

STANFORD ATHLETICS



MEDIA RELATIONS

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Pepperdine vs. Arkansas

Game No. 1 - Notes

Friday, May 30, 2008

Stanford Regional

Stanford, Calif.

Pepperdine Head Coach Steve Rodriguez

Opening Statement...

I think that is what people love about college athletics. When you have two teams, regardless if they are good or bad, competing like that and you see games end like that. A game-ending diving catch, those are the things that make college athletics so great. We are just very fortunate that we came out on top today, but Arkansas did an amazing job today.

On the game-ending catch...

I always expect him to catch it. I hope he doesn't run after it and have it hit him in the head. When you have been around our guys as long as we have and you see all the effort put into everything that they do when they make a great play it never really surprises us. He dove after a ball earlier in the game and may not have come up with it and he did it in our championship series and just missed it, but that is part of the game, when guys give great effort those plays come along at some point.

On stopping Arkansas from coming through when they had chances...

I think that both teams had the same opportunities. Arkansas had some guys on base and they would ground out or fly out and we had those same opportunities where we had guys in scoring position, where we had chances to extend the lead from two runs to three or four runs and we just couldn't seem to find the hit. That is what is great about baseball. There are going to be those opportunities to get those hits. Today just happened to be a pitching and defense day and luckily we were fortunate to come out on top.

On the last fly ball...

There was never a doubt (jokingly). The funny thing about it was that before the game we were telling our outfielders how the wind was coming at a cross-angle pushing balls toward that left field and when balls were going to right they were drifting to right center. We hit some balls to right center and they hung up a little bit and they were able to make the catch so when the ball was hit my initial reaction was, we got it, but then I saw the wind pushing it away and that was when it got a little scary. Luckily we have a tremendous outfielder out there that made the play for us.

On the two teams being even...

Absolutely, we both had our chances. Even in the first inning they didn't execute when they had a guy on third and less than two outs and we did the same thing with less than two outs. We both had our chances, that is what you are going to get when you have two good team is a close game whether you like it or not.

On not having Eric Thames in the lineup...

It is not easy to replace a guy like Eric Thames. What is amazing is that we lost him in a game we ended up losing, but I think the biggest thing for our guys is we never really relied on one person. We lost Brett Hunter after his second outing and the rest of the pitching staff stepped up. If you told me we were going to lose Hunter at the very beginning and then lose Eric down the stretch, I would be pretty upset, but that is one thing I have noticed about this team is the character that they have shown. We may lose someone, but it does not make us a worse team, in fact it may make us better in a lot of different ways.

Pepperdine Starting Pitcher Nathan Newman

On his outing and facing Arkansas...

The have a good ballclub up and down, one through nine. I struggled with fastball location and had to go to a lot of off-speed. They seemed to jump on the fastball early, but our pitching coach called a great game. It was a decent performance, the pitch count ran a little high, but the guy behind me really kept me in it by making plays when we needed it. It was a fun game to play in and a fun game even after I was out.

On gaining confidence by getting Arkansas in the first...

Of course, and the way the guys played behind me. Throwing a lot of off-speed and getting ground balls and getting Forsythe to pop-up gave us a little bit of encouragement. We know he has been hot, but our pitching coach gave us a great scouting report.

Pepperdine infielder Chase d'Arnaud

On the next game...

We just take it one game at a time, we both tried real hard today and hopefully we can take it into the next game tomorrow.

On his home run...

I was pretty sure they were going to try to come inside because I remember my last when the had two strikes they came inside on me and just missed and I ended up with a walk. Needless to say, I was ready for it. It was a fastball inside and I was able to get my hands inside and I was lucky enough to get the barrel on it and it went.

On whether he thought he got all of the home run...

When I first hit, my first reaction was run hard because it might go off the wall because the way the way the wind had been blowing, but sure enough it got out.

On the last fly ball...

I thought he was going to catch it for sure, but then I saw it drifting away from him and I was like oh my gosh, but then he dove for it and I gave the Tiger Woods fist pump.

On stepping up after losing Thames...

We each know that we have to pick up the slack because Eric was our best hitter the whole year and our most consistent hitter also. All of us have to step up our game.