

Arizona — 4
South Carolina — 1

June 25, 2012

An interview with:

**ARIZONA
COACH ANDY LOPEZ
BRANDON DIXON
ROBERT REFSNYDER
TRENT GILBERT**

THE MODERATOR: Andy, give us an overview of the championship.

COACH LOPEZ: Again, and I said it a couple of times out there, but I really do want to commend Ray, South Carolina, the fans, the program, Michael Roth, Matthews, the kid that threw at the end.

It was just a dynamite, dynamite program. It probably means a heck of a lot more for me personally for us to have won this national championship against Ray because I know what he's done there in the time that he's been there. And it validates what I think these guys have been this year, and that's a pretty good team, because Ray Tanner and South Carolina, that's a very good team.

We're very thankful. Very fortunate. Very blessed. And I'm extremely, extremely fortunate to have coached this group this year.

It's full of intangibles. They really, really were easy to work with. And for three years they've been this way. They've just been a joy. I mean, how many times have I told you I love suiting up with you guys? Said it today before the game. And I really do. I like suiting up with young guys that go to class. Go to study hall. Hustle on the field. Clean up the clubhouse on their own. Never an issue on the road.

I mean, make sure it's tonight, too. But never an issue on the road. And just a joy to be around. I'm extremely, extremely fortunate to be in this profession and work with young people like this.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Coach, you said last night that your team got the win, and you gave them a grade of



a B. Does winning a national title give them an A?

COACH LOPEZ: I give both teams a grade of A. I've been a head coach for 36 years. Started as a high school coach way back 100 years ago and went to a Division II school called Cal State, Dominguez Hills, and nobody even knew where it was. The first 37 recruiting calls I made, they didn't know what it was: Is it a junior college? Is it Domingo Hills? Where are you?

These are great ones to win and tough ones to lose. And I've been on both ends. I thought it was a great man, it's a great college baseball game. I just thought it was a great college baseball game.

We got a big hit in the ninth. Man, it was a good Michael Roth's a legend. He's as good as I've seen in postseason. Seriously, their closer, my God, I just think I will go to bed tonight, if I do sleep, and know in my heart that, boy, we beat or we were fortunate enough to win against an outstanding pitching staff and an outstanding program.

Q. Brandon and Trent, will you talk about your atbats in the ninth and what transpired there? And Andy and Robert, will you talk about those two guys are sitting in the middle of you here tonight instead of some of the older guys that maybe you are used to relying on?

BRANDON DIXON: In the ninth I got another atbat. My first atbat had a chance to put us up by another run. Popped out to first base. And then in the ninth I got a 11 count, I believe, and I was sitting on a slider. I got it and rolled it over, through the third baseline, and got the run in.

TRENT GILBERT: For me there really wasn't a lot going on for me with my last atbat. I tried to keep the game small. I knew we had runners in scoring position, and I was just trying to get a hit. Pretty much as simple as that.

COACH LOPEZ: I think it's want me to comment on these two guys? Okay. Oh ye of little faith. I was going to pinch hit for them. Man, that righthander is tough. I was going to pinch hit for him, and my assistant coach, Matt Siegel, looked at me shook and I looked at him, and he shook his head no, and I went, okay, I'll go with the guy's gut. Please forgive me, Brandon.

But he obviously came through. I'm really proud of Trent, Riley Moore, Matt Troupe,



Tyler Crawford if I missed a few other freshmen, I'm not sure if I missed Maggi, Joe Maggi.

If there's one thing I've learned in this profession, this junior class had expectations. They came in and wanted to be in this position today. They really did. Now, could they accomplish it? There were some days I wondered, the way they were going about things. Not them, but the game. The game is a vicious game. It wasn't being kind to them at times.

But they came in the junior class had a tremendous vision of accomplishment this year, and for Trent Gilbert, Riley Moore and key guys that have to kind of jump up. They couldn't be freshmen this year. That's basically what I'm saying. These guys cannot be freshmen. And there were a few times I'm sure Trent will tell you that I encouraged him verbally at practice at times, Trent, you know, I encouraged him verbally at practice and Riley Moore and some other guys, a loving way of saying you've got to find another gear.

And I've said that only because it's a junior class that wanted to be here. And for them to do what they've done, he got a big hit against St. John's, got a big hit tonight.

Real proud of these freshmen. Real proud of them.

Q. Coach, did you think it was an advantage after you clinched last Thursday to be able to see South Carolina in person an extra two times, especially going against their hitters?

COACH LOPEZ: I don't know if there's ever an advantage when you've got a club like Ray's got, but it helped us. I'm not going to sit here and lie to you. It did help us.

We had videos. It's in the modern age. In the SEC I was at Florida, a lot of TV games, you can get stuff on that. When you're able to sit and watch and bear down on it, it did help us, to be very candid with you. I felt like we had a pretty good pitching plan.

Now, whether we could execute or not was another story. But, boy, to Konner Wade's credit and James Farris's credit, they I joke with our guys. Whenever somebody plays, I say: You're my favorite player. James Farris was my favorite player, but right after him was Dixon and Gilbert. But James Farris really executed our pitching plan tonight.

Q. Coach, before the postseason started, you talked a lot about how the pitching

and defense was going to be the key to the postseason run. Can you talk about the success of your pitching throughout the postseason? And will you finally say that this team is better than the '08 team?

COACH LOPEZ: On paper the '08 team is probably as good if not better because of their bullpen. I had two first rounders from the sixth inning on, another potential first rounder in Jason Stoffel.

But it's not always the best team that wins. I came here in '98 as the number one team in the nation with Florida and I came here the seventh seed in '92 and we won it in '92 and didn't win in '98.

It's not always the best team that wins; it's the hottest team. And these guys got hot at the right time. I'm not taking away. They're the national champions. But I don't want to take anything away from the club because I really felt they could come here if we had a chance to host.

But life is life. The pitching, phenomenal. It really was. Coach Shaun Cole deserves all the credit, my young guy that works with the pitchers. I stand around and make calls and call things and hang out in the bullpen and eat sunflower seeds, but Shaun's done a marvelous job and I'm thankful he's on the staff with Matt Siegel, Josh Garcia, and Brett Scyphers. Those guys have been great for me.

But they were special. Pitching was a special. A high level of competition. We're very thankful. And that's usually what does it. In '92 we came here and I think we ran 25 consecutive scores, something like that, and after watching Konner Wade and Kurt Heyer and James Farris, Troupe made it interesting, but those guys they did a pretty good job.

Q. Robert, could you talk about the vision that Andy said this junior class had and what it means to you guys to finish up where you're finishing up? And then, also, are you going to let anybody else handle that trophy?

ROBERT REFSNYDER: Well, going into my freshman year you could see Coach Lopez sometimes when he's recruiting guys he's got a big smile on his face. And he's always very positive. He knows what to say. But as soon as I stepped on campus, we started practicing, you could tell how frustrated he was with the last team.

And you could tell that he was fed up with baseball and trying to teach young people to go to simple thing to go to class and study hall and take care of your business off the field.



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And you could see the frustration. But Lopez gave us, gave myself and the junior class, this year the tools to what he wanted and how to be successful.

And I came to Arizona because I saw Arizona Super Regional against Miami. I wanted to be a part of that. I wanted to make a run for the national championship, and here we are today.

But Coach Lopez is always his two biggest things is he wants to see his team play good baseball, he wants to see the freshmen turn into young men.

I'm proud to say Coach Lopez is my coach. I can't imagine learning something more from one person throughout my three years at Arizona.

And this is a great last college experience, and I'll cherish for the rest of my life.

Q. This is for Brandon and Trent. You're part of a team that's one of the best hitting teams in college baseball history, and you're at the back end of that lineup, you don't get a chance to be the big guy. What does it feel to be in a game where it clinches it for you? And, Robert, what does it feel like for you to know that those guys came out big for your junior class and what does it feel just seeing where the future of your program's going? Because you guys aren't going anywhere anytime soon.

BRANDON DIXON: It was amazing to get that opportunity to help the team out. I mean, towards the end of the year I was my main purpose was to help us defensively and then get my atbats when I got them. And I got one, and praise the Lord a good thing happened.

TRENT GILBERT: For me, I think it's no secret the juniors, they're the main contributors throughout the season. But, I mean, with me and some of the other younger guys, I think we feel just as confident in those situations. So when we get a chance like that, I like our chances as well.

ROBERT REFSNYDER: The program, and Konner and Farris and Troupe, it's exciting, because they do it the right way. And to see Trent grow up before my eyes, he was a real quiet kid, and for Coach Lopez's programs, you need to be really loud on defense and aggressive, and Trent was a little timid at times. He'll even admit it.

But to see him grow up next to Alex is just a joy. And Brandon had his ups and downs this year, but I look forward to big things out of Brandon. His batting practice has been as impressive as anyone's on our team, and his work ethic is bar none, one of the finest on our team.

To see the program in the hands of young guys like this, it's very promising for Arizona. And for young guys in high school to see Arizona on the main stage and to win a national championship, that can only help recruiting.

So I look forward to Arizona baseball and myself contributing to the program wherever Lopez needs. And it's exciting time for baseball.

Q. Andy, break down James' performance tonight. Just pretty impressive out there, the stuff and whatnot?

COACH LOPEZ: Short of the base on ball and the hit bat, I mean, tie the shoes wrong. He had stirrups on different, I can't pick anything apart. He was outstanding. I said we had a plan. Thought we could have a plan against South Carolina.

But I've done it too many times where you go into the game, you have a plan and guys don't locate and before you know it, forget about the plan, you've got to go get another arm. Short of base on balls and hit bats, I thought he was absolutely spectacular.

I've said it to younger coaches, when your best players aren't your best human beings, it can get a little dicy.

Your best player is a 3 hole guy, best player is a pitcher, doesn't go to class, this and that, it's a challenge. But when your best players are your best human beings, it's going to be a good year. It's been a great year for us because my best players are my best human beings. And James is one of those guys, as well as these guys here.

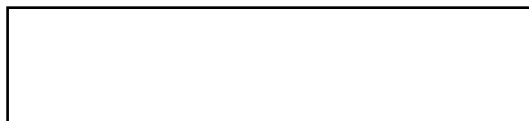
Our best players are our best human beings in the program, and that's a real deadly combination when you suit as a team. I thought James was pretty special.

Q. Kind of a similar question, Coach. I know last night you were sort of up in the air on which guy you were going to throw tonight. When did you decide to go with Farris and what's he been doing the last three weeks?

COACH LOPEZ: I teach these guys these guys are going to laugh because I talk about it all the time: Remove the emotion and let's be logical. Let's not be emotional let's be logical.

Logic says if you want to shorten up your stroke gotta get your hands on top of the flight. Logic says if you want to win in a yard like this, you need to throw strikes. Logic says if you want to win on defense you've got to communicate.

So these guys hear it, how many times do you hear that? Every day. I'm the one that was



emotional last night. I have too much respect for South Carolina.

My thought was, when I left here, we probably need to pitch Heyer, because I knew they would be throwing Roth. And I have so much respect for Ray's club and Roth. I thought let's match it up. A lot of emotion.

By the time I got back to the hotel my emotion dissipated and I went back to logic, and logic says: You know what, James has been throwing great, our pens are intense, when we do our pen work. A lot of yelling, a lot of screaming by me to kind of get the intensity level up.

Not necessarily the pitcher, but all over, around them. I do it around them so they have to focus and not listen to me, which is very easy for them to do, by the way.

But he was ready to pitch. He was ready to pitch. And, again, I got very logical when I got back to the hotel and said Farris needs to go in. And if we needed a third game shootout, then you go to your best arm, you give another day rest in Heyer.

Q. Trent, can you kind of walk us through the line drive in the bottom of the ninth with the bases loaded, what you saw on that play as the ball came off the bat? And, Coach, your thoughts, too, on that play with your perspective from the dugout.

TRENT GILBERT: Yeah, sure. He got ahead of me. And eventually went to two strikes. And then from that point I'm looking fastball, but gotta be ready to react to a curveball. And I got that curve. And like I was able to react and put a good swing on it.

ROBERT REFSNYDER: I'm reading off the bat, making the catch, and go to second and try to get the double play.

TRENT GILBERT: You should have seen everyone's faces.

ROBERT REFSNYDER: Should have got

COACH LOPEZ: 3.5. He's got a 3.5 GPA now.

My thoughts, when the ball was hit, again, when you see a ball squared up, with bases loaded, as a coach, you kind of cringe a little bit.

To be honest, I thought it was going to go through, I really did. In fact, I was counting before the pitch, okay, let's see it's 4 to 1, 3, 4, 2, when the ball's hit, I go doggone it.

But I have so much respect for South Carolina. I knew they wouldn't go quietly. I just knew. I sensed it. And poor Michael, called changeup on Walker. I probably should have gone hard. And to be honest, as you could see, we

wore the fastball out after that. If they're going to beat us, they'll beat us with the hard stuff. But I threw a changeup and Walker left it in left field and I said: Why did you do that? Stay hard. We stayed hard from that point on. I thought it was a great job of base running, first and foremost, I thought it was a great job of base running, and we also had Trent right at the right spot.

Q. Coach Lopez, can you describe how difficult what James Farris did today and have you ever seen that done before, somebody having a 22day layoff and pitching in really the national championship game and doing what he did?

COACH LOPEZ: Against Michael Roth. Against Michael Roth. Listen. Someone's going to get mad at me and so go ahead and get mad at me.

When I woke up this morning I went: Farris against Roth, we're probably going to be playing on Tuesday. Really, I said we're probably going Tuesday. We have Heyer. We'll try to match up Heyer against somebody else. Nothing against James Farris.

I've watched Michael Roth the last three years in the postseason and couple times in conference games when I get a chance to watch some TV, the SEC, and, boy, he's as good do you realize that J.D. Arteaga -- remember that guy back at Miami? Just a sure win. Just a lefthander with the presence and knows how to pitch and all the rest.

So I was really hoping that Farris would match up until we could possibly score a run or two if that were possible against Roth. We really powered some balls off of him.

What, we scored one run? It was exactly what this program needed. And it was exactly what I'd hoped he would do. Really happy for him. These guys will tell you about three, four days ago in practice I pointed him out to the club, and I said it's never about you. We talk about that a lot. It's always about the program. It's never about you as an individual.

Sometimes they have to be reminded of it. God bless them. But I want more innings and want more atbats. When you get that way, it's never about you. It's never about you, it's about the program.

And two or three days ago I pointed out Farris. I brought him in front of the group. And I said this guy's been passed over twice in postseason and he's ready to pitch and he'll get a chance to pitch here before everything's said and done. And he was pretty marvelous tonight.



Q. I was standing by the tunnel next to the dugout. Right after you guys made your rally in the ninth, you went back into the clubhouse. Was there a reason why you did?

COACH LOPEZ: Honestly?

Q. Did you just have to pee?

COACH LOPEZ: (Laughing.) Combination of things. I take vitamins during the season because I'm struggling. I just wear out. I don't sleep after wins and losses. My wife will tell you. I get like two or three hours after a win or loss.

So one is I went to visit the restroom. But the other one was I was really trying to clear my mind because I've seen, God bless him, but how many times have we seen Matt Troupe do what he did tonight?

Man, that son of a gun can load the bases as quick as any human being I've ever coached. And I love him because he's got good stuff and he'll be real good when it's all done and said.

I went back to use the restroom. I am on these vitamins that make me go a lot. Getting a little earthy here, but you want the truth, here's the truth.

I wanted to be away from the dugout and clear my mind, because if it got a little hairy, I wanted to know exactly what decision I was going to make. I wanted to plan. I had a plan. Didn't have to go to it. I love Matty, but he can do that? Has he ever been clean? I don't think he's ever been clean. But he gets out. So we're okay.

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