

**NCAA Morgantown Regional
Pre-Regional Press Conference
West Virginia University
May 30, 2019**

Head Coach Randy Mazey

Opening Statement

Isn't my excitement evident, obvious? No, we are super excited as a team, as a University, as a community and as a state. This doesn't happen every day in Morgantown. The excitement that has been building in this program for the last five or six years has started to come to a head, and I am super excited to see the crowd that we are going to have tomorrow night supporting these guys. I know what they are capable of. I have been saying it for years that this day was coming in our program. I don't know if anyone outside myself, my coaching staff and the players believed it, but it's here. We still have a long way to go. This isn't the end of the road for us. It's just a step along the road, but we're super excited to be hosting a regional and having teams from the SEC and ACC come in here. Our people have been used to seeing Big 12 caliber baseball, so it's nice to give our community a taste of what NCAA postseason baseball is all about.

On the messages he has received about hosting regionals

Good question, there have been so many. It seems like you spend just about every day responding to text messages and emails. The funny thing is that even in the Big 12 Tournament, you win a big game against Texas Tech or somebody and it seems like you have 50 texts, and then the next day, they beat you 10-3, and you have no text messages. It's like no one wants to talk to you if you don't win, but it's been super exciting and super positive. All the former players that have reached out are super proud of what these guys are accomplishing. They are happy with where the program is it at right now and what these guys have turned it into. We've been in the Big 12 for seven years now, and we knew this day was coming. These guys made a leap of faith. When we recruited these guys, we weren't talking about all the regionals, super regionals and stadiums. These guys made a leap of faith to come to West Virginia. You're looking at two kids from Texas and one from Miami sitting at this table coming to Morgantown, West Virginia, to try and do something that's never ever been done before in the history of the school; to advance past the regional and potentially play in the College World Series. They came here for one reason; to have an opportunity and put West Virginia on the national stage. Like I said, how many times in life do you have an opportunity to do something that's never been done before? That's what these guys did. They took a leap of faith and believed in the coaches that were recruiting them and talking to them. They came here and did exactly that. They put West Virginia baseball on the national stage.

On what he knows about Fordham

As a coach, a team like this worries you to death. They are leading the nation in stolen bases, and they have the conference pitcher of the year pitching against us. This is a super high-quality team. They are super well coached. They can give you a different look than what you got all season. We run a lot as a team. I think we stole 92-93 bases. We lead the Big 12 in that category, and these guys have stolen almost double of what we have. I have all the faith in the

world in Pudge (West Virginia senior catcher Ivan Gonzalez) back there that if we give him the chance to throw someone out, he's one of the best catchers in all of college baseball. We take a lot of pride in controlling the running game, so I'm anxious for the challenge to play against a team that runs so much. It's not much different than March Madness when you draw a team that shoots a ton of 3's, and you are not used to it. You have to account for it, for sure, but you don't change your identity. Our identity is our identity, and we are going to play the way that we play. We are going to do a good job at controlling the running game, and hopefully, we can get a few mistakes on this guy that doesn't make many.

Senior Outfielder Darius Hill

On WVU's matchup against Fordham

They look like a team that can really pitch. We've seen a few arms from them, they look like they can attack hitters and get anyone out at any time. As an offense, we know they can steal a lot of bases, which causes problems for your defense and your pitching philosophy. So, we are going to have to bring it in order to beat them.

On sharing his past experiences at NCAA Regionals with younger players

I think the message is it's just another game. Obviously, there's going to be large crowds and quality opposition in the other dugout, but at the same time, we need to do what got us here. We've been playing well offensively, defensively and on the mound, so if we can maintain what we've been doing, I think we will have a chance against anyone.

Junior Right-Handed Pitcher Alek Manoah

On his preparation for the NCAA Regional

I'll wake up Saturday morning and not know who my opposition is and who is starting for them, but I've already done some studying and know both of those teams that I'm going to have to prepare. I've talked to some guys who are in their league and that I know from summer ball. It's actually pretty nice. I threw Thursday last week, and going into Saturday this week, the arm is going to be nice and rested and once I get some more information on who I'm playing, I'm just really excited to get out there.

On his study routine

They study most of the hitters, and they have to know where to position the defense and obviously Mazey calls the pitches. So, he does a lot of the studying. I just like to take a look at the hitters and put a name to the face and get an idea of what I want to do before I get out there. I don't like to overthink things, just put a name to the face and get an idea of how I'm going to pitch to them before I get out there.

On when he disagrees with WVU head coach Randy Mazey on pitch calls

I just shake my head. He tells us all the time in the fall on things like that, it's just a suggestion. I do a lot of homework on my own, and I'm technically the person out there throwing the ball and I know what I want to throw. A lot of times, we're on the same page and we kind of pitch the same way. So, whenever I shake down, he knows exactly what I want, so it's never a hassle.

On if there is pressure playing in an NCAA Regional at home

I would say there is not really a pressure. I would say two years ago, we went into it like it's our first regional in 20 years, and we are just happy to be here. Now, we know the kind of team we have, and our demeanor is to come out and win this thing. There isn't any kind of extra

pressure, and we are the No. 1 seed for a reason. We love playing with each other, and we know that if we go out there and take care of business, we will be moving on.

Senior Catcher Ivan Gonzalez

On WVU will change their approach against Fordham

No, we're not changing any approach. Definitely, just like (West Virginia senior outfielder) Darius (Hill) said, it puts a little pressure on the defense. As they steal, they get out of formation. We are going to keep doing what we are doing, make sure the pitchers just give me the ball on time, and I just have to put it on a dime.

On sharing his past experiences at NCAA Regionals with younger players

Yeah, it's just playing Mountaineer baseball, just like we've been doing all year. Just keeping our composure, and when the time calls to make big plays, make big pitches, and just keep playing ball.

**NCAA Morgantown Regional
Pre-Regional Press Conference
Texas A&M University
May 30, 2019**

Head Coach Rob Childress

Opening Statement

Getting through the SEC, it's all about survival, and certainly, our guys did that. (We) went to Hoover (Alabama) with the expectation of winning that tournament. (We) got off to a really good start and (had) a couple of really good pitching performances by our guys, and the other team got us home quick. We had a great week of practice, and finding out on Monday that we're coming to Morgantown, the guys were excited. We're thankful to be here. Everyone that we've come into contact with thus far has been over-the-top gracious and welcoming. The park is beautiful, it's got great character. You can see what (West Virginia head coach) Coach (Randy) Mazey has built here in a short time is something special.

On the keys to success in the NCAA Tournament

You have to catch a lot of breaks to get through a regional (and) to get through a super regional. You have to have your guys playing well at this time, and sometimes, it only takes a spark, and it's one guy that gets going, and all of a sudden, three or four guys get going offensively. You have to have a couple of really good pitching performances. If you have to go really deep into your bullpen the first game or two, it can be a struggle. The key is just getting off to a good start. Certainly, our pitchers that are going to go early in the weekend have gotten us off to a good start more often than not on the weekends thus far. Everybody that's playing this time of year is hot and has earned the right to play and to feel as good as they've felt about their team all year long, too.

On meeting Duke and/or West Virginia for the first time

I don't know if it is (an advantage) or not. Certainly, you go to a new place, a new town, a new hotel, no routine you've been in before like you've done in conference. Like I said in the opening statement, what we've seen is absolutely beautiful. The park is gorgeous, (it has) great character, plays true and it ought to be a fun regional.

On traveling for a regional

You have to look at it as a blessing. You get away, there will certainly be some parents here, but it's all about you, and it's about the 27 players and coaches and staff that you have together. It's all about galvanizing together and going and playing your best. Sometimes when you are playing close to home, there's a lot that pulls at you as far as friends and more tickets on the pass list and this and that. This is all about our team and our coaches and our staff going to be the very best we can be together.

Junior Left-Handed Pitcher John Doxakis

On his first impressions of Monongalia County Ballpark

The ballpark is beautiful, as coach said. It has a lot of character to it, it plays really true. It's a really fun place to play just from being out here for one day. We're excited we get to play a couple, three or four games out here. So, we're looking forward to it, and it's going to be a fun weekend.

On falling back on past experiences in the NCAA Regional, Super Regional and College World Series

I think it helps a lot when there are a couple guys on the team who know what it takes to get through a regional. It takes everyone, not just the hitting, the pitching or the defense. It takes one unit, and that's our goal this weekend; to play as one unit, get through this and hopefully on to super regionals.

On what Texas A&M has to do to win against Duke

We just have to throw strikes and get ahead early. We can't set up hitters' counts for them, because then they'll be able to swing it. If we can get ahead early and throw the offspeed's down in the zone, we should be pretty successful. It's been our plan all year, and when we execute it, it works out pretty well.

Junior Shortstop Braden Shewmake

On the team's mentality entering the NCAA Regional

We know that we're going to get great pitching performances day in and day out. I think we have the best pitching staff in the country, with (Texas A&M junior left-handed pitcher) John (Doxakis) and (Texas A&M sophomore left-handed pitcher) Asa (Lacy) to follow him. I think that's the best one-two punch in the country. We know we just have to get them a few runs, and they're going to take us home. But like you said, it'd been a struggle, but the mentality hasn't changed. We're going to stick to our approach and do what we do. We felt like we did that in the fall, we were really good against them, and like I said, if we can be good against them, then we feel like we can be good against anybody in the country.

On generating offense

I think we need to be aggressive, one, and two, with being aggressive, we also need to take the right pitches. I feel like we're getting ourselves out at times. I feel like if we swing at the right pitches and are aggressive with those pitches, then we'll hit them hard, and good things happen when we hit the ball hard. That's kind of what we need to do to get the offense going.

**NCAA Morgantown Regional
Pre-Regional Press Conference
Duke University
May 30, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Pollard

Opening Statement

We're thrilled to be here in Morgantown. It's a beautiful ballpark. It's great to get a chance to be in a ballpark for the first time today. We are thrilled to be a part of what is a great regional field. We are excited to be back in the tournament for the third time in four years, and candidly, we really shouldn't be here. The first week of April, we were under .500. We were 3-9 in the ACC. Our RPI was down in the 100's, and over the second half of this season, our kids have shown tremendous resilience and determination to grind our way back to be at a point to get an at-large bid. We lost a preseason All-American, who was arguably one of the top pitching prospects in the country, to injury. We lost a Cape Cod League Pitcher of the Summer to injury, so that was our one and two we lost for the season. We lost a freshman All-American for 25 games during the first half of the year. We lost an All-ACC shortstop. We lost a starting right fielder who was having a terrific year, and because of these guys sitting to my left, we were able to overcome that and still get back and be at this point.

Coach Josh Jordan, who is our associate head coach and recruiting coordinator, has done as good a job as anyone in the country, and he was recognized this past offseason by the ABCA as the Baseball American National Assistant Coach of the Year. It showed this year, because we had to go deeper into our depth than any year I have ever coached. We literally had about five years' worth of injuries in one spring, so it is a credit to the job that he has done from a recruiting standpoint to put us in a position to absorb those injuries and still be here. Our coaching staff, (Duke assistant coach) Jason Stein, (Duke pitching coach) Dusty Blake and (Duke director of operations) Chris Gordon, have done an unbelievable job, and then, you have two guys to my left who have put their heart and soul into this program. Over four years, these two seniors have accumulated 139 wins. They have been to three regionals. They have been to a super regional. They have been within one game of going to Omaha. They left it all out on the field for this program. If not for their leadership, we wouldn't have survived the first half of this year. Their determination, the job they did and their performance on the field allowed other guys to follow behind them, and I'm just incredibly proud to sit behind these three guys as we get ready to start this regional.

On his impressions of Texas A&M

We have to limit free offense. We have to make sure that we don't give away anything. I made a comment earlier in the week, and it rings true for tomorrow's game, but it also rings true for the whole weekend. I think the team that will come out of this region will be

the team that plays the best defense, limits the free offense via the walk, because I believe all these offenses are reliant, to a degree, on a little bit of help. There is not an elite offense in this regional, and it's the team that gets the key two-out hitting with runners in scoring position. It'll be old fashion baseball, where you are going to see a lot of really good arms and you have to make routine plays. You can't put guys on base for free, and you have to come up with clutch hits. We are seeing a guy who is as good as anyone in the country, and he is really good at keeping the ball down. He has a wipeout slider. Obviously, Texas A&M is really proficient at producing swings and misses, so we have to be good when we get in two strike counts at figuring a way to put the ball in play and move the baseball so we can move runners, and hopefully, force a mistake or two along the way.

Associate Head Coach Josh Jordan

On who stepped up when key players were injured

Well, the guys I think that had impact here, he alluded to when we made change. (Duke redshirt senior right-handed pitcher) Ben Gross stepped into a very difficult situation. I think he found out on Tuesday he was getting the start at the University of North Carolina on Friday night. He's done an unbelievable job with that. Without him, I don't think we would be in this position, as a matter of fact, I know we wouldn't be in this position. He's done an unbelievable job of stepping up, and then obviously, (Duke senior outfielder) Kennie (Taylor) alluded to the fact that we lost two really good outfielders last year. (Duke redshirt senior outfielder) Kyle Gallagher is another young man that has stepped up huge for us; coming in as a fifth-year guy, transferring from Cornell. (He's) done an unbelievable job stepping in, and we've asked a lot of him. First time facing ACC pitching and hitting in the middle of the order, he's done an unbelievable job with it.

Senior Outfielder Kennie Taylor

On this season's turning point

I think it definitely helped when we got (Duke sophomore infielder) Joey (Loperfido) back in the lineup and back in the field, as it provided a spark for our whole team. He's a big leader out there in the field and in the lineup, so I think when we got him back, it set the lineup and had everyone clicking at the right time. That's what started that whole onset, when we started to win more ACC games.

On being in an NCAA Regional three out of the last four years

I think it helps us a lot as the guys that were here last year know what to expect, and that will definitely help us in showing the younger guys exactly what they need to do and be ready for in terms of the atmosphere and how to approach their game.

On the pitching talent in the NCAA Morgantown Regional

This regional is definitely jam packed with a lot of good pitching. As hitters, we have to know how to grind good at-bats, hit our pitches, don't expand our zones and stay within our approaches. We know they are going to be really good, but we have faith in our lineup as well.

Senior Right-Handed Pitcher Hunter Davis

On this season's turning point

A game that sticks out is our midweek loss to Campbell. We had a heart-to-heart between coaches and players, and from that point on, we were kind of playing with house money, because we realized the position we were in and what we needed to do. We rattled off a couple ACC series wins, and an ACC series sweep at Clemson and it got things going.

On if there was any pressure at the turning point

Definitely, once we were under .500, it was kind of now or never, and we had a good group of guys to do it and stay loose instead of folding under that pressure and disappointment. It's been a fun second half to have that opportunity.

On what makes Duke a good team

I think that we've been through the ringer. We've had some pretty bad losses that we shouldn't have had. I think we lost so many guys from last year, which was an old group, and this year is a different identity, and I think once we found that, we've played really loose. We have the ability to win all sorts of games, because we've played in them before, and I think that's what makes us a little different.

**NCAA Morgantown Regional
Pre-Regional Press Conference
Fordham University
May 30, 2019**

Head Coach Kevin Leighton

Opening Statement

Yeah, this is awesome. I've said this a bunch over the last week. I'm just thrilled for our players, for our program, for our alumni. It's been a while getting back here. We're excited to be in Morgantown. West Virginia has been a tremendous host so far, and we can't wait to get out on the field tomorrow night.

On Fordham's offense and stealing bases

I can tell you, at Fordham, we play in a big park, so it is a tough place to drive the ball over the fence, especially when it's cold and the wind's blowing in. So, we've kind of shifted gears as far as becoming a running offense. I guess you could maybe take a football term, but the recruiting switch we made three or four years ago, all the credit to (Fordham associate head coach/recruiting coordinator) Coach (Rob) DiToma. I said this to our radio guys. The only thing I really did was sit back and let him go. I've always said, as a leader, as a head coach, you better realize when you have somebody good in your midst and let them do what they do. Basically, we talked about it a few years ago, we have to give everybody a green light, and it's worked out for us. It's something that we focus on, we recruit to, we coach, we practice. It's become a big part of our offense. I think for another team, they have to prepare for something new, and it's a challenge for our opposition, so it's what we try to do.

On if the players have a green light to steal bases at all times

There're red lights, but every guy in our lineup is green. They have 100-percent freedom to go. At times, as a head coach, it's a challenge. There may be times when they run, and you're kind of frustrated when they do and they get thrown out. That's where, as a coach, I've bit my lip. Half the time, the guys are running and I'm saying, 'Oh no.' Then, they're safe and you're saying, 'Oh yes.' It's one of those things where you're going to get burned by it every once in a while, but it's what we do, and I think we're really good at it, so I'm fine with trying to execute it. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work.

On if he considers his team as a good base-running team

Yeah, I agree with it all. I think we run the bases well, I think we run the bases aggressive, and I think we steal the bases. We're No. 1 in the country right now, so we do that well. I wouldn't say our guys have picked too many bad opportunities. Like I said before, you don't lead the country, we wouldn't be where we are right now without what we do. So, a ton of credit to (Fordham associate head coach/recruiting coordinator) Coach (Rob) DiToma and, obviously, to our players for buying into that philosophy and executing it.

On Fordham sophomore right-handed pitcher John Stankiewicz

He was good last year, he wasn't great. So, if you're asking me, 'Has he had it this year?' Yes, he's been pretty good. It's hard to take anything away from him. He's, I'm sure, missed a few

spots this year, but he's able to mix pitches, throw everything for strikes. He competes, he's not afraid to challenge a guy, especially when he falls behind. He's going to make you beat him, typically. He's not going to beat himself as far as putting multiple guys on base. Johnny is probably the quietest guy on the team, but on the mound, he's one of our, I would say, biggest competitors, toughest kids. He's got stuff that is hard to recruit. Sometimes, you talk to a kid and you hear a guy that comes off very quiet, and you may think certain things about a guy. When you watch that guy on the mound, you'll see a completely different competitor.

Senior Right-Handed Pitcher Anthony DiMeglio

On Fordham's first NCAA appearance since 1998

It's awesome. It's a great experience. I know everyone's really excited to get out there and compete tomorrow and make a name for ourselves. We walk through airports and everybody asks where we're from, (when we say) Fordham, they say, 'Oh Florida? That's awesome.' So, we're just trying to go out there tomorrow night and make a name for ourselves and let people know who we are.

On playing in front of a projected sellout crowd

We both have that experience. Freshman year, we went down to LSU, and this year, we opened at Texas A&M, which is pretty cool that they got a spot in the Morgantown regional. We've handled that, and I think we did a pretty good job of handling that. I don't think we're going to feel too much pressure. It's just a good experience, and it's going to be cool to play in front of a lot of people.

On bouncing back in the Atlantic 10 Tournament

It was definitely a rough one (in) the first game of the tournament. I'm someone that's able to put something behind me pretty quickly and move on to the next one. That's kind of my mindset. I did well in that second game, but Saturday's a different start for me, so I have to move on and focus on that.

Senior Catcher Justin Bardwell

On the team's mindset right now

I think we're pretty loose going out there. We don't really have much to lose. We won the A-10; we don't really have the pressure on our shoulders. We're coming in here to try and make a name for ourselves. West Virginia has the pressure on them, because they're a top-ranked seed. We're coming out here playing loose and just going out there to show them what we can do.

On West Virginia junior left-handed pitcher Nick Snyder

I haven't seen anything on him and haven't really looked at any stats. He's another pitcher. We're just going to go out there, battle and do what we do.

On preparing during fall ball

Fall ball is really good for us because, especially for me with all the running we do, it prepares me as a catcher. I know I'm facing one of the best stealing offenses in the country. If I'm able to throw out our runners, I have confidence that I can throw out pretty much anyone in the country.