**2017 SEC BASEBALL TOURNAMENT**



**MAY 23-28 | HOOVER METROPOLITAN STADIUM | HOOVER, ALA.**

| GAME 1 | SOUTH CAROLINA (7), VANDERBILT (4) | NOTES AND QUOTES |

**SOUTH CAROLINA POST-GAME NOTES**

• The Gamecocks improved their overall record to 33-23 and are now 26-44 in the SEC Tournament, winning their first game since 2013 and snapping a seven-game losing streak.

• South Carolina has not defeated Vanderbilt at the SEC Tournament since May 30, 2004 when the Gamecocks topped the Commodores 3-2.

• The Gamecocks are the first team to hit three home runs in a SEC Tournament game since Vanderbilt on May 23, 2015.

• South Carolina has three homers this season in the first inning. Carlos Cortes has all three. He belted his 10th home run of the season with RBIs 34 and. 35.

• All nine Gamecock starters reached base at least once with six recording at least one hit. Justin Row led Carolina at the plate going 2-for-4 with three runs scored and one RBI.

• Right-hander Tyler Johnson had season-highs in strikeouts (7) and innings pitched (4.1).

• South Carolina’s three homers ties the number of home runs it had in its 14 previous games at the SEC Tournament.

• The Gamecocks had three home runs, tying their single-season high.

• The last time Game 1 of the SEC Tournament went into extra innings was 2008.

• This game marked the sixth longest in SEC Tournament history at 4 hours, 1 minute.

**VANDERBILT POST-GAME NOTES**

• Vanderbilt falls to 33-22-1 on the season and 45-33 in the SEC Tournament.

• The Commodores are now 34-22 under coach Tim Corbin in the SEC Tournament.

• Vanderbilt drops to 2-3 in extra-inning games this season and 4-2 overall in the SEC Tournament.

• Sophomore Connor Kaiser hit his first-career home run.

• Sophomore Ethan Paul singled in the fourth inning, extending his team-best, on-base streak to eight games.

• Junior relief pitcher Reed Hayes tied his career-high in innings pitched (1.2) and strikeouts (3).

• Matt Rupenthal’s two runs allowed in the first inning were the most given up by a Vanderbilt pitcher in the opening inning at a neutral site this season.

**SOUTH CAROLINA COACH CHAD HOLBROOK**

*Opening Statement …*

“Well I couldn’t be prouder of my team. They have had a lot thrown on top of them at a lot of different points this season. They knew coming in here that our backs were against the wall. They played their tails off. They handled adversity within the game, after getting up 3-0 thinking we had some breathing room. But Vanderbilt, like the team they are, always fights back. Our kids didn’t lose their cool and their edge. Reed Scott got us off to a decent start and got us some big outs that, maybe eight or nine before the home run. Tyler Johnson was special. He was Tyler Johnson today. We had some big swings at the bats from our guys, Alex Destino, Carlos Cortes and Justin Row. It was a complete win. We played great defense. There were no errors on the board. We pitched our tails off, and we battled at the plate. I couldn’t be prouder of my team.”

*On Riley Hogan’s at bat…*

“For a freshman to come up and have first and third with one out earlier to win the game maybe, in the eighth inning and he hits into a double play, he kept his wits about him. He showed some maturity and settled in there. He had a very confident at bat. He took two really good swings at it and fouled them back against a really good pitcher. He made the pitcher throw the ball in the strike zone after being in a 1-2 count. It was an at bat where you don’t see a lot of freshmen execute. It was really neat to see him do that. It obviously gave us some momentum and I think spurred Alex on to get a big knock.”

**ALEX DESTINO, OF**

*On the mood of the team after the win …*

“I wouldn’t say it was a huge emotional win, but it took the pressure off of us and the light. Obviously, we have a lot of work to do, and we have our hands full. We can just got out there, play and enjoy each other now. Getting the double elimination was huge. Honestly, like Carlos Cortes said, we are very excited in the dugout. After I hit the double, I was more excited to look at my teammates in the dugout and watch them celebrate and see the smiles on player’s faces that haven’t smiled in a while.”

**TYLER JOHNSON, P**

*On when the last time he felt that good pitching …*

“It was probably the regional last year. I wasn’t trying to throw my hardest. I was just trying to stay within myself. Clearly, I need to do that more often.”

**CARLOS CORTES, INF/OF**

*On what was the mentality around the first hit and rest of the game…*

“I just got a pitch and drive. It was actually a hit and run, but I hit it out. It just fed energy and every thing rolled after that.”

**VANDERBILT COACH TIM CORBIN**

*Opening Statement …*

“These games are very difficult to play. In a one-game scenario in this first day, it’s not easy to do. I just want to congratulate South Carolina. Tyler Johnson was obviously the difference when the game got going. He really didn’t give us much of a chance. We swung through some balls against him. He was just an aggressor and you have to give the kid credit. I thought we did a nice job of playing some good emergency defense in several different ways. One was at second base and the big double play that Toff (Will Toffey) turned. I thought Zach King did a very nice job of stabilizing the game. There’s a lot of good in it. When you’re playing close to the edge and you get into extra-inning affairs, you are going to have one team feeling like this and one team feeling like that. Congratulations to Chad (Holbrook) and his kids.”

*On breaking through in the SEC ...*

“For us it’s about the guy we have out on the mound. If we have (Patrick) Raby and (Kyle) Wright on the mound, and I think a lot of teams can say this, we have to be playing well behind them. Unfortunately, this was a one-game deal for us, but I do think we are built for shorter series because of what we have out on the mound. We are not as deep as we have been in the past for a variety of reasons that don’t matter. That’s what it is. We have to go with a variety guys and after that it doesn’t always become consistent with what we have out on the mound. In terms of what we are doing if we are fortunate enough to play next week, I still like where we are.”

**WILL TOFFEY, 3B**

*On motivation from loss ...*

“I wouldn’t really consider losing in the first game a motivation by any measure, but we did swing the bat well. I thought we were in a place to do some damage in this tournament. It’s unfortunate that we weren’t able to get the job done.”

**CONNOR KAISER, SS**

*On team’s inconsistencies ...*

“I love this group and I think what we’ve been doing in training is good. I think we are heading in the right direction. Hopefully, we can continue that. I’m not sure because this isn’t easy.”