

2021 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma State Cowgirls

Kenny Gajewski

Chyenne Factor

Carrie Eberle

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma State 3, Georgia 2

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 2 press conference featuring Oklahoma State. We are joined by student-athletes Chyenne Factor and Carrie Eberle.

We'll start with questions.

Q. Chyenne, can you talk through the home run. You've had some batting struggles here lately. What did you see? Did you know it was gone? Kenny was talking a couple weeks ago about how rejuvenating last year was for you to get the break. I think he said at one point you said, COVID break saved me. Talk about what transpired there.

CHYENNE FACTOR: Yeah, the home run, I mean, it's been no secret. I haven't been having very good at-bats through supers. My first at-bat wasn't very good.

That pitch, it was kind of up if I remember correctly. I just decided to swing and not be defensive, and good things happened.

Yeah, COVID, that was probably the best thing that could ever happen to me honestly. I've never had a break like that, as no one has probably. Yeah, it was good. I needed that. This year has been really, really fun.

Q. Carrie, at the seventh inning, it was getting rough out there with two runners on, becoming 3-2. In the moment when that was going on, what was going through your mind to help get you to focus to get to finish?

CARRIE EBERLE: It really was just you need one good pitch. The second out is the most important. If you can get

there, the defense behind you will take it home.

I really just tried to focus and hit my spot and make the best pitch I could.

Q. Carrie, I'm curious, making your first-ever trip to the College World Series, the atmosphere was so grand. What was your experience like just getting to take it all in?

CARRIE EBERLE: I mean, it was amazing. This is what I've always dreamed about doing. To be able to be here with these people around me is awesome. Our fans were great today. We're going to need them again tomorrow. It's really just an experience that you can't really describe.

It was awesome being able to be out there today.

Q. Carrie, talk about the sequence in the final inning. Errors are always tough to deal with. Were you ever fazed? Did you always feel in command?

CARRIE EBERLE: I mean, once that nine hole hitter got a base hit, that was on me. It was a bad pitch. I just had to come back and try and hit my spots. We just kept going out, out, out on that girl. Then decided on, I don't even know what count it was, I think it was full, to go inside, hit the spot well enough to jam her. Then the next pitch went back to the bread and butter, which is just throwing groundballs. Sydney did a great job, so did Alysen, getting that play done.

Q. Carrie, did you always know you were going to start today? How did your day go entering the game?

CARRIE EBERLE: Yeah, I mean, that was the plan from the whatever, they told me like three days ago. I definitely knew I was going to start, I was going to go as long as I could, just do the best I could for this team.

Q. Chyenne, you were here a couple years ago. This year, this experience, especially after last year gets washed out, did it feel different at all for you? The upper deck gets added. What was the emotion like for you to be back here?

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CHYENNE FACTOR: It was awesome. I think it was, like, I was more calm this year. Like the first year, like, it was kind of crazy. We just got there, there was so much going on. This year not that it's like, Oh, I've been there. But, I mean, I've been there, and it was just, like, almost another game just with a lot more fans.

Q. Carrie, you came in with Alysen. Obviously she's playing her old team today. Her hit that got the extra insurance run, what could you see from her today emotionally? Was she pretty stable?

CARRIE EBERLE: Yeah, I mean, I've been in her shoes before when we played Virginia Tech last year. It's always an internal, like, emotions that you don't usually feel when you're playing people you know, people you were on a team with for years. Obviously she was practically feeling that some today.

I think she went 2-for-3 at the plate, got the biggest run of the game, the insurance run. I mean, she'll clean up the defense. She always adjusts. It won't be an issue. She did a great job of making some nice stretches like she always does.

She was still in prime Alysen form today, just with little hiccups here and there. It's all right. We fought through it for her.

Q. Carrie, after that Texas game where you pitched a complete game, Coach G was telling us you'll pitch and you want to pitch complete games, see out what you started. How important is it for you to finish what you started?

CARRIE EBERLE: I think just being able to throw a complete game is always satisfying just to know that you were able to do it from start to finish. If I ever felt that I couldn't get the job done, I would pass it on to the next one because we got a great staff.

It's all about our defense. It's really been a team effort. Pitchers that are able to throw complete games know how important your teammates are behind you. That's been like that all year long for me.

Q. What did you think of Hayley's throw there?

CHYENNE FACTOR: I mean, I thought it was really good. She threw it on the run. We work on that. I know she was telling Karli to get out of the way because Karli was still trying to pick it up. She was telling her to move so she could get it. I think she made a good throw on the run. It was good.

CARRIE EBERLE: I mean, that was a huge play. The momentum really could have shifted there. But she shut it down. That's what you need, what you're asking for from her. She even had a great throw later in the game, that a little bit earlier she probably would have gunned another one out.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. We'll see you tomorrow.

CHYENNE FACTOR: Thank you.

CARRIE EBERLE: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Now joined by Coach Gajewski. We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. Could you talk about Chyen's homer. She admitted a second ago she hasn't had the best at-bats of late. What did you see in her in that moment?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, the at-bat was obviously huge. The pitch before that, I just didn't like her swings. I think she said she didn't feel good her first at-bat. I decided to put on a run-and-hit, which is kind of like a hit-and-run except I'm trying to get the hitter to be a little bit more aggressive. She swung at a ball down. I thought to myself, that swing is the one I want, like that one right there. The next pitch is the one she hit out.

I went over to Jeff when that was over with, I said, You got to help me at times when she's not going good, we need to get her in some action.

The action I think is what put her in a more offensive mindset, just what she needed. This kid is really good. Like anybody, when you're not going as good, it's tough. She knows that. She wears things on her sleeve. She wants to come through. It's been a grind the last couple weekends.

But this is all it takes, one good at-bat and you get going again. Then she gets a sacrifice bunt later. It's huge. I thought she had a really nice day.

I heard you ask her about COVID and all that. I still feel like COVID was really good for her. Wasn't good for everyone. For Chyen, it really helped her just to look through life and softball, everything, with a different lens. Sometimes it's good to step back and look through a different lens, understand what you have, how to appreciate what you have, just put things into better perspective.

Q. Carrie really performed a gritty performance. How impressed were you by her grit?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: I mean, it's what we see every day out of Carrie. She's given up three or four runs only twice this whole year. I'm not surprised. We had a couple unfortunate plays behind her. We had some really good plays behind her, as well.

Carrie is just Carrie. She's just a grinder. She just never gives in. I'm just so thankful that she's on our side. It's really cool to see her perform. Her teammates care about her. They want to play well behind her. I think Alysen is as disappointed right now as anyone, feeling like she cost her some extra pitches and outs.

It's softball, it's just part of it. We're playing on a dirt field. It's hard as a rock out there. It's windy, warm, the dirt is dry. It is what it is.

I'm just really happy that Carrie just continues to grind and doesn't point a finger. She picks up her teammates like they get her as well.

Q. You mentioned Alysen had an interesting day with the glove. Probably uncharacteristic for her. How important do you think it was that insurance run in the sixth?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Well, I mean, I'm sure she feels really good about that right now. But you never know. Like if we don't score that run, I mean, their hitters might not have done what they did. It's hard to look back.

I just think Alysen is glad we got this win. I think for her there was some added pressure here today. She didn't let it bother her. You think about these kids who are named All-Americans yesterday, there's some more pressure on these guys. I just think Alysen handled it very, very well. She could have melted down there. She didn't. Went out to the circle, tried to calm everyone down.

I looked at her and said, Hey, make the next play. That's it. Just make the next play. Don't look back, don't dwell on what's happened. Make the next play.

She looked at me, said, I'm good.

That's all I had to hear.

Q. You told us after the Texas series how important it is that Carrie can go seven innings. What went into the decision to let her see it out?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: When John and I went to the mound

in the seventh, I talked to the infield. I heard Carrie tell John that she was getting tired. I was like, Oh, crap. Because she's pretty honest. She'll tell John exactly how she feels.

As we walked back in, John told Kelly, Carrie has this kid here, you have the next hitter.

So I didn't know that Kelly was up. I knew that she was up early, but I wasn't sure if she was up late. I looked at Kelly as John told him that, Kelly was, Okay. I was like, Great.

I felt good about that.

Then when Carrie got the leadoff kid to pop up, she looked right at John and gave him a thumbs up. John and I said, Let's go, let's roll with her. This is her game. She put us in this spot. She's put us in the position to win this game, let's let her win this game.

Q. A couple plays at the plate today. How big was the throw-out in the fifth inning? Looked like some hesitation from the Georgia runner. The significance of that play in a one-run game?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, I feel like I saw some hesitation, as well. I think that's why Hayley was taking some extra steps. I don't know if she thought she was going or not. I kind of got blocked out. I wasn't sure if Lu was trying to hold her or if she hesitated more.

Hayley may have the best arm on this team in the outfield. Like you heard Chyenne say, we practice throwing on the run every day because it's going to come into play at some point. She threw an absolute strike. Reagan was in a perfect play, no obstruction on that play. It was just a play that was huge.

You look back, that's what in these type of games, in this arena, that may be the play of the game. She also had another play that she threw the girl out, if Reagan hadn't obstructed. I think it shows you she can really play out there and can really throw as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Congratulations. We'll see you tomorrow night.

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Thank you.

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