

2021 Women's College World Series

Friday, June 4, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma State Cowgirls Kenny Gajewski

Postgame Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: I know in your heart of hearts it certainly felt like you'd score at least one run there and possibly push across another. As that inning unfolded, take us through that from your standpoint.

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Well, we just, we had an opportunity and we let it go away. We just didn't quite execute the way we have been accustomed to, and you got to credit them. They're playing really well. They made plays on us all day long, held to us three hits. I thought we hit the ball pretty well. Their third baseman made some nice plays, their shortstop made a really nice play in the 5, 6 hole earlier in that game when we had first and second, I believe with nobody out or maybe one out. They just, they just did what they needed to and credit them. They're playing very, very well. I thought we had a really good plan against Odicci and it showed and we just couldn't punch through. Just give credit to her and their staff. They just, they have got those kids dialed in.

Q. Kelly Maxwell came in and gave you a really outstanding performance and whether you go back to Carrie or you go with Kelly, you got to feel good about your pitching moving forward?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, our pitching has been strong for us all year long. Give up two runs, only one earned run, you should, most of the time you're going to come up on right side of this. We didn't do that here today. I'm very happy for Kelly. Being a freshman and coming in here and competing the way that she did was really, really good and that will be something for her for the rest of this tournament to go back to and know that she can make it happen. And we'll talk to the staff here tonight and figure out what we want to do and how we go forward with that next game.

Q. You move to the other side of the bracket. I'm curious from a game-planning standpoint how much you've actually scouted them as opposed to the other

teams in your side of the bracket for this tournament.

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah. We'll be busy here tonight, and at least we have all day tomorrow to go to work. We're not a crazy, like, scouting team anyways, but we'll put our work in. We'll put our hours in. We'll get familiar with both those teams pretty quick. We've watched them both play a bunch and have a lot of respect for both of them. So we'll have our kids ready and we'll figure out as a staff, like I said, who we're going to pitch. And the bottom line, when you get to this, it's just, hey, we're going to run our best against their best and the best team will win and that's the way it works. So we'll just go out there and fight.

Q. There's one thing about your team is that they have always had so much energy and pop about them. These kind of losses can always sting after a hard-fought battle. So as a coach how do you keep them up and moving to the next day, next game and not think about the past?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, I don't think I'm going to have to talk to them much. We're going to correct our mistakes here tonight, this evening we'll talk about that, just real quick and then let them get to sleep and get some rest. But like if I've got to get them up, I'm not doing a very good job as a head coach. These kids, their season's on the line, you know what I mean? They don't want to go home. We're ready to take the next steps. We were hoping to make that happen here tonight. Last year or the last time we were here, the last time we had a series, we won the first game and lost the second game and we're learning how to get over that next hurdle. And we had it right in our hand here tonight, but now we got a chance to play another game and get into Sunday, which we haven't done yet.

So we got everything in front of us, who know, I'm just telling you, like this team, we can beat anybody in the country, we have got good pitching, we have got good hitting, we play good defense, like we can do this. But we got to win that first game. We got to win tomorrow night. That's the most important game. I have no doubt our kids will bounce back and play very well.

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Q. As you go through the rest of this tournament, it's not really -- and you touched on it -- it's not really about who you play moving forward, it's about the culture you establish in the fall and the relationships your team have with each other and just playing Cowgirl softball. Do you feel like that's a pretty accurate assessment?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: I think it's perfect. I think you nailed it. Like we're playing to a standard and the standard is the standard that's been set by all of the athletic teams at OSU. All of them. I mean there's no secret, we have the fourth most national championships in the country. And that's the standard. That's what we're going to play to, that's what we're going to fight to, that's what we're going to hang our hat on. So we have got a lot to play for, these kids love each other, the staff loves each other, this one hurts, they all hurt. When you lose, like losing suck, it's no fun, no matter where you're at, no matter what you're up to. But I said we'll get over this, we'll go to bed at night, I promise the sun will be up here tomorrow for sure and these kids will bounce back and they will be ready.

Q. This probably should have been asked earlier, I'm sorry. It looked like your kids at the plate had discipline and they laid off the rise ball, but is she just that good at changing speeds, because the difference was your girls really weren't able to make solid contact. Do you credit her for that?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, I don't know if I totally agree with your assessment. I think we hit a lot of balls hard. They made some great plays. You forget about the ball that Febrey hit in the first, like it was an absolute rocket, maybe the hardest ball hit in the whole game. We hit three or four balls in the 5, 6 hole. Credit her. I mean, she's just really good. She just gets the ball where she wants to. And the change of speed I don't believe affected us, because she doesn't throw too many of those. I bet it's 80 percent rise ball. So we just, we didn't strike out and maybe we didn't square up enough balls. You're probably right on that, we didn't square up enough balls, but we put the ball in play, we did what we wanted to do. We really, we didn't really execute in that seventh inning there, we kind of had a base-running blunder there. But this is what it's all about, we got to get these young kids ready and I got to help them and we'll get it right. But she's really good, man, I mean she's a special, special kid. They are scrappy, their staff's done an incredible job with these kids and I can't, there's nothing to take away from them except they just beat us and they were better tonight.

Q. You had a pretty good look at the tag that Odicci was able to lay, obviously unfortunate for you that that play happened but what did you think of that feat of

athleticism that she showed?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Well, she's a crazy athlete. For her - I watched the replay as we were waiting for this press conference -- and I watched it over and over again. Just credit her for doing what athletes do. Doing what big-time players do. They just make plays. We screwed it up. That's the bottom line. She just made us pay. We hesitated at third, there was no need to hesitate, it was a safety squeeze and it's lessons learned. We got a young kid out there in Scotty and I'll put her right back out there again, it's part of what this is all about. If she doesn't hesitate, she doesn't even have to slide, she's safe easy. But credit Odicci, she just made an incredible athletic play that you just don't see pitchers make and I wish we could have it back, but we can't, so it's the way it goes.

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