

2021 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 7, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Patty Gasso

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 7, James Madison 1

Q. Patty, just wanted to ask you about this team winning four straight games coming out of the losers' bracket. I believe that's the first team that's ever done this that you've coached. How were they able to do that this week?

PATTY GASSO: They don't want it to be over. I think every team feels that. It's just really important to try to play your best, and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

We've been in some tough situations before and they've handled it so well, so I think going through some adversity through the season and playing in some tough environments and tough situations has really groomed this team for this type of tournament.

Q. I had a question about Odicci Alexander of JMU. Obviously she got the standing ovation when she came out of the game. Your thoughts on her?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, wow. Just wow. We didn't know a lot about JMU. We haven't ever played them, not that I can remember in my years here at OU. What a competitor. She made us better. She made us work. She is outstanding.

Their coaching staff, outstanding, cool and calm, hardworking players. A real joy to watch, a real joy to play against. I certainly have tremendous respect for them and what they've done while they've been here.

Like I said, they made us better, and more than anything, I think they've brought a lot of fans into the fold of college softball. They were fun to root for, they were fun to watch. Odicci is an incredible pitcher, but just an incredible athlete.

Some of the players that she made I think forever will be in our minds just watching that squeeze play that she dove

and made that play on against Oklahoma State. She is just a great competitor. It was honestly an honor to play against her.

But I think singlehandedly James Madison made our sport better because they brought a lot of people in that wanted to watch them. I think that's the ultimate compliment I could give a coach and a program, and they were in.

Q. What do you think about JMU? You were just talking about how great it is for the sport. How great is it that East Coast softball can compete against everybody in this country?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, tremendous for the sport. Like I said, I am sure that they brought in thousands of fans, viewership-wise, and got them on their train, and that is tremendous. We love that for the sport. We love it for that part of the country, as well.

But the fans here, I mean, I'm watching the entire stadium applaud and honor that team and their pitcher when she walked off the field. Mad respect, but really just a fun team to watch. I'm sure that this is going to be a momentum builder for their program without question.

But I really do like their coaching staff. I think not a lot of talk about them, and I love the way they're calm, they call a great game, team plays hard for the coaches, as well.

It's been great for our sport, and we need more of that in the future.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about the fourth inning, breaking through after the slow start offensively. How huge Nicole's at-bat was to lead off with a triple and for Virginia Johnson to come through with a big RBI to put you in front?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, it was really important for some of our players that haven't -- maybe we haven't talked too much about since we've been in the tournament, to see Nicole Mendes lead us off, I thought Jana Johns had some really quality at-bats today.



It was nice to see Jayda Coleman come through. She's really been actually trying too hard, and we put some action plays on for her, like some angle down and runs and some things that will force her to swing a little bit differently, and she did. It really worked out for her.

Of course Lou is the hottest player in the tournament right now I would imagine.

I really love what those guys have been doing, and you didn't have to depend so much on the top three, although Kinzie swung it well today, Jocey kind of put the icing on the cake with her home run late in the game, but it was just nice to see different faces and different ways of getting it done besides the big home run.

Q. I just wanted to ask what did you think of Giselle's performance after giving up that home run off the first pitch and then to turn around and throw 10 strikeouts like she did. What did you think of her performance today?

PATTY GASSO: Exceptional. On the big stage, exceptional. They are very aggressive first-pitch-type hitting team, and their 1, 2 hitters are very good and they're just fishing for what they want. It's almost like wherever you throw it I'm going to hit it and I'm going to hit it hard.

It was nice that maybe it did happen in the first so it gave us more time to kind of get ourselves in order. I think Odicci did a really nice job early kind of keeping us off the bags and getting us a little bit frustrated, but Giselle, the words I kept hearing was, "We got your back, Giselle, keep us in the game, we've got your back," just constant.

Jocelyn Alo, I heard her say that quite a bit. Giselle, this is the best she's been throwing all season the last week and a half, two weeks. She's been throwing outstanding. Very proud of her and excited about what she can do in this next couple of days.

Q. Coach, you're not used to being kind of on the wrong end of the bracket, so to speak, in these things. I'm wondering, is there anything that was said or done differently after that first loss last week?

PATTY GASSO: It seems so long ago. I'm going to have to take myself back.

It was just more the gladiator mentality and people look at us like, Okay, really? Yeah, really. They do play that way. They play hard. They don't quit. It was just really that attitude. My coaching staff has done a tremendous job in preparation and understanding of what we're facing from the pitching side, so our offensive plan is in order, our

pitching plan is in order, defense challenged them today.

Our defense has not been outstanding, but they did play well today. So it's just one game at a time, one inning at a time, one pitch at a time. If any team can do this, it's our team, so let's make history.

That was really kind of the attitude, and not being afraid. You can't be afraid to lose. You've got to play to win. You can't think about, Oh, my gosh, what could happen. You've got to stay in the moment. That's really hard to do at this tournament because you start thinking about, oh, well, the time is ticking on us, we're already in the fourth, oh, my gosh. You can't do that. You've got to really stay locked in and keep your minds right where they're at, and the team did a really good job of that.

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