

# 2021 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 7, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

James Madison Dukes

Loren LaPorte

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 7, James Madison 1

**Q. I wanted to ask you about that moment in the sixth when you go to get Odicci out of the game and the reaction that she got not only from your fans, but everybody else in the stadium. What was that like and what does that say about her and the way that your team has been received here this week?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Yeah, I'm not going to lie, I was trying to keep it together. We were talking as a staff, Do we leave her in, is she out of the gas. It's one of those things that's a hard decision to make in that kind of situation.

But after talking and kind of getting a feel from her, I think she gave us everything that she had, and I think her teammates did, too.

It was one of those things when she came out, it was a perfect moment for everybody just to give her a standing ovation and just cheer for her. I mean, it couldn't have been a better moment, even though a lot of runs were scored. Just so happy what she was able to do for this team.

**Q. Coach, this has been such a great run for your program. I'm curious, are you already thinking about the future? Are you already thinking, What can we do with this, improve recruiting or get new facilities? Whatever you're thinking, I'm just curious.**

LOREN LAPORTE: Well, I think it's one of those things that a lot of people don't understand when it comes to your culture and the family and the building blocks. There's a lot that goes into it.

We had a lot of seniors that helped us as a staff, had our back all the way, and we have to -- we're going to be bringing in a lot of freshmen, and they know what to expect. We've talked to them a lot about what we want. Oklahoma City has always been a dream, but now we've

been here, and now it's back to work.

I think the underclassmen realize what it takes to get here by being under these seniors' wings, but it's one of those things where it's right back to it. When we start recruiting, we're looking for those players not that are just talented but are great people, and I think that's a big difference. A lot of our fans and those who kind of just joined in on our team, they have no idea. Our players are so good at softball, but they are even better people. This group was a family.

It's so hard. I think Candrea said it the other night, it's so hard for me personally because you spend every single day with these players and then the team is different every year.

I just think it's one of those things where we enjoy the time that we have left in the next couple days and week, and then it's right back to it.

**Q. It's been a while since you've been home, so kind of a two-parter. What's next for you when you get back home? And how do you think this is going to impact your recruiting as far as maybe transfers or ladies who might not have been looking at you before but now might be giving JMU consideration?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Well, I can tell you when I get home I'm hugging my babies for a long time. I have a five-year old and an eight month old husband is back at home taking care of them for I think we've been on the road 12 days.

So getting back, and we've got camp is coming up in a couple weeks, so super excited to see all the young ones energetic and ready for camp, and then we go recruiting very shortly after that.

I think we've been making a name for ourselves, and I think people have just kind of fallen in love with what this team was been able to do.

**Q. I don't know if you heard Patty Gasso, but she said she thinks James Madison singlehandedly made the sport better with what you were able to do. When you hear that coming from the No. 1 coach in the country,**

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**what does that mean to you, and what effect do you hope that JMU had during this postseason run?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Well, it means so much. To see the growth of our sport and to see a mid-major and a smaller school be able to do what we have done, I mean, good Lord, it's just so exciting. I think it just allows a lot of people to believe that it can get done.

And I can tell you it's not easy. There's a lot of hard work that goes into it, and it's a mindset. I'm just so proud of our team for not being intimidated at all.

I think that's the biggest part of it. Sometimes when we first got to JMU, I think it's one of those things when you play the so-called Power Five. It's like an intimidation thing, but anybody can do it. Just like the girls said in a couple interviews a couple nights ago, we put on our pants the same way they do and we work just as hard, and I feel like when our team steps on the field they know what they have outworked their opponent, and that's very, very important so that intimidation is not in it at all.

**Q. What's it like trying to prepare for a team with so many hitters up and down the lineup?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Yeah, I mean, it's the best offense I think we have ever seen. When you have to face them three times, you have to do things different, and I felt like CC was doing that. She was mixing in a drop ball that was dropping off the table, getting swings and misses, and still being able to go up and east and west.

It's just one of those things when the strength -- not just physically but mentally they're just so prepared and they can hit a lot of different pitches very hard.

Just trying to keep them guessing as much as we can, but she did an absolutely wonderful job against that kind of offense.

**Q. How will you remember this special season, and how do you build on it so maybe you can be one of those teams that come back to Oklahoma City?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Yeah, soaking it all in at this moment. And you're right, I hope those that we're going after and recruiting and who we're competing against, hopefully it'll help us. They want more. They want more than just winning championships.

It's more to that, just having that team feel, and that's what we were, just a family and just -- they were such good teammates to one another. The chemistry was amazing. Because it's hard. Getting up every morning in the fall and

doing what they do, you have to love the game and you have to love each other to be able to get through it and to be happy with it, and I really feel like this year they loved coming to get better.

**Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on G Juarez and her performance through this series. On top of that, Patty Gasso said she has mad respect for you and your team. What's the feeling you have towards this Oklahoma team?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Yeah, they just have so much depth, and I think that's a big part. She can put so many different people in the lineup, and they can get it done and they're confident. Her pitching staff, the same way.

And then she has defenders that just make ridiculous plays. I think it's one of those things with G, we hadn't seen her at all in the three games, and she mixes speeds really well, and it's hard to time her up.

She has so many different pitches, as well. She did a great job, and nothing but luck to them and that staff.

**Q. You guys obviously won a regional at Tennessee, won a super regional at Missouri, and advanced all the way to the semifinals here at the Women's College World Series. How proud of your team are you?**

LOREN LAPORTE: Yeah, if you kind of take a look and just sit down and think about what we just did, I mean, it's crazy. I think I did that a little bit last night, like I was thinking, good Lord, we just beat the 9 team, the 8 team, the 25th team in Liberty, the 1 team, the 5 team, in three weeks.

It's crazy to think about, but I do feel like we didn't get caught up in it. We stayed within ourselves. We stayed very grounded. We focused on the next game instead of just focusing on what we just did, and I think it just kept us moving forward. It was one of those things where we talked about why not. Why not us being able to do this. And we just kept our eyes on the prize the entire time. We just kept paving this path, and it was awesome.

**Q. You never get tired of talking about your team and the journey that they've been on in this moment, and you don't like to be called a Cinderella team, but the story that we took from that was of that, but in the end, what do you hope your players take out from all of this when they move on with their lives? What do you hope for them they keep inside through all this?**

LOREN LAPORTE: The relationships. I told them back there in the locker room, Don't you lose touch with one

another because what we had was so special. Like I said, the love that we had for each other was so special. It's very difficult when everybody leaves and does their own thing and goes to different schools and lives their own lives. It's easy to disconnect.

But just do everything you can to keep the relationships strong, to keep the connections with this group and with us as a staff because at the end of the day it is just a game, but these relationships will last forever.

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