

# 2022 Women's College World Series

Wednesday, June 1, 2022  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Oklahoma Sooners**  
**Coach Patty Gasso**  
**Jocelyn Alo**  
**Grace Lyons**  
**Nicole May**

Postgame Press Conference



very well. So I love where we are right now. I feel like we're trending upwards, and we have been, and everybody is focused and ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Grace, this team has been great all year. Give me a couple of things that you think make this team special.

GRACE LYONS: What's really cool is we have a complete team. From the pitching staff to our offense, one through nine, with pinch-hitters and bench players and base runners. Then, our defense. I think it's something that makes us special, and it's just super fun at practice to compete against each other in all those areas.

Looking at our pitchers, I'm thankful that I'm on the same team as them. We do live so much, and that makes us better. Then, on defense we get grilled with ground balls. Practice relays a ton for those special moments that are going to happen in the game.

I think it's just that preparation that we know that we have the confidence in our team in all those areas, and we are prepared for what is coming. We practice like we play, so I'm really excited to see us just compete in all those areas with confidence, with experience, with passion.

And our team is very unique. We have a very tight bond, great chemistry, great atmosphere, and we really focus on the why we play.

It's beyond just a softball game. When we play for something bigger than that, it makes it so much fun. It makes it joyful, and we can play with passion as you have seen.

**Q. This question is for Patty and Jocelyn. Patty, I want to ask you, you've coached some really special teams here. When did you see this one really start to come together, 54-2, and getting all the accolades? And, Jocelyn, kind of the same question. You've played for good teams here, and did you feel going into this season this was going to be this special kind of team?**

THE MODERATOR: This is the pre-tournament press conference featuring the Oklahoma Sooners. The Sooners are making their 15th Women's College World Series appearance after having defeated UCF in the Norman super regional. We are joined by head coach Patty Gasso and student-athletes Jocelyn Alo, Grace Lyons, and Nicole May. Coach, if you can start us off and tell us a little bit about the Sooners' journey back to OKC.

PATTY GASSO: Well, this is a team that had a phenomenal 2021 season in winning the National Championship, and the challenge is always, going into 2022, how do you do it again? We've been through that -- I've been through that once. It's tough.

The goal here was not look back into the rearview mirror and refer so much about what happened last year, but learn from those experiences and then look through the front window and go forward and create a new journey, a new experience.

We've got new players, and I think we've done a really good job of that in maintaining who we are and not referring always to last year. Except for it comes in handy as we go into the World Series and the experience is really going to help us tremendously.

I like what we've done. We've been challenged quite a bit. I think the biggest moments of our season have been our losses and how we've responded to them and what we've learned from them because there are times through the season we've been complacent and still able to win, and we just kept moving along.

We needed to get poked a few times, and we responded



JOCELYN ALO: Yeah. I've played with a lot of really special teams. Obviously, been here for five years, so I've had my fair share.

I think this is the best team I've been on just because of how complete we are and how tight-knit we are. Again, I've never seen a pitching staff like this, and they just love to dice us up at practice, so I feel like that's what makes us good. Just iron sharpening iron every day. Coach always pushing us to the best of our abilities.

I think I saw this team really start trending in the right direction I think after we lost to Texas, and I've just seen us come out of some really tough spots and handle it with grace and passion.

Yeah, I think we're trending in the right direction and very excited for this week.

PATTY GASSO: I think a key for us is experience. We've got five super seniors. We've got an entire infield and close to an entire outfield that was on the field winning a championship last year.

What's new for us, besides Nicole May is our veteran, and she's only a sophomore, but adding Hope, adding Jordy, the rest of our pitching staff has been to me the game-changer here.

Our offense we knew was going to hit well like they did last year. Our defense was going to be as good or better than they were. Our pitching staff has been just brick wall. They've been stellar for this team, and that really I think has set us off to another space.

**Q. Patty, I'll ask you the question we've asked you quite a bit recently. Actually two-parter. One, if you could update us on Jordy's status going into this weekend, and, two, if she is available, will she be on a pitch count, and how do you re-integrate her back into what you're doing with that pitching staff?**

PATTY GASSO: I will just kind of keep it pretty self-explanatory. You're going to see her pitch this week. How much? We're still working.

It's kind of like going into a laboratory and knowing exactly what you can and can't do, the timing of it, how many pitches. We're still kind of putting all of that together, but we have followed doctor's orders and done everything we're supposed to do, including talking with Jordy, talking with doctors, communicating with her parents to make sure this is the right thing to do and she is not in enough severe pain, that if she was, this wouldn't even be an option. But we have done everything right, and that has allowed her to

have this opportunity.

**Q. Patty, you kind of touched on this earlier, but last weekend you mentioned a couple of times you feel like this team is playing as well as it has all year. Especially during the playoffs to play kind of at your best, is that something you can manufacture with adjustments or just going through the season, or is that something that happens naturally, and how have you seen this team handle that?**

PATTY GASSO: Our program has always been trending at the right time. I don't know the secret sauce for that. If I did, I would be -- I wouldn't be coaching. I would be selling it and probably be very successful living a life in an island somewhere.

I just think that it's the journey and the build-up and the fight and the battle together for this team to be on the biggest stage is what they dream of because this is where they know they can be their best.

We can't get away with being mediocre this week. We can't. We've got to be at our best, and I think that excites them. It's very enticing for them to get pushed to see how good we can be.

In our program we've had a history of really starting to tick upward, and I think a lot of it is just the competition and the excitement, and now it really has a trophy attached to it or a different meaning that will stay in the history of your program forever.

**Q. This one is for Coach and Nicole. We've talked all year about how the run rules lose innings for your pitching staff. Now that you're here, does that flip and become an advantage for you guys now that you have fresh arms? Then, Nicole, how fresh do you feel coming into this weekend and kind of talking with Hope compared to what she's had to do in years past, carrying the load for North Texas? How good do you guys feel physically coming into this weekend?**

NICOLE MAY: I think we feel good, we feel fresh. This week was fine-tuning things and getting our bodies right. We do a lot to take care of ourselves, so coming in we're feeling good.

PATTY GASSO: You keep starting with Nicole, and then I forget the question. (Laughing.) We should do this in reverse.

That's a good question, and I was very concerned and talked about it with you all quite a bit. Like concerned about the lack of innings. But this pitching staff has been

tested. Looking back, I think it is an advantage now that we're in postseason. They got significant innings in postseason. They felt it. So I feel that we are in a very healthy space from a pitching point of view.

**Q. For Jocelyn and Grace. Can you guys talk about how much of an impact JT Gasso has been on you as far as hitters over the course of your careers?**

GRACE LYONS: I think, coming into college, hitting was still confusing to me just because I love defense, and there's so many different parts of hitting that now on the other side of it I see are so exciting, on how many parts go into hitting and just the offensive game in general.

I think it's so important to realize that it's so much more than just the actual swing. JT does such a great job of getting our minds right, focusing on the things before you even step into the box and preparing yourself that way, whether it's through film or just practicing how to come in with confidence and to know that whatever the pitcher's throwing your way, you have all the tools to go and combat that and to have success.

One thing that I love is that you don't just measure success based off of the hits that you get or home runs, and that's something that he really instills in us and that it's all about that process.

Our goal is to hit balls hard, and he keeps telling us that every day, hit balls hard and see what things are going to happen.

I've learned so much from him, and that's allowed our offense to trend upwards the way it has the past few years. And also learning from Joce on how she plays the game and attacks hitting, it's incredible. I learn from her every single day.

JOCELYN ALO: I think for me personally JT has helped me just propel my hitting to a whole 'nother level. When I came in as a freshman, I could hit the ball pretty hard, but not consistently. And once I surrendered my swing to JT and just told him, hey, I want to do this, I want to do that, he has been nothing but open to that and always helping me learn constantly.

I think one thing he does with us as a whole, like Grace said, is he is always wanting the best for us, and he is just never satisfied with what it is that we do.

I feel like that's what makes us great is because we're hungry for more to see just what more we can do as an offense and as a unit.

Yeah, I feel like even in practice, too, just facing these pitchers, JT is always in our ears about what we can do and stuff like that.

So if we're facing the best pitching staff and we can hit them, I would say we're pretty solid as an offense. It's all a testament to the hard work that JT puts in. He is at the field early. First one there and last one to leave. I would say that he loves his job a lot. Just really thankful for him.

**Q. Patty, you have said in the past that the most difficult part is just getting here. I think we look at your five games, and it doesn't seem like it's been particularly difficult, but just getting here and being able to play freely, is that the case this year? Also, for Jocelyn, are there any extra emotions with this being your last time at the Women's College World Series?**

PATTY GASSO: As easy as it might look in regional and super regional, it's not for us. It doesn't feel like, oh, we've got this.

Texas A&M is a challenge. They were a challenge. UCF was a challenge. They were a pretty complete team as well. They had good pitching, and they also had an offense that was aggressive and fast, but they also had some power in it.

We were very prepared. We don't ever take anyone lightly, ever, never, because that's when you do get beat.

We face them, and we prepared for them as if we were the underdog and they were the one that was coming in as the No. 1. So we just -- like to back up what Joce is saying and Grace, the work that goes into it with the coaches, to the players, we're all -- and they get feedback as well to us. We learn a lot from them. They learn from us, yeah, but we learn a lot from them. So it is a culmination of all of us talking softball and speaking it out loud.

It's always a challenge. Whether we win 6-1 or 2-1, we're going in feeling like we're going to get pressed, and we're ready for it. That really has prepared us to be here now.

JOCELYN ALO: I would say just with it being my last World Series, I'm just going to run with it and whatever happens happens. It's already written what's going to happen, so I'm just going to enjoy these moments while I can.

It's definitely bittersweet knowing that I won't get to play for this program, not being able to put on the uniform. Oh, my gosh. Yeah, just kind of taking these moments in and just going to leave my mark.

**Q. Patty, we heard a lot from some quarters this season about maybe adding a double base at some point. Mike White was just in here saying said he wants to add it when the Rules Committee meets later this month. I know you have said in the past you wanted to see more research and data and that kind of thing, and I'm wondering where your head is at now and where you see that debate heading in the future?**

PATTY GASSO: I missed the beginning of it.

**Q. About the double base and whether -- we've heard more about it is this season.**

PATTY GASSO: We haven't had a lot of collisions or it hasn't really affected us much. So right now I'm not really leaning one side or the other. I'm a traditionalist. I like the way the game is now, and it shows by the connection with fans and so forth.

I heard that it's going away from international game and that international wants to get rid of it. I don't know if that's a rumor or not, but that's what I heard.

I would like to see the data. I also think it's tough for umpires because they have more things to look at. Right now we do not want to give any more work for umpires because they have a lot of things that they need to look at.

I'm not leaning one way or another. I certainly don't want people to get hurt, but it really hasn't ever, that I can remember, affected our program in that way.

**Q. Grace and Jocelyn, I was wondering if you could talk about something Patty actually was sharing earlier in the week. Sort of piggybacks on what Joe asked about JT and your hitting. The strength that you guys have worked to build with Dane and how that has helped both of you. Jocelyn, I know you came in as a power hitter, but Grace, you have developed into that. I'm wondering if you can talk about that, how it's helped you, and then also what that's like to walk around with these super powerful bodies as women in women's sports and what that's like for you guys.**

JOCELYN ALO: Yeah, I think this staff has a whole is just so invested in us, and I'm just so grateful for the work that they put in and the time that they put into us because they have lives of their own that they need to -- whatever they need to do. (Laughing).

Like Dane, he has gotten us into the best shape possible, which kind of leads right into us working with JT and us just being able to show those strengths and stuff like that.

But I think just what this coaching staff has done for me personally is just, one, I'm strong; but, two, I'm super confident in my body, and I love muscles and what great things that they can do for women and how far we can hit the ball.

Yeah, it's definitely just made me a lot more confident in myself. Not as player, but as a woman.

GRACE LYONS: I really think this aspect of strength and conditioning and refuelling is just another component of our sport. You can't just play softball and not be recovered and not be strong and not be healthy. They go hand in hand.

One of our little mottos with Dane is eat, sleep, hydrate. Those three components are a great method of recovery and how we can be the best shape that we can be in when we step on the field.

We've all learned to enjoy lifting, and whether it's getting up at 6:00 a.m. and it's tough to get out of bed, we realize how important it is to be fast, explosive, strong.

It's really cool to see the work we put in in the fall, which is lifting heavy weights, it translates into the spring when we start moving weights faster and being more explosive with that.

It has an influence on all parts of the game. Pitchers and driving towards home, hitters and that turn, and then base runners stealing bases and getting good jumps on defense.

There's so many aspects of the game that it has an effect on, and Dane does such an amazing job. We love him. We know that he has our back, just like all the staff. And it's something that it's not just a small component of the game. It's a major aspect that I believe we take advantage of.

And we're just so thankful that it translates into strong bodies that we can be confident in, like Joce said, and then prepare us for when we're done with softball. We're going to have a healthy lifestyle beyond that in just being able to be women and rock that when we're getting older.

THE MODERATOR: Nicole, I don't know if you can swing a bat or not, but how has the weightlifting and conditioning affected you in the circle, your endurance, your strength?

NICOLE MAY: I used to hit, actually. (Laughing). Kind of like what Lyons was just saying, it helps a great deal. We need to explode off of the mound and towards home plate, towards the batter, and keeping arms healthy, shoulders healthy. We do arm care before every game day, most days at practice.

Just keeping our bodies healthy will allow us to stay in the game for longer, and in the long run, like throughout the season, just keeping our bodies healthy, and both our athletic trainer and Dane do a great job of doing that.

**Q. There's some teams that we're used to seeing here that are not here. A lot of upsets along the way. Some of them early. SEC, only one team here. A little different series. What does that say about the sport?**

PATTY GASSO: Parity. Parity all around. It's the fight in those championships, the teams. I look at some like Arizona. They finished last in their conference, but they're Arizona. They'll always be Arizona, and that hope and that belief in your program and your history and playing still for Mike Candrea.

Oregon State, they've got a phenomenal pitcher that nobody even knows about, but you'll know her now. Northwestern, phenomenal team. Scrappy, hyped, great pitcher. Very great pitcher.

These are teams that nobody knows about, but we know who they are. So am I shocked? Not really, no. Sometimes when you are, "Oh, I just got in the tournament," or, "Oh, we're last, but we're in the tournament," you can run. You can run with that team if they have the belief.

Caitlin Lowe said it very well in one of her interviews. The only people that believed in our team was our team, and that's all it takes. It's that kind of fresh, free, "let's go for it, we got nothing to lose" mentality. That's what you are seeing around the country right now, which makes for a pretty exciting World Series because any of these teams can win this. It's not just two or three.

Any team can do this because those teams that got here are still on a crazy roll. They haven't been home for weeks, but they don't care because they're in this beautiful bubble right now that they don't want to get burst with.

It's going to be fun. It's going to be fun for everybody.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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