

# 2022 Women's College World Series

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

**Oregon State Beavers**

**Laura Berg**

**Sarah Haendiges**

**Frankie Hammoude**

Postgame Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: This is the pre-tournament press conference featuring the Beavers of Oregon State. They're making their second trip to the Women's College World Series after having defeated Stanford in the Palo Alto super regional. We're joined by head coach Laura Berg and student-athletes Frankie Hammoude and Sarah Haendiges.

Coach, if you could just start us off and tell us a little bit about the Beavers' journey to Oklahoma City.

LAURA BERG: We're excited to be here, to go out and represent Beaver Nation, we're super pumped and proud of. It's been a long season, but these guys have been battle-tested and have been through some ups and downs all season long and stayed together and come together and they have just been so much fun to watch play these last four, five weeks.

THE MODERATOR: Frankie, you went through a long losing streak at the end of the season. You have a huge comeback win against Utah. Got, I believe, a two-run triple from the freshman to win that game. I believe. Did that game set you guys back? What was it that enabled you guys to bounce back from a long losing streak to get to this point?

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: I just think those losses were very close. We knew if we just changed one or two things in those games, that we probably would have had a different outcome.

I think our team does a really good job of staying positive and just looking forward to the next thing, so I don't know. I think the youth in us kind of helps with that, but, yeah.

LAURA BERG: I was going to say everyone talks about

the long losing streak, but we had a 17-game winning streak. That was pretty exciting to be a part of. But like Frankie said, sometimes you learn more from the losses than you do the wins, and like Frankie said, just a few things that go our way, we win those games.

**Q. Laura, I know this is kind of the cliché a little bit, but given the youth on this team, do they not really know -- they just don't know what they don't know and they're just going about this thing and don't really know what the situation is here, given all the youth on the team?**

LAURA BERG: (Laughing) A little bit. A little bit. These guys they've played on this field before. Sarah has and Des has. They've won a championship here with PGF. A lot of them have played on high, top-quality travel ball teams. So they know what top competition is and what it's all about.

At the end of the day it's just a game. It's just a game. You play catch. You see ball, hit ball. You run 60 feet and turn left. That's kind of what our philosophy has been going from regionals to super regionals to now.

**Q. Then for the players, you guys seem exceptionally loose. You have seen the videos dancing. Who is driving that?**

SARAH HAENDIGES: Whenever I'm not pitching and I'm in the dugout, I definitely feel like I'm a part of it. Jade Soto and Erin Mendoza and Kristalyn Romulo, they're always getting cheers going in the dugout. When we're on the field, they're going to be just as loud as when we're hitting.

Whenever I am pitching, it's just great to look in the dugout and see that, and just know that even if they're not on the field, they're putting so much into it in the dugout.

**Q. Frankie?**

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: Well, I think everyone did not expect us to be here, on the outside bubble at least. We know we don't have anything to lose, and all the pressure is on everyone else. So we can do nothing but have fun.

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**Q. Sarah, I want to go back to something from the regional against Ohio State, bases loaded, and the coolest under pressure I have ever seen somebody. You have never been in that situation before. Can you just tell me having never been there, what made you so cool in that moment? Is that a momentary thing? Is it something that's part of you?**

SARAH HAENDIGES: I think it's a mix. I think I knew I got myself into it, so I was, like, you know what, you are getting yourself out of it. We're not losing this game.

I knew obviously what was on the line. Being a freshman, I think there's a little bit less pressure just because I was, like, so just looking at the batters. I wasn't really thinking about the outside stuff.

Yeah, I just tried to keep calm and know that any defense had my back, and I got into myself into it.

LAURA BERG: I know I say this a lot about Sarah. The only thing -- when looking at her on the field, you don't know that she's a freshman. The only way you know she's a freshman is on paper. She does an incredible job of how she holds herself out there on the mound.

**Q. For anyone that follows the Pac-12, everyone knows Mariah Mazon is one of the best players in the country. What do you think about her having a chance on a national stage to really make a name for herself?**

LAURA BERG: I just so happy for Mariah. She has done such an incredible job for our program, all four and a half years, when you talk about the COVID year. We knew the talent that we were getting when we got her, and I will say this had until the day I day. Mariah Mazon should have been on Team Mexico for the 2020 Olympic Games. That's how highly I think of her.

She is an incredible two-way ballplayer that doesn't get enough recognition, doesn't get enough publicity.

**Q. Laura, I was here in '98 when you were the star of the World Series. How often have you got to come back on a yearly basis, and when you look at where this event is compared to where it was in '98, what strikes you as the big differences?**

LAURA BERG: Oh, my gosh. Where do I even start? They had the berm when I played. Remember the grass berm? I have been here several times since then with Team USA. My junior team came here in 2017. I played here in '04, '05 as a part of the World Cup with Team USA.

What they've done to this facility is phenomenal. I mean, outside of the Olympic Games, this is the place to play. This is the place to be.

**Q. We've heard some more this season about whether college should adopt a double base going forward, and I wanted to know, Frankie, what you make of those suggestions and, Laura, given your international experience where your head is at on bringing that to the college game.**

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: I would love that. Actually in that COVID year, I had an injury with a collision at first base, so if there was a safety bag, it probably would have ended up a little differently.

I don't see why we should make it any different than the international level and every other -- almost every other level.

LAURA BERG: Absolutely, we need to have that safety bag. Without a doubt. We need that 100%.

**Q. For Frankie and Sarah, playing at the Women's College World Series, I'm sure is a dream come true for you. Has it hit you yet, one, the season you're having and when you have kind of saw the facility, you have been here before, but to be on this stage, has it kind of hit that moment? Have you felt it yet?**

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: I don't think it's hit me yet. I almost feel like I'm just here spectating, but I'm not here playing. It has not hit me that I get to play in OKC with my team and have all these cool memories to share later down the road. It's awesome.

SARAH HAENDIGES: I second that. I don't think it's hit me. As a freshman, I've never had to experience losing in a regional and losing in a super. The fact that we're here seems like something that should happen, and obviously I know this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Hopefully more than once, but you know what I mean. Yeah, it definitely hasn't hit me yet.

**Q. For Coach Berg: Coach, we've talked about your career as player. Obviously, in the international game, in the college game. Where does this rank for you getting here as a coach with a young group that we've talked about, a young roster?**

LAURA BERG: This probably ranks at the top. It's one thing to be able to do it as player. When you have the bat in your hand, the glove on your hand, the ball in your hand. To be able to get a group of incredible young women from 18 to 22 on the same page, in the same boat, rowing in the

same direction, it's different. This is probably the top. The top on my list.

**Q. Coach, what makes your duo of Sarah and Mariah such a good duo?**

LAURA BERG: They just work really well today. Mariah has done a great job of taking Sarah under her wing and letting her know what to expect in Pac-12, you know, knowing what to expect in regionals. Whenever Sarah has a question, she goes to Mariah. Mariah is able to kind of help her and guide her through it.

They balance each other out very well. I can start Mariah in a game and bring Sarah in or I can start Sarah and bring Mariah in. They just compliment each other very well.

**Q. How do you think that helps the future of the program when Mariah is gone and Sarah will be able to take over?**

LAURA BERG: Absolutely. She'll know the new pitchers that come in, to be able to take them under her wing. Having Tarni here with the experience that she's had, too, we've got in my heart and my mind, we have a three-headed monster in the circle. I think all three of them play off of each other very well.

**Q. Laura, in regards to Mariah, she obviously has been here four years before this year. What has she done this season to elevate her game?**

LAURA BERG: I think a lot has to do with realizing this is her last year and to just leave it all out on the field. She has nothing to lose. Leave it all out on the field, show the world what she is capable of doing.

I also think the injury midseason kind of helped her a little bit to realize this game can be taken away from you in a heartbeat, and to have to sit back and watch and let somebody else do it, I think was really hard for her.

For her to be able to have the ball in the circle, she wants to be able to do whatever she can for her team to win.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for your time. Appreciate your time. Thank you. Best of luck.

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