

# 2022 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 2, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Florida Gators**

**Tim Walton**

**Natalie Lugo**

**Avery Goelz**

Postgame Press Conference



Hoping Chey was right there. She was placed perfectly thanks to Coach Thomas. Yeah, just letting my defense work.

**Q. For Avery: I think you had 12 RBIs during the regular season. You had six the last two games. What is working for you right now?**

EVERY GOELZ: I'm really confident right now. I feel really good, and it's just like this is it. This is the end of the season, so why not just give it all you've got? I just feel like my teammates are behind my back, and I have a lot of confidence in them too.

**Q. Avery, when you guys got out of that second inning, how much of an emotional boost was that for you guys? You came back and scored two runs and took the lead right after that.**

EVERY GOELZ: It was a huge -- we all took a deep breath after that inning. At the end of the day we all knew we were going to score runs. We have good confidence in our offense right now. Once we finally got the first two runs across, it was even more relaxed, and then we all just kind of went after it after that.

**Q. Just when you come in to a situation like this in this stadium, does it feel different just what the atmosphere is like here? Describe that.**

NATALIE LUGO: My focus was just me and my catcher. Again, I'm really big on just my mindset of letting my defense work and hitting my spots to get our offense back into the dugout as quickly as possible, so not really. I didn't really feel -- I have probably felt more pressure about the bases being loaded than I did with the surroundings, honestly. Yeah.

**Q. Avery, playing in this atmosphere, does it feel different, special?**

EVERY GOELZ: This is my first time ever being at the Women's College World Series. Once I got to first base, I took a look around and like, wow, I'm finally here. This is what my little kid self was watching on TV and dreaming of

Florida 7-Oregon State 1.

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 3 press conference featuring the Florida Gators. Joined by head coach Tim Walton and student-athletes Natalie Lugo and Avery Goelz. We'll start out with questions for our student-athletes, please.

**Q. Natalie, when you came into the second inning, I think you gave up one hit, and everybody else was out. Was there one pitch in particular that was working against Oregon State, or were they swinging at bad pitches, or what did you see?**

NATALIE LUGO: In particular I felt like all my pitches were working pretty well. When the off-speed is on, I feel like I can get a lot of outs pretty quickly, pretty easily, and let my defense work.

So that was the game-changer for me personally and what helped.

**Q. Natalie, what does your coach tell you when you inherent the bases loaded with no outs in second?**

NATALIE LUGO: Bases loaded no outs, get the ball on the ground, let the defense work. Things that I already know. Those are my goals when I go into situations like that. I have one of the best defenses behind me, and I know if I hit my spots, they're going to get me out of it, and that's really all I think about when I go in.

**Q. The first batter made pretty good contact. Did you think, oh, what -- at first because it looked like it may have been in the gap or something out of the box?**

NATALIE LUGO: It definitely turned around pretty quickly.

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being here. Once I finally got here, wow, this is it. It was nerve-wracking, but then once the first pitch was thrown, I was locked in and ready to go.

**Q. Tim, when did you find out that Mariah Mazon wasn't going to play today, and did that in any way change your approach to the game?**

TIM WALTON: Yeah, I didn't find out until I got a sheet of paper with the starting line-ups on it, and we prepared for both pitchers. Looking at the game, Sarah hadn't given up a run all postseason, so it wasn't like she's a slouch. She's really good. She's had a really good postseason. When I didn't see her in the starting line-up and pitching, I knew something was up.

**Q. From a coach's standpoint, when you give bring in a pitcher, the bases are loaded and nobody is out, what is acceptable to you? We can get out of it, what's minimal damage at that point from a standpoint?**

TIM WALTON: I think in that situation with no outs, you are hoping you can get out of it with a one run. Whether it's exchange a couple of outs for a run. Obviously, we've done that to Natalie quite a few times, and she's responded very, very well. Lexie just had some bad luck in the first couple of innings.

But I think getting out with one run it's a really good job. A great job, which is what she did -- a phenomenal job is what she did today.

**Q. Have you seen that from her? Is that as well as she's pitched when she set down 18 or 19 batters?**

TIM WALTON: She's pitched really, really good in her last three outings. I mean, against some really good offense. I think that what she's been able to do, like I said yesterday as our players are now accepting their roles. They're not really dwelling on things that they hope they can be. They're being who they are, and I think she's done a fabulous job.

Lexie did a good job today, but Natalie has just -- she's hot right now. Who puts a kid in in the second inning? She's just been doing it for us, and I'm really happy for her because she works really hard, and she's had a good season.

**Q. Can you speak to what Avery has been able to do the last couple of games? It seems like a microcosm of you guys finding this offense in a really good time of the season?**

TIM WALTON: I think when you look at the starting line-up

today we go freshman, senior, fourth year, fourth year, freshman, fourth year, sophomore, freshman, high school kid, pinch-hit for her with a freshman, with a sophomore and then a sophomore and then a freshman. We're pretty dang young. Avery was the 8A Player of the Year in the state of Florida coming out of high school, winning a championship. She's a good player.

I said it from a long time ago, it's just a confidence-builder. Getting more and more and more and more confidence. Natalie, the more runs we got, the better her stuff got. You saw that too. It's just confidence. Happy for them because they just keep working and working and working and go out and having fun.

**Q. The last three games you guys have scored 26 runs. Your offense seems like on a different level right now. How good do you feel about what you guys are doing offensively?**

TIM WALTON: I feel really good. Again, our defense is obviously electric. There's some really tough hops out there today, and we made some really nice plays. Offensively it's been good. Cheyenne has been good. We've been good. I'm glad you said it that way and asked me that question. I was really disappointed when the All-Americans came out yesterday. I really thought we had three All-Americans on our team, and we only earned one, and second team at that with Nintendo numbers. Skylar Wallace had one of the best seasons in Florida history, and she's a second team All-American.

I was really disappointed. I thought we had a little bit better schedule and a better play than that, and so maybe if that's going to get us fired up and keep us going and keep us motivated, then good.

We've had a good offense. You saw today. Charla crushed that ball. The kid caught and made a nice play in right field, and then she crushed it again and swung even harder the next time and got it over the fence. We hit a lot of singles, which is hard to score runs at times, but our team batting average is probably close to .320 now, and I think these guys are doing a good job have being who they are, and I think that's been fun for me.

**Q. What have you seen from Charla in the past few games? She's really turned it on for you.**

TIM WALTON: Like I said yesterday in the press conference, Charla has had a good year. If Charla wasn't an All-American the year before, you'd be like, man, what a great year, what a good kid. She's been reliable for you. 50-plus RBI. Now almost 60. She's been good and really good third baseman.

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I'm really happy with the way Charla plays. Just getting done with the school year, just getting everything out of the way, and now it's just play ball. All she's focused on is just winning the next game and what she's doing. Her at-bats having really good.

**Q. Importance of winning that first game?**

TIM WALTON: I told my team that from the beginning. If you want a chance to compete for a national championship, you have to win the first game. It's really tough not to. I don't even know when we play next. It's funny, the new formula, I'm not even sure when we go.

Pretty excited about being able to get the first W and we're going to head upstairs and get some funnel cakes with the team and be excited again and get ready to go whenever the next game is.

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