

2022 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 2, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Arizona Wildcats

Caitlin Lowe

Sharlize Palacios

Hanah Bowen

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma State 4, Arizona 2

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 4 press conference featuring the Arizona Wildcats. We are joined by head coach Caitlin Lowe and student-athletes Hanah Bowen and Sharlize Palacios. We will begin with questions for our student-athletes, please.

Q. This one is for Sharlize: When you committed to Arizona, you said you wanted to win a National Championship for the Wildcats and to hit a home run in your first game here this year, how special was that, and what went into that at-bat?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: Definitely a lot of advice from Cait going into that at-bat. It was definitely not getting my head down and instead just getting ready for the next at-bat. I definitely slowed it down, and it was a really great feeling to be able to do that for my team and get us ahead.

Q. Hanah, you kept them at bay all game until that sixth and then the gal hits one over the center field fence. What happened on that at-bat?

HANAH BOWEN: I think they just capitalized on pitches, especially in the right moments.

Q. Sharlize, just you guys as a whole entire team today you seemed to be able to put together good at-bats, got runners on base, but the strikeout numbers were kind of high today. What were you guys seeing at the plate?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: I think we're seeing one of the best pitchers in the country. That's the big part. She's a really good pitcher, and there's going to be strikeouts. The way we bounce back, a big part of our momentum shift

was when Sophia Carroll got that amazing up-the-middle hit, and everyone kind of opened their eyes like, hey, we can pass the bat. Let's do this. We're facing one of the best, and they were facing one of the best too.

I think that's what the game ended up to be.

Q. I guess this one is for Hanah Bowen: What was working for you today? There was so much that you were just getting out of jams, and you were pitching really efficiently, and then the sixth inning happens, but what was working for you today up until that point?

HANAH BOWEN: I think just moving both sides and using my off-speed to keep them off stride. Go up in the zone and start getting jams.

Q. For either one of you guys: What will be the mindset going into tomorrow? How do you erase today and just look ahead to tomorrow?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: I definitely think that us not getting our heads down is the biggest thing. We played an amazing game, and it was one pitch that changed the difference, and you take away that pitch, and it's a different game.

I think the great thing is that we're an amazing team. We're meshing when we need to mesh. Our pitchers are still doing amazing. It's not anything -- there's nothing lacking.

It's just that's the way the games are when you get to the College World Series. There's only eight teams left. It's the best of the best, and that's what's going to happen.

I think we just have to play our best game and just focus on the next pitch.

HANAH BOWEN: Like Shar said we have to keep our heads up and not get down on ourselves because I believe in this team. I believe so wholeheartedly. We just have to come out there and compete and what do what we know how to do.

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Q. Cait, was there any thoughts after Bow had that trouble before the sixth where she loaded the bases, was there any thoughts of going with Devyn at the beginning of the next inning or did you think because she got out she was going to --

CAITLIN LOWE: I thought when she got out of that, it rolled her into the next one, and I thought she had the stuff to get through them. Really, I think Shar said it perfectly, they capitalized on one pitch. We've been living on that one pitch this entire postseason, and they had it tonight, and I thought Shar had it with her home run, and we put ourselves in good situations. We didn't get the big hit when we needed to.

Q. Shar mentioned that strikeouts happen throughout softball games all the time, but how did you feel that your hitters did at the plate today against Maxwell out there?

CAITLIN LOWE: I thought we put some really good at-bats together, and I thought we gave away some. When we swing at stuff that's out of the zone with a good pitcher, we just can't let that happen. I thought when people went in there and they were hunting something and they got after it and that was Soph's second at-bat and Shar's home run and I thought Jazz did a good job of making her bringing the ball up. We can't let strike three happen so quickly, and that's where the maturity comes in.

Being able to slow those moments down, and I thought Allie Skaggs did that at the beginning, and one pitch got away from her in that last at-bat. Here's the thing, I choose Jasmine getting on and I choose Janelle and Shar and Skaggs in that same scenario over and over and over again, and they're going to get those chances again. Probably tomorrow.

I still want them in those moments.

Q. One of just a few rookie head coaches to get to this point in your first season. What has this experience been like, and to be playing on this big stage now here in Oklahoma City?

CAITLIN LOWE: It's cool, but honestly, being here with the team I feel like this is second home for us, and I love that they expect to be here every year.

When you go to Arizona, that is the expectation that hopefully we will be playing here at the end of the year. We got to experience it. A lot of us as freshmen last year got to experience a different team on the field, but, man, it does a lot for helping you grow up as a player.

It's been exciting for me. I'm able to slow these moments down and hopefully I can help them slow those moments down as well.

Q. How special was it to have Mike Candrea here, and will you be speaking with him after today's loss to kind of get in his headset? I know you have been under him for quite a while.

CAITLIN LOWE: Of course. We talk after wins and losses, and that's the greatest thing about him. Is he there when it's hard, and he is there in the good times as well. He will always -- I will always probably annoy him too much and ask him too many things, but it's just amazing to have his support.

He has been with this team throughout this entire season.

Q. Arizona has a history of playing the Sooners in this event. You got a taste of Oklahoma State. Was it a similar atmosphere, or whatever difficulty, if there's difficulty in that? Was it any different than what you faced before?

CAITLIN LOWE: Normally I would say yes, there's more difficulty, but really we've been playing big away games this entire postseason, and I think it was almost just another game for us because that's what we've been facing. The SEC on the road. Let me tell you, it gets pretty loud.

We knew it was going to be a tough game. We knew they were going to have the crowd, and I thought -- honestly, I thought our family and friends held their own amongst that crowd, so I was pretty proud of that.

Q. One more time, Coach. Transitioning from a player to a coach in these moments, are there any differences in your mentality as a coach, and what do you encourage or help your players get familiar with the moment? What do you do?

CAITLIN LOWE: I think as a coach you're helping 18 different individuals control their own moments, and they all handle it differently. They all handle it differently than I did as a player, and there's no right or wrong way. It's just their experience.

I think being in tune to what they need in a given moment and what they need after a game like this because it's hard to turn it around in 24 hours and be ready for the next game.

Oregon State, we're in the same boat. We just took that



loss, and we're playing each other. So it's who is going to show up, more so in the head space because we have the talent. Both teams have the talent, but who is going to show up ready to play?

Q. You mentioned that run that you went through of going and playing at those power SEC schools. What's been the magic formula for this team that has gotten so hot so late?

CAITLIN LOWE: We believe in each other, and everyone to do their jobs, and I think we realized that we didn't have to fight ourselves solo.

Our pitchers didn't feel like they had the weight of the world on their shoulders. They felt like they could pitch into our defense, and our defense was making crazy plays, and here's the thing, I think G was an inch away from that ball, and that would have been a double play instead of a double down the line. It's a game of inches.

I thought Bow had a couple of strikeouts that were right there, and they ended up being walks, and that changes the game. It's just that much, you know? I think that's where Shar hit the nail on the head. It's a game of inches, and today it went their way, and tomorrow it's going to go our way hopefully.

I think just being able to keep their heads screwed on and trust each other and have talk for tomorrow and positive reinforcement for what we're going to do and not dwell on this.

Q. Obviously, you mentioned the quick turnaround. Take us through the process between now and tomorrow night, and does it help that it is a familiar foe in Oregon State that you are quite familiar with?

CAITLIN LOWE: I think it helps in the sense that we're not going to -- obviously, we'll do our homework, but we know them, and they've faced those pitchers, and our pitchers have faced those hitters, and I think that helps us a little bit for the turnaround, yeah.

Q. This was a great game. Unfortunately, you just ended up on the wrong side of it. Now as you talk to your team, what's your message to sort of get them in the same head space for tomorrow, to come out the same way they came out today?

CAITLIN LOWE: We talk about how that one pitch can change the course of a game, and they have to believe that the next pitch is going to be their best pitch.

Whether they struck out three times today or not at all. I

think that hope and that working towards the next one because it's going to turn around. I think that's what we've been doing all postseason. We start striking out, and we end with base hits that matter.

So I think just keeping their head screwed on and knowing that the next one is going to be better.

Q. Obviously, you guys have played Oregon State this season and a lot in the Pac-12. Mazon has been one of their better players throughout the year. She did not play in the first game. She was unavailable. How do you go about preparing for a team when one of their best players may or may not play?

CAITLIN LOWE: We prepare for all of their pitching staff, and we have plans on whoever is going to be in the circle, and I'm sure they have the same thing for us.

We know it's going to be a tough game. They hit well. They pitch well. They come out with a lot of energy. We're really looking forward to playing our game, hunting our zone at the plate, and kind of getting back to what we do well.

Thank you.

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