

2022 Women's College World Series

Saturday, June 4, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Patty Gasso

Tiare Jennings

Jocelyn Alo

Jayda Coleman

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 7, Texas 2

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 7 press conference featuring the Oklahoma Sooners.

We'll start with student-athlete questions.

Q. Jayda, there in the fifth the adjustments that y'all made to Dolcini. Was it a coordinated attack to try to get after her the first pitch with the way she was pounding the zone on y'all early?

JAYDA COLEMAN: I think it was more of a mental thing just knowing individually how she's coming to come at us, and it worked out.

Q. Jocelyn?

JOCELYN ALO: I think it was a matter of us just continuing to play the game. We had a pretty -- we threatened there in the fourth or third, I think. We were right on it. So in the fifth we knew that it was coming.

It was just a matter of us trusting ourselves and sticking to our plan.

TIARE JENNINGS: Yeah, what they were saying. Also a matter of just getting our timing down and getting the pitch we wanted. She was obviously mixing it both sides of the plate. Getting the pitch we wanted and adjusting from there.

Q. Jayda and Jocelyn, the first two hitters in the lineup, that was such a great start. Talk about it. Jayda first? You could kind of talk how you laid that

out.

JAYDA COLEMAN: That was fun, being able to lead it off. I knew if I just get on base, I could trust Jocey to get me in. She hit a bomb, it was great.

JOCELYN ALO: It was funny we talked about it last night. I was like, you're going to get on and I'm going to hit you in.

But I think we had the edge this time, a little bit of chips on our shoulder. Last time we faced Dolcini, she shut us out. No one shuts out the Sooners twice, let alone three times.

Yeah, we had something to prove for sure.

Q. Tiare and Jocelyn, I wanted to ask you about getting a day off, get a win, a day off. How much do you appreciate that day off or would you rather just continue that momentum? Jocelyn, what is it like playing with these two young players?

TIARE JENNINGS: Yeah, day off definitely helps. It just gives us a chance to recover, take a breath, stay out of the sun, get our pitchers recovered. It's a time to prepare.

I think the day off definitely has helped us for sure. I really like the adjustment to this tournament.

JOCELYN ALO: Yeah, seeing these two just thrive in this environment is fun to watch. I've been around it now for a long time and have watched it on TV for a long time.

I don't think you'll come across another -- any kind of player like these two. I'm just excited for how young they are and excited to see where they're going to go. Definitely blessed that I got another year with them just due to COVID.

I just remember talking about it with Tiare, like, I can't wait to play with you that one year. Thankful that I got to.

Q. Jocelyn, you always seem to play well in the women's College World Series. What did you develop that? How did you develop that? Jayda, from your perspective, being around Jocelyn, you see that, what



is that like?

JOCELYN ALO: Yeah, I've been here for four years, so I got to learn from the best. They pass it on for me. I got to watch Shay Knighten thrive in these moments. Sydney Romero, Caleigh Clifton, Aviu that whole senior class. Even players like Lea Wodach and Kelsey Arnold. I definitely learned from them how to just not make the moment too big, but just to enjoy the game for what it is. With it being my last year, just trying to leave it all out on the field, just make my mark.

JAYDA COLEMAN: Same thing. I've been watching her since I was a junior in high school, watching her breaking big records and stuff.

Just trusting her. She communicates with us so much. Being able to chip at her brain, get all the information we can from her before she leaves, it's a good thing. I love playing next to her.

Q. Texas celebrated their win against you guys pretty obviously and got a lot of attention for that. Did you keep that picture of their celebration in your minds? Was it on your mind coming into today's game?

TIARE JENNINGS: Yeah, I think for sure it was on our mind. Like Jos said earlier, we had something to prove. No team beats us twice, we proved that here. Just taking that and not letting it get too big, not letting the moment get too big, playing with that chip on your shoulder.

JOCELYN ALO: Me personally, I didn't have it in my mind. Just watching it, I was like, you know, I would celebrate like that, too, because we're the No. 1 seed.

I mean, our record speaks for itself. We're pretty solid. So I would say they should celebrate the way they should.

But, yeah, we came out here and we just did our thing.

JAYDA COLEMAN: I think for me personally, just resetting. I don't really think we ever play out of revenge or hate in our heart. We really just play for one audience. That's why we play so free. That's why we play so fun.

Yeah, it was a tough day watching them celebrate like that, but the next day it was over. It's the next game. Today we came out and played free and played fun.

Q. Jocelyn, you specifically had a long weekend in Austin. What did you do to adjust from those games?

JOCELYN ALO: I kind of took a step back and thought to myself what it was that I was thinking. I definitely think I

wasn't in the right head space down in Austin. I knew that we would meet them again somehow, somewhere.

I prepared a lot for that. But as good as a pitcher Dolcini is, I'm a really good hitter, too. I'm going to trust myself. I'm going to pick myself no matter what.

I knew the adjustments I had to make, went out there and made them.

Q. Tiare, you played them three times earlier in the year. They had familiarity with you guys. Was there a comfort level for you guys knowing you played them three times already?

TIARE JENNINGS: Yeah, I think it was good playing them in our conference, that we know them. The good thing is they didn't know us today. We came in a whole different team than we were in Austin. That's something we had an advantage of. We knew that we were different, that's why we did what we did today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies.

Questions for Coach.

Q. Obviously got some big moments, Tiare's home run, Rylie started off the fifth inning with a hit. Jayda and Jocelyn have that combo where Jocelyn was able to bring Jayda in today. How big is it to have them back to back in that lineup?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, they're elite athletes. I have felt that since I recruited them. So to have that dynamic duo pretty much start the game, it's nice that it's on our side.

Jayda has so much energy. She can get on in a lot of different ways. Jocey has so much power. The combination just really sets a great tone.

Q. What went into the decision to throw Hope again today? What did you think about her performance?

PATTY GASSO: I thought she was stellar, fantastic. Looking at her numbers, I'm seeing them for the first time really: One strikeout. Our defense, she fed our defense. Our defense played great. She doesn't have to try to overthrow to get strikeouts because our defense is great.

I thought she had good command. I thought she did a great job.

What was the second half? I have a problem with recall (laughter). Did I get it? All right.

Q. You get the day off. How much is that going into your decision to maybe roll with the same pitcher?

PATTY GASSO: I think Hope is kind of on fire right now. She's really found her comfort zone. I think the matchup was better for us with Hope.

But we had a plan to bring all kinds of different looks at different times, including Jordy. Everybody was all hands on deck. But Hope is just never making me feel it's time. It was getting close later in the game, but never made me feel ready to do that.

The day off, we just had a short little dance party in the locker room because we have another day off. I don't even know what to do 'cause having been here, it's just like chaos. It's get to your hotel, okay, get your stuff, let's get ready, look at video, eat fast, eat fast. It's like that.

So for us to -- now I'm like, What are we supposed to do? Lay around the hotel? What are we going to do here?

It is great for your pitchers. One thing that my coaching staff and my training staff has done a great job with is recovery and hydration and mobility and all of those things are really paying off for this team right now.

Q. In the Women's College World Series history, there's not once been a game on ABC, but that changed today. What can you say about that for the sport of softball and that your team got to represent the entire league?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, absolute honor. Absolute honor. I think of ABC, maybe nobody even thinks the same way, but to me it is the Wide World of Sports. I've been watching it for that long.

To think that we are in a game on ABC is just a wow factor for me personally. I don't even talk to our team about it because they don't watch ABC, they watch Netflix (laughter). For me, it was a wow moment.

For our sport, for women's athletics, it's just off the charts. I am really anxious to see what kind of viewership there was because it's just going to continue to help this whole sport just continue to grow.

Q. Back to Hope. She held Texas to 2-for-13 just with runners on. Your pitching staff has done that all year long. To have Hope do this on this stage, what does that mean mentally for her and the staff?

PATTY GASSO: It's a game changer. This was a big game. This obviously was the biggest game of our season

and the biggest game in Hope's career.

I felt like she did a really nice job with Northwestern, that built her confidence. But to be honest, we talked a lot about playing in the Big 12 tournament here in Oklahoma City. There was about 7,000 fans here. That kind of preps you. I don't think there's any other teams in the country that play in front of that many fans. So that really helped our cause.

We're lucky to be living in a place where the College World Series -- I know some people think it's an unfair advantage. I can't help where we live. We live here. It's a beautiful stadium. We're going to take advantage of it. That's what I felt like today.

Q. I was speaking with some parents that raised questions about what the impending repeal of Roe versus Wade, they may not necessarily be sending their daughters to places where there's anti-abortion bills, like there is in Oklahoma. What would your message be to recruits' parents if that comes up? I ask that, too, because you recruit so heavily in California. It might be viewed differently than it would be in Oklahoma.

PATTY GASSO: I really don't feel equipped to answer that because it's never come across. I don't even know how I would go about it.

I just don't feel comfortable on this stage to be talking on those subjects, to be honest.

Q. Would you be happy to talk to me afterwards?

PATTY GASSO: I've got a team to take care of. I'm not ready for that. Sorry.

Q. I don't mean to --

PATTY GASSO: It's just not the right place right now. That is not where my mindset is. I don't want to say one thing that would make me regret anything. My mindset is not in that space right here.

Q. Can I just ask?

THE MODERATOR: It's asked. We're moving on.

Q. You've seen a lot of home runs in your time. I'm just kind of curious about your perspective on Tiare's home run. It was in the second to the last row of the venue. Have you seen a home run hit that far? Is it the farthest home run you've seen in your time?

PATTY GASSO: I've seen a lot of far home runs, but that was elevated to allow her to really get underneath it and get her power in it. So it was definitely another momentum builder for the team.

Q. From a softball standpoint, obviously it's a lot more fun when you win the way you did today, but how much fun is it to watch the matchups between Dolcini and your group of batters?

PATTY GASSO: Dolcini is really a fighter, she's focused, she's hard working. She has helped carry Texas this far. So we have to respect her. She is really, really crafty with the way she throws.

We were ready for it. Then you see a couple innings where we just didn't have a lot of success. That is a tribute to how she can mix up her speeds and so forth.

To be able to turn out 10 hits with a few against her was like a big victory for this team. We worked really hard to prepare for her.

Q. Today Jocelyn sent her batting average back above .500. She just missed on the pop-out. You've seen her at every stage of this, but what about her impresses you most?

PATTY GASSO: As you can see, she's very, very confident. That's what confidence looks like and what it sounds like because she is not afraid to say how good she is.

I'm just so proud of her because she is not allowing the outside to get in. Our focus this week is on winning a championship, and she is doing a very good job of allowing all of the players to get in her ear. She'll speak to what we're dealing with, how we need to deal with it properly.

But that is where our focus is and where her focus is, not how many home runs I can hit, look at my numbers, it's let's walk away with the notes, fight for another one, do everything we can to get another one. The team is really responding to her.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

PATTY GASSO: Thank you.

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