

2023 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 1, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Coach Patty Gasso

Jayda Coleman

Jordy Bahl

Press Conference



Oklahoma - 2, Stanford - 0

THE MODERATOR: We're going to go ahead and get going. Patty Gasso will start by giving a statement, then Oklahoma athletes Jayda Coleman and Jordy Bahl will answer questions.

PATTY GASSO: Proud of this team. We knew what we were running into in the way of NiJa, and she has become one of the hardest throwing, ball moving freshmen I've ever seen. So I feel like we got a really tough, tough matchup. Their pitching staff is really good.

They're very disciplined. Stanford just is very well coached, and I feel that. I felt that watching them, very disciplined, very quick. They do a lot of things really well.

You may have seen us look like we were really struggling, and at times we were just trying to figure this out. A lot of foul balls, a lot of foul balls, but we made her throw over 60 pitches up to like the third inning, and the goal was to just keep fighting and get her to keep throwing, maybe tire her out. It's hot out there.

I mean, there's strategies, we've had so many different strategies to go up with and try to make something happen.

Thankfully Jordy was absolutely on her game. She was just a boss today. It was really fun to watch that, especially not getting the opportunity she wanted last year and just making the most of it from day one.

Jayda and Boone, these guys just really starting to put a few things together was really, really important. But that was probably one of the most stressful, struggling first games we've had that I can remember in a long time.

Q. Jayda, you hear Patty talk about fouling a ton of pitches off. That first at-bat of the game, you and Tiare really worked 21 pitches over the two at-bats. How much do you feel that had to do with maybe setting yourself up? I know it took a while, that fifth inning, and finally seeming to wear her down a little bit?

JAYDA COLEMAN: I think those really long at-bats, even though we weren't scoring, I think our team was still very motivated. We knew we were having good at-bats, and we were seeing balls.

We like to celebrate the little things, so watching people go to a 13-pitch at-bat and watching them poke it through, it's something we like to get excited about, and it ended up coming good for us later in the game.

I'm just glad we kept fighting and just keep grinding.

Q. Jordy, it felt like the couple of times Stanford got the two runners aboard, you fought back even stronger immediately. What does that say about your continued ability to dig deep and make the best out of those potentially stressful situations?

JORDY BAHL: Those are honestly the situations you kind of like to be in as a pitcher at times because, when teams press you like that, it makes you be your best, and you can't take a pitch off, and it's a good test. So those moments are kind of fun even though they're really high stress at times.

Yeah, just can't take a pitch off.

Q. I've got a question for Jordy here. Really good outing for you. You got ten strikeouts today. Going back in the dugout and you had those conversations with Patty or Jen Rocha, what were those like during the course of the game, and what's your relationship been like with Rocha in your time here?

JORDY BAHL: She is so smart about the game. A lot of times when we go in there between innings, we're just talking about what it felt like, what we felt like from the hitters, and going off of that to the next time we're going to

see them.

Q. Jayda, we talk a lot about support staff and people behind the scenes. When you have someone like K.J., a student manager who can throw it like he can and bring it like he can, how does it make a difference when you see a pitcher like you saw today?

JAYDA COLEMAN: It really does. Our support staff, they're amazing people. To have someone like K.J. throw pitches to us, that just helps us more in the game.

Q. Jordy, Coach mentioned a year ago today you're here but you're not going to throw. What was it like today for you knowing that the opener the ball's in your hands. What were the emotions like? Having that experience, though, towards the latter end of the series last year, how did that come into play today for you?

JORDY BAHL: Going into today, I think, if I learned anything from my injury, it was you just really can't take anything for granted. So just trying to be as present as possible was huge. At the same time, just trying to treat it like another big game you're getting ready for.

Q. Jayda, you guys talk about the long at-bats, and eventually you break through in the fifth. What were you able to pick up on in the way that NiJaree attacked you guys and operated through the lineup?

JAYDA COLEMAN: I think she really just wanted -- she wanted to throw 75. I think she was throwing 75 miles an hour. She was really starting ahead. She was getting strikes.

I think we realized we needed to take those pitches up in the zone. For some reason we felt like we needed to swing at them, but we got a little bit more disciplined as the innings went on and just kind of letting those go and really focusing on the strikes that were lower in the zone.

Q. Jayda, this isn't the first time that Rylie Boone has been able to come through in the late innings of a really tight game. Can you just like speak to her ability to rise up to these type of moments?

JAYDA COLEMAN: Every time Boone gets on, I know we're going to start rolling. Every time she jumps up and she's like this, I'm like here we go. She is a party starter.

I don't think people talk about her enough. I don't think she gets enough recognition. She is one of the hardest working people that I know. She's a great teammate. She's literally always in the dugout yelling in our ears,

always got our back.

When she starts hitting, I know we're going to start rolling. She knows how to flip that lineup around.

Q. Jayda, I'm curious, you guys have faced all kinds of talent, and you've often talked about facing your own pitchers is as hard as anybody. What does this tell you about your offense today? She's given up nothing all year, and you guys finally scratched and got two runs against her and won the game.

JAYDA COLEMAN: I think it shows that we don't always have to hit home runs. We can be the team that's just scrappy. Just put the ball in play, hit low line drives. I think sometimes people want us to jack home runs when that doesn't win it all the time.

So just really getting down to the fundamentals and the foundation and just hitting low line drives and just taking the walks and just being scrappy.

Q. Patty, we talk about Jordy's pitching. Fourth and fifth innings, runners at first and second, two outs, 3-2 pitches, so the runners are moving in a scoreless game. Talk about in that situation, one pitch could -- a hit's going to score a run. How does she handle that situation, and how impressed are you with what she's able to do?

PATTY GASSO: She said it herself, she lives for those moments. It's not a lie. It's real. She loves the pressure, and that's where she thrives the most. So she's the right person at the right time.

Q. Patty, wanted to ask you, along the same lines of what I asked Jayda, the way that those first two at-bats wind up obviously didn't pay off right then, but come back at the end, how important was that to sort of set the tone, for Jayda especially, to see a lot of pitches there and get an idea of what she was throwing?

PATTY GASSO: Once we scored or --

Q. Yeah, just sort of setting up what happened later in the game with the first two at-bats of the game with 21 pitches.

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, I was really proud of those guys because we haven't really seen this before, and they were really fighting, and they knew -- I think it just bled over to everybody.

There's somebody that I need to just -- it was her first World Series, and she's been waiting her lifetime for this,



and she had two really good at-bats and one that helped us score, and that's Alynah Torres.

I think she was listening and taking messages. These guys were bringing it into the dugout and talking about how our posture should look like, what we should be looking for, there were times we were overswinging a bit.

So we were talking about letting her pitch, do the work, just work to get to the ball. We were talking about trying to get on top of the ball. We were bringing all kinds of different ideas to this group, and they just kept trying, and they kept working.

There was a small moment where they were getting frustrated, and you could see it. You know when you -- again, where are our fans? We've got to do something in order for them to cheer. So just keep working. They'll appreciate good, hard-fought at-bats.

That started from the beginning, and I feel like it went through the end until it finally started to break open a bit.

Q. This seems like it would be the perfect situation if there's any overconfidence at all coming in. You've got Stanford's pitcher going the way they did. In a way, aren't you kind of happy that they kind of faced this right off the bat in Game 1?

PATTY GASSO: Yes, but I will tell you there's absolutely no overconfidence because this field of teams is loaded, and everybody who knows softball knows that.

So when I saw our matchup, I'm like, okay, oh, no, let's go. Let's get the machine cranking up. Let's grease it up, make sure it's working, they can throw that hard.

But yes, I do think a battle early -- and I think we may have had one of the toughest matchups at the beginning of this World Series -- it is going to pay dividends because of the fight, the fight they had all day.

Q. Patty, kind of along those lines, you've talked a lot about wanting the team to face adversity. You go through Clemson your last game, this one today, kind of two different situations, but you have to battle to find a way to win. Have you learned anything about the way this team's responded or maybe just the way they've been able to respond?

PATTY GASSO: Nothing they do surprises me at all. They're always ready. They're always talking. They're wanting to win. They're wanting to be great. They love doing it together. So nothing surprises me about this team.

Q. Just seeing Avery Hodge go out there and look confident and have a big swing there at the end of the game, how big was that, and how rewarding is that knowing you've been putting her in those situations throughout the year?

PATTY GASSO: I brought her in to run for Alynah, and that kind of leads her out to defense because she's very quick and has a very strong arm, normally a shortstop.

It was what are we going to do here? Are we going to let her swing and stay on defense? We wanted more runs. We wanted to let her swing. She's been working really hard for that opportunity, so it was big.

I've also got Q in there. I've got some players who got a feel for this big moment who have not been in it. So very pleased with the entire team and their approach today

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