

2023 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 1, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma State Cowgirls
Coach Kenny Gajewski

Rachel Becker

Kiley Naomi

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State 8, Oklahoma State 0

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Oklahoma State.

Kenny.

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Obviously not the way we drew this up. We didn't play well in any facet of the game. We didn't pitch well. We didn't play good catch. We didn't get enough good at-bats.

I thought that Sandercock's stuff was electric, made it really hard on us. So we got to bounce back. I mean, we have the pitching staff in my mind to bounce back. We were just having that talk in the hallway. We have the team to bounce back. We've been in this spot before.

I told our team this is what you love as a coach, is to see what you look like when you're up against the wall. So kind of looking forward to getting back out here tomorrow night at hopefully 8:30 and getting to watch these kids play.

THE MODERATOR: We'll now go to questions to Rachel and Kiley.

Q. What was so difficult about what Sandercock's was throwing tonight? How did you guys try to adjust to that throughout the game?

KILEY NAOMI: I would say she was hitting her spots really well. Her drop ball was working pretty good, I would say. She didn't leave anything really fat for us to hit. She was hitting her spots.

Just making us work and having our game plan, being able to stick with that. Her drop ball was really well. She has her rise ball, too, to kind of throw us off, so...

RACHEL BECKER: Yeah, kind of what Kiley said. She throws to all quadrants of the plate and hits her spots very well.

I think you just never know what to expect when you're going up to the plate against her. You can't really ever sit anything because she can throw a strike anywhere.

So throughout the game, I think we just tried to, I don't know, adjust and swing at better pitches. So yeah.

Q. How tough can it be when they hit the early home run and you don't really have a chance to gain any momentum because you go right into a rain delay after?

RACHEL BECKER: I mean, the home run in the beginning to me wasn't really a big deal. I thought we were going to be able to put up some runs. I still felt confident going into the rain delay. I thought we were going to come out strong after that. We definitely could have, and we can, and we will.

So yeah.

KILEY NAOMI: Yeah, I agree.

Q. Rachel, you talk about you came here and wanting to play on this stage, get out there, getting close to taking the field, they say, We're going to wait a while and play. Play an inning or two, rain comes. How tough is that emotionally to get yourself ready to play, then you don't play, get yourself ready all over again?

RACHEL BECKER: Yeah, I mean, it is tough. It's kind of just I would say just frustrating. But, I mean, we've done it before. Like, we can't control the weather. You always kind of just have to roll with it.

But, yeah, I mean, it is frustrating at times. I still think we need to just stay strong throughout, no matter what kind of weather we're facing. So yeah.

Q. Kiley, the play at second base, could you take us

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through that. Obviously didn't look like a traditional tag out the way the second baseman had to make an athletic play to get back to you.

KILEY NAOMI: So I saw the ball go high, so I didn't know if she was going to be able to catch it or not. I made an error not knowing that there was two outs after Rachel's strike-out. I was frustrated with myself there, too, because after that rain delay, I didn't even check the scoreboard.

Yeah, I just thought it was going to go over her head. She made a really good play. She had to put a good tag on it, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Kenny.

Q. Can you walk us through your decision to put Kyra in instead of going with Kelly.

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, it was an easy one to be very honest.

As the delay got longer, Kelly, her history, we know her history very well. The more she sits, it doesn't usually work out in her favor.

We didn't like the momentum that we didn't have, and felt like, Hey, let's get a change-up here, let's get Kyra in there.

You know, as far as Kyra goes, she's thrown one inning in the last two weeks. That's not enough. She's a kid that the more she throws, the better that she'll be.

Trying to be back here every year. To do that, I got to get these kids experience. We felt like it was the best move for our team at that time.

Q. There were two errors committed for you guys, Florida State one. Were some of those plays just having to start, stop, start, stop with the rain delays or something else you can pinpoint?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Just not good plays. I don't think we can really blame the weather or the delay that much, to be honest. We just weren't sharp. We had two errors, and we gave up five walks. That's the two things that we talked about going into post-season play that if we could clean up, that we would be on track. That gives us the best chance to play our best.

I think through three regional games and two super games, we may have given up five walks total, and we had no errors. When you're playing teams like this here, the margin of error, it's tiny. We looked like a JV team at times. We took poor at-bats. We just weren't clean. I

don't know why. I don't have an answer.

I feel like we'll respond well.

Q. When you're coming into a night where you know the weather forecast, something could happen, do you have a plan for your pitchers in case, or is that something you make sort of midstream?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: I think most of the time we're going to just kind of make it midstream. We kind of were thinking, and I think everybody at the ballpark thought, once the delay happened, we were clear. Then something else popped up. I knew we had something that was coming or could, but I thought we were done once it came through. That was kind of the bigger shocker in that.

I mean, in baseball, you're planning like crazy and all this stuff. Softball, one of the things I've gotten used to in this, these kids are used to flying by the seat of their pants. We don't even tell our starter who is throwing until the day of, where baseball they're announcing it on Tuesday. It's kind of a unique thing in our game which is kind of cool, too.

But no real talk about that. We just felt like once we got through the first delay there that we'd be fine, so...

Q. You guys don't get shut out very often. Do you think you know how your team is going to respond going into tomorrow?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, I think we'll play well. I do. This team is special. They've been special all year. I have no doubt that we'll play well.

I wish we didn't have to wait until 8:30, I can tell you that. I wish we could get right back out here and play. These kids will be antsy all day. They'll be ready. We'll have to figure out a way to kind of curb that.

I think we'll respond well.

Q. It seemed like any time you guys got any little bit of momentum, they answered back in a big way to take it back. Did it feel that way? Did that start to compound the difficult energy?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, we could get nothing going. When Kiley got that hit, we were really focused on trying to let the ball -- after the first couple of innings there, we were really trying to let the ball get deep with that hard drop. She made the first adjustment, hit the ball well.

I didn't even think that there was going to be a play at two, to be very honest. I was focused on getting her there. I

thought she was going to be able to go. Obviously she's aggressive and fast.

When that happened, I kind of felt the wind come out of us. We never quite got anything back. But credit Florida State, too, I mean, that's really good coaching and really good game plan. Sandercock was really, for us live, we faced her a bunch, that's the best we've seen her, for sure. The ball was exploding down, it was exploding down and in. We just couldn't make a good adjustment, so yeah. Couldn't get anything going.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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