

2023 Women's College World Series

Friday, June 2, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Washington Huskies

Coach Heather Tarr

Lindsay Lopez

Rylee Holtorf

Postgame Press Conference



Washington 4, Utah 1

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Washington.

Coach Tarr, would you make an opening statement.

HEATHER TARR: Well, I'm proud of our team. I'm proud of everybody on our team. We have 17 women on this team. That's not a very big roster. We nearly used every single person. Had to hold a couple off. Certainly could have used them all.

I'm just proud of the work that they're continuing to put in. Last night was tough on us in terms of getting ready. A lot of these guys haven't played here before. Just waiting for the advantage, just like every other team got, to kind of break the ice and get out there.

It's tough to extend it another 15 hours. Nobody's fault or anything like that, but it was just a challenge. I thought we did that well.

I'm excited for what's to come. Lindsay Lopez threw a great finish to that game. Rylee, how we expect she should be at the plate. It was a complete team win for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. In the fourth inning, you come in, bases loaded, two outs. Getting out of that jam, how much confidence did that give you?

LINDSAY LOPEZ: It gave me a lot of confidence. There's been times with runners on. I really notice in those types of situations, my heart rate is so low. I just breathe through it all. That's really helped me in my process.

Q. What was going through your mind when you got the pop-up in that inning?

LINDSAY LOPEZ: Not much. The one in right field?

Q. The pop-up to first base, with a third out in the bottom of the fourth.

LINDSAY LOPEZ: I was excited because Haley Denning is someone that's hard for me to get out. I played with her in high school ball. I knew I had to get her today.

Q. Rylee, three for three, a home run, three RBIs. Going to do that every game?

RYLEE HOLTORF: Thank you. I think just going to compete at every at-bat is kind of the same mindset. The stage is a little bigger, but it's the same, getting in the box, same routine, all of that. Just competing the best I can.

Q. More to do it here, on this stage?

RYLEE HOLTORF: It's for sure a cool feeling, yeah. Something we all looked up to since we were little girls. It's cool being here, cool to kind of see the results of hard work throughout the season. Just continuing to take every at-bat as it is.

Q. What were you doing during the delays?

RYLEE HOLTORF: It was a lot. We were in our little team room. We had games going on. We were playing Barkle [phonetic], messing around, throwing oranges back and forth, trying to stay locked in as much as we could, not knowing what to expect. We knew what we had to do, we knew we had business to take care of, so...

Q. Rylee, you grew up watching great shortstops play. Now you're the U-Dub shortstop. You're inspiring the youth at home. Was that home run kind of full circle to you? Was that moment everything you could have imagined?

RYLEE HOLTORF: Yeah, it was for sure a really cool moment. It was cool when I was growing up watching



these players play. Sis, Ali, all the girls you were talking about, it's a really cool thing knowing I'm that to little girls.

I think being here is awesome, to be wearing Huskies across my chest and being that for little girls.

Q. One of the great things about the Women's College World Series is the sort of excitement that's put on display for everybody on TV. On a waiting day like that yesterday and today, to come out with the energy, what does that add to a game? What does that mean for you to keep the energy up after a long day of waiting like that?

LINDSAY LOPEZ: I would say we knew we had to come out strong. We've seen Mariah Lopez a few times. She's a good pitcher. We had to be on our A game today.

RYLEE HOLTORF: I think like Coach Tarr was talking about earlier, we have 17 women. We're small in the dugout. When you get three girls on base and then someone on deck and the hitter, the number goes down really small.

Knowing all of our voices are just as important as the other one, that each role we are playing on this team means a lot. So it's really cool that all of us can buy into that with only 17 of us just being loud and bringing that energy.

Q. Rylee, you've been really good against left-handed batters this year. What are you able to see when you're at the plate against a lefty that gives you an advantage?

RYLEE HOLTORF: I think that just of the preparation that we've had and done as a team. The coaches have done a really good job preparing us. This was now our fifth time seeing Utah. We've done a lot of scouting, preparations off of machines at stuff back at home in Seattle. Just that preparation and trusting when I go into the box, trying to see the ball big, do what I can.

Q. I want to know what it felt like to get that first game under your belt here at Oklahoma City.

LINDSAY LOPEZ: I would say it feels really good. But I still have that head space of we're not done. We still have a lot more to do.

RYLEE HOLTORF: Yeah, I'd agree with that for sure. We're not done yet, but I did have the butterflies, the nerves going out there. Once Kelley threw me the first groundball, Okay, I can settle in, be here with my teammates, same game. Kind of a surreal feeling being out there. But it feels good to get that done, have the W

done, be in the winners bracket. Know that we're not done; we have more business to do.

Q. Rylee, from a defensive standpoint, Utah has a tendency to put a lot of runs on the board quickly. How did you as a defense try to figure out a way to mitigate that as much as possible?

RYLEE HOLTORF: Yeah, Utah is a good offensive team, they're fast, put a lot of pressure on the defense.

Just working at practice to get balls to first as quick as we can, trusting each other on the field. Me and Si play really well next to each other. She's at third base, and it's a lot of fun. We kind of know where each other is at and stuff. Just the preparation of playing quick, knowing we can do it, being clean, working behind our pitchers. It's fun playing behind them. They make it pretty easy.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for Coach Tarr.

Q. Were you nervous about how the team would react to the break yesterday? Pretty unusual.

HEATHER TARR: Yeah, just for the moment, I mean, the seniors, when they were here last time, they were freshmen, I don't think we really had any of those experiences with them. We just more so, All right, let's hurry up and get to that game. Almost didn't want to take BP because sometimes it gives you a little bit more anxiousness. We had taken our pre-BP yesterday.

For the most part I knew they were going to be okay. They were pretty lighthearted. Just kind of almost like caged beasts in a way, like, Let's go. It's a common opponent, so that puts another weird situation out there where you're not, like, unfamiliar in any way.

I was like, we were all anxious, anxiously awaiting it.

Q. Did you find out before 11:30? Did the players stay up?

HEATHER TARR: We kind of had an idea that it wouldn't start before noon, which was a really good thing for our sleep because we did still have to wait until about 9:30 before we left. Our food was en route from one place, then it had to come here, then go to the hotel. Those things always extend the evening.

Obviously as coaches we have to prepare for the worst. If we didn't win this game, we would have had to have been prepared for the next opponents. We at least stayed up to see who that would be if we didn't take care of business

this morning.

Q. In 2009, you had the epic regional game against UMass. That spurred that team on the rest of the way because nothing was as hard as that. Do you think the game you had could catapult you guys like 2009?

HEATHER TARR: I think when weird things like that happen, they extend your life, extend you past what you thought you could do. It changes your brain space, allows you to really stay tempered in moments that might otherwise feel pressure-filled.

I think for this group, that was a really good thing to have happen. I think just our overall mental game improved from that day.

Q. Your first Women's College World Series win since 2019. A lot has changed. How special is this moment for you?

HEATHER TARR: I think just in general, as you take time away, have space away from things, you just realize these things don't come around that easy, especially for a program like ours.

I mean, of course we believe we can do it every single year. But having not done it for the last few years, it's really special. We really care about our people and how we do it. We're just really trying to soak it in, but also continue to get better and see how long we can play.

Q. Meylan called for the coach to come in the circle in the first inning, and Lindsay started warming up. Is everything all good with her?

HEATHER TARR: Yeah, I just think she's amped, she's ready, she's going to have to really figure out how she's going to just stay in the moment and do what she knows she can do.

Certainly we're going to keep giving her the ball, giving her opportunities. We also at that point just thought Lindsay was the better option at that point in the game.

Q. How big was it to get that win this morning and not play this evening?

HEATHER TARR: Oh, man, I think you try not to put too much pressure on yourselves. Unfortunately for both teams it was kind of like playing in one of those if games in regionals, the old-school Saturday, whatever it's called. I just think for us, it was trying not to put too much pressure on ourselves, but also knowing that we were going to be okay if that did happen.

Q. I know the girls said it was tough to have the long layover. What did you say to the team this morning? They came out ready.

HEATHER TARR: I think it was just more last night. Who's going to handle it better? How are we going to deal with the situation?

You look at past NCAA championships, whether it be softball or women's basketball, and you know there's always that disadvantage card.

For us, we just play it as we're advantaged, we're here. We could be watching this at home on TV. We'd much rather be in the situation we're in.

Q. Lindsay Lopez coming on strong. What can you say about her performance towards the end of the season and postseason and here in the Women's College World Series?

HEATHER TARR: Yeah, thanks for that question.

I think Lindsay has been just learning herself. When you go and mature in this game through a system, and she matured at ASU. Trisha Ford did an amazing job with her. She got to come to us next. We're a completely different program.

I just think for her, she's really realizing the success she can have is in her. It's her. It's not where she is, it's who she is. That's been really cool to watch her really take ownership of that. I'm excited to see her go through this, but also go through another year with us.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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