

2023 Women's College World Series

Saturday, June 3, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida State Seminoles
Coach Lonni Alameda

Kalei Harding

Devyn Flaherty

Kathryn Sandercock

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State 3, Washington 1

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Florida State.

We'll start with a statement from coach Lonni Alameda.

LONNI ALAMEDA: Just what a great ballgame. Washington is a great ballclub. Knew it was going to be gritty. That was so much fun to be a part of. Of course, on the winning side of it is super fun.

Couldn't be more proud of our team and the fight. Kat has been a rockstar for us. To see the momentum building in the defense, incredible plays. Inspiring and motivating. Just really proud of them.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Josie is a walking highlight reel. Does it surprise you anymore when she makes plays like that, or is it the norm now?

KALEI HARDING: I would say definitely normal now. Josie makes those in practice. As we can see on the field, too. It's great to see her on the biggest stage making those same plays.

DEVYN FLAHERTY: I would say personally in that situation, I've seen it so many times. Not like I would have been disappointed if she didn't make it, but I knew she was going to make it. I was like, Throw it to me, we got to get the double play here.

It's cool it's routine for her, then on to the next play. Getting the momentum there was huge.

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: Josie is so athletic. Athleticism for her to get up that high. To have the wherewithal to throw it to second base and get the double play, she's just incredible athlete, great teammate, definitely has a great softball IQ. I have so much trust in her playing.

Q. Devyn, after their inning in the sixth and you leading it off, how big was it to get on base there?

DEVYN FLAHERTY: We talk about momentum a lot. I think we really felt like momentum was kind of swinging to their side.

Going up there, having a team at-bat, we weren't adjusting great, me included. So just trying to get a good pitch and get on top of something. I know my speed plays, just being out there for my team, get an extra insurance run. Kat was pitching a great game. We knew they were going to come out and battle, that's who they are. It was pretty cool.

Q. Kat, seems like when teams get runners on base, you take your game up to another level.

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: For one, being a groundball pitcher, knowing I'm always one pitch away from a double play. Relying on my team, the defense, the experience I've had for five years. All the mental game we work on. The long days at practice. Just everything that we put in is why we do what we do, so we can succeed here.

Just having trust in that and focusing on executing one pitch.

Q. Kat, coming into the game, was this the game plan for pitching? What was your mindset coming in?

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: Yeah, that was the plan for Makenna to soft open, then for me to come in. I'm so proud of Makenna to come out here and thrive and do her thing on the biggest stage as a freshman. That's huge for her. I know she really wanted that.

Really proud of her being able to get it done. Just the



same mindset I would have. I think it's a little more uncomfortable coming in middle of the game. You don't really have the chance to feel out the strike zone, all of that stuff. Then just runners on base. It's just added pressure.

It's what we've been working on all year, so just getting comfortable with the uncomfortable. Just trying to go in and do the best I can for my team.

Q. Devyn, I heard from Coach that you didn't want to step foot on the field when you made the trip out to Oklahoma. Tonight you had a big night. Do you feel the superstitions played off tonight here for you?

DEVYN FLAHERTY: Yeah, I mean, it was more of a team thing why I didn't want to step foot on the field. I just wanted us to earn it. I think coming off last year, we talk about it a lot, just getting back here, very process oriented we've been. That was kind of my process, is staying at every game, every pitch that I can. This team is going to make it back here because we work so hard for it.

Yeah, I guess it paid off. It's paying off more for the team, I would say, which is pretty cool.

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

Q. You seem to have defensive players make incredible plays against Washington whenever you play them. Is there some inspirational speech you give to your players when you play Washington?

LONNI ALAMEDA: No. They're a very athletic ballclub, too, though. No, there's something about, like, we're so far away from the Pac, but we have such good rivalry games against Washington and UCLA.

I think our left side, they have a lot of short gamers, a lot of kids that kind of slap. It gives us the opportunity to maybe cheat a little bit in some of those. That's a little bit what Jessie did in the situation in the national championship series.

Yeah, no, it's not an inspirational speech at all. Josie is Josie, for sure.

Q. Every time you guys score, you respond with a shutdown. Every time the opponent scores, you respond by scoring yourself. What is it about this team that allows them to control those swings?

LONNI ALAMEDA: I mean, I think it's your entire season. We really pride ourselves in one, two, three innings. Definitely when we score, we want to attack the strike zone

and really tuck that first hitter. It's a mindset for our pitching staff, and defense, too, to not allow the momentum to roll to the other side, keep it on our side.

When the girls speak the language, there's a heightened awareness to that, it plays overtime and they can see and trust the process of it.

I mean, you heard Dev talk about the process. This game is very simple. It's hard, but it's very simple when you work through the layers. If you play a good, fundamental softball game, you can be successful over time.

Q. Kat talked about it a little bit, but Makenna's start, what did you see from her, how she handled the moment?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I knew that this was going to be tough. Klingler is tough. I think she's struck out five times all year. I knew there was going to be a lot of pitch to contact tonight. I needed to buy some outs. I thought she was a good matchup.

She's a freshman. We need her. We need her next year. I think it's really important in these moments to get there. Like she said, she wants the ball.

I saw her tuck the zone, which is good. A little hyped up in the beginning. That's going to be huge for us. I think if we can make this deep run that we're trying to get right now, in a couple days, we're going to need her. We have to get her in these moments. Really liked what I saw.

Q. How big is it to get a 2-0 start, have a day off?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, uncharted territory, A. I'll tell you afterwards (smiling).

The days are long not playing. We have to build in some time. We're lucky to have family here with the Sherrills, we're going to spend a little team time over there tomorrow.

When you have a pitcher like Kat that can give you a lot of innings, I think she was around the 70 pitch mark today, it's really important to keep her legs underneath her. We're going to face really good teams, dogfights from here on out. We have to take care of the bodies as best we can. Earning days off is really big for us. We'll see how it plays out.

Just going to enjoy today.

Q. Talking about Devyn's performance tonight, she had the leadoff hits, what kind of energy did she give you?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, I think for our team, Devyn works really hard. You've got some players that are very athletically talented and some players that are smartly talented. Devyn is a smart player. She takes pride in understanding the game.

When you can see her start to make adjustments, it will fire up the team because they know it's not based off of straight athleticism. I mean, she is trying to get on top of curve balls, rise balls, she's trying to make things happen.

On the other side, Devyn has been really challenged to be a good leader for us. Leadership is really, really hard to do.

I can't tell you how many times we've been in the office talking about how we handle ourselves on the field after failure. She's a hugely competitive player. To see her thrive in these moments, not get down on frustration of outcome, but stay in it, I think the team recognizes that. That's true leadership. She's done a really good job of keeping us going.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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