

2023 Women's College World Series

Sunday, June 4, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Washington Huskies

Heather Tarr

SilentRain Espinoza

Ruby Meylan

Postgame Press Conference

Stanford 1, Washington 0

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with the press conference. We'll start with a statement from Washington head coach Heather Tarr.

HEATHER TARR: I just have to say congrats to Stanford, one, on a great season, but two, for winning today. It's a tough day for everybody to get through, knowing what's ahead.

I'm just super proud to be a Husky. I'm proud of these guys for the legacy that many of them are leaving our program, having left behind them. I talked to them just a little bit ago, and everybody's gone through it, but to get to college, have a lot of momentum, get to the college World Series as a freshman, and then the pandemic hits. Transfer portal everywhere, all kinds of crazy stuff. Everybody moving everywhere.

For the ones in our program that stayed and really led our program, I'm just proud of them. I'm proud of them leaving the program better than when they found it, which was a really hard thing because these guys came in when we were on our third college World Series appearance.

How we got here, we were pretty sad in the locker room, more so just the seniors being done. We have an amazing four-year team manager, Carter Pierce. He's done some awesome GAs.

This season, the team adjourns, unfortunately, but I'm just proud to be a Dog, and I'm proud to be associated with these guys. We could have easily been done in regionals, and these guys are truly miracle makers. I'm proud of them. I'm proud of staying with them.



Q. SilentRain, you and the rest of the seniors had a special career. How special was it to share that career at UW with them?

SILENTRAIN ESPINOZA: It was everything. My fellow fifth years, we pretty much grew up together. We started at the World Series, and we were just saying how cool it is we're getting to end our career at the World Series. Like Coach Tarr said, we're just trying to leave this program better than we found it.

We stayed all our five years to do that and made sure that was done. I hope we did that.

Q. Ruby, you had a phenomenal game. You had a phenomenal freshman campaign. How do you feel about the future of this program knowing that you and the rest of the freshmen are going to be around for a while?

RUBY MEYLAN: Sorry, this is really hard (crying). This rookie class, I'm just so grateful I get to be with these three and we came in together and we're going to stay here for the next three together.

The future is really, really bright. We have some amazing, amazing girls, and I know we have a really good class coming in. Yeah, I'm just really grateful to be a Dog.

Q. Got ahead of hitters. It looked a lot different today than it did the first two. Did it feel a lot different today?

RUBY MEYLAN: I think the first day for sure it was just nerves. There's nothing really to prepare you for that. It wasn't the people honestly. It was just, I think, the stage, just knowing what's on the line.

But today I just like knew that, in order for us to win, I couldn't give up more than a run or none because NiJaree is like an amazing pitcher. That was just my goal, and I just wanted to do it for the rest of the team.

Q. Is it harder when you're 0-0, knowing one hit could mean the end of the game, or is it easier in that situation?



RUBY MEYLAN: I like it. I like the pressure of knowing that the game's on the line. One of us is going to get it.

Q. You had that great regional win that kind of propelled you here. When you look back, how big of a deal was it to win that game and to finish here in the same situation?

SILENTRAIN ESPINOZA: Yeah, we knew that we weren't done at regionals, and it got down to the wire, but we pushed through, and here we are.

Q. What would you tell the players who will be here next year? What advice would you give them for next year?

SILENTRAIN ESPINOZA: It's good to be a Dog. (Laughter).

Q. SilentRain, you mentioned like what Tarr said, leaving a legacy for the people that come ahead. How much did it mean to you to wear "Huskies" across your chest, and how much will that influence you in the future to be a Dog?

SILENTRAIN ESPINOZA: Being a Husky has meant everything to me. I basically grew up here these past five years. Coach Tarr has taught me so much, not only how to be a great softball player, but how to be a good person and how to be a good leader. Yeah, love being a Husky.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Ruby and SilentRain.

Q. Coach, you came back to Ruby, and obviously that was a pretty good choice.

HEATHER TARR: Yeah, I spoke maybe a little bit earlier about the infinite opportunities that something like this brings to your program. Lindsay has carried us through this postseason, she really has, and her wisdom and experience has been wonderful.

Also too, Ruby's youth has been something we've been able to grow on. We just thought it was important to start Ruby again. Not that Lindsay didn't deserve a start either, but just for she was going to have to hold us, and if we found a way to get to a space where Lindsay could come in, that's what we were going to do.

Obviously Ruby was throwing good enough to just keep her in. Just for the opportunity for us to grow and learn from this experience, it's been a very valuable opportunity.

Q. You said it's important to start Ruby, just to give

her a chance to kind of feel good about being here?

HEATHER TARR: Yeah, just the start. She's probably had some tough starts, and I think any pitcher that you don't give a leash to, sometimes they maybe second guess themselves and think, oh, maybe I'm just going to keep giving up a run or keep getting taken out. That's not the case. We've got Lindsay in the bullpen. Why wouldn't we go to Lindsay to keep the game close?

Just more so for her brain, knowing that she has the ability to pitch with the best of them and in the future carry our program to the places we all want to go.

Q. You mentioned yesterday that you expect Lindsay Lopez to come back. What about the other seniors that could be the next group of seniors?

HEATHER TARR: We have three that are still deciding on what they're going to do, and that's up to them, us a little bit. I just think it's taught us a lot about the super senior retention. It's a challenging experience to be at a place for five years.

Of course it's wonderful when you leave and you finish at the College World Series, but some of them have to extend their academics. At the University of Washington, it's not easy to get into a grad school program that you love. So sometimes you're just hanging on for the opportunity to play.

Sometimes as an athlete that's female, sometimes that's hard to do. So I think we've learned a lot about how to nurture that fifth-year senior, but also at some point things have to turn over. There's futures and new people that you get to grow and you get to develop.

Of course it's going to look a lot different next year without at least the super seniors, but as a program, it's a great opportunity for us to just continue to build and continue to have those guys build Husky softball for us, Ruby Meylan, Syd Stewart, Alana Johnson, and Brooklyn Carter.

Q. How are you set for the future? You lost five key players.

HEATHER TARR: I think just what I told the team. The leadership style and how they learn to lead as a group was fantastic, and the model that they led by and how we like the model to go, they really showed the younger ones that's how it's done. You lead selflessly. You lead with humility. You don't bully people. You nurture people behind you.

They did a really good job of trying to find a way to keep



the teammate-ship greater than friendship, and that's a hard thing to do for anybody.

Q. The great career of the fifth years has come to an end, but all of them have left a lasting legacy. What did it mean to you as a manager to coach each and every one of them. How will they impact you in your future?

HEATHER TARR: The three that specifically graduated yesterday, it was Maddie Huskey, SilentRain, and Megan Vandegrift. It was a pretty cool thing to see them through that whole grad program. Sami Reynolds still continues with another year, and she'll be on our coaching staff next year.

Just to see that group through, watching them come in here, and Maddie Huskey and SilentRain and Sammy Reynolds starting in our lineup as freshmen, thinking like they were in Sydney Stewart's shoes. They were clueless sometimes. Where am I? What am I doing? How do I hit it at this stage?

Now to see them, like they're refined, they're confident. It just gives you hope when you develop younger ones, there's a model.

We're just proud of them, excited, and excited to try to do it better than they did it next year.

Q. Speaking on it, those freshmen had such an incredible opportunity to have so many fifth years with that experience. How do you think that's going to help the future of the program?

HEATHER TARR: It's a symbiotic relationship between the olders and the youngsters. The older ones appreciated that youthful energy, and the younger ones, they looked up to those women like they were their big sisters. So it's a pretty cool thing that they get to leave behind and that we get to create with a very young group looking forward next year.

Q. Coach, when you look back at this year, what's going to come to your mind? Considering some of the young players like Ruby that got the experience in this magical run that you had with that great win against McNeese and that great image of the players surrounding you in celebration. What are you going to think about when you look back at this year?

HEATHER TARR: I think I'm going to look back at looking at this group as a legacy. You get to recreate it, and that's the best part about being a college softball coach is that graduation happens. It could be really sad, but I'm sad

because we don't get this team anymore, but I'm more happy because of the model that this group left and the way in which we get to like fill the mold the next year.

I think last year's group, it was hard because we ended at regionals. So it was really hard for this group as a unit to forecast out and really see the College World Series and the whys and what-fors in November and December. But for that matter, we know what this looks like. We know what this feels like. There's a lot of upset people, and it was upset because we think we fell short of our goal.

So now we get to go into the rest of June framing that, talking about that, and every single thing we do can be this end in mind. So we always start with the end in mind, and this is where we ended. That group gets to lead from this point, and we're so excited about it.

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