

2023 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 5, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners
Coach Patty Gasso
Tiare Jennings
Grace Lyons
Jordy Bahl

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma - 4, Stanford - 2

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started. We'll start with an opening statement from Oklahoma head coach Patty Gasso, then go to questions to players Tiare Jennings, Jordy Bahl, and Grace Lyons.

PATTY GASSO: What a battle today for both teams, very even and just back and forth the whole way. Challenging always at the plate, with both pitchers are very good.

At the same time, Nicole May had a plan, and she executed it to the T to allow Jordy to come in and ultimately -- 55 versus 85, which is kind of what we were hoping for is to just keep the pitch count low on Jordy and work our way through this in case we had to go to that if game.

But clean game, exciting game, but a great pitching duel. I think sometimes -- we win a lot, and that's fabulous. But sometimes I think we're so used to taking it for granted, and this means a lot. This means a lot. To get to the championship game means a lot.

Q. Tiare, for you, I guess, first of all, were you surprised when they walked Jayda there in the ninth? Just walk us through that at-bat really from the first pitch until the hit.

TIARE JENNINGS: I didn't know they were going to do that to Jayda. It kind of didn't matter to me. Either way, I was going to have to find a way to either get on or help my team as best I can.

We talk about not being result oriented, and that's exactly what happened today. I didn't get the results I wanted

earlier, and so what? I'm going to step in there and keep on swinging.

That's kind of what I did. I shortened up my swing. I knew I had two strikes so I was going to battle. But I was going to keep swinging and just do whatever I can to help the team.

Q. Tiare and Grace, I don't know what's awaiting for you guys later in this week, but these two games against Stanford and Canady especially seemed like ultimate grinds. How much of a sense of an accomplishment is it to get past such a dominant pitcher that you had to deal with two games?

GRACE LYONS: Amazing pitching staff. That's something we know coming into this World Series, we're going to get everyone's best. We love challenges, and we know we want to come in with the best game plan possible.

Like Tiare said, not be result oriented. Because every single at-bat is a new at-bat, a new chance to make an adjustment.

It was so cool to see different people step up in different ways, and that all led into just how it ended. The entire game, top to bottom, offense, defense, we all got each other's backs, and it was a complete game.

TIARE JENNINGS: She said it best. I think they've, again, two really good pitchers on Stanford's staff, and they helped prepare us for the next game and later in the week. So it was a challenge for us, and I'm glad to get through it so we can just move on and keep on grinding.

Q. Jordy, I just wanted to ask you, take me through your mindset going through those first innings, knowing you were going to get the ball at some point and how excited and waiting for that. And take me through the ninth inning when you have a two-run lead and just the adrenaline and the energy in the stadium at that point.

JORDY BAHL: Nicole was throwing a great game. The game plan going in was I was supposed to be hot, ready to



go by the fifth. And so by that point I'm just staying loose until then. Then when I got in, it was just be present, make effective pitches, let the defense work, and just stay simple with everything and not let any moment get too big.

Q. For Grace and Tiare, you guys struck out the first time you faced NiJa, but then you come back in the ninth with two clutch hits. What was kind of the adjustment that you had to make?

GRACE LYONS: You can't think back to the results like we were talking about. You can't think of what not to do. You just want to set your mind on, one, things above. That kind of keeps us from being result oriented. But we also just want to make an adjustment by getting on top of the ball.

I think that was something that everyone could see. She was spinning it really well, getting people to chase on that up ball. We just needed to make an adjustment to get on top of it.

It worked out this time. But even if it didn't, we were still making those adjustments and just being simple with what we were doing and keeping our eyes fixed on things above.

TIARE JENNINGS: I think just watching previous at-bats. You see people coming off the bench that are driving the ball to the outfield. Just learning, communicating throughout the entire team.

Alynah Torres having great at-bats, so just being able to, hey, what did you see? What can I adjust to do better? I think just talking to each other, watching their great at-bats and kind of just let it happen for us.

Q. This is for Grace and Tiare. I know this is not really the focal point, but if you let down defensively at any point, if your pitchers don't really do what they do, you're not going to win this game. Grace, talk about that. Tiare, talk about that back when your pitchers were playing such great defense in this game.

GRACE LYONS: That's one of the funnest part of the game, is playing great defense behind our pitchers who do such an amazing job. We're kind of the last line of defense behind them. Making sure they've got our back and we've got theirs. It's so important to play clean defense and clean ball in general.

Making sure the heat doesn't get the best of the us, the long game doesn't get the best of us. Making sure we're present because we've been prepared for this. We've been through long games before. Looking at that, it's

definitely prepared us just to stay our best throughout the entire game, and even if it's the ninth inning, the tenth inning. It's fun to play defense behind our pitchers.

TIARE JENNINGS: She said it best. I've got no words.

GRACE LYONS: Come on, birthday girl.

Q. Jordy, three really good outings in this College World Series. I don't think you've given up a run yet. What's been your approach? Just to continue staying fresh, going into every single outing, just what do you think just every single time you've been going in?

JORDY BAHL: Really for me it's just be present, stay simple. The second I try to do too much with any one of my pitches, I start overthrowing, and then things really go downhill from there.

Honestly, just trying to keep everything simple, and like Grace said, like they have my back, I have their back. So I know that they're in every pitch, so I need to be in every pitch, and they deserve that from me. So just trying to stay where I know I can have success.

Q. Jordy, kind of going off of that, you get in jams every once in a while, and from the outside looking in, it seems like you almost enjoy the thrill of getting in those jams and then getting yourself out of them. I'm wondering just what's your mindset when you get into those and the confidence you have when you do get in those jams?

JORDY BAHL: It's really just let's go to work. Turn around, look at the defense, and it's like, all right, let's go to work. We're going to get out of this. I mean, it's just as simple as that.

Q. Jordy, kind of building off of that as well, is that something you feel like you've gotten better at over the years? Or are you one of those people who are pretty even keel? Can you talk about how that's progressed throughout your career.

JORDY BAHL: I feel like it's progressed. I think every single time you're tested, you either come out on top or you don't. There's been several times where it hasn't gone the way that you would want it to go. Then after that, you just want to be tested again.

Just I think from a lot of experiences, I mean, they're fun. We all love it.

Q. For Tiare and Grace, all the hitters on this team seem so good at controlling the tempo when you're in

the box and knowing when to step out, maybe take a moment, stay in the moment mentally, what does that do in a game like this that's so close and goes so long?

TIARE JENNINGS: I think it's huge just knowing that we can take a deep breath, relax, reset in our minds. Us hitters play a huge role in that. When I'm not in that pitch, let me reset, take a breath, call time, go back to Coach, get some words.

I think we've been kind of doing that the past three years that I've been here, is just breathing, resetting, and knowing to stick to your game plan and trusting what you can do.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Tiare, Jordy, and Grace.

Q. Patty, I know a lot this year you don't have to say anything to the lineup as they're going through it. What's going through your head for Jayda to get intentionally walked and Tiare to step up? Does the team have to chip in for a bigger gift for Tiare for her birthday? What does that look like?

PATTY GASSO: We will do that, absolutely. What I've learned about coaching is I need to speak less and let them understand. They know what to do. So when I get in, if I have nervous energy, they feel it. So less is more on this side.

Tiare had some tough times, but she's one of the best hitters I've ever seen. So coaches, all coaches pick their poison. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. Tiare has this ability to get locked in like nobody I've ever seen as well. Her swing just looked kind of easy. It looked pretty free and easy and ran right into it at the right time. So less is more on this side.

Q. Patty, we've talked about Jordy a lot during the postseason. She just mentioned wanting to be ready to come in in the fifth inning, delivers again down the stretch. Just maybe how much has she developed into a player where down the stretch, when things get tough in these big games, she can deliver?

PATTY GASSO: I think she's been delivering since she was delivered from the womb really (laughter). She is just made just tough as nails like that, just good, down-home, Midwestern kid that has a work ethic beyond anything I've seen, that has a passion and fearlessness about her and just absolutely embraces the biggest moments you could ever imagine when a lot of pitchers would go, No, thank you. Don't call me.

She's like, Give me the ball. Give me the ball right now. Give it to me at the start of the game, give it to me in the middle, give it to me at the end, it doesn't matter, I'll be ready.

It's really inspired a lot of our players to have that kind of mentality. I think they say it very well. We're not super results oriented. It's not, okay, if we don't win this game -- we don't talk like that. We don't talk about any of those games. It's just allowing their mentality of love for the game and each other to take place without a lot of pushing and prodding from the coaching staff.

Q. Patty, you say all those things are unsaid very often, but for Tiare to start 0 for 4, deliver there, and then sit up there and say it's all about the process and that stuff, how far along is she now from maybe two years ago as a hitter to step into that moment?

PATTY GASSO: Quite mature without question. She came in ready to play as a freshman and was led by some outstanding players, and one in Jocelyn Alo that taught her a lot about hitting, and they would go together and work together.

Tiare was a sponge, and now Tiare is delivering the messages. There's just that kind of growth that you know when you're not good enough and you need to learn, and then you know when you're good enough and you need to teach. And that's Tiare, and that's Jayda, and that's a lot of these upperclassmen that have been going through this for quite a long time.

Q. Jordy obviously outwardly very fiery, but in those moments of stress, calm seems to be what she is. How do you see her balancing the two? And a second part, if you don't mind, the catchers have taken to wearing the blue on their gear. How did that come about that Jordy figured out that was something that could benefit her?

PATTY GASSO: You guys screw me up when you do two-part questions very badly.

(Laughter.)

Okay. So I just screwed myself up for saying that. Where did we start? Jordy calm, okay. It's just a fearless nature, I think. I think this team, but Jordy and this team, feel like there's nothing they can't overcome, and they know that fear is kind of the enemy, like you are -- you hear people say pressure is a privilege. They thrive. They love it. They love those big moments.

The one thing we talked about in big moments are you

don't get these lasting memories when you're run rolling teams. It's these games that you're never going to forget. In ten years from now, we're going to come back, and we're going to gather together, and we're going to laugh about all the stuff that happened throughout, before the game, in the game, after the game. Those are the moments they don't forget.

The ones that are pressure filled are the ones that they embrace, and Jordy is just, she's made that way. I don't know a better way to say it. She loves it.

And the blue -- you went like that (indicating), and I got it. Thank you. I think the blue is just more of something to lock her eyes on. It's nothing. There's no big philosophical story behind it. It's just locking your eyes on it, and it's just a different color than the guard, chest protector.

Q. Patty, you talked about Tiare's ability to get locked in like nobody that you've been around before. What did you see adjustment-wise from her early at-bats today into that last one and even during the course of the at-bat as she fights off a couple and then finally gets the hit?

PATTY GASSO: I think she got a better pitch to swing at, and it was a little more of a down angle that we were just kind of clipping things. A lot of foul balls behind us, and we tried to get a little more on top, and those things started turning into line drives for us. So it worked out well.

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