

2023 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 8, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida State Seminoles

Lonni Alameda

Kathryn Sandercock

Michaela Edenfield

Mack Leonard

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 3, Florida State 1

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with Florida State.

We will start with a statement from Florida State head coach.

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I guess first off, congratulations to OU. They're just firing on all cylinders. It's pretty cool. I think a lot of people were texting me throughout, like a lot of people don't like that one team's winning all the time. I get a little vibe sometimes of, like, take down the machine.

We gave our best for that, but they're really good. Oklahoma does a really good job. They do a good job in all cylinders from recruiting to developing to meeting the NIL, development of program and team. It's really an honor to compete against the highest level. We talked about that today.

It can be frustrating at times or it can raise our game. It's raising our game. It's making me a better coach. It was just really cool. Hats off to them.

I thank Oklahoma City, OU for hosting this event. The NCAA. We had a great experience. Our student-athletes had a great experience. I know us as a Coaches Association, we work really hard at trying to make this a special experience for players. When we were here in '21, we were playing late night, then we made those rule changes. We had a ton of rest, a ton of opportunities to be better when we came out. That was the whole goal, is to make the best on TV.

I'm really proud of us as an organization and the NCAA for

working with us. Oklahoma City, everyone is a part of this. It's really awesome. We're going to keep pushing the needle because we want this game to be great. I just recognize that part of it.

I think to my staff, administration, Mr. Alford, Laura, Cindy, everyone that's here and supported us. We've had a lot of people for the entirety and some that came on late. We just have such great support in Tallahassee. We're just so lucky to be able to wear the garnet and gold. We feel the family core values all the time and I'm very grateful for that.

Lastly would be team 40. It's been a ride. I know it's been a rocking one, but it's been a ride. I couldn't be more proud to my right. I think these ladies have done an incredible job.

They're representing a team that set out in August to be better. We were better. We're leaving the program better. They're leaving a mark for that.

I'm already going to start to cry? That's my opening statement (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: Questions for players.

Q. Could you each reflect on how far you came from last year.

MACK LEONARD: I think this team, we learned a lot from supers or regionals last year getting cut really early on by Mississippi State. We took times to re-watch the games together as a squad. It was really hard. I hadn't re-watched any of the games since then. That was my first time since then.

The motivation and passion that returns to you, just the grit and the hard work that you put in in the fall and early spring. Mid-season we had tough conversations. All year we've been having tough conversations about holding each other accountable. That's what we did.

We worked really hard as a squad to be there for our left and right, constantly have each other's backs. I know that's a lot stems from last year. I'm really grateful looking

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back that we had that motivation in our hip pocket.

To have that going into this season and to leave it all out there on this biggest stage is undescrivable, so... I'm just very grateful.

MICHAELA EDENFIELD: Yeah, I mean, we definitely learned a lot about ourselves that year. I really like the analogy that a successful team is like a big puzzle piece. You're trying to create that big picture. If you don't take care of your own individual piece and all the edges and the curves, you have to fill in where other people don't.

Being able to open up and learn from that year, being able to use it into this year, has been really big for us individually.

Really, really proud of team 40. I'm glad that we had all the puzzle pieces together, for sure. I think this team is special. I hope you guys saw the big picture.

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: Yeah, I mean, learned so much from team 39. It was really, really hard to lose at regionals. It was really hard. I mean, I couldn't even watch super regionals last year.

I was grateful that I had another year to put the jersey on. It was really hard to say good-bye to Syd and Danielle, for them to end their careers like that. What they gave to this program was so amazing. It really just set up a foundation for team 40 to thrive. I think that we really took what we could from last year's team and we ran with it this year.

We didn't let the little things go. We talked about them. We fought for them. I mean, this team, like, it's just incredible what we've been able to do. So I'm just really, really proud of team 40. It started with team 39, with Syd and Danielle, just the legacy they left with us, how we were able to build off that. Just thankful for them. Thankful for the foundation that they left for us.

Q. Mack, you talked before this series began about how Lonni gave you a start. You never imagined you would be on this stage. What has this week meant to you?

MACK LEONARD: It's meant a lot. I've said it, like I said I think last night. Living a dream I didn't know I had.

To be able to do that and not just make it to the World Series but to make it to the championship series says a lot about our program, just the people behind me.

I think that I'm so grateful for these memories. It's been said the greatest memories are yet to come. I've made a

lot of great memories in this post-season. I have made a lot of really great friends through all these memories. A lot of times I'm not ready to give up yet.

But to finish it here on this stage means the world, especially having my mom and my sister in the crowd, my step-dad, family and friends. Meant a lot (tearing up).

It's definitely not easy, but I'm just extremely grateful I could be here with these people in this program. They've given me such a new lease on life, just an outlet to be myself genuinely. I'm so grateful. I don't really have words.

Q. Kat, could you talk about the challenge of facing their lineup. If you got out of the jam early on, good defensive plays. They throw so many weapons at you. How difficult is it to maneuver against that lineup?

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: Yeah, incredible lineup. Great team. It's tough, the bases loaded, no outs, all the momentum was on their side. We were able to get out of it with no runs. What an awesome moment. What amazing defense. That was so, so fun.

I mean, they're tough outs. They keep you on your toes the entire time, which is great. For me as an athlete, like, I'm very competitive and I've always wanted to put my skills to the test. Everything that I've worked on for the past five years, showing up today. Being able to put that to the test against one of the hardest lineups in college softball was such a fun challenge.

I gave up a couple solo shots, they got another run across. They're a good ballclub. It's tough to face them.

But I'm really proud of myself and really proud of the team, just what we were able to do today, the fight we showed, how we stayed in it, stayed in it. That's what we've been saying all season long, stay in it.

It's challenging, but it's what you want as an athlete, yeah.

Q. Michaela, talk about the two seniors here, what lessons you're going to carry over to team 41 from them?

MICHAELA EDENFIELD: Oh, man. You had to give me a tough one. Let's see if I can get through this without crying (smiling).

Mack - God, here we go.

So team 40, it's one team, one year, one season. I'm grateful for these girls to my left and my right. Mack has

done a great job of accountability, knowing and teaching me what it's like to live above the line. Definitely have been able to try to model after her with keeping other people accountable. I think it's just been really cool to learn from her. I've only had two years with her, so I can only imagine what it would be like to have more. But it's a constant mentor and a piece I am so grateful to have her as an upperclassman. Being able to work with her these past two years have been great on and off the field.

You see Kat, you think of her as the heart of this team, and it's very true. But you don't see the stuff that she does behind the scenes. To the freshman me that she reeled in (laughing), I quite literally wouldn't be here without her. The things that she's done for me and for this team, for this coaching staff, for FSU, the community as a whole, it's been really awesome to see, from me watching her as a high schooler to be able to think that, Oh, wow, I get to be on the same field as her, I get to be on the same team. Then being able to catch her, and being able to be a part of two amazing seasons catching her, being able to learn from her.

To think that I was going to be the one to have to replace Anna Shelnutt, and I'm not Anna Shelnutt. Kat made sure that I could be myself and grow to be myself as a better individual for her has been awesome. Just been so grateful for everything that she's done for me.

I'm trying to take every bit of what these two have given me and wanting to be the upperclassman for that incoming freshman for my fellow upperclassmen for everybody, because it takes a team. It's going to be all of us for team 41, yeah.

Q. Kat, Lonni talked the other day you guys are at this point because of the culture. As someone who has been in the program for five years, what is it about Florida State that makes it so special?

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: I mean, Coach L, honestly. You talk about culture, Coach L has built that. It's just such a special thing to be a part of. You don't get experiences like this in your life. Coming in as a freshman, we were talking about it before, you just don't get it. You don't get it until you really get it. It's so much bigger than softball. It changes you as a human being.

I have changed so much as a human being. It's so much more than a sport. But just the family aspect, the living of the core values. We don't write it down on signs, put it up in the locker room. We really live it. We talk about it. We hold each other accountable to it.

I mean, it just forces you to grow and it forces you to be

better. I have become so much better and I have grown into somebody that I'm so proud to be. I am just so ready for this next part of my life. I'm just so grateful for Florida State to have spent five years. It's exactly where I was supposed to be. It's just like so unbelievably grateful for them and for Coach L, for a program that sets you up to be a better human as the ultimate goal. Like winning the national championship is the goal, but we're all coming out of this program as better human beings. It's just indescribable. Just very thankful.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for coach.

Q. What Kat just said about the ultimate goal of this program is to be a better person, for you as a coach to hear that, what does it mean to you?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, digging for tears right now, aren't you (laughing)?

Our program is based on the core values of being the best version of yourself essentially. I think it's pretty cool. I think administrators get to go through it a little bit, too.

As a coach you're daily with them. You become the mom, the counselor, the pitching coach, the hitting coach, whatever it might be (tearing up).

When you see them ready to take on the world, it's very heartwarming. I'm just very grateful we could get here. The ultimate goal for sure as an athlete is to play at the highest level you can. Kat is ready to go on and play pro and hopefully she gets a chance in Japan. That's her goal.

So there's definitely a side of you that wants to be the skill set coach to take them there. But man, when they're ready to take on the world because of sport, because of what we offer them at the university, it's really, really, really cool.

When you're a part of that, you see that with your colleagues, it's super special. I'm just so grateful for the opportunity to be there by their side for four or five years.

Q. Do you feel you got the effort today?

LONNI ALAMEDA: 100%. You know, strategically we wanted to match up Kat with whoever. Thought we'd have a chance. We had some information on Jordy. Jordy is good. So it was our best chance to get to Game 3. I felt we got some good information yesterday. Our rookies that were in that environment came back today and they were different. I thought we had a great game.

Coleman doesn't rob that home run, who knows. It's a



game of inches. If Max's ball is two inches on Game 1 down the right-field line, it's a different game, too. I think the softball gods weren't with us this time around.

We laid it out there. I'm really proud of them. It feels really good to know that you bounce back and you're able to do what we did. Kat led us the whole way there. It was pretty special to see that and end her career there.

Q. It's really soon after, when you look at that team you faced the last couple nights, where does this team stack up when you look at the big picture of college softball history?

LONNI ALAMEDA: It'll tough to say because they've had great ones, they've been great different ways. I would say this probably lineup was a little bit deeper lineup-wise as tougher outs. They may have more power in the lineup in '21. I think we had a little deeper pitching probably in '21. Jordy was pretty good.

It's hard to say. They play the game hard. I think the one thing Oklahoma does, and we all try to do, is they keep getting better every year. What they were in championships a couple years ago, they're a better version of themselves now. We all have to do that. As coaches we have to go back and figure out how do we get better to get back here.

The game is changing. The athletes are changing. The way we train changes. That's one thing they've done a really good job of, they've gotten into analytics at a high level and they use it. I just think they're tough to beat.

Again, a lot of fun to go against, yeah.

Q. It's early to think about team 41, you're always planning. Can you reflect on the challenge of building another roster for next year?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, there's always expectation. Of course, last year expectation was to get past regionals. That was the goal, right? Here we are. We just blossomed in an environment.

You never really know as a coach what you're doing that actually clicks. But we've been pretty good at building teams to flourish at the right time. I would say that's to our entire staff. So I think it's a collaborative effort.

We get home, we do a good job of dissecting the season. We'll go through it, what was good, what wasn't good, how can we be better, how do we get better. How do we put that game plan into place September, October, November.

Replacing the innings that Kat gave us will be tough. Replacing what Mack gave us towards the end is going to be tough. We're going to have some rookies. It's going to take some time to get people in experienced situations.

You look at what our returning pitching staff is right now, it's going to be very young. We have some offense coming back, they'll know what this feeling is like, but we'll have to endure figuring out what the pitching staff can do. That's probably going to be something we figure out how we do that February, March, to be able to bring it together for another run at the end of the season.

After that I think we have some really talented freshmen coming in that have been texting every single day. Even though they're not here, they are getting videos from me of like, this is what it's like when we get here.

We've got the dream of where we want to be with the new ones coming in. It's just going to take work. The circle is probably one of the biggest things we really have to figure out.

Q. A lot of times younger people have a hard time seeing perspective. It sounded like the players that came in here had a pretty good perspective on what they've accomplished. Is that representative of the locker room?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, for sure. Again, I think we're a very honest coaching staff. I think we do a good job of letting the players know where they're at, where we see they can go.

Like Mack said, she didn't know -- she's reaching these dreams she didn't know she was capable of. We knew she was capable of doing the things she was doing. We ran out of time to get her to a level that I know she's super capable of. But, boy, has she helped this program a ton. Now she starts to see it.

When you can have real conversations of what I see and what they see and start to match that, their confidence as a human, as a ballplayer blossoms. That's to me the secret sauce we have, is we get to know them as a human being and a softball player, we match that. They're ready for these moments.

They don't really need us for these moments. They're ready for them, grateful for them. That's the special part when you see them graduate. You know, Kat is super proud of her accomplishments. I think that's a really neat feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

