

# 2024 Women's College World Series

Wednesday, May 29, 2024  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Stanford Cardinal**  
**Coach Jessica Allister**  
**Aly Kaneshiro**  
**NiJaree Canady**  
Press Conference



establishes that notion that we are fully deserving and capable of being here.

I think while we do have a different team than last year, and last year was very deserving, I think it's great for the freshmen and the newcomers, the returners from last year, to know we brought ourselves back here because we were fully capable and because we've earned it and put in a lot of work to get here twice in a row.

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Stanford.

We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

JESSICA ALLISTER: Just really thrilled to be here. What an amazing event put on by NCAA softball and Oklahoma City. It was an absolute privilege to compete in this tournament last year. We are so, so, so happy to be back.

Ready to get going and excited for a great week of softball.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. How did winning last year help you in this year's tournament?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: A couple things. I think just understanding that once you get here, the margins are so slim, understanding that anybody can win on any given day. Having the confidence that we are capable and we are prepared and we are ready.

I think the familiarity is a big deal. Just knowing what to expect, even just starting yesterday when we got in. The biggest thing is understanding how small the margins are. Come out here, play your best ball and see what happens.

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, kind of what Coach was touching on. Just being here again, already having that experience, is incredible.

It's just nice to give our freshmen the same experience, allowing them to kind of play here, too. This is the greatest show on dirt, so it's just really good to be back.

ALY KANESHIRO: Yeah, I mean, I think they both nailed it on the head. I think going off of that, for sure it just

**Q. NiJaree, you're focused on team, but right now you are the USA collegiate softball Player of the Year. Could you put that into perspective?**

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, it's incredible. Honestly, it's a dream come true to be here, to play in Oklahoma City, and to get that honor. It's almost everything I could have dreamt up. Next thing is the national championship.

Yeah, it was everything.

**Q. NiJaree, I read you took an unofficial visit to Oklahoma State when you were being recruited. What do you remember from that visit? How did they factor into your recruitment?**

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, I just remember everyone being really nice. The coaching staff there is incredible. Just building a relationship with them was really good.

But, yeah, I'm really happy where I'm at.

**Q. Is this bittersweet in a way knowing that the Pac-12 for so long has been historically dominant in softball, and now you are here, UCLA, that this is now coming to an end?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, it is sad. Pac-12 softball, best conference in the country. Seeing that come to an end is sad.

That being said, I think the only thing certain in college athletics right now is things change. You have to be comfortable in that change, find the good in that change. We're excited to be members of the ACC, excited to build



new rivalries, excited to compete against phenomenal academic institutions that have broad-based excellence in their sports programming.

Sad ending of a chapter, sure. We're not going to spend much time on that. We're going to be excited about the things ahead. Look forward to building those experiences against other teams.

**Q. Mike White a couple days ago said it's a huge advantage for Oklahoma to always have the World Series here. Proposed maybe rotating sites. I wanted your thoughts on that.**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Oh, man. Uhm, I don't know. I think there's not going to be any such thing as equal and fair no matter where you're at. That's just not the way the world works.

I think what we've built here in Oklahoma City for the sport of softball is really, really, really special. So do I think there's some advantages built in there? I do. Do I think that they outweigh what this event does for the sport? That's a hard jump for me to make.

So I'm really happy with everything that Oklahoma City has done for the sport and the stage that they've built for us to compete.

**Q. NiJaree, people obviously saw you on the stage a year ago, talk us through what you built on, you're similar at, what you've changed, improved? Aly and Coach, your perspective on where NiJaree is a year later.**

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, actually that was one thing I was honestly really concerned about just coming into my sophomore year. I had a lot of conversations with Coach Nyberg on how to grow and how to improve. Together we just came up with a list of things that we could improve on in the fall.

We just worked a lot on location, just putting each pitch where we wanted it, throwing each pitch off the last. We did a lot of inter-squads and things like that in the fall to just prepare.

Honestly, just so much credit to Coach Nyberg for just helping me grow and develop.

ALY KANESHIRO: Yeah, I think just going off of that, I think when we were here last year, NiJaree appeared as if she had been here a million times. You would have thought she was a senior playing her fourth year in a row. I was absolutely blown away by her.

Nonetheless, she put in a ton of work in the off-season, fall, winter, and this entire season. Just has continued to get better. Her toughness, her competitiveness was never in question. Even with the pitch locations, the lay-ins, the spin, everything, it's so fun to watch her continue to grow. I'm excited to see what she does this year, for sure.

JESSICA ALLISTER: I'd say the biggest piece is just managing the expectations that come with a freshman year that NiJaree put together last year. That's the space where I've been so, so impressed.

When people are celebrating foul balls and celebrating hits the way they celebrate them, that can start to feel heavy. I think the way that NiJaree has managed that this year has just been not surprising, because we're around her every day, but impressive.

When we play teams, they prepare for her all week. Just not allowing those pressures and expectations to mount too much, managing those, just staying in the process and doing the best she can.

NiJaree is a phenomenal teammate. Last night she wins the award for Player of the Year. You should have seen her teammates behind her. I think they were maybe more nervous than she was because they wanted her to win it so badly and they care so deeply about it. That's been a big piece of it.

Just the way she's handled herself this year has been really, really fun to watch.

**Q. How much and what do you take away from your two prior meetings with Texas?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, obviously it's the third game that we'll face them this year. We've seen all their pitching. They've seen all of our pitching. We've faced hitters a fair amount of time. We're all going to do our homework, watch our film.

There's some definite familiarity there for both teams. I would say also we're at a point in our sport there's so much film, whether you've played somebody or not, you're going to have a good scout on them going in. I think there's definitely something to be said for that. They're obviously a great team. Just excited to get back out there and get back to work.

ALY KANESHIRO: I think going off of that, we've seen 'em twice. They are a great team. We respect 'em a lot. Just going out there with all the preparation that Coach Allister said, trusting our preparation on the field and off the field,

just knowing we can beat anybody and having that mentality when we go in for sure is going to be the key this Thursday.

Stanford.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the development of NiJaree's change-up this year. You addressed her progress from last year to this year. How have you seen that pitch specifically? How has that improved her arsenal so much?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: It's been important. Change of speed is really important. When you have the capability to throw with this speed and movement that NiJaree does, batters are going to begin to cheat and try to get going a little bit sooner, hope that they're guessing in the right location. Being able to pull the string and keep them honest has been important.

NiJaree's ability to get a sense when that is happening and when to use it has been a big thing in her development. It's a big pitch, important pitch.

ALY KANESHIRO: I agree. I think it has helped us incredibly. I thought it was amazing last year. It's gotten so much better this year. Being able to trust that that pitch is going to be incredible, do what it needs to do, I'm sure is great for NiJaree, also great for me and the whole team.

I think it is just as helpful as every other pitch that could ever exist in the world, if not more. I'm really happy with NiJaree's growth. I think it just shows how much work she's put in this off-season, for sure.

**Q. Describe the growth and the journey of getting here this year through the ups and downs.**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, it was great. I think it's really prepared us. I think there can be different paths. Last year, we were talking about it actually as a team, was almost -- I'm not going to say easy, because it's never easy to get to Oklahoma City. But it was smooth. This year it was not smooth.

I think it's a good thing. I think playing in those situations is really important. I think feeling those nerves of not one but two elimination games will serve us moving forward. You find out a little bit about yourself in those moments, a little bit about your teammates. You grow close and draw from those things.

It definitely wasn't easy. I think it's a good thing moving in. We're going to have a lot of confidence to draw from that journey this week.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap things up. Thank you,

