

2024 Women's College World Series

Friday, May 31, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide
Coach Patrick Murphy
Marlie Giles
Kayla Beaver

Postgame Press Conference

Alabama 2, Duke 1

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Alabama.

We'll start with an opening statement by coach.

PATRICK MURPHY: Just wanted to say Marissa and her team are terrific. I think it's the seventh year of the program and they're here at the World Series. We played them last year at Clearwater. I was very impressed. I was like, Wow, this is a good program. Great athletes all over the field. I'm confident they'll be back.

It was cool to see a new person, a new team at the Women's College World Series.

Tonight the first inning was big. Got a run. She saw the ball as big as a basketball tonight. It was perfect timing. We had a runner on, she hits the double. The next time she hits a home run. Two RBIs, one person. That's all Beaver needed.

Briski gave us a good start. The reason why I took her out, a couple lefties in there, Beaver is really good against lefties. She goes hit less with nothing on her slate. A terrific relief job by Beaver.

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

Q. Marlie, obviously battled back from injury this season. Get the home run tonight. Talk about your journey this season, and the at-bat when you hit the home run.

MARLIE GILES: It's definitely been a long year. Been a journey, for sure. I know for me personally, like, I've put my faith in God through the whole process, and that's



helped me come back as fast as possible. Our training staff have helped. So many doctors that's helped us. Dr. Young, she did my surgery, went really well. Really grateful for her.

Really trusting my team. Even whenever I was out, I was in their ear every game, still with them, still working it through it with them. Coming back, being able to be with them on the field again was really special.

Q. Marlie, you had a home run last year. What is it about this stage that you can step up in these moments?

MARLIE GILES: I'll be honest with you, I don't really know. My dad has always said for some reason the Lord is always with me in big moments. Sometimes, most of the time honestly, I come through for some reason. I just thank the Lord for it because I really don't know.

I didn't do anything different today warming up compared to yesterday. It's just today I just saw their pitcher well.

Q. Marlie, you get to see what Kayla does in the circle. How impressive has it been to see what she does?

MARLIE GILES: It's been awesome. To get to know Kayla is to get to know she's a bulldog. She hates to lose. She's a fireball herself just like I am. We work really well together, and I'm so glad she decided to come and wear the 'Bama uniform for her last year. I know Murph always says we're going to take our seniors on a magic carpet ride, and that's what we're trying to do for her today.

Q. Kayla, this is your first Women's College World Series win. What does that mean to you?

KAYLA BEAVER: It means everything. Wearing the A, it's a dream. Being here makes it even better. Everything that I wanted to happen coming in this year, having one year to do it, there was a lot I wanted to get done in a year. We've done it all. There's one more thing left.

Q. Kayla, what has it been like watching Marlie battle back from her injury?



KAYLA BEAVER: It means everything. Me and her, we've been working well together all year. What she's done since she's been back, again, I can't be more proud of her. She has come in, put the work in, come back guns a blazing. She's been incredible behind the plate and in the lineup.

Q. Kayla, you talked about how much fun and looseness you bring on the field. That's hard to do on this stage. How much have you talked about it?

KAYLA BEAVER: Coming into this game, there's a lot on the line. There's two teams playing against each other, their seasons are on the line. We got a lot of seniors on this team. Coming in, playing free, not letting those emotions get to us. That's what it really comes down to. Trusting our abilities, trust in what we've done this year, going from there.

Q. Did you have your Red Bull?

KAYLA BEAVER: I did. Almost forgot it. Had to sprint back to the room. But I did not forget it.

Q. Kayla, you are a grad student, a couple years in the sport. How have you seen it grow in the past couple years?

KAYLA BEAVER: This sport has grown so much. They've dropped a few statistics of viewers per game and things like that. How much it's grown over the years is incredible. Growing up as a little kid watching it, it wasn't that big known thing like football, men's basketball, things like that. What we've turned this into as women, it's incredible.

We do it all together.

Q. Marlie, you talked about your dad. It's the tradition here to give the ball to the family. What is it like having your family in the stands?

MARLIE GILES: It's definitely something special. I know that last year it was just my parents and my sister actually didn't get to come. This year she's able to come. Actually brought a little bit of our crew back from where I'm from, from Chilton County. I hear them yelling in the stands every single inning. I love 'em being here. I'm so blessed to have them in my corner.

Q. The home run was the winning play. How big was it for you to get a run in the first inning, especially with two outs?

PATRICK MURPHY: Huge. For some reason, we scored first in a lot of the post-season games. We haven't been

doing that. Luck of the draw, Ken that got on. It was a tough play. Falls to her knees, she tries to throw, makes a great effort. A little luck out of that. A double in the gap is going to score easy.

Scoring first was huge. I think for us, it was like we're here, we're ready to play.

Q. How big is it to build off having extra base hits?

PATRICK MURPHY: Huge. Huge. We didn't strike out one time. So they made a bunch of plays. Got the ball in play every single time, which I think is a feat. They played play after play, but we put the ball in play.

Kali went from left to center to right. She needs to hit the weight room a little bit, but... I mean, the whole thing was great. Great athletes on both sides of the ball. Just a really good college softball game.

Q. You shouted out Duke when you started. You were once a first-time program here. What is that first year like?

PATRICK MURPHY: I can't tell you how much. It is huge. For them to really come from nothing, for her to do it. I believe she was the first coach. She's been there for seven years. It's like her daughter. To see it grow from where it was to now, to come to this stage, to be on this stage, to talk with you all, to be on TV, it is huge for Duke softball.

I can't say that enough. It was huge for us. I remember talking to my SID after. I said, I want to come back. I know that they will come back. Just really, really good athletes and coaches.

Q. Your first win at the Women's College World Series since 2021. How does it feel?

PATRICK MURPHY: Well, these two -- we set up a game ball, give the lineup cards. Whoever was the defensive MVP gets Duke's lineup card. That was Miss Beaver. Our offensive lineup card goes to Miss Giles. There's three. There's a big one that hangs in the dugout. I gave that to Lance McMahon, our pitching coach. That's his first win at the College World Series. You cannot understate the importance after really good pitching coach.

He has to call every pitch, which is agonizing in itself because that's a lot of pressure for anybody to do that. Go back to the 14-inning game against Tennessee. That's a lot of pitches for one person to be on the ball, concentrate. My baseball buddies always text me, I'm sure I have a bunch when I get to the bus, every play in softball matters.

They all say, How do you do it? How do you do it?

It's just the game. It's fun. Every pitch is involved. It's a huge play after any groundball. I think that's why it's such a good spectator sport. It goes fast and athletes are great.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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