

2024 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 3, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Jessica Allister

Caelan Koch

NiJaree Canady

Postgame Press Conference



Texas 1, Stanford 0

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Stanford. We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, obviously the season coming to an end, didn't end the way that we wanted it to. Still just a lot to be proud of. When you end the season in Oklahoma City, that's the goal every single year. Like I told the team in the locker room, you just got to keep tossing your hat in the ring, get your heartbroken a couple times, stand back up and try again.

I couldn't be more proud of the group of women on the team. They played for each other. They took care of one another. They worked hard. They stayed in growth mode. I feel like we were just getting going. I think we were getting better every game.

Just an absolute wonderful, wonderful group. A pleasure to be around. Obviously NiJaree was fantastic all week, fantastic today. I mean, maybe one of the best performances in Oklahoma City that I've seen at least. None of us that are around here all the time are surprised. Just gritty and tough and phenomenal.

Sad for this year to be over. But proud. Really, really proud.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. NiJaree, you were controlling their lineup. At what point did you think this may come down to one mistake by either team?

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, honestly the whole game. That's a really good team. I knew just to go at 'em as hard

as I can, just trust my defense.

Q. Caelan, you had the knee injury last year. What was it like to be with this squad and play this week?

CAELAN KOCH: Just grateful is the word that comes to mind. So grateful to be here. Kyra, my other teammate, also had an ACL injury, and just watching her ball out this season has been absolutely amazing.

This team is special. They're some of my best friends. Best coaches, best staff. It's just been one hell of a ride. I couldn't be more grateful for the season and to be here.

Q. Caelan, you came into Stanford softball with the senior class that just finished. Can you speak to their impact on the program.

CAELAN KOCH: They've had just the most tremendous impact on this program, both on the field and off. Biggie with a Gold Glove winner, Regan with all of her accolades and strikeouts, Ellee is the fastest person I know on this Planet Earth. Lim can just hit the ball.

They're so talented and made such a huge impact on the program and us. Just wonderful people. We're just all so proud of them and so sad to see them go. They've left their mark in every way possible. We just couldn't be prouder and happier for them. Like, they're awesome.

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, just piggybacking off of that. I think part of the reason we went so far is for those seniors, knowing we want their last game to be as late as possible. At one point we were just playing for them, trying to prolong their season for as long as possible.

Q. Caelan, what makes a Texas pitcher so effective against y'all? You fight your way back into a rematch. What did you try to learn from the first game?

CAELAN KOCH: Sure. I think she's a very good pitcher. I think she has good lanes. She has a good rise ball. That with her change-up makes her very effective.

I think coming off of the first game to the second game, we



played them previously in the year as well a couple times, for me, my approach was try to lay off her rise ball and get a good swing off on a good pitch. So I think that was take an aggressive swing at a good pitch was the mindset.

Q. NiJaree, you had a great World Series last season. Coming into this season, what are you most proud of? What do you think you grew the most in?

NIJAREE CANADY: I think something I'm most proud of honestly is the way this team fought until the very last out. I'll pick us every single time.

As far as my growth, I think just trying to dig in even more. Just dig in, compete, get us back in, yeah.

Q. NiJaree, is it even more painful losing as you did on such a bang-bang close play?

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, definitely. But I feel like every loss hurts. This being the last one definitely does.

Again, just like Coach Allister said, you have to keep going in the ring. One day it will pay off.

Q. Have you seen a difference between the two teams in the two games, the separation?

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, oh, no. I think we can beat any team here. I don't think there's any separation. Again, I'll pick us every single time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, players. We'll continue with questions for coach.

Q. You had last year with NiJaree as a freshman here. The Texas kid was a freshman this year. How tough is it for a freshman to come to this atmosphere and be so effective in the circle? What did you see from the Texas pitcher?

JESSICA ALLISTER: I think it's tough for a freshman. I think it's tough for a lot of players just to be able to, on this stage that we've collectively built as a sport, to come in and keep the game the same.

I thought Kavan did a fabulous job. I think you could see a little bit maybe of the nerves on Thursday. We maybe didn't take advantage of that. Then today you could tell she was settled in and comfortable and pitching aggressively.

Hats off to her. She threw two good games, kept us guessing. She did a phenomenal job. She's a great pitcher.

Q. I think NiJaree had high expectations. She came in, she met every single one of them. How remarkable is it what we see every time she steps into the circle?

JESSICA ALLISTER: I don't know if you can describe it, right (laughter)?

Her competitiveness is the piece that just continues to, like, awe me every single day. Her skill set is unique, but really just the way she competes sets her apart. I've never seen a situation that she backs down from.

Coming back out and getting the ball... We had her on a short leash today. We're monitoring her closely, ready to make a change. She was like, Absolutely not. I think that competitor in her is unlike anything that I've ever seen.

Then she sits here and the team doesn't get the result we want, she looks inward, talks about what she can do better. That's not common. It's what makes her a wonderful teammate. It's what makes her so successful. It's why her teammates love her. You heard it in all the press conferences, all the sound bytes from all of them. We're playing for NiJaree. They love her because she does all those things. She's phenomenal.

Q. The catchers in this World Series, the level of play there. How pivotal is that position and how do you evaluate the talent level here?

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, give catchers some due. That's what I'm talking about. This is good (smiling). I'm just kidding.

We're really there to make the pitchers happy and make them look good. That's our real job (smiling).

There's just great ball players, right? When you walk around and watch the level of play, watch all of the teams, just the level that the sport is being played at right now, it's exciting.

Catching is no different. It's a position where you got to be fast, got to have a great arm, great hands, aware of what's going on, got to run the defense. I think there's just phenomenal athletes on the field right now who are competing at such a great level.

What a wonderful time for the sport. Catching, it's the same as everywhere else. The athletes that are playing the position are pretty spectacular.

Q. Pac-12 softball, you being the last team here, what does that mean for the conference and for Stanford?

JESSICA ALLISTER: It's sad. It's bittersweet. Again, to finish as one of the top four, we're proud of that. We compete in an athletics department that can humble you quickly with the success that you're surrounded by. To think about how far this program has come in the last seven years, where we're sitting here disappointed with a top four finish and feeling like we could have done more, that's great.

It's sad that the conference is going away. Hopefully one day it will come back in some form (smiling). Really, really proud of Stanford softball and proud of the women that I've been able to spend all this time with.

Q. Do you believe in maybe Texas is a team of destiny? Your second baseman made a phenomenal play, then had an error on the other one. You lose it in a rundown.

JESSICA ALLISTER: We did.

Q. What does all that say?

JESSICA ALLISTER: Are they a team of destiny? I don't know that I believe there's teams of destiny. Are they a really good ballclub? They're a really good ballclub. When you talk about the three facets of the game, pitching, offense, and defense, and the old adage that you need two of three on any given day to give yourself a chance win. They have a good chance of being really, really good at two of three on any given day.

Hats off to Coach White. He's built a great roster. They are dynamic, deep, athletic. They've got power, they've got speed.

Do I believe in them as a team of destiny? I don't. Do I think they're a team that keeps the pressure on you and you're going to have to play a really good ballgame to win the game? I do. They're a good pull ballclub. They're a really good ballclub.

Q. A young team, new faces, freshmen. Speak of the growth of this team, especially during this run.

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, every once in a while I look at the roster and see the youth. It's exciting. I think we grew up a lot this year. We grew up a ton this year, both physically, mentally, emotionally, all of the things. Just as teammates and people.

The future's bright. We're excited about our recruits that we've signed. We're excited about the recruits that are committed. We're in a good space right now. I can tell you

that everybody in that locker room is going to leave that locker room hungry. Everybody wants more. We've got the character in the clubhouse that they'll do the work to show up and try again next year.

I think at some point I'll reflect on that a little bit more. Right now, sad to see our seniors leave. Just really, really proud of the impact they've had on the program, the year we had this year.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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