

2021 Women's College World Series

Saturday, June 5, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida State Seminoles

Lonni Alameda

Kaley Mudge

Dani Morgan

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State - 4, Arizona - 3

Q. Dani, obviously probably one of the highlights of your career, the gigantic home run. Take me through that at-bat and kind of all the feels for that moment.

DANI MORGAN: Yeah, I made sure I took my deep breath. Tried not to let the moment get bigger than what it was and just go in there with the pass-the-bat mentality and try to get my swing off for the team.

Q. What was it like in the dugout following the home run?

KALEY MUDGE: It was definitely a crazy environment. We were all screaming, jumping around hugging each other. It was tough not to go out to home plate, but we were waiting at the front of the dugout for Dani when they came in.

Q. After the home run in the next inning, they scored to tie the game, so what was -- for both of you, what was the momentum and the atmosphere for you guys in the dugout going into the next inning? Was it high, low? How did you keep yourself focused through it?

KALEY MUDGE: I knew I was coming up in the bottom of the seventh inning, so I was just trying to get something started for my team. We were pretty pumped to have the bottom of the 7th to score that walk-off run, so I was trying to pass the bat for my team.

DANI MORGAN: Yeah, it was a pretty fun atmosphere. Everyone was pumped, but going to the top of the 7th reminding ourselves that Arizona is a good team and we have to come out and do what we know how to do and stay focused and stay one pitch at a time.

Q. For both you players, two games now you got in in the new stadium with the upper deck. What's the atmosphere like with more of a huge stadium feel? Does it change anything about the atmosphere of the game for the players?

DANI MORGAN: Playing with fans is great, especially when so much of the year we didn't really get to have a huge atmosphere due to COVID. So just coming here and get to go play in front of a full crowd is exciting, and the atmosphere is fun and our fans definitely bring the energy.

KALEY MUDGE: Yeah, it's definitely fun being on this field. I've dreamed of being here since I was probably five years old, so it's really cool to take in the moment when you're standing on the field and looking out to the crowd. And our fans have been so great to us so far. But yeah, I just feel like having all those fans there 100 percent capacity is super cool for us. We appreciate all the fans that come out and support softball.

Q. You were a part of the 2018 run from that losers bracket coming from behind, and there's a lot of your former teammates in the stands that were a part of that. Talk about that experience and how that's helping you into this run here as you make a run once again out of losers bracket.

DANI MORGAN: Yeah, we've been here before. We know what it takes to come out of the losers bracket and win the whole thing. Sharing that experience with the young ones and being the leaders to get us there is something that us upperclassmen that have been here before are trying to do.

Q. When you took third on the errant throw in the bottom of the 7th, was that you visually reading the throw going to the outfield or did you hear anybody yelling go, go, go or anything like that?

KALEY MUDGE: I pop-up slid into second. I didn't expect her to throw it to second, but I slid anyways. And as soon as I saw the ball go off her glove, I just went for it. So it was just of a spur-of-the-moment read.



Q. Now that you're moving on to the next game, after this kind of game, how do you keep yourselves now centered after this because this also could be so draining after a battle like that.

KALEY MUDGE: Yeah, I think right now we are just focusing one pitch at a time. We are not trying to get too far ahead of ourselves. We always say the most important game is the next one, so we are just going to focus on working to play OSU and playing one pitch at a time. And whatever happens, we know that we are going to give our all.

DANI MORGAN: This break is important. We have a few hours off. Just making sure we get back to the hotel, rest, and get locked into the next game.

Q. I was sitting there in the 6th inning thinking I'm going to have to ask Coach about, it just seemed like you were one clutch hit away from getting back in and winning some games. That changed in a hurry. What is it about this team that just you guys kept fighting and grinding?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I think that we talk about fight. That's kind of been -- our whole season is, you know, situational hitting and passing the bat. Usually trying to really live our core value of being smart and being able to make adjustments later in the ballgame. Some of our players talked this morning before we left for the yard and talked about staying in it, staying in the fight, because we can make adjustments and do things later in the ballgame, and Dani did that for us today. It was pretty awesome.

Q. At OU, you go back to Reaves Park at home field. You've seen this stadium and atmosphere change year-to-year. What do you think of it this year? You've played two games with the upper deck and big crowds. How is the atmosphere different now than even, say, when you won the title three years ago?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, there's so many things that are different. At Reaves Park, we got kicked off by the club team so we never finished practice. How much softball has changed in the State of Oklahoma. For a lot of collegiate softball players, to have that stadium feel all the way around, you know, there's not many stadiums that have people behind you, in front of you, sides, and upper deck. So it is pretty awesome to be able to see that and be able to take it all in.

And I also think it says a lot for our sport and how much it's growing and how many people are supporting just the game of softball. There's people here just to watch

softball. And before it was fans of teams, and now it's a place, a destination. This time of year people go to watch the game of softball. That's really special for our sport.

Q. Dani Morgan comes through again, that championship pedigree with a lot of her former teammates in the stands coming out of the losers bracket. You're the only team since 2018 that's come-from-behind.

LONNI ALAMEDA: Dani has always been a scrappy style of player. I mean, she's just gritty, and you know she's always in it. She always rises to the fight and gets after it. So it's just fun when you have players like that that have been in games and won games. They know what it takes. So you know that they are going to give their all at any time.

I think for me, just super happy and proud of her. You know, I think every senior in this program wants to leave this place better than they found it. You know, it's something they talk about, and that's why we have all those former players sitting up in the stands right now because they feel a part of this team. They give their blood, sweat and tears to put Florida State on the map, to have Florida State here. And so they are supporting the players that they influence while they are here.

And our seniors are trying to do the same for the freshmen. A really gritty effort on her part. I thought Kat Sandercock did great today too and just having some very mature pitchers for a sophomore. But when they are lead by seniors that have so much passion, it's pretty easy for the younger ones to follow that.

Q. Even when the run came in in the 7th, Kat didn't break and that's something that was key, so your team could come to bat and get their chance. How proud are you of her for that performance she did today?

LONNI ALAMEDA: I think as a coach, this time of year, you're not coaching. It's everything you've poured into them and you start to see it come out. ACC series, we put Kat in to close the game, and it didn't happen and we got to have a real good talk about leadership. So not only your ability to pitch but your leadership and going with your team to be present for the moment. We had a couple errors and she stayed present. Her head didn't go down.

Like the couple plays to Josie, she turned around, eh eyed her up and talked to her. The maturity, I'm just so proud of her because we have had some long talks earlier in the season for it to show up in these moments. As a coach when you see that this time of the season, it makes you really proud. But she's proud of herself. She has earned

that and that goes into confidence in who you are. And I'm just excited for her career to continue, hopefully here as much as it possibly can.

Q. You addressed it, the maturity and veteran presence you have. How much did you address after this first loss the fact that you can possibly replicate the path that you made three years ago to come back and win the whole thing?

LONNI ALAMEDA: I don't think we really talked about winning a National Championship. I think we talked about winning pitches. I think when we got home the other night -- there's so many kids pressing right now because they want to do so well. So can you get out of your own head and just relax and be pitch by pitch, and it's so easy to say the mantras and so easy to speak it, but can we actually do it. And then can you do it eyeing each other up.

And you can see that closeness starting to work together. You see Dani looking at Mason and Cass looking at Mudge, and Mudge, I've got you, I'm going to get to third. And that synergy starts to happen. I think that's really special. It's pitch by pitch, and if you can keep putting all those pitches together and you stay in the fight and keep throwing some W's, then maybe there on Monday. But right now it's about Oklahoma State and first pitch to last pitch.

Q. There's been a lot of speculation, and we'll find out now, or soon, if Mike Candrea is going to retire. In your opinion, what does he mean to the sport of college softball and what impact has he had on your coaching career in any way?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I think he's impacted every college coach, whether they know him or they don't. He's taken this game to a whole other level, not only collegiately but internationally.

What he's done for Arizona, State of Arizona, the PAC, college softball and international softball has brought such an awareness to play a high-level game. I know when I was at Stanford many years, he was the one we were trying to beat all the time. And it would be on the field, beating recruiting, beating everything. He's such a class act. He's always there as a phone call. I was an assistant at Stanford. I could talk to him at any point and now as a coach across the country, I can call him and talk to him about anything and he's willing to share anything and everything.

I think he's exactly who we all want to be. I think he's who we want to be in the game and off the field, too. So class act. Loved the opportunity to play them this year. They

came to our place. It's just fun to compete against them. Their kids don't quit. They play the game hard and he's truly impacted the game at so many different levels.

Q. Do you hope because you were able to get things going offensively in the last two innings, that will carry some momentum into the game tonight?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, you are who you are when you get here. You are not going to find anything different.

What I hope is we can continue to scratch and claw and play some defense and do the things we were doing, and when we get our chances, we take advantage of them. I don't want to come back to the park and try to be something different. If the first inning ends up being a five-spot, it's a five-spot. But you don't ask your team to be anything different than we've been all season. I'm just excited I get another game to play and these kids get to go out and do the things that they love to do. Just smile, appreciate the moments and just lay it on the field.

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