

2021 Women's College World Series

Sunday, June 6, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma State Cowgirls

Kenny Gajewski

Sydney Pennington

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State - 4, Oklahoma State - 2

Q. Starting with Logan, she gave you every opportunity to win the game tonight. She was brilliant. What did you see from her tonight?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Well, just she seems to pitch her best in the biggest games. The moment is never too big. She just -- when I gave her the ball, I just said, hey, I just need you to keep us here. And she just had the same look that she always has, just calm. She just executed pitch after pitch and I think she was only -- she walked Sheryl at some point, I can't remember if it was early. Other than that. She was just dead-on and pitched very, very well and I don't know how many baserunners they had on her. It wasn't a lot. She calmed the whole game down, calmed the team down, and gave our offense a chance. We just weren't clean and didn't play our best.

Credit Florida State. Sandercock was really good. She was really, really good. It was a grind, but Logan was really good.

Q. Kenny, I know this is hard, I saw your team most of the year and they played at such a high level. Anyway to explain, like you said, not playing clean there, and then also, can you sum up what a great season this was? It was one of the best softball seasons in school history.

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, I don't know why we've had some breakdowns. They come in bunches for us. It's kind of been a thing that we fought all year, and I wear that. I'm the defensive coach and I have to figure out a way to get us just cleaner. We're too good to make four errors in any game. I really didn't think that Kiley's ball was an error. I don't know the official scorer here. I don't know if they have ever played softball. But I don't know how that's an error.

The other ones, balls we'd like to have back. Unfortunately in these type of games, you just can't have them. A little disappointing there, but we also make a ton of plays and I'll hang our hats on those. And I'll have to find a better way to clean us up some. We'll get there.

On the season, I don't know. Hard to say right now. It's hard to reflect just quite yet. I don't know that I want to go there. It's another great run. Another top five. But, hurts. We're going to lose some great kids. Team will look different this next year. I don't know how much I want to think about that yet.

I just kind of hurt for those kids that this is it. That's the tough part. So there's a lot of great things. Pitched very well. Played defense well for the most part. Really have grown on the offensive side. We're starting to look like an elite softball program and we'll just continue to Chase the standard at OSU, and that's win championships. We fell short again. Right now, that's the hardest thing. We just fell short and maybe you can catch me in a week or so and we can kind of start going back over just how good of a year it was.

But right now, it hurts.

Q. There's a whole lot to be proud of for you this year and for your team. You won 48 games and you broke the home run record and you hosted a regional and you hosted a Super Regional and you got to the World Series. What stood out for you from this year?

SYDNEY PENNINGTON: I think the biggest thing is just the way that our team grew so much closer towards the end. It's really tough to see these seniors play their last game because Coach tells us all the time that we are not really going to remember the games. We're going to remember these friendships and the memories and the moments that we make, and I think it's just really important that we remember the really good moments that we had this year and just continue to stay in touch with these people. And once a Cowgirl, you're a Cowgirl for life. I think it's just really exciting to be able to look back and see how much we grew together throughout this season.

Q. What did it mean to sub Carrie in there and finish out her career as a Cowgirl?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Yeah, I mean, I don't know, it wasn't our intention to get her in there late. We got here in there because we are trying to win. So it wasn't like a feel good deal. I thought Logan -- felt like we needed to make a change. Probably the longest Logan has gone most of the year, so it was just time.

Carrie was ready. We kept telling her, hey, if she gets a runner on base, we may make a move and Logan wasn't getting runners on base and we kept going with her. We were trying to steal as many outs from her as we could before we had to go to Carrie because we were trying to win this tournament, not just win this game.

We were trying to keep Carries fresh and I was hoping we could get a little more out of Kelly. I think she just came out so good and adrenaline kind of ran out of gas, her ball got flat. They were taking good cuts and that's why we made the change.

You know, if Karli makes that play late, tough play up the middle there, we may not have taken Logan out. I don't know if I answered that or not, but that's kind of where I'm at.

Q. Sydney, clearly you could see that your coach cares so much about not only you but your team as a whole, and he wants the best for all of you. Speaking on behalf of your teammates, what does he mean to you?

SYDNEY PENNINGTON: I think when I speak about him, I can talk about -- all my teammates would probably agree with me. Just someone who is super positive and encouraging and never has a doubt in us whatsoever. If we are down, he's the first one there to get you up and get you pumped up. He's just someone that is a role model to me and someone that I look up to every day, and leads this team so well and has built this program so quickly in the last couple years. And I'm just really proud, and I'm sure my teammates are just as proud to play for him and to play for the Cowgirls, because there's just going up from here.

So I'm really proud of him and I'm really, really happy that I've been able to play for him.

Q. I know obviously this game started later than originally scheduled, and so when you're going through the weather delays that you dealt with today, what are you telling your team during that time to kind of stay in the mode mentally?

KENNY GAJEWSKI: Honestly, we just had a team meal at about 5:15. Thought we'd be hanging out for about a half-hour. I got a text that we had lightning and I just kind of told the team, hey, they pushed the first game time back, so we'll push our departure time back.

We had a group of girls playing games, playing card games. My daughter was in there. They were teaching her a card trick that she was trying to master, so that was kind of funny to watch. Our incoming new president of OSU was there the whole time with her husband, Dr. Shrum and Darren Shrum. They were in there for two hours probably just talking, hanging out with our girls and talking with the staff.

It was a joy. We just kept -- you know, we've got to do what do, and we always talk about not letting anything distract us. We're still -- play the game and we're thankful to have the opportunity to play this game. So wasn't really anything to worry about.

As it started to get a little later, I kind of felt like we may not play because we have these different things that we go by, but you've just got to be ready to play. And you know, it is what it is. It's a late game. I don't know. It's tough. You know, it's tough to play -- start a game at 11:50 at night. This is about the time these kids wake up and go out at night. I don't think it affected them as much. It was harder on the coaches than anybody else to be honest.

Q. What was it like starting the game that late but also seeing the fan support you had despite the game starting about midnight?

SYDNEY PENNINGTON: We were treating it like any other game. We weren't discouraged by the time we were starting. We were probably more amped up. With our fans, we expect them to be there. They are the ones that get the crowds going and chant and get us up if we're down and they are loyal, so I didn't expect anything less from the crowd. They were awesome. There was a lot of orange in OKC this week. That was really exciting to see.

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