

2021 Women's College World Series

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida State Seminoles

Kalei Harding

Kaley Mudge

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State - 8, Oklahoma - 4

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Kaley Mudge and Kalei Harding.

Q. This is for Kalei Harding, could you walk me through where you were in 2018 when Florida State was playing for a title? Where were you and what do you remember about that experience being back in Tennessee?

KALEI HARDING: I was at a travel-ball tournament and we were all watching on our phones. I know a lot of people wanted a Game 3 but I was just pushing for the Noles. Just wanted to get it over with, but I think I was at a practice, just cheering them on.

Q. This question is for both of you. Your ability, could you talk about the aggressive base running, putting the ball in play, the final inning, the switching of the defensive positions because you guys had to, just what is it about this team, you guys aren't afraid to do anything. You go out there and you get it done.

KALEY MUDGE: We worked on just being aggressive all year. That's one of our core values, being aggressive. It's definitely something that comes with this team. I think we really bought into being aggressive base runners and just being so flexible on defense. Kalei Harding can play any position, and it's fun to see her move around and to see Syd and Dev have to move around, and then Kiersten come in, that was huge. And everyone in the dugout is ready for next man up which makes it such a good culture here.

KALEI HARDING: Mudge basically said it all. We practice so hard, we practice base running a lot. We just go out there honestly and play softball. We practice enough. So...

Q. Talk about Danielle Watson's performance tonight and how important that was, the way she set the tone early. And then also the throw-out there in the second by you, Kalei Harding, how big was that for you to set the tone of the game?

KALEI HARDING: Danielle did a great job. She kept the momentum on our side. She did a great job keeping the ball in the park. We knew they were going to swing it. She kept her composure really well.

The second inning, just I don't really know. I just tried to do whatever I could to keep the momentum on our side. It's not easy playing in front of thousands of Oklahoma fans, but whatever I could do to keep the momentum in our dugout.

KALEY MUDGE: Danielle is one of the most competitive people I've ever met. She's grown so much since being here. So it's really fun to see her compete on the stage and succeed. I knew that we all had her back. When she got the start we were all just ready to be in her hip pocket for her. She worked so hard to be in this moment. I'm just really proud of her.

Q. Kaley Mudge you talked about the base pass and how that's really been the MO with how much speed you have all year. Was there an extra emphasis on that, maybe that could be the great equalizer for y'all against a team like Oklahoma with that lineup?

KALEY MUDGE: Definitely. We worked hard on our base running all year. When we were trying to find who we were as a team, we knew one thing for sure and that was that we were fast. I think one of the pitchers said it in one of the beginning of our team meetings is that we're fast and we can take a lot of bases.

We definitely used that to our advantage throughout the whole season. It's just trying to be the same team we've all been all season being here. Nothing's going to show up new. It's just cool to see us running the bases, just like we have all season.

Q. Obviously to win this whole thing you guys will have to beat OU one more time. No team so far this season has managed to beat OU twice. What's the recipe to get the win tomorrow or the next day?

KALEI HARDING: Honestly, just playing Florida State softball. We have been all year -- trusting and not -- only team 38 really. It's not going to be easy and we know that, but we are resilient and we're going to fight, whatever it takes.

KALEY MUDGE: Yeah, I definitely agree with what Kalei said -- it's go I get take all of us and all of our fight. Oklahoma is a great team and we know they have some hot bats and some good pitchers. Just focusing on us, focusing on what matters. And what matters is the people in our circle.

It's obviously very loud here. It's basically a home game. So the fans have been amazing on our side, but we're just trying to focus in on ourselves and just fight for each other one pitch at a time.

Q. Kalei Harding, you moved down to the ninth spot in the order and then you really have broken out these last couple of games. Is that because you got less pressure in the ninth spot or just one of those things you broke out as a coincidence?

KALEI HARDING: It's definitely less pressure, especially being a freshman, coming in, playing in front of so many people. Less pressure in the 9 spot definitely helps. But honestly just keeping a short memory and knowing I can do it. It only takes one pitch. So just believing in myself.

Q. I want to talk about your teammate, this is for both of you guys, your teammate Josie Muffley, scary play during the game. But they picked her up, just helping her, she was so upset by being taken out of the game. Just tell us about her toughness and how no matter what she still wants to go give her best one 10 percent?

KALEY MUDGE: Josie is one of the toughest people on this team for sure mentally and physically. She throws her body around like it's nothing. She's made plays like that for all season for us. She's not afraid to go in hard, dive for balls whatever it takes -- she's definitely a whatever-it-takes type of player.

It's a scary moment. I was standing at home plate, a very scary play. I'm glad she got up. She's so competitive and tough that she always wants to be out on that field. But I'm just glad that she's okay.

KALEI HARDING: 100 percent what Mudge said. Josie is definitely the toughest player I've ever played with. She'll take whatever. She'll take so many hits, so many hit-by-pitches, so many collisions. But she'll get right back up. And I'm pretty sure you'll see her out on the field tomorrow with a huge smile on her face.

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