

2021 Women's College World Series

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida State Seminoles Coach Lonni Alameda

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State - 8, Oklahoma - 4

Q. You talked about your team's speed and what that can do and how that can make you more aggressive on the base paths. Was there an extra emphasis coming into this game knowing the power of the OU lineup you were going against?

COACH ALAMEDA: No, I think this has just been who we are. I think it's a mixture of speed and smarts. I think Kalei alluded to the fact that we practice on our base running. But we talk about the smarts of base running and how important it is to take an extra 60 feet knowing arm strengths and running with your head up and all those things. So that's just been who we are. We've done that all season.

So I'm so proud of them to be able to, on a big stage like today, let it loose and take the extra bases that got us here. And they're comfortable doing it now.

Q. Did you say anything to Kalei Harding after the game? And how do you sum up how a freshman pulls together that sort of game after her earlier struggles?

COACH ALAMEDA: Kalei has been amazing all season. She's had a big role for us as a freshman. She's played a lot of different positions. She's been at the top of the lineup for most of the season and has done incredible.

And I know at this point in the season she's almost like a sophomore. But no, I think I hugged her. I hope I hugged her. I think I didn't. But I will. It's kind of whirlwind after the game. As a coach you get to this time of year and your heart is just so full when they get opportunities to be on the big stage and get after what they want to get after.

Q. Just coming into that game, Danielle, obviously between your pitchers was pitching the fewest innings in this Women's College World Series up to this point. But to have that kind of outing -- the scoreboard might

not have looked like it -- against an offense like Oklahoma what do you say about the start and quality that she came out and gave you for those five innings?

COACH ALAMEDA: Incredible. I think we've been blessed with a great pitching staff this year and I think we've been blessed with the pitching staff that works together. They know they're a unit. They know they can bring it anytime. A pitch to the circle that's needed for the team. And Danielle was waiting for her moment and she was present.

She was completely composed in some big moments and connected with her team. And that's something that we've worked on all season for her. And just, I mean, we all knew she had it in her. And here we are, the opportunity to give it to her and she shined.

Q. You have played in some really tough environments. What was this like and how did you feel like the team handled it? What do you expect it's going to take to close out Oklahoma here particularly?

COACH ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, I said it in the fourth inning interview. It's electric. Every time we kept going out there; they're softball fans not OU fans. Everyone's just excited about the softball game. I think Mendes has her own cheering section in right field.

It's incredible. It's incredible for the game. I don't know if anyone's ever played in this environment unless you're playing Oklahoma at home for a national championship. It's a different story with that second level. It echos. It's really, really cool. It's really cool. And for the growth of our sport.

And I was so proud of all of us, even me. I know that I've coached a lot of games and been in a lot of places but there are many times I'm like, wow, this is so loud, this is so cool for our sport. And all of our kids just took it in and were completely comfortable in the moment.

Q. Can you talk about the importance of having the veteran players talk to the team before the start of this game? How important was that and what impact did it



have?

COACH ALAMEDA: I think we probably have been sharing stories about postseason for about three to four weeks now. You get towards the end of your regular season, your book of work puts you in a position to be at-large. So you start practicing and talking about three-game series. You start talking about championship mindsets. All the things that we've earned and we can trust.

You get together as a group and, hey, Syd, share with the team what is it like to walk into Oklahoma City for the first time for practice day. Hey, Anna, what's it like when there's two teams left playing and all fans are yelling and they can share their experience.

Now those experiences have been shared and the freshmen can see what they're talking about. I think it's hugely important. But I think the biggest thing right now is we're playing together as a team. And there's no someone's been here before. It's we're all in this together and we're playing as a team. And we're playing some really exciting softball. And that's probably the greatest thing that the stories have shared with us.

Q. Going back to Danielle for a second, how did her performance last night influence the decision and thought process? And is that a decision that you knew you were going to make last night when you go to sleep, or do you sleep on it?

COACH ALAMEDA: No, I had a pretty good idea I wanted to start her today. I knew her velocity down in the zone and her ability to spread the zone with the rise ball was going to be pretty good. They're a great hitting club, so you have to attack different quadrants and use different speeds.

So they're right-handed heavy. They're power-heavy. There's a lot of thoughts going into that thought process.

And other side, can I give Kat a little bit of rest? She's been pitching great games for us too. And Caylan and her have a lot of innings under their belt here, so could get a little bit of rest for them to go into, what, tomorrow's game is the biggest game. Game 2 is the toughest of any three-game series. And we wanted to get quality information today. And if we got the W, wow, incredible, icing on the cake. Now we can get to work tonight and decide what we need to do tomorrow.

Q. Can you talk about the importance of jumping on them early? This is the second time that you got the big lead and then kind of held on a little bit. And also

how is Josie doing?

COACH ALAMEDA: Josie is great. We had a doc come in and check her out. Make sure she's okay. She's going to be okay.

And, gosh, any run support, right now. I think it's just so cool that the team is so comfortable with short game, passing the bat, big swings. They're okay with quality plate appearances. Like everything that we've been working through this season they're comfortable with. But when you can throw some run support on the board and then you're going after a team that can leave the yard pretty consistently, it allows you as a pitcher to calm down and attack the zone with a different mindset.

It was absolutely huge for us. The hitters have just been incredible how they've been working their plans. And Travis and Troy have been getting after each individual player and the offense in general. And it's a huge one and something we want to keep getting after for the next game.

FastScripts by ASAP.