

2021 Women's College World Series

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners Coach Patty Gasso

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State - 8, Oklahoma - 4

THE MODERATOR: Joined by head coach Patty Gasso.

Q. Coach, your team has played in four elimination games, what did they learn the most from those games and what can they take from those experiences into tomorrow's game?

COACH GASSO: You can't wait. You can't sit back and wait. And when you're on a stage like this, you just gotta play well. You gotta pitch well. You gotta hit well. You gotta do a lot of things well.

We didn't do much of that very well. We had signs of it. We were creating a little bit of momentum. But the beauty of this series is that you have another day, and we learned again kind of reminded me a little bit of what happened to us as we started this tournament. We just wasted time, not quite ready, not very loose in the way of swinging. Now, not taking away anything from Florida State. They just stuck it to us, bottom line.

I mean, they were good tonight. Everything they did was solid. Defense was pretty solid. Pitching, very good. Their offense, just absolutely was on point with about everything they did. Aggressive base running. We've got to make plays. We didn't make plays. We didn't have timely hits when we needed them.

Q. Just ask if you could expound on two decisions you made. One to start Nicole. And also sending Jennings --

COACH GASSO: I knew that -- yes, okay, Nicole May, we thought could move the ball around a little bit and mix some speeds and kind of keep the ball down. And she plays good defense. And Florida State does a lot of short game, a lot of hit-and-run, run-and-hit type action. I thought Nicole would handle that well.

That was what went into that decision. I made a horrific call. And I own that. I should not have send Tiare. I just really in my mind was wanting to push the envelope to create momentum.

What I didn't do a good job of was knowing who was coming up, two hitters up. I don't know. I wear that. I already apologized to the team. And that was a bad call by me.

But at the same time, they make a great play. So they earned that. But I'm going to hold onto that for a while.

Q. With Nicole, you left her in the third or the fourth, what were you thinking as they were beginning to get to her a little bit and she was walking, were you thinking about -- what were you thinking about coming in or when you should have come in with another pitcher?

COACH GASSO: That's another thing that we probably should have done a better job of is that we just didn't want to show all of our hand too early. We wanted to get ourselves back in the game. And if we could have done it over, I know we would have done it a little bit different in the way of bringing in Shannon. But Giselle was the one that was hot in the bullpen. And that didn't make sense for us.

So we were trying to get Shannon ready as quickly as we could. And I think Florida State just does it very quickly. They do it quickly. They get on base and they move their runners quickly. It just happens very fast.

The fact that we gave up six walks really hurt us. So we didn't pitch well. Not good enough. We didn't play good enough D, like nothing for us was really good tonight.

Again, I think as a coaching staff, we would have done a few things quite differently. Me especially.

Q. Wondering what you thought about the play there in the seventh and not only the way that play unfolded with the obstruction call at the end, but also just sort of the momentum shift that goes on there as your



players are celebrating? Seems like they're getting off the field with a three-run deficit going into the seventh with the top of the order coming up shortly, and all of a sudden the inning continues.

COACH GASSO: It hurt us. That call hurt us. And all I can say is that I wish that rule was looked at a little bit differently because there's a lot of ways that you can look at it. And I guess I'll just leave it right there at that.

I'm sorry that the young lady got hurt. That's not the intention whatsoever. But I just am going to leave it right there. It's a tough rule. It's a tough, tough rule for all teams who are trying to be aggressive and umpires are trying to do the right thing.

It's something that is tough. And you just hate the fact that it's at home plate because it's going to lead to a run or cost a run, one way or the other. So it was a tough play.

Q. I think something that stood out is maybe you guys not scoring a ton of runs early in these games in the World Series. You guys have been great offensively as the games have gone on. But what do you guys have to do maybe in these last couple of games to get off to better starts offensively?

COACH GASSO: I think probably just relax a little bit. Trust what we're doing some. You can see that sometimes hitters are trying to do too much. I just -- at one time Grace Green was at home plate as the tying run. So do we want a faster start? Sure we do. Is it that easy? Not really. Good teams and good pitchers that we're facing. So it's not like you can -- I don't know any team that comes out and just scores six runs in the first three innings. This is the World Series. You would expect that pitchers don't allow that as much.

So I trust this team. They fight. They're fighters. But we did not play well enough to win. And that gives credit to Florida State. They did. We did not. But we also understand that -- I just think failure is not something that we believe in. I mean, we've got to keep fighting. It's not like, oh, we failed. We fought. We fought when we needed to. It just wasn't set up for us tonight. And that happens. But I believe that you'll see a new team tomorrow with a new approach. And I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Nicole was just talking a little bit ago kind of what you were saying there at the end the previous times this season losing to a team and coming back beating that team multiple times; is that something you'll communicate to the players to help them draw confidence moving forward, hey, we've done this

already three other times this season losing to a team and coming back beating them multiple times afterward?

COACH GASSO: I don't need to tell them. They know. They know exactly how this works. And I mean you've got to put it all out there. And I think we learned from the way we played tonight. And I'm very confident as I know they are that they will not repeat that performance and have a different mentality of fight, even when things aren't going our way. We just can't sit back and wait. And so they're not happy right now. I know that. But that's a good thing. That's a good thing. It's going to show our character and our style and who we really are as a team and as a program.

So I'm looking forward to it. I think you're going to see a different team with a different approach and much better play.

Q. Can you talk about Kalei Harding's performance tonight; seemed her performance brought a lot of momentum to Florida State.

COACH GASSO: She did just a great job. We just couldn't get her out. She was clutch for them, definitely. Hitting gaps. Driving in runs. Give her credit for that.

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