

2022 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Arizona Wildcats

Coach Caitlin Lowe

Hanah Bowen

Sharlize Palacios

Allie Skaggs

Postgame Press Conference



score against them.

And I think it was kind of a battle for us at the plate, but it was something really good that we were able to overcome.

Q. Caitlin, I think you're one of three coaches in the field who played here in college in Oklahoma City. I think you go back about 15 years.

CAITLIN LOWE: Hey, hey. Five.

Q. Can you reminisce on those playing days and just how different it was then versus how it is now?

CAITLIN LOWE: I have to say it felt so grand back then. This stadium felt so big and larger than life. It's crazy because you look at it now with the triple deck, and it's just a whole different vibe. It gets better and better every year. I think the ratings get better and better every year. The competition gets better and better.

It's just cool to see the sport grow. Oklahoma City and the state of Oklahoma really embraced this tournament and just make it an A-class event. And just so proud to be here, but really just to be a part of the growth of softball has been so cool.

I know that these athletes are going to put on a show for you guys this week and really just add to it.

Q. Coach, I talked with Madi earlier today and just about playing her sister, Miranda. Have you talked to her about that at all? And what kind of experience do you think that will be for Madi?

CAITLIN LOWE: I think it's going to be fun. I think they got to see each other last night at the banquet and take some pictures, and then it's less about softball and more about family. I think it's cool.

I actually played my sister at the World Series, and it was more rough for the parents. I think that's where it's going to be interesting, to see how her parents do in the crowd.

It's exciting. They're both at the top level of their game.

THE MODERATOR: This is the pre-tournament press conference featuring the Arizona Wildcats. Arizona is making its 25th trip to the Women's College World Series after having defeated Mississippi State in the Starkville Super Regional. We are joined by head coach Caitlin Lowe, student-athletes Allie Skaggs, Hanah Bowen, and Sharlize Palacios.

Coach, if you could tell us a little bit about the wildcats' journey to OKC.

CAITLIN LOWE: Just so honored to be here among so many great teams, so many great coaches and athletes. It's just an honor. A lot of different paths to get here. I think that's what stands out the most. Ours was a bumpy road to start, and we have a team that really persevered through a lot of stuff that happened this season, and just so very proud of this group of women for coming together at the right time and really going through some tough -- very tough regional, a very tough super regional to be here.

Proud to be here and excited to compete with this group.

THE MODERATOR: You opened up regional play with a win and then faced Missouri in that second game, and Hanah turned in an absolutely brilliant pitching performance and shut them down. What did that do for you guys confidence-wise, like, hey, we can do this? How did you feel after that game?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: I think it was a great momentum shift for us to get some wins under our belt against some really good teams and some really good players. I think we sparked our hitting off of Bow and off of Devyn and having them pitch really good games, it made us want to



That's just so cool to see a family go through, and they must be really proud, and they're going to have a lot of probably anxiety to go with it.

Q. For Coach: I know there had to have been some pressure on your team on keeping the NCAA tournament streak alive, but once you made the tournament, have you been able to play with less pressure? Have you noticed a difference in your team?

CAITLIN LOWE: Yeah, I think honestly -- someone brought it up. In watching the Selection Show, it was huge for our team, and it made my heart happy just to hear their reaction. I thought we released a lot that day, and it was just a new start from then on.

I think they've played with less pressure. I think they've played loose. I think they've started to be themselves. It helps to have a healthy team going in too. I think they chose themselves in a way they hadn't yet before. It didn't really matter what anybody else thought, and they kind of went on a tear of being themselves, and I think that's been the coolest thing to see.

Q. You mentioned it, but I guess I'll ask Allie. How did the struggles earlier in the season help you and get you guys to where you are now?

ALLIE SKAGGS: I think it showed how competitive we were as a team because we had it in us, and losing brings that out of you. Losing sucks. We hated it. It's not fun.

It brings it out of us because we have such a fire in us, and so you go on an 0-8 streak, and it just says at what point are we going to change this? It's up to us.

That's one thing that Cait kept telling us at the end of those games: Hey, it's up to you guys. You're the team now. Go light a fire under someone, and let's go win some games.

Losing I think just ignites that, and now that we're in a little bit of a good streak, I think the pressure is off. We're loose. We're just having a good time and taking advantage of every single moment that we get at this point.

Q. Just for Caitlin and Sharlize and Hanah: Obviously, the numbers dictate this team is pitching better in the postseason, so what's the difference? What's the difference in how you guys are attacking hitters now than maybe what we saw during even the latter stages of the regular season?

HANAH BOWEN: In all honesty, I think it's just the time is

right right now, and just going out there like I always do. Command and attack the zone. I'm just here to win, and I felt like right now everything is starting to click as a whole. Not only for myself, but with this team, and we're just ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Sharlize?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: I think they've had it in them the whole time. It's just a matter of when they were bringing it out, and they brought it out the perfect time. I love catching our pitching staff. They're great competitors, and they do an amazing job.

I think just what Hanah said is just trusting and commanding the zone and competing out there. I think that's what we did as a whole entire team, and it's really fun catching them now in the postseason. It's always been fun, but even elevated to that. They've been doing an amazing job, and I'm really proud of them.

CAITLIN LOWE: It's funny. I was looking at our Instagram, and they were talking about how the team has been doing puzzles. And I just sat in my room, and I was, like, we're a puzzle, and we're a bunch of puzzle pieces, and that's what we were at the beginning of the year. We were a bunch of really good puzzle pieces, and we saw it in the fall. We just knew we had to put the pieces together. The pitching, the defense, and the hitting together.

I think for the last five games you've seen all of it. You've seen us win games that we've shut really good teams out and been able to score the one run when it counted, in games when we've turned double plays to help us get momentum into offense.

I think that's been the key for us is we saw in practice what we could be, and then being able to put it all together.

Q. Coach, I'm curious how does it feel to be here at the World Series as a head coach versus being here as a player and as an assistant? And I'm curious what did Coach Candrea tell you after you got -- you booked the trip after the win in Starkville?

CAITLIN LOWE: What did he tell me? I can't remember. It was a really good text, though. I'm not sure I can even share it with you.

It was a good text, and he booked a trip out here, and he is very excited. He has been texting the girls even on our group chat after the games, and he has been supportive every step of the way.

It feels more rewarding in this seat because I get to see



each of them, 18 individuals, kind of go through the roll of their own seasons, their own struggles, their own triumphs. It's special. It's special for me to see that growth throughout the year and for them to play really some good team softball at the right time. That's been the most exciting for me.

Q. For Caitlin. You played on a lot of teams where you would give the ball to one pitcher, and she would go all seven innings all tournament, all season, whatever the case may be. One of them is on your staff now.

As the sport has changed, how have you kind of shaped your view of pitching and pitching usage and managing a staff?

CAITLIN LOWE: Hitting is better. I'll be the first to admit that. I think all around the game the hitting is better. One through nine with all of these line-ups are going to be pretty stacked.

I think you have to provide different looks. I think you have to go with a pitcher, one of them sitting right here, that can change themselves throughout the game according to what hitters are doing off of them. And that's when it helps to play headsy softball, which is what Hanah Bowen does. Devyn Netz is great at it. You have to be a dynamic pitcher and know the game, and that's where the difference comes in.

Q. Sharlize, at one point you were you were hitting under .200 this season, and then the second half of the season you just exploded. What was the key to your turnaround?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: Staying focused on the little things. I really did get to enjoy playing with my teammates and pulling from them and pulling their energy and not trying to focus so much on my performance.

There was definitely a lot of tears and a lot of talks with Cait and my family, but I just tried to stay the course and just simplify it again. And, yeah, it's been a lot more fun now on this side.

Q. Last one for Allie. Did you ever envision in your second season that you would lead the Pac-12 in homers?

ALLIE SKAGGS: No. Just because look at the other players. Especially coming in -- last year, yes, I got a decent number of at-bats, but coming in in this, I kind of call it my freshman season. I feel like it's my first full one. I'm still kind of figuring it out just like the rest of us.

No, I knew I had it in me, but I've never been the type of player to expect that type of thing. I feel like it just happens, and I'm taking everything -- I'm not taking anything for granted.

And I will say Baylee Klingler, she's my favorite player. And so it was cracking me up when she would go ahead one, and I would catch up to her, and I would go up one and she would catch up to me. A little cat-and-mouse chase.

I think it's awesome, and I'm super honored to be to be on that list with such great hitters.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, can you talk about Allie's improvement, her growth, maturity? What have you seen from her this year?

CAITLIN LOWE: I was going to add to that and say I don't think the rest of us are surprised by it at all. She's being humble right now. When you watch her come to work every single day and do what she does, and she's just steady. She's always been consistent for us, and I'm not talking about games. I'm talking about every day at practice, any workout, any individual.

Good things happen to those people that put the work in every day and have a great attitude and they're great teammates, and you're not surprised to see those.

Honestly, in the limited time she got, she hit five home runs last year, and to me that's not surprising at all that she could come in in uncomfortable situations with less reps and still hit five bombs in really crucial situations against very good pitching.

Not surprising at all, and now that she has this full season, full body of work, she's just going to continue to get better.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much. Student-athletes, thank you. Best of luck.

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