

2022 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 2, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oregon State Beavers

Laura Berg

Frankie Hammoude

Kiki Escobar

Postgame Press Conference



Florida 7-Oregon State 1

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 3 press conference featuring the Oregon State Beavers. We will be joined by head coach Laura Berg. We're currently joined by student-athletes Kiki Escobar and Frankie Hammoude. If we can begin with questions for our student-athletes.

Q. Frankie, as one of the team's leaders, when you found out that Mariah wasn't going to play today, what did you feel like the mood of the team was and what did you guys do to kind of get yourselves up for that?

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: I think we all have a lot of confidence in Sarah. So obviously, we lost a bat in the line-up, but we all knew it was going to take all of us to win here, so I don't know. I think we've been dealing with this kind of stuff all year with injuries, all that type of stuff. It didn't really faze us too bad, I don't think.

Q. Kiki, what made it more difficult offensively to get more than your team did against Lugo, Florida's second pitcher?

KIKI ESCOBAR: I would say just being a little bit more disciplined in our at-bats. We swung at a lot of balls that were in the dirt, so I thought just us being more disciplined, seeing more pitches, and not being so aggressive on the strikes that weren't strikes, but just being more disciplined I would say would really help us a lot.

Q. Kind of along those same lines is a question that Frankie answered: Obviously, Sarah has been good for your team in the circle this year. How much of a mental hurdle was it not having Mariah with you tonight?

KIKI ESCOBAR: Again, like we said, I have a lot of confidence in Sarah. I have seen her pitch all year, so I wasn't too fazed of Mariah not being able to start for us today, but I have a lot of confidence in Sarah, so I was really confident going into today's game.

Q. For both of you: Were there any nerves today going into it? I know you said there's no pressure, just having fun since there don't seem to be a lot of expectations, but were you nervous playing out there on this stage?

KIKI ESCOBAR: Definitely coming on the field and seeing everyone, there was a little nerves there, but I feel it was more excitement more than anything. I just really wanted to play. I really wanted to get the game started, was one of my big things out there. But there definitely was nerves there, but nothing too crazy, I would say.

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: Yeah, I was more excited than anything. Like she said, I was just kind of anticipating the game happening because it was kind of later in the day.

I don't know. Coach Berg says we're not human if we don't get butterflies, but I didn't really have butterflies before the game, and I think -- I don't know. I think I was just more excited if anything. I'm just excited to be here and enjoy the moment.

Q. Kiki, you had the hard-luck line-out in the second inning. You guys were unable to score there. Just how deflating was that inning for you guys?

KIKI ESCOBAR: It wasn't deal-breaking for us. We knew we had a lot of game time left. We know it was difficult not getting a run scored with bases loaded and nobody out, but we knew it wasn't a deal breaker for us. We knew we can get on base, and we had plenty of game left, so it wasn't a deal breaker for us.

Q. Frankie, yesterday you said that you guys sometimes learn more from losses than victories. What will you take away from today going into tomorrow?

FRANKIE HAMMOUDE: I think just the experience of playing in Oklahoma City. A lot of us are young and have never played in front of big crowds like this. So just getting those first game nerves out, and obviously, we had a couple of errors, so just cleaning it up and learning to just focus and focus on just that one pitch that's coming and not make this bigger than it is because, again, it's just softball. We've been playing since we were little, little kids.

Yeah, just learning to soak up the moment, but also be in the moment.

Q. Laura, when did you know that Mariah wasn't going to be able to play today, and can you say why she wasn't able to play?

LAURA BERG: The big elephant in the room. No, I cannot say why she was not here. She's just unavailable today. Hopefully we'll have her tomorrow. It's just some unfortunate circumstances out of her control that she was not able to be here today.

Q. How did that change things for you without her in the lineup? I know you've had some games without her, but not in this situation, obviously.

LAURA BERG: You're right. It's unfortunate we did not have her today, but it's nothing we haven't already dealt with all year long. At one point we had six starters out, and these guys have done a good job of next woman up. Next person up.

We didn't play all that well. We had four errors. Obviously, you can't have four errors and expect to win a ball game at this point in the season and leave bases loaded with nobody out. You just are not going to win a lot of ball games that way.

Q. Laura, what did you see that made it difficult to get more going offensively when Florida switched pitchers?

LAURA BERG: It was like we've never hit a change-up before. A kid like Natalie, and I know Natalie from the Junior Worlds. She played for me in 2017, and she's a tough kid to hit off of, but if you are going to try and hit hard and hit soft, it's really hard to do, so either you hit one or you hit the other. We just weren't committed to doing that.

Q. You've been able to depend on Mariah a lot this year. Did you see that as a mental hurdle at all times for your team today?

LAURA BERG: Any time you don't have a kid like Mariah in your lineup, it's going to suck, but it is what it is. We

didn't have her. You have to deal with it and play ball, and we didn't play ball the way we're capable of playing.

Q. Going off of that, to have Sarah step up so huge being a freshman on this stage, what did you see from her today that you really were impressed with?

LAURA BERG: I thought Sarah did an incredible job. I thought there was maybe some strikes that were not called, but she dealt with it.

Sarah is just like this. You'll never see her up too high. You'll never see her too low. I thought she accepted the pressure very well and did a great job.

Q. People from the outside are going to see this score and say Oregon State, just a team glad to be here. How do you feel like this team bounces back from a game like this?

LAURA BERG: If I say what I really want to say, you won't be able to print it, but... (Laughing.)

We aren't really glad to be here. We expect to be here. We work our butts off from September 15th throughout the entire season, and it's real easy when people don't have any skin in the game to say stuff like that.

Q. Coach, do you feel like that second inning not scoring changed the momentum of the game? I thought up until that point you had the better of play.

LAURA BERG: Yeah, absolutely not. I don't think it changed the momentum of the play -- of the game, I mean.

Thanks, you guys.

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