

2022 Women's College World Series

Saturday, June 4, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Texas Longhorns

Mike White

Alyssa Washington

Bella Dayton

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 7, Texas 2

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 7 press conference featuring the Texas Longhorns.

Questions for our student-athletes to start, please.

Q. I want to ask you about facing Hope Trautwein. What was the biggest challenge there? How difficult was it to get anything going consistently offensively?

ALYSSA WASHINGTON: Yeah, I mean, we faced Hope before at North Texas. This was kind of like really just playing against Hope, not the name on her jersey.

But it was just really following our plan, and I think we kind of struggled on that a little bit. But, yeah, it was just really following our plan.

BELLA DAYTON: I can back that up. Like personally I struggled following the plan. Our plan was to see the ball down. I think that a lot of us did struggle there. But a lot of us did make a change at the plate. It just wasn't consistent.

Q. With the win in Austin, Oklahoma plays well here, but winning that game in Austin, did you have a feeling they'd be even more motivated or locked in after what you did?

BELLA DAYTON: I think Oklahoma overall is always locked in. I think it's whether the other team decides to show up and lock in for themselves.

I will say that we did show up. Again, it wasn't super consistent. We are ready to keep going and phenomenal up with more wins after this.

ALYSSA WASHINGTON: Yes, I agree with Bella. Just knowing that we're capable of beating Oklahoma, like we've proven ourselves, just knowing we can play up to that standard, I just don't think we fully went up to that level today.

But I do fully agree that we are able to win.

Q. Alyssa, you mentioned facing Hope at North Texas. What changes have you seen in Hope since then?

ALYSSA WASHINGTON: I do believe her command has gotten a lot better. But that goes along with us really hunting strikes, because she is a really good pitcher where she can have you chase a lot.

But really if we stick to our plan, seeing her down, then I think we can be successful on her.

Q. Bella, tomorrow you guys are going to be playing Arizona, your former team. Can you talk about getting the chance to face them.

BELLA DAYTON: Yeah, I do have a lot of respect for them and I love seeing my old teammates because I was super close with them.

But I'm excited to play with the team I'm on now. I know they have my back with everything that we do. We're just pumped to keep moving forward.

Q. Caitlin Lowe, she was the assistant coach during that time when you were at Arizona. Now she's the head coach. What was that like being able to play for Caitlin during that span of time?

BELLA DAYTON: It was great to be coached by her. She was a well-known player, well-known coach. Respect to her for making it this far, first year as head coach. That's pretty much it.

THE MODERATOR: Bella, Alyssa, thank you very much for your time.



Questions for Coach White, please.

Q. Your team did a great job coming back and getting that run back. What were you thinking at that point when it was a 2-1 game?

MIKE WHITE: Well, it's encouraging to get those runs back, one run back straightaway. Could be a couple more if we get another hit. It's important to break through straightaway and we were able to do that. It gave us some brief confidence, obviously it was brief, some confidence going forward.

I think we started to chase, trying too hard, pushing ourselves too much instead of letting the ball come to us. Like the ladies said, we didn't really follow the game plan of seeing the ball down. Good pitchers like Hope Trautwein make you do that. She throws with velocity. She's effectively wild at times and moves the ball through the zone. It's a tough thing to do.

Q. I want to ask you about the top three of Oklahoma's lineup, what they were able to do from a production standpoint today.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, I mean, it's murderer's row. I think somebody asked me maybe we should work Alo in the first inning. It's not the way I play softball.

We were successful against her, we just didn't execute the pitches. I talked to the ladies about that. It's not like I'm knocking Dolcini, not her fault, nothing there at all. Alo makes you throw those kind of pitches. She's patient. She's looking for that pitch she wants to hit. She got it. She didn't miss it. That's what great teams and hitters do. You have murderer's row up there and you have to pick your poison. She could have popped it up, too.

I don't think she got all of it. I've seen Jocelyn Alo home runs and she didn't get all of that. She's strong enough to punch it out but I don't think with the wind it might not have left the ballpark. Again, she did a great job. Hats off to her.

Q. Jocelyn, her ability to have big hits on this stage, seems like she always comes through. How difficult is that when the country knows she can produce in big moments? How do you try to guard against that or can you?

MIKE WHITE: Well, she's batting around just under .500. She's failing half the time. That's the way you have to look at it. You're going to fail as much as you're successful. You have to give your best effort.

There's the gap in how well you can play and how well you do play. Her gap's very small. It's called the performance gap. She's going to perform on the big stage consistently and she gets up for that. It drives her. That's what we want as coaches. We want athletes that can be motivated by the situations, not be afraid of them, and perform.

We talk about when the lights turn on. We've got a lot of 5:00 hitters - great in batting practice, but not when the lights turn on. Their team does that.

Q. I want to ask you about Hailey. First of all, the way she was able to settle in after that aloe home run, get through the next eight or nine hitters, then the adjustments that OU made, what did you see out of Hailey and how she was able to react to that, then the adjustments OU made in the fifth?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, she was able to hang in there. That's a testament to her fight and her determination. She didn't let it get down. A lot of pitchers would have folded right there, right? Big moment, giving up a home run in the first. You probably would have had to take her out. But I know better than that with her. She's going to keep fighting for this team, for this club. That's what I love about her. She's stubborn in a good way, which is great.

They stuck with the game plan. They were able to get a couple runners on. I can't remember how the first runner got on. It was a bunt, I think. A great bunt. Short bunt there. I think Coleman was able to hit one in the gap there.

If we have a little faster outfield, we may be able to get to that. That's the difference. It's a game of inches. You look at the speed in the outfield of some clubs, they're able to track balls down. That's what makes Oklahoma tough. They've got three cannons out there for arms, they can track balls down. It's hard to find grass. That's what we got to work on. We've got to get some more speedsters out there to track those things down.

Q. You mentioned murderer's row at the top of the lineup. It started there in that inning with the bottom of the lineup. How much pressure does that put on the teams they face, y'all today?

MIKE WHITE: Well, a lot of coaches stick a really good hitter down there that's able to get on base. We did that against UCLA the other day. We were able to turn the lineup over. It's a big plus if you can do that.

Same about murderer's row. It's like the row changes. Whoever is not hitting, they're switching in there.

Again, that's her job. She did her job. She got on base for

her teammate.

Q. Your team has been on elimination in both of the first two rounds. You made it through in both of them. Can you draw some inspiration or confidence from that?

MIKE WHITE: Well, that's the plan without a doubt. I've told them that the most important game we're going to play all year is this next game, without a doubt. We can't hang our heads about what happened today. That's a good team. Now our job is to try to get into the final four. That's what we want to do.

We've got to be ready. If we're out there hanging our heads, we're going to lose, there's no doubt. We got to bounce back, we got to bounce back strong, play the game the right way and get our monument back.

Q. When you have a team, Bella mentioned struggling to follow the game plan, you mentioned when the lights come on, can you articulate the degree of difficulty of preparing a team that hasn't been on this stage compared to a team like Oklahoma?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, I say it's hard to practice in front of 3,000 fans. Now it's 13,000 fans or 14,000. It's a situation where you got to be here. That's half the battle.

Very few teams have actually come to the Women's College World Series the first time and won it. This is basically the first time for us as I've been coach. Five times Oregon didn't win it either.

It's a tough thing to do, to come out. You can't practice it. You've just got to find those players that can perform in those situations. You go back and analyze it, you assess it, say, What could we do differently? Then you work on the mental part of the game. That's the big difference here. Physical part is somewhat easy to teach. But the mental part of the game is very difficult.

I know that from my own playing experience, now from coaching.

Q. Your general thoughts about Arizona from what you've seen of them.

MIKE WHITE: They're on a roll right now. I mean, we're pretty hot, but they've been pretty hot as well. Their pitchers are doing a good job. They have a couple good ones that spin it out. They've got some power and speed. Probably more power than I've seen throughout the lineup, particularly have a lot of speed and some power, but they've got more power throughout the lineup.

We're going to have a tough game about us. It's going to be an exciting one I'm pretty sure.

Q. Can you just talk about the job that Caitlin Lowe has done there in her first year at Arizona, how she's been able to take a team that tied for last in the Pac-12 and get them to the Women's College World Series?

MIKE WHITE: I don't think anyone wants to take over for Mr. G.O.A.T. It's a pretty tough job. To do what she did, obviously they had a struggle, I think they lost the first eight in Pac-12. To be able to come back and rally the troops, I know what it's like. We have to do the same thing. It's difficult because everyone starts to doubt.

It's hard to keep that confidence going, not only in yourself but in your team, knowing you're going the right direction. She's been able to turn it round. Hats off to her for doing what she's done so far.

Q. Looking at tomorrow, how difficult is it in these elimination games to go back to back, trying to figure out your pitching staff?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, I mean, it's flipped from what it used to be, right? It used to be you'd have to come back if you won and play on Friday. Now it's the other way around, if you lose, you got to play the next day.

We play these tournaments. We did the same thing in regionals, super regionals. You have to be ready. You can't win with one person. Obviously we have Hailey Dolcini, who is our main person, but we've got to find a way to get some innings from some other people as well, and that's what we're going to have to do. We're going to have to trust each other, come out, score some runs. That's it.

If you look at the game today, we come out and if we score three, four runs in the first inning, all of a sudden the pressure flips, right? It didn't happen. That's the momentum shift you have to create. Tomorrow it's going to be important for us to get some runs so we can get ahead.

Q. I know it's not the result you wanted, but pretty historic day. The game aired on ABC, first time ever. You get to be a part of that. What are your thoughts on that for the game and your program?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, well, I'm just so excited for the game itself. We're starting to see -- let me step back a little bit.

Whenever you get someone to come and watch women's fast pitch, they want to come back. That's always been the challenge, getting them back. Now you walk past a

restaurant, you'll see the game on. People are invested in this game right now, they love it.

To be on be ABC is another big step for us. I wish we could have made it a little better game or closer. The fact is they got to see some really good plays and some good hits, some good pitching on TV.

We keep spreading the word. We all got to be ambassadors for the game. That's what I want to be. I want our team to be, as well, ambassadors for the game.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach White.

MIKE WHITE: Thank you.

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