

2022 Women's College World Series

Sunday, June 5, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Arizona Wildcats

Coach Caitlin Lowe

Sharlize Palacios

Carlie Scupin

Devyn Netz

Postgame Press Conference



Texas - 5, Arizona - 2

THE MODERATOR: This is the game 10 press conference featuring the Arizona Wildcats, joined by head coach Caitlyn Lowe. And our student-athletes are Carlie Scupin, Sharlize Palacios and Devyn Netz. If we could begin with questions for our student-athletes, please.

Q. Carlie, there's a point in the season where you guys, I think, lost 10 of 11 games. To be able to turn it around and get to where you're at right now, what does it say about this group? And how special was this run for you all?

CARLIE SCUPIN: I'm so proud of the entire team for what we've done the past three weeks. And we'll all remember it forever. I'm just proud of everybody for how far we've come.

Q. Devyn, you didn't get to play as much when you guys were here last year. So I wanted to know what you take from this because you're still a young group. You guys are going to be together for a while. What do you take from this for going forward?

DEVYN NETZ: I learned a lot from last year's team, and I learned a lot about what it feels like to lose. It doesn't feel good at all. Sitting here right now, I wish I was the next team going to the semifinals, but you learn a lot doing it yourself. And sitting there and learning and watching is way different than playing.

I can't thank the older seniors enough for what they've done for me and what they've taught me to be here and play at this level.

Q. Devyn, to follow up about that, entering the postseason, the pitching staff was struggling a little bit, but then you guys go on this amazing run. What did you learn about yourself during this run throughout these last three weeks?

DEVYN NETZ: It all kind of started when we finished -- or I would say when we saw our name called at Coach Lowe's house. And we're sitting there, and Coach T said to us in the bullpen the next day, she said, this is a clean slate. It doesn't matter for anyone. It doesn't matter how bad you've done. It doesn't matter how well you've done. Everyone has a clean slate.

That's what, I think, all of us went into. I looked at it from that perspective. And I took it and I ran with it, and I'm pretty sure everyone else did as well.

Q. Sharlize, I just wanted to ask you your takeaway from how you guys put things together there in the postseason when nobody really thought you would get this far.

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: You hit it right there. Nobody thought we would get it this far, but we did. We believed wholeheartedly. Like Devyn said, at Caitlyn's house, we didn't want it to be over. I don't want it to be over now.

I just want to say a great thank you to our seniors because they're continuing to better our program the way all seniors do. I'm happy to come back and have more years with the girls that I'm playing with. I'm just excited for us to be able to do the same thing next year.

Q. Sharlize and Devyn, just kind of walk us through the home run by Smith. The pitch you were trying to make there, what you were hoping to do with that, and what she ultimately was able to do with it.

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: I think we set her up with a really good drop ball the pitch prior. And I thought it was a really good spot. Sometimes when that pitch doesn't get called, it kind of disrupts the pitch sequence a little bit, I think.



And I think Devyn tried to execute another great pitch. She was just seeing the ball well, and I think she did what she did with the ball, and she got a good barrel on it. But I think Devyn was fighting to get good strikes in, and I think she did a great job.

DEVYN NETZ: I'd say it's tough working behind in the count. I think that's what kind of got to me a little bit. And I should have slowed down that moment. I'd say that, right now, that one pitch and that one swing, it replays in your mind. Like Coach Cait said after, she said you can let this moment destroy you or you can let it motivate you. And I think I'm going to choose that second option of letting it motivate me.

Q. Shar, you've been there every step of the way behind the plate this postseason. You've been able to see Hanah Bowen pitch through injuries. She's been limping after every pitch it seems like. Can you just talk about the performance she had in this postseason and just being able to experience that behind home plate, watching that?

SHARLIZE PALACIOS: I've expressed it to Bo throughout the postseason and throughout every tournament that we were winning to get here that I was so proud of her. And the struggles that we faced during season and during conference, it all led up to her to be able to pitch this well in postseason.

And I told her all the struggles made her better for this moment, and I think this is the way she would have wanted to end it in the biggest stage for softball.

So I'm very proud of her. She went out the way Bo should have went out. She went out competing. She played through injury. I'm just so proud to be able to try to help her through that and be her biggest cheerleader behind the plate and just trying to help her and Devyn through all those games.

Q. Can you just take us through the at-bat where you put the team ahead?

CARLIE SCUPIN: Yeah, I mean, I was getting a lot of pitches, and I was seeing her pretty good. It felt good to get the lead. But yeah, just wanted to execute.

THE MODERATOR: Carlie, Sharlize, Devyn, thank you very much for your time. Congratulations on a great run. Questions for Coach, please.

Q. Coach, we talked it over with the players, but just your thoughts on the way your team was able to turn it around down the stretch of the season?

CAITLIN LOWE: I talked to them about the last three weeks, and they talked about it, about having them sit in my living room, and I swear that those cheers came from their soul when they had their name called. It was a turning point for us.

We went, in three weeks, from a team that was excited to have the opportunity to play more games to a team that knew we were going to win Regional and win a Super Regional. And then when we got here, we weren't satisfied with being here. And that's important.

And I think we grew up tremendously. And as much as they might not see it now, I have the perspective of how great this is going to be for them in the future and how much this experience -- you know, expecting to win in Oklahoma City will do for them when they show up to their first individual next year.

We said good-bye to three great seniors, but, man, our team is young and hungry and ready to be back, and they want to be back tomorrow. That's just something that fuels you for the future. And I hope they use that in the right way.

Q. Cait, can you talk about this team being able, not only to get to this spot, but what it means to you? Because this isn't necessarily the conventional way to get to Oklahoma City, how Arizona's been able to get here. But what does this team mean to you as a first-year head coach? What will you remember from this season?

CAITLIN LOWE: I think I will remember their belief in themselves and in each other. I think, when you have so many people doubting you and you still find a way to keep your circle tight, to keep 18 people plus support staff and everyone that works with us forging ahead -- Shar said it best, it didn't matter who believed in us; we believed in ourselves, and we saw it every day. We knew what kind of team we were.

For them to not only believe it but put it into action and not care what was behind them, man, so huge. When we talked with our pitchers, we always talked about how on ESPN, they show the stat lines -- hey, this is where they were, ERA here, and this is what they did in the postseason. And that was a fresh slate. I love that they became those pitchers.

Man, I don't think anyone wanted to face them, and they went right at people. Just so proud of the way they believed in each other and stayed together.

Q. Caitlin, this was your first season, and obviously you'd been on staff for a number of years beforehand, but just what has this season meant to you? You get to the Women's College World Series? And what has Hanah meant to your program?

CAITLIN LOWE: Well, I will never forget Hanah Bowen, and I told her that. I think you saw all heart today. I thought you saw all heart for the last -- honestly, this whole season she hasn't been at 100 percent all season. She's had bumps and adversity thrown at her. And she's handled it with grace.

We had about a 30 minute conversation at Cal where she just wasn't feeling great. She made a decision at that point to -- her mind got really strong, and she didn't have her whole body.

That's the thing about softball that's different than other sports. You only get so many days to play this game, and it's a game she's loved and she's prepared for this stage for her whole life. So it's not a hard decision to make, but man, when your body's giving out, it's pretty hard.

I think you saw her leave her heart out on the field today. It makes the rest of us want to fight that much harder for her.

For me, it's pretty crazy because I think we are -- this team and my journey, I think, were very similar. They felt they were replacing a really big senior class. Obviously when the GOAT leaves, it's a whole different kind of vibe. But I thought we were kind of finding our way together, and that was what was so special about it.

I thanked them for putting their faith in me for letting them lead them to here. And that doesn't go unnoticed that was a big step for a lot of people.

There's a lot of uncertainty when something like that happens, and I think they know that I had their back the whole way, and my heart was in it for 18 of them. It was rewarding to see them fight through the hard and get here because I know we all kind of faced that going through the season, too.

Q. Can you talk about Devyn and what this postseason could do for her moving forward? Throughout the season she had her moments and struggles, and then here in the postseason she's been pretty much lights out for you guys.

CAITLIN LOWE: It's huge. You can't replace this experience, this environment. You can't create it at practice. You've got to be here. And I think the way she stepped on the field and the way she threw her first pitch in

relief showed me everything that I needed to know about Devyn Netz. She's a competitor, and she wants those moments.

The reason she's hurting right now is because she put her heart and soul into it. That's kind of what you -- I know it's sad to see, but you want to see because she believed with her whole heart that she was throwing every pitch to the best of her ability, and I trust her to throw that pitch again, and she will here, and she expects to be back.

So I think when you experience those moments, you tend to level up a little bit at practice. And I think that will only pay dividends for us in the future.

Q. Caitlin, just talk about the identity of the program now because it went from maybe having some question marks this year to now the way you guys have performed in the postseason. Now the expectations to be like they've always been for Arizona. Just talk about what you see now out of this program going forward.

CAITLIN LOWE: I think in 21 days I watched them grow up. We've been on the road for all of it. But I watched them go from a team that was happy to be here, and then they realized, like, why not us? And they went to work in a Regional against seeded teams, didn't matter.

Every single game felt like an away game, except for Oregon State, felt like an away game. And they just didn't care. They put their head down, and they grinded.

I think they did it in their own special way, which was cool. They didn't try to be last year's team or the teams of the past. They did it with their own stamp, having fun. Izzy Pacho catching balls and smiling about it because she's just having so much fun playing the game, and 5'5" Janelle Meoño chest bumping and so uber confident.

And they did it in their own way. I'm just so proud of the growth. And I think now -- you hit the nail on the head that they just expect these moments, and they'll prepare to be to be in these moments.

Q. What did you learn about yourself in your first year as a head coach?

CAITLIN LOWE: That's a great question. I learned a whole lot, and I think Coach Candrea always talked about this being about people, and it's so important. The relationships are what matters.

The Xs and Os are great, but pouring into people -- and I don't mean 18 people on the team. I mean support staff

and everyone that goes into making this program tick. Those are the things that make it rewarding. It's not always just helping someone be better at the plate. It's about helping them be better people.

I truly believe in the way they competed, not just on the field, but to have our -- the people that opened the doors at the hotel come up to me and say, man, your team is just a class act and they do things the right way.

That's a big deal. That's what it's about. They come to the field and life just as great people and great athletes. I just couldn't be more proud of them.

Yeah, there's a whole lot of stuff that makes this team go, and I just couldn't be more thankful for surrounding myself with great people in this program. And I'm not talking about just athletes. I'm talking about a great assistant coaching staff and ops and everyone down to our video manager, who gives us pump-up speeches before we leave for the field, everyone. It just matters so much. The way you not just interact with people, but the people you surround your athletes with.

Q. Caitlin, two-part question here. Now that it's over, kind of a follow on Hanah. Could you put a percentage on exactly how healthy she was throughout this whole postseason process, whether it was 60, 70 percent? Also, I know that Mike used to always have a team video that he would show on the bus during the postseason. Are you still doing that as well?

CAITLIN LOWE: Yes, we still have a team video. We show it in the hotel right before our video manager gives us a speech. His name's Max, by the way.

And the second question, percentage -- you know what, I don't know. I think that's a question you'd have to ask her.

She's been banged up this whole season, but here's the thing. Her heart and her head got her a lot farther than -- you know, it didn't matter for her. She wanted to get here for this team and for herself.

I thought she showed it today. She left it all out there. I went out and asked her, and she said, I have one more hitter. And I said, great, let's go. I trust you with this. And then it was time. And I'm happy to hand the ball to Devyn every single time in that situation.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

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