

2022 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 6, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Mike White

Estelle Czech

Hailey Dolcini

Courtney Day

Postgame Press Conference



Texas - 6, Oklahoma State - 5

THE MODERATOR: This is the game 13 and 14 press conference featuring the Texas Longhorns. Joined by head coach Mike White, and our student-athletes are Courtney Day, Hailey Dolcini, and Estelle Czech.

Estelle, take me through that first game. You were outstanding. I think it was probably a situation all hands on deck, but you just rode it all the way through. Tell us what was working for you and how you felt out there.

ESTELLE CZECH: My curve ball was looking really good for me that day. Staying low in the zone and working. That's what worked for me. Keeping the hitters off balance. I didn't have many strike-outs that game, but my defense worked a helluva game for me, and they were behind me the whole entire game. I appreciate that a lot.

Q. I think you all three were in the dugout, the play that pushed you in front where you scored three off the single and then the two mistakes by OSU defensively. Could you three give us a sense of what was going through your mind on a play like that and how you are feeling if you recall how you were feeling.

COURTNEY DAY: It was a big moment. It was definitely a momentum shift in our energy as a team. And after that happened, we were hyped, and we took advantage of the next however many outs. Hailey came in and did her job, and, yeah.

HAILEY DOLCINI: I think, like Courtney said, big momentum shift. I think it was a momentum grab for us. I think we did a really good job as an offense to keep

attacking on those runs and then as a defense to play just solid softball behind me and Estelle today. I think that was a perfect recipe.

ESTELLE CZECH: We definitely had the more after that. I know in the dugout we were hyped, and we had Hailey's back, and we knew that she had ours, so ...

THE MODERATOR: When you came in the game, Hailey, it was 3-0, and then you gave up the home run. How much did it mean to you in the circle when you got those three runs back on the home run?

HAILEY DOLCINI: Oh, it's a huge weight lifted off your shoulder. I had trust in our offense the whole time with the way they've been hitting the ball all week and the last three weeks of our season. Getting those runs back and then especially getting that one ahead, it was a lot easier to do my job and just hit your spots and let your defense work.

Q. Estelle, when did you find out you were going to get the starts? How far in advance?

ESTELLE CZECH: I knew I was going to start the first game yesterday before we played Arizona. Then I knew that I was going to start the second game right after the first game.

Q. Estelle, can you talk about the first inning in the second game. They score. Alexander gets on. She comes around and scores. Then they hit some balls hard, but nothing got -- nothing more across. How important was that for you to shut them off at that point?

ESTELLE CZECH: It was very important and -- wait, are you talking about in the first inning how they didn't score any more?

Q. Yeah.

ESTELLE CZECH: Yes. I knew my defense had me, and I think I got three pop-ups after that, and I was just counting on my defense, and I knew they had my back. Obviously, Hailey came in after the second inning, and she had my



back, and I thank her a lot for that.

Q. Hailey, obviously, you have done a lot of work in the circle, but especially in the postseason when you haven't been in the circle, you've really taken on that great cheerleader role, so to speak. Can you just talk about that because I feel like there are things that go into that that really have nothing to do with in the circle itself.

HAILEY DOLCINI: Yeah, I think with being a fifth year and being around and having Estelle and Sophia to help mentor, these are huge moments. Moments I never even had until fifth year, but just seeing them thrive in their role and, I mean, Sophia in that last game of Arkansas, to have a freshman do that, is big-time. To have Estelle come in and help me out last night and start us off and keep us going, that's why we're sitting here right now.

Q. Courtney, can you talk about kind of what you've been seeing at the plate? You had obviously the two home runs today, and then on top of that just what it feels like to know that you are going to go play for a National Championship here in a couple of days?

COURTNEY DAY: Me and Coach Sing have been working on my swing and stances. We've finally found a substances that I've been comfortable with, and it's really been helping me see the ball better. When a pitcher makes a mistake, I'm able to take advantage of it, which I did today and yesterday. (Laughing.)

Sorry. What was your next question?

Q. (Off microphone)?

COURTNEY DAY: It's everything. We've been fighting all season. Coach White talks about being dangerous, and we've proven that. Now we're just playing for the supers and trying to get them as far as possible, which we've made it as far as possible. Yeah. Okay. I'm done. (Laughing.)

Q. For Estelle and Hailey both: You transferred to Texas. I think it was mentioned in a press conference earlier this week. You came here to play in the World Series. Now you're not just going to play in the World Series, you're going to play for a national title. Can either of you or both of you sum up what that's like. You're getting to play on the last day of the season now.

ESTELLE CZECH: It's crazy. It's mind-boggling, and I wouldn't want to go through it with anyone else. Our pitching staff is stacked. Our hitting is stacked. Defense is

stacked. We're so hyped. No one thought that we would be here, but we proved everyone wrong, and we're going to play very hard. Sorry. I was trying not to use bad words. (Laughing).

HAILEY DOLCINI: I mean, yeah, when we got here initially, we were like, this is a cherry on top. We get to play in the World Series as fifth years. Now we are literally extending our careers to the very last day, and I think that means the world.

We're in a position we can't lose. Like she said, no one had us being here at all, let alone going and competing for a national championship. So for us, we're playing free. We're playing for each other, and I think that's the best part of all of this.

THE MODERATOR: Courtney, Hailey, Estelle, thank you very much for your time. Appreciate it. Congratulations. Questions for Coach White, please.

Q. Mike, same thing. On the play that -- where things sort of unravelled for OSU and you pushed through, what was your mindset? What were you thinking? What was going through your head there?

MIK WHITE: Run. Let's go. (Laughing) I mean, it's kind of ironic because with shooting ourselves in the foot all year and especially against OSU and we've beaten ourselves a lot of times by making errors. They've really put a lot of pressure on with their speed and their ability to do the short game. You don't know what's coming.

We've kind of hurt ourselves, and today it was they kind of -- we put the pressure on them and reversed itself. Our defense played fantastic.

As far as that happening, that's part of the game, and it's about doing the simple things sometimes like playing catch and making good throws and making good decisions. When you start getting out there and there's 14,000 people, it's nerve-racking.

I feel for them. No one wants to go out and lose like that, but we've been there too.

Q. Coach, you've played in a lot of postseasons. You've played in a lot of World Series, but even you're in uncharted territory for yourself now. Can you sum up that side of it, because this is new even to Mike White?

MIK WHITE: Exactly. That's what the team said to me. This is the best team I've ever had. At times it didn't feel like that.



Truthfully, it's been one of the hardest years I've ever had to coach. Just the ups and downs and the things that have happened. It's been difficult, and credit to my coaching staff as well. We've kind of pulled things together. We're learning as we go. I've only really been coaching 12 years as a head coach, more or less, I think. I can't even keep track now. It's like being on a treadmill. Just goes.

I'm always learning. I'm learning this new age, Generation Z is it or whatever? I don't know. Do we start back at A soon? I don't know.

It is learning about what makes them tick. It's not about what I want. It's about what makes them work. We've been able to do that. We've helped accommodate what they need and what we need, and we're on the same page, and you can finally start to see it come together.

I'm telling you, like I said last night, in March I would never have thought we would be in this position, but credit to the team. They've stuck it out, and they're playing really hard right now.

Q. I think you guys are now 6 or 7 or something like that in elimination games, and tonight you were down 5-0. Where does that resolve come from with this team to battle back in those situations?

MIKE WHITE: Well, I started off -- I had my room key, and I said I don't want to give this one back. You're playing for room keys. Whatever motivation you can get them going for.

Just keep going and see what we can do here. We're playing free. It's carefree and not careless. I've learned that throughout my career. As a pitcher myself when I put pressure on myself, I didn't perform as well. It wasn't until later in my career I learned how to just relax and say there are worse things in life that can happen.

I think the team has taken that to heart. I think they understand. And before we started the game, say, hey, we're here, we're free. Just like the ladies talked about. That's been their mantra the last couple of weeks, and I think it's freed them up.

Q. To follow up on that. How much was that what you -- what you took to your team to prepare them for the day, needing to win twice against a team that's kind of had your number the last couple of years, and then how much does that feed into what's ahead with Oklahoma?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah. Obviously, we tried to reverse it and

say all the pressure is on them because we have nothing to lose. They're supposed to win.

I say this about super regionals. The most important game is the second game because that's the momentum shifter.

That's what we got today. We got the momentum shift. Great pitch and hitting performance.

Of course, they always had the ace in the hole, Maxwell, right? We have to beat Maxwell. We have to get to Maxwell first, and so the focus was really on the first game and see what happens, and then just go from there.

Being down 5-0, it's tough. You start thinking about the end of the season and what you're going to say and what you're going to do. Then you hang in there, and you keep the spirits of the team up and see how they respond.

Going in against Oklahoma, that's the best team that we've seen this year for sure, offensively, throughout 1 to 9. They've got people on the bench we would love to have, as most people do.

They can start trouble in multiple ways. They can start it with the short game. They can long-ball you. They have great eyes. They're patient. Of course, they've got a pitching staff with three really good pitchers on it.

But we've got to go out there. It's 0-0. It doesn't matter what our records are, and it's going to be who can make the most of their opportunities. Obviously, we've got to make sure that we don't give up the big numbers like we did the other day against them and hang in there.

Q. Can you talk about the transfers you brought in -- Hailey, Estelle -- obviously coming through for you at the biggest point of the season. Again, like I asked them, you brought them in for this moment, and they delivered.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah. Well, you know, I think that's -- how many teams in this tournament right now that have transfers? Quite a few, right? Even UCLA, a pitcher. It's become almost a necessary part to be able to fill in some blanks in your line-up.

Maybe it may even out because of early recruiting. Because of early recruiting, you would make some mistakes here and there. Even Oklahoma, right? They've had a number of really good transfers that have helped their program out.

It's kind of like almost a necessary evil right now where using the transfer portal to fill in your holes in your line-up,



and we were able to. We knew we needed a deeper pitching staff. Last year we had Shea O'Leary. Unfortunately, Shea, we were counting on Shea being a big part of that line-up this year.

So we've been able to do it with what we considered to be our number two coming in as number one. We thought Hailey and her would be number one. She had the freak injury before Christmas and never could get back. Thank goodness we had transfers.

Q. Coach, this incredible run, which started in Seattle, winning the regional, going to Fayetteville, beating Arkansas, the SEC champs, coming here, beating UCLA, and then you dropped OU, beat Arizona and OK State twice. Was there a moment during this run where you thought this was possible to get to the championship? Just put this into context. This has been a remarkable run that nobody has really seen in the sport.

MIKE WHITE: Wow. (Laughing). Thank you for that. Really in some cases it hasn't hit home because you don't get a lot of time to think about it. You just go out there and you play and you say anything it is possible, and you lead your team that way. It's about executing.

My goodness, we are playing some really good defense right now, and we're making the plays, and we're getting good pitching. I think since the midpoint of the year we've had some pretty good pitching. Hailey has been really consistent for us. We've had different people step up with hitting.

Janae Jefferson has been amazingly, really consistent the whole year. But to get those big home runs from lower in the order, that's really helped.

To answer your question, no, I would have to be honest and say this is unbelievable. I really -- it's going to sink in sooner or later, but it's not sinking in right now.

Q. With Estelle starting the first game today, how much of that was based off of what you saw yesterday from her as opposed to the match-ups that you were looking at with Oklahoma State?

MIKE WHITE: Well, I actually told her yesterday, if you remember what she said in the thing before the game that she was going to pitch. She hadn't pitched against them all year. I thought she would be a good match-up against their lefties. We had to control their righty power.

So it worked out. We were able to get some runs. Starting the second game, it's always -- that was a tough question.

I was tossing backwards and forwards whether to start Hailey, but I didn't think Hailey could go the whole game. I was really worried about her stamina, and I figured if we're going to start Hailey and bring Estelle in, she would have to sit for a while, so I really wanted to keep it rolling.

She got a couple innings, three innings for us, and it worked out pretty well.

THE MODERATOR: I would say it worked out pretty well. Thank you, Coach White. We appreciate it. Congratulations.

MIKE WHITE: Thank you very much. Appreciate you all.

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