

2023 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida State Seminoles
Coach Lonni Alameda
Kathryn Sandercock
Kaley Mudge
Press Conference



playing in Oklahoma City. When we had the chance to come out and play Kenny and Patty and OSU and OU, it gave us a chance to come here for an hour or so, just for our freshmen to feel that, for this team to feel that, how hard it is to get here, the respect to get here, and then the opportunity of being here already this year with this team has been really special.

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Florida State.

Lonni, would you like to maybe start with an opening statement.

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah.

Excited to be here. Who isn't right now? There's been so many cool things since we were here last time in '21, which is the remnants of COVID. It's really neat to see the social aspect for the athletes right now. Really special.

Excited for the opportunity to be here.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions now.

Q. Coach, obviously a team that you've seen a lot over the last five years. Talk about what it's like to face a team that you've seen so much here, and also how the home-and-home series you played came together.

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, so first of all, familiarity is always great when you're playing teams. I think that that's the reason why we do the schedule that we do. We try to face as many top 25 challenging opponents on the road. If we have the opportunity to get a home-and-home, which Oklahoma State has been great to do that, we're going to do it with Oregon, there's just different people outside of our region that we try to get to to challenge ourselves, but also know that only makes us better to play that level of softball.

Kenny has been great with that, so many others that we get a chance to do that for.

Then being able to play here was a really good experience for us. This is where every team wants to be, is to be here,

Q. So you actually came to the facility and hung out for a little while?

LONNI ALAMEDA: We did, yeah. On our way down from Stillwater to Norman, that morning I think we got a little workout in, towards lunchtime stopped here, got a chance to visit the museum, which is hugely important for us to know where we came from. So we got to chat about how the game has grown from umpire calls to pictures on the wall, just to talk about the growth of it.

Personally, having played here, been a little part of the vision of getting the World Series to the level it is right now, we had that chat last night at the social, how OU is a host, how this has all come to fruition, how great for our game, so many people and volunteers to make the game special.

Got in the field, can we touch it, can we be here when we want to be here at the end of the year.

Q. Talk about the experience of having faced Oklahoma State so much throughout your careers. I'm assuming you expect this to be a really intense ballgame.

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: Yeah can, I faced Oklahoma State a bunch of times. I think first time was post-season 2019, my freshman year. Then got to face them in '21 here. Got to face them in the regular season this past year.

I mean, they're just a great team. It's always a lot of fun. Like, they play really gritty. I think that we do, too. They're just a good ballclub. It's just the most fun competition to play the best. It's really fun. Looking forward to playing them again.



KALEY MUDGE: Pretty much what Kat said. Getting to play them at the World Series, facing them this year, getting them at home is huge for us. Getting to see their pitching staff. Maxwell has been great for the years she's been there. Getting to see Lexi at Alabama as well. Just to get information throughout the past couple years. They have a great hitting staff, too.

To be able to I guess play great competition is a lot of fun. Getting to play at their place, having them at our place, just kind of getting to see the information. I'm just excited to see them on this stage.

Q. Lonni, a bigger-picture question, pace of play has been a topic of conversation. I wonder, do you see any issues or any changes that you would like to make as far as that goes?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, it's something that's awesome for our game. I think the offensive part has gotten better, so it's added time to our game, for sure. I think there's areas we can clean up.

Having been a part of the international game, I do love the one foot in the box. I think the pitch clock has been awesome. There's a lot of things I think we can implement and bring back the speed of our game, which is such a draw for a lot of fans that really enjoy it. Even coaches and players, we don't want to be out there for three-plus hours.

Definitely things that we as coaches have been talking about. We just need to get it into the NFCA and talk about how we can clean that up. I know it's a pressing issue for us.

Q. How much do softball players get into the scouting reports of individual teams? Is it something you guys have been studying for four or five days or wait till the day before? Especially maybe somebody you know somewhat about, like Oklahoma State.

KATHRYN SANDERCOCK: Yeah, I think that we scout a lot as a program at Florida State. We really go into charts and videos, all of that. We discuss as a team if we faced a pitcher or hitters in the past, or just like the overall feeling, like, has a pitcher the overall feeling that an offense will give you.

I'm personally super into spray charts, I like to have them in the back of my head. Coach, she taught me everything I know about scouting. My freshman year I think it was a little bit overwhelming, but now I like to look at the spray charts, kind of get an idea, then watch some video, see what matches up, then just go out there, know what you're expecting, but still being confident and throwing your best

stuff.

I definitely enjoy the scouting aspect of it. I think it's a lot of fun. I think that it just kind of ties into just the smart aspect of Florida State softball which we really pride ourselves in.

Q. Lonni, you guys obviously faced Oklahoma State early in the season when they were playing so well, then they had that little swoon late in the season. What has impressed you most about their team, and what has sort of top-of-the-line got to attack tomorrow?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, I think everything. Every team during the season hits a little bit of a lull. You really got to figure out what it is to get you back going, whether it's a cohesive thing or a skill set thing.

So I think Kenny is always so good at being real, he's a very real coach. Even in his little social media releases, it's real. You know their conversation is a conversation they're having, they're not hiding anything.

I think Becker does a great job as a leadoff. She's a tough out. She kind of gives the flow of the whole team there. They're an excitable team, but do what they do. I would say a little more blue-collar playing them. I think that, but the 1-2 punch they have in the circle is probably the toughest thing to really get after, not only the up-down, the lefty, up.

Their experience plays a lot. When Kat speaks to scouting reports, you can't implement that until you have experience at the high level to know what you're doing. Those two have been through a lot, so they have great experience. It's really tough to beat that kind of pitching, so we really have to be locked in, dialed in.

He does a great job, they do a great job there.

Q. Lonni, you mentioned the social element of this, the whole spectacle you didn't get a couple years ago. From the first time you took this program here in 2014 to now, how have you seen all of this, the scope of fastpitch college softball grow?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, yeah, answer that one? So I can remember when I was here as a player, the vision, we were rolling down the hills, right, the berms, because there were no seats there. I wanted to bring blankets out. I think we're feeling that in our college venues, too. We're busting at the seams.

I think the growth financially, how the state has jumped in, the city has jumped in, to financially build this so people

can come and experience it at a high level. I think when you get this venue to do that, we dream about getting there. We're trying to push the element. If we don't get the game to the level it needs to get to, it's hard to fill the stadium where it's at. I think it's twofold on that side.

I know for our personal experience, '14 you come here, you're so excited, you're taking pictures and you're going at it, to all of a sudden '16 is like can we win here? It's one thing to live the dream, get there, take the pictures; it's another, like, can you win here? Then the mindset is it's another tournament we want to get after.

Luckily enough we've been able to come back and build on that so players that have been here before know what the experience is like. I think there's two different looks, how softball has grown and how we individually have grown up.

Q. Over that time span, transfer portal, the game has grown. What would you say if I asked you what's the next thing the sport needs to tackle to go from here? Maybe it's pace of play, but if there was that next thing, what would it be for you?

LONNI ALAMEDA: It's funny, Patty and I had a conversation last night at the social, really thinking about how we as coaches in the game can continue to protect the game and grow the game.

There's so many areas. I think international softball is so huge for us, Olympic softball, professional softball. What Chamberlain is trying to do here in the state, professionally what we've been a part of. Continue to growing our level of softball at the collegiate level. How can we be great at what we do daily so people want to watch us, so then our ESPN numbers are big, our actual ticket buying is big, people are in the seats. There's a lot of responsibility to that.

Not the smartest in the CEO of the softball world, but can we each contribute in little areas to keep the game growing. I'm really proud of the ACC. I mean, Clemson and Duke, to be in super regionals, pushing the envelope of another conference for us to be here. In '18 for us to throw the flag here so we can be here. But the more conferences we get to compete, the more the game grows and the more people recognize and the support continues to grow.

We are definitely trying to take care of that, proud of that.

Q. Totally screwball question, Lonni. From your days in Norman, how much do you remember about Alameda Street?

LONNI ALAMEDA: It's funny. There was a lot of Alameda Streets. When we go recruit in the state of Colorado, I get a lot of pictures of I'm on Alameda Street. It's quite fun.

Nothing here in Norman, no.

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