

2023 Women's College World Series

Saturday, June 3, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Tennessee Lady Volunteers Coach Karen Weekly

Kiki Milloy

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 9, Tennessee 0

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Tennessee.

We'll start with an opening statement with Coach, then for to questions for Kiki.

KAREN WEEKLY: Certainly not the way we wanted to play or expected to play today. I'm still very proud of my team and have a lot of confidence in my team. That wasn't us out there.

At the same time you have to give a lot of credit to Oklahoma. They are an exceptional team. We knew that coming in. We knew that we had to play a pretty near flawless game in every phase of the game to have a chance at a victory.

We didn't do that, and you saw what happened. So we'll bounce back tomorrow. I told this team I don't want that to define this World Series or in any way dictate anything for tomorrow.

They've got a lot of grit and a lot of toughness. I expect them to come out ready to play tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go to questions for Kiki.

Q. Your program has been here before, but was the atmosphere an issue? It is the biggest stage in the sport. Do you think that was part of what went wrong today?

KIKI MILLOY: I mean, we knew it was going to be loud. We played them last year at Mary Nutter. It was loud.

Luckily our first game, I think it was sold out. We played in that atmosphere earlier, so I wouldn't necessarily say that was like a distraction for us.

Q. You guys have talked a lot about being a player-driven team. Could you talk about what you need to do in that regard now to regroup quickly.

KIKI MILLOY: I think just making sure that we keep the energy no matter what happens during the game. I think a little bit today you could kind of tell our energy went down a little bit. Just making sure that no matter what happens, like, we keep the momentum with our energy.

Q. You guys have been a really good team all year. This game happens. You're still alive in the tournament and everything. Talk about how you plan to regroup?

KIKI MILLOY: I mean, you have to have a short-term memory. We have another good team tomorrow, another good opponent. Just flushing this game. If we face them again in this tournament, we'll talk about it when the time comes.

But we focus on Oklahoma State.

Q. What is it that Jordy as a pitcher does that makes her so successful and hard to hit against?

KIKI MILLOY: I think just attacking the zone. But I think we could have had some better swings on her pitches that she might have left more on the white of the plate.

It was good seeing her. If we see them again at the end of the tournament, we saw a lot of pitches, so...

Q. I want to ask about the catch in the outfield. Take us through it.

KIKI MILLOY: You know, I guess just reading the ball, going back. Yeah, let me think about it. I was just, like, playing. I think a lot of people expect you to roll over when things are not going well, but you still have a game to play.

As long as we're on the field, you got to make some plays. Just being able to make that play for Rylie coming in, she came in, was throwing practically well, just being able to



make that catch was really good. Hugging her at the end of it...

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Weekly.

Q. What was the strategy going in with the pitching decision?

KAREN WEEKLY: Yeah, so just scouting them, kind of watching a lot of the other games where people had been able to kind of hold the number in check as far as runs scored.

I felt like Karlyn presented a pretty good option to start with. I didn't plan on anyone going the full game or letting them see anybody too many times. I thought that was something else important in terms of just trying to keep them off balance.

We planned to throw different people at 'em. The people we put in there I thought had the pitches in their arsenal that would be most successful.

We didn't execute in a lot of those instances, but ultimately that decision is on me.

Q. Was the idea kind of like what happened against Florida in the regular season, Ashley or Payton would come in if you were able to get the lead?

KAREN WEEKLY: Yeah, I think Ashley was going to be our back-end person situationally if the game warranted that, yep.

Q. The team never really got going offensively today. You're a good offensive team. What do you think happened today?

KAREN WEEKLY: Well, the first inning we get a lead-off double. Right there that you are like, Okay, here we go. It's not very often we'll get a lead-off double and not get a run. I don't think that took the wind out of our sails necessarily, but it was an opportunity we didn't capitalize on.

Again, when you play a great team like Oklahoma, you got to take advantage of everything you can get, then not give them anything. But I just felt like we just got jammed up a lot. There was just a lot of weak contact.

I'd have to see the film to know if we were getting out of the zone a little bit on some of those. She's a great pitcher, too. That's what great pitchers do, they get you swinging at their pitch.

Q. When Oklahoma's lineup gets rolling, what's hard about seizing that momentum back to steady everything?

KAREN WEEKLY: Yeah, I mean, you look at the people in their lineup. I mean, great player after great player. Everybody in there has won a lot of awards, whether it's been at Oklahoma or somewhere else before they got here. I mean, they're good, really good ball players. That's part of it. There's no break there.

Then I think you just have to treat it -- if you start to think about kind of that momentum and everything that's come at you, I think it can overwhelm you mentally. You just have to, Hey, this is one batter, one pitcher, let's stop the bleeding with this batter.

We just couldn't get to a point where we did that very well.

Q. You said you told the team you did not want this to define the series for them. This is their 50th straight win. Does that give you something to latch onto, that it's not just us? How do you deal with that?

KAREN WEEKLY: I mean, we knew we were the underdog coming in, right? I mean, everybody's picked Oklahoma, deservedly so. I think any motivation we get is we're disappointed in how we played. That's not us. Even if we had not won the game, those girls want to play a whole lot better. They got a lot more pride than what we showed today.

Q. Looking ahead, Oklahoma State tomorrow, what do you know about that team and what do you have to do to get the win?

KAREN WEEKLY: Not a lot. We work pretty hard and pretty fast.

The interesting thing about the World Series, we had played one team that was here. We played them five times. Well, the fifth time here, I guess. We hadn't seen anybody else on the schedule, which was kind of weird because usually we do somewhere.

Everybody's kind of new to us. We've been keeping our eye on teams we might face at the next stage. We'll get after it tonight. I know they've got two outstanding pitchers, and we saw Kilfoyl a fair amount in the SEC before she transferred. Never seen Maxwell. Hopefully there's somebody we've seen that we can say, hey, we think she's a little bit like her and get some familiarity.

Q. A couple times you've said, That's not us. My question is, is this what just a super dominant team

like OU can do to somebody, even somebody as good as you? What I mean is, you're not your best. They're hard to play. Their aura, whatever. It gets to opposing teams and they don't bring their best. Did anything like that happen to you today?

KAREN WEEKLY: I felt very good about my team coming into this game. I felt like we were prepared. I felt like mentally we were where we needed to be.

I think Kiki spoke to it. Once we got down three, we were fine. Once we got down five, then I think there was a little bit of, you know, just lack of energy. That's hard to do. I mean, my gosh, these athletes, that's the hardest thing in sports I think is to keep your energy, your intensity, your focus at the level you want it to be at when you get punched pretty hard.

They've done it really, really well all season. Today we didn't. But it does also speak to their pitching and their team. Once they get you down, there's not a whole lot of room there. They're not going to give you anything to help you get back in the game.

Last year out at Palm Springs, we got down 4-0, then we just played a whole lot looser. Today we didn't. That's not characteristic of this team, not at all. I expect tomorrow we're going to see the Tennessee that I'm used to seeing.

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