

# 2023 Women's College World Series

Sunday, June 4, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Jessica Allister**

**NiJaree Canady**

**Kylie Chung**

Postgame Press Conference



Stanford - 1, Washington - 0

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with the press conference. A reminder to please silence your cell phones.

We'll go with first a statement from Stanford head coach Jessica Allister.

JESSICA ALLISTER: Just another great softball game. Proud of the way the team came out and competed today. I thought NiJa was fantastic on the mound. Kylie came through with some big at-bats.

I think overall just really proud of the group in general. You can tell that these women love playing together, and they want to continue to play together.

The special thing about getting to do collegiate athletics and getting to do these things with the people you love and care about. Doing it on your own is hollow, but doing them with the people that you work hard next to every day and who have the same hopes and dreams that you have makes it special.

Just happy to have a group that gets to play another day tomorrow.

**Q. Kylie, nice hat, by the way. What was going through your mind in the at-bat before you got the hit, and what was going through your mind after you were on first base with the RBI to take the lead?**

KYLIE CHUNG: She's a good pitcher, and I was trying attack strikes and expand the zone because that's how she was getting people out. I was just looking for a good pitch to hit in both at-bats. When it wasn't a good pitch to it, I

would take it. When it was a good pitch, I would swing at it. That's pretty much what was going through my mind both at-bats.

**Q. NiJa, you've looked so cool, calm, collected pretty much every inning you've been in the circle all week, but I am curious, this was a new day, new game. Again an elimination game. Can you just walk me through your approach and your mindset coming into this game today.**

NIJAREE CANADY: Coach Allister always talks about slowing the game down, especially in this atmosphere, just trying to slow the game down. I try to take a lot of deep breaths and just throw each pitch the best I can.

**Q. Can you just talk about the final strikeout, just what was going through your mind, and that little celebration you got as you hopped off the mound?**

NIJAREE CANADY: Just try to get the out honestly. Then just I feel like getting a strikeout is the best way to end the game. So just trying to get her out, but yeah.

**Q. Kylie, when you're in a game like this that's obviously a huge pitchers' duel and one run is probably going to make the difference. When you get into those later innings, does the messaging in the dugout, in the huddle, does the approach change at all, or is it just a matter of staying consistent and continue doing what you're doing and it will break through eventually?**

KYLIE CHUNG: I feel like our at-bats got better throughout the game. I feel like we all had confidence, if we just kept sticking with it, that something was going to fall. I'm pretty sure that's exactly what happened.

I think we kept making sure we had confidence in ourselves. That's the biggest key, I think, for us.

**Q. For both players, are these the type of games that you dreamed about when you were in high school, whether getting the game-winning hit or shutting out a team in the World Series?**



KYLIE CHUNG: Yeah, I still can't believe it. It doesn't feel real. Ever since I rode down in fourth grade, that was the career I wanted to have was play softball, so I have been thinking about it for a while.

NIJAREE CANADY: Same as Kylie, I can't believe I'm here right now. This is the biggest stage to play softball on. To have an opportunity to play here with this team, it's incredible.

**Q. For both players, describe what's it been like playing in this atmosphere. You have so many Stanford fans and alumni there in person rooting you on. What's been the atmosphere like?**

KYLIE CHUNG: It's been awesome. I mean, our fans have been awesome all year. I just think it's so cool that there's so many people supporting our support, and it's great to see how our sport is growing, like not only to see our fans in the stadium, but to see all the people who love softball and want to be here and watch our sport grow.

NIJAREE CANADY: Yeah, it's electric. I'm from Kansas, so I've had a lot of people come down and just being able to see my family and friends again, and seeing so many people travel from far away to watch us, it's been awesome.

**Q. Can you just talk about what it's been like watching your pitchers kind of dominate over the last few days?**

KYLIE CHUNG: I've been watching her do it for a few months now.

(Laughter).

It's just unbelievable. When we hit against her in the fall, it's got about the same result that you're seeing all these other people have. It's just awesome to see other people get struck out and not us.

But she's electric. Watching her stomp up on the mound and get excited. It just pumps us up even more. I love watching her play. I'm so excited to get to see her play for two more years.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Kylie and NiJaree. We'll move on to questions for Coach Allister.

**Q. Coach, I was wondering, did you have the feeling it was going to take a break or an error on one of the teams to actually get a run scored in that game?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Maybe. We played them a very

similar game in our place not too long ago. They're a good team, good defensive team, got good hitters, good pitchers, so tight ballgame.

I think oftentimes, when you're squaring the ball up and they're making good plays, their second baseman made two phenomenal plays to keep us off the board early on. Oftentimes it comes down to a little bit of luck.

Yes, it's an old fashioned pitchers' duel that we don't see much of, but it was going to be whoever bent first.

**Q. Congratulations, Coach. So when you last played Washington, they had the 8-0 victory in six innings. That can either really inspire a team or kind of drive them down. As a coach, how did you get your girls prepared for this matchup knowing that it's probably going to be a dogfight, and how do you keep them focused?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: I wouldn't say we thought about that the last game of the three-game series. The first two games were a lot similar to what you saw today.

That Sunday game against Washington, if you asked our team, maybe the worst game of our year, but that's kind of what happens on occasion. We play a sport that sometimes ends that way. So I wouldn't say we talked about that game at all and more just knew, based on the first two, that it was going to be a competitive game and we needed to just stick with it and continue to put on pressure, and just NiJa was tremendous in the circle.

In the sixth inning, when we make the two errors behind her and she digs in, just amazing.

**Q. Coach, obviously when you're recruiting any player, you believe they can have these type of performances, but when you were recruiting NiJa, did you imagine as a freshman she'd be able to come in and be this strong?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: I'd say yes and no. I don't think you expect anyone to put together the year that she had. I think it's unrealistic to put those expectations on anyone. But Kylie's not wrong, the fall when we faced her over and over and over again, it looked a lot like this.

Actually, Jessica Merchant, who works a lot with our hitters, I thought was about to tear her hair out. I think with every game that she continues to do it against other people, it makes her happier and happier.

So we knew she was special. Also, we knew she was special when we were recruiting her. When I called NiJa



on September 1st, I told her, I think you're the best pitcher in the country. It wasn't a "let's bring you in here and bring a couple other pitchers in here and see who says yes." She was my first phone call, and I told her, I think you're the best pitcher in the country, and I think that I have proven to be correct.

(Laughter).

**Q. Coach, tell me about Kylie Chung coming through for you there. That was a gutty at-bat, battling there with two outs. Did you feel confident that ball was going to drop? Then your base-running too obviously was an underrated part of that inning as well.**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, I thought it was a great at-bat. Was I confident it was going to drop? Was I hopeful it was going to drop? Sure. Again, there were a couple balls I thought were going to get through early on. They made some great plays. That's just how the game goes sometimes.

Yeah, we thought we could be aggressive on the bases today. We were trying to get Gindlesperger in motion early on. Just couldn't get the right pitch. It was good job of her stealing the bag and having the presence of mind to get up and make it to third base.

Kylie's a great story. She didn't sniff the lineup for a really long time. She's a pitcher too. The DP position was kind of held by other people. We had a couple injuries to people who had that position on lockdown and opened up some opportunities. After having great at-bats over and over and over again in practices, got a shot, and has really filled a hole in the middle of our lineup and given us good at-bats since.

I couldn't be more proud of Kylie and just her stick-to-itiveness. It's easy to think, I'm never really going to hit, but she continued to prepare, continued to prepare, and see her get paid off now, it's fun.

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