

# 2024 Women's College World Series

Thursday, May 30, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

## UCLA Bruins

## Coach Kelly Inouye-Perez

## Jordan Woolery

## Taylor Tinsley

### Postgame Press Conference



UCLA 4, Alabama 1

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by UCLA.

We'll start with an opening statement from Coach.

KELLY INOUE PEREZ: First and foremost, I have so much respect for the Alabama program, Pat Murphy, what he does every year. I'm not surprised that they're here. It's always great to compete. Always a great game against them.

And then to my Bruins, Game 1, I can tell you, is always the hardest. I'm proud. We had a feel. We got experience. We got to settle in. The plan the entire time was I wanted KT and Taylor to get out there so they could get a feel for the game. It comes down to critical moments.

I always say the game has a sick sense of humor. Jordan had an opportunity early in the game. It didn't pay her back in that moment. That's one thing that makes Jordan very special. It's kind of crazy those situations. It was familiar territory. She stepped in and was ready for that next at-bat.

I'm proud. Game 1. We're excited. We'll figure out what's next. For right now just going to celebrate the fact that Game 1 is a big one. Super proud of my Bruins.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for players.

**Q. Jordan, can you talk us through the home run.**

JORDAN WOOLERY: I just wanted to have Megan's back. She's had my back all year long. Seeing her go down, I wanted to step up and be there for her. Even if I didn't get the outcome, I knew we were going to come through and

play for the rest of the day if we had to.

**Q. Does you know as soon as you hit it?**

JORDAN WOOLERY: I think I blacked out after I hit it. I don't really remember honestly (laughter).

**Q. What about your previous at-bats? What were you seeing? What did you change in the third at-bat?**

JORDAN WOOLERY: I think my last at-bat, not letting the moment get to me and, like, being too big. Settling in in my third at-bat, where the first two I was kind of excited to be here, excited to play. So settling in and just playing my game was a big portion of that.

**Q. Jordan, what was Kayla Beaver able to do?**

JORDAN WOOLERY: She was throwing a lot of good pitches, a lot of drop balls. We were kind of grounding out and getting on top of it. Making the adjustment the last inning was big for us. Coach Lisa was helping us throughout the whole game, so it was really cool.

**Q. You mentioned this is your first time here in Oklahoma City. What was the experience like?**

TAYLOR TINSLEY: Yeah, I feel like for me, just coming in and having KT's back, it definitely was a little bit, like, a lot. Look around and see how many people are there. I ended up just settling in, finding my focal point, playing the game, loud pop, soft pop, just playing with Shar. Ended up just settling in quite nicely, same with Jordan.

JORDAN WOOLERY: I would say the same, settling in and realizing it's just softball even though the stage is a little bit bigger. Just remembering it's a game at the end of the day.

**Q. Taylor, can you talk about the challenge of Alabama. Obviously great pitching. How were you able to avoid letting them find that one or two to get you guys on the ropes?**

TAYLOR TINSLEY: Yeah, I mean, Alabama, they're



definitely great hitters. We faced great hitters all year. Just attacking the zone, providing my pitches, executing what I know is best, trusting in Coach I that she's going to call the right pitch, trusting Shar is going to get the strike for me. Just having a lot of trust in my coaches and my defense.

**Q. How big was it y'all to minimize the play at the end of the fifth inning?**

JORDAN WOOLERY: I think just trusting the defense. Our outfield especially is literally ridiculous. I knew Meg was going to come up with the play. All the outies are doing such a good job. I think it kind of turned the momentum for us, too.

TAYLOR TINSLEY: Yeah, Shar is a dog, she's a veteran. I knew she was going to get the out, so...

**Q. How did you spend the rain delay?**

TAYLOR TINSLEY: Yeah, I mean, I feel like we're pretty good with rain delays. It's been a pretty rainy season for us, even though we're in L.A.

Just playing music, staying loose, just chatting it up. Nothing crazy.

**Q. Coming here as first-timers, this is a first experience for sophomores and freshmen on this team. What did it mean to get that under your belt and a win?**

JORDAN WOOLERY: It was really cool. I think just playing for the seniors last year who didn't get to come here, I think that fueled us a lot. Also knowing, like, even though we didn't get outcome immediately, everyone was going to have our back. Not pressing throughout the game, but just continuing to let the game come to us.

TAYLOR TINSLEY: Yeah, definitely doing for it seniors from last year. Megan Faraimo, she's definitely still really close for me. Just knowing me and KT are going to ride this out, have our offense's back, defense's back. I'm glad we got the win under our belt, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Players, thank you. We'll continue with questions for Coach.

**Q. On the play in the fifth inning, what did you see? How big was that for y'all?**

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: Well, I knew where we were playing defensively. Of course, you got to send the runner. I'm kind of glad they did because Megan was in position.

She's got a good arm. The ball was hit right to her. I felt really good, if we were able to play catch, that she was going to be out at the plate.

I know our world is so heightened right now with obstruction. That was clearly a catch and out. It wasn't as close or dramatic as there have been plays throughout the year. It was just a test to see if we could play catch, and we did.

**Q. Obviously when they decided to eventually walk Shar to get to a couple pretty big hits, but young players, what was your sense of things at that point with Megan and with Jordan?**

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: Smart move, right? Shar is a hot hitter. But I love what we have behind them. I think the experience, like Megan, I can't wait to see what she's going to do next because we've talked about it. I have her behind Shar for a reason. And everyone, you know, it's a great coaching move.

So with that it, strategically we knew if we moved the runner we could put ourselves at that point. Tie ballgame, World Series, Game 1, we have to do whatever it takes to get that lead run.

With it, I kind of knew that could happen. That was the decision we made, advancing the runner 60 feet. Once again, both those two, Megan has come through some really big at-bats for us, and Jordan has come through some really big at-bats for us. It gives us more confidence knowing the pressure doesn't have to be on Shar. She may or may not get at-bats all weekend, but it's going to provide opportunity for those behind her to have the opportunity to have that big moment. Today it was Jordan. It was exciting.

Last year and this year, both of those two have done some pretty phenomenal things.

**Q. You have some important pieces, this is their first experience, to get that experience moving forward, but a win at the same time, how crucial is that?**

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: I mean, Game 1 of every post-season tournament is the biggest. The nerves, all those things are just a factor. I remember being a player. I remember what it feels like to feel like, Whoa. It seems really easy to watch, slow it down and get underneath the drop ball. Everyone is saying that. The energy, there's a lot of energy that every player is feeling.

We say this all the time. The team that settles in and plays their game is going to give themselves the best chance.

We've pulled together a lot. I credit my coaches. They did a great job of pulling them in every inning. Normally we let them talk about it. We pulled them in, stayed with them, stayed very positive. It's not a time to be captain obvious on "This is what you need to do."

They stayed very positive and hopeful on what we're going to do. We knew we had the opportunity to throw the last punch. There's familiar territory. This team is battle-tested. We've been behind. We've had to find ways to be able to get on the board so they can come out and swing it. We did that in the first. We didn't square up anything. It wasn't great.

But their ability to settle in. Even Maya, finding a way to be able to get on base. She took two low pitches, able to find ways to get on base. Those are the little things that add up to the big things in those moments.

This team, again, we have found a way to win. As things get later in a game, we have the ability to make adjustments. That's something that I think what you need to do, especially at this time of year.

**Q. How does it speak to the maturity of KT to come in?**

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: I mean, almost like I wouldn't use the word mature with KT because she's so fiery. There's no thought of anything but "I'm going to go." There's no other thought. So with it, she's engaged, she's passionate, she's a power pitcher. She missed on some balls. Like I say, what I love about her is she'll come in and just own it. She'll say that was fat, that was straight up there. Then want to get better. She's a true pitcher, a true competitor.

Maturity is something that you almost gain through time. This is her first time on this stage. All I know is she's green means go. There were a lot of misses. I think what she does is she was able to settle in with the big-time change up, big-time drop, get outs in critical moments. That's a sign of a higher-level pitcher.

I can't wait to see what she's going to do for the rest of her career. Her mindset is get in the box, I want to get you out every single time. It's fun to see them grow and develop.

With Taylor, Taylor felt a little bit out-of-body experience. Everyone is, like, that's a bummer when you're watching it. To see her settle in and find that pitch at the end, those are things that make me proud as a coach, they can find their way to play in big games. There's a lot on the line. The fact that they did that, it's great signs for the rest of the tournament for us.

**Q. You mentioned trailing, come back. You have been good at that all year. How did you build that?**

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: First of all, there's a lot of trust in the program between the athletes and the coaches. The work ethic is there during practice. We're not just swinging. There's intent behind situational hitting, certain counts. Sometimes we just give 'em one shot, one pitch to be able to lock into a moment. There's focus on what side of the ball to hit, field to hit, what pitch to attack.

I credit my coaches. Lisa and Coach Kirk and Bubba and Will are just a staff that have everything covered. They're prepared. This is the bottom line. If it's a drop ball or rise ball pitcher, has a change up, we have practiced this a lot. Like I said, if we settle into our game, I have strong belief that we will find a way to get on board.

But I think the biggest thing is defense wins championships at the end of the day. It's not easy to dial up a lot of runs at this tournament. The catch that Jadelyn made, the foul ball, those type of things, the throw that Megan made, Shar threw out the runner by a pretty big margin. Those are the things that are big.

The pitchers, obviously it starts in the circle. Two pitchers with very little experience kind of stumble a little bit but settle in, that makes me really excited about our opportunities to be able to compete in this tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports