

# 2024 Women's College World Series

Thursday, May 30, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Duke Blue Devils**

**Coach Marissa Young**

**Francesca Frelick**

**Kelly Torres**

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 9, Duke 1

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Duke.

We'll start with an opening statement from Coach.

MARISSA YOUNG: Obviously a tough game. Not the outcome we were looking for. But I think there's a lot of positive things we can pull from this.

We scored first. We put a lot of pressure on their starter, Kelly Maxwell, drew some good walks, lifted her from the ballgame. Played really good defense. Obviously their offense was lights out today and did a really good job handling our pitching staff.

We've got to have a short-term memory and take from today so that we can come back tomorrow and take on our next opponent.

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

**Q. Frankie, when you stepped up to the plate, you've talked about wanting to put this team really on your back, did you see anything specific that you were like okay, I can hit this?**

FRANCESCA FRELICK: I was just going in looking for a good pitch. I really wasn't overthinking anything. I was really trying to keep it simple. First at-bat of the game. Trying to get the butterflies out. Just looking for something I could hit hard. I wasn't trying to hit a home run. I was just looking for a good pitch to hit right back up the middle.

**Q. Could both of you guys, sort of being in this space for the first time, what was it like out there? How did you feel initially you handled things?**

FRANCESCA FRELICK: Yeah, I mean, when we walked in, all I could do was take a 360 turnaround. I had the biggest smile on my face. I was talking to the girls to the left and right of me saying, How exciting is this? What a dream this is. Growing up, every girl dreams about making it to this stage.

I think everyone was super excited. We had a great crowd at Missouri. The atmosphere was pretty similar. Obviously not to this extent. More than I've ever played with.

I think that helped us. I think what our team did was just take a step back, see where we were, take it all in, and play with no fear.

KELLY TORRES: Yeah, I'd echo what Frankie said. This is every little girl's dream to make it here. We did that. The job is not done yet. We still have life, still have game. I'm excited to see what we do next game.

**Q. No matter what, you faced the opponent that's going to have the most fans here, the defending champ. Do you feel you've seen it, like you've kind of come through that first test and you faced it, now move on?**

KELLY TORRES: Yeah, I would say we knew Oklahoma was going to have the most fans. I mean, 20 minutes down the road.

We knew coming in game one was going to be the biggest atmosphere. What a game to start with because now the rest is just going to be a breeze.

**Q. Kelly, as the emotional leader of this team, is it nice to have the quick turnaround, short-term memory?**

KELLY TORRES: Yeah. Have you watched the show "Ted Lasso"? Kind of had the goldfish mentality. Can't change the past, all we can do is focus on the next game.

**Q. Speaking of "Ted Lasso," what can you say about your coach and getting you to this point? One thing to talk about it; another thing to get here.**



KELLY TORRES: Yeah, it's crazy. I committed team two; came on the team team four. In seven years we did what people can't do in 50. It echoes what Coach does, what we instill, our standards.

Although team one, team two, team three, they didn't have the outcomes that we have now, they're still held to the same standards. That's why we're here today.

FRANCESCA FRELICK: I've never seen "Ted Lasso," so I'm a little confused by the first part of the question.

I think we have a lot of returners from last year. I think the experience we bring from last year, falling short, kind of lit a fire under us this whole season. We faced so much adversity. That's a theme we've always talked about, we face adversity, we'll come back from it.

Even though the outcome of this game is not what we wanted, we know we got punched in the gut, how hard can we punch tomorrow.

**Q. OU had the majority of the fans. There were a handful of some very loyal non-family Duke supporters here. What does it mean to y'all being such a small new program?**

FRANCESCA FRELICK: Our freshmen year was COVID year, so we had cardboard cutouts in our stands. It was like dead quiet during games.

To see that we have fans who aren't our family, our immediate family, come to support us, it's really hard to explain. I mean, the love and support they've given us throughout the year has been exceptional. We play for them, as well.

KELLY TORRES: I would just say our village runs deep. It's awesome to see. Although might not feel the crowd, but to see our one blue in the stands, it's beautiful. Although there's not that many, the love they have for us, it feels like there's that many.

THE MODERATOR: That will do it for players. Thank you. We'll continue with questions for Coach.

**Q. You had some things working there in the fourth inning. Could you talk about Jayda's catch, how incredible of a fielder she is.**

MARISSA YOUNG: Jayda's catch?

THE MODERATOR: Coleman.

MARISSA YOUNG: Definitely, we had bases loaded. G really working the count. A few inches from that ball dropping in and scoring runs. But that's what great teams do. They show up and make the big plays. She's done that time and time again for them. Unfortunately the ball didn't bounce our way.

**Q. How did you think about Lillie Walker and her ability to handle the pressure playing in front of her home state?**

MARISSA YOUNG: She's done that all year. We talk about Lillie having ice in her veins. She wants to be in the big moment for her team. She wants to get the job done.

I think the zone wasn't in her favor, not getting the down ball call for a strike. She continued to work and fight and try to find ways to adjust.

**Q. You talked about some of the positives. Maybe in the early years you had to draw on the positives more. Now you win so much, this doesn't happen. How do you feel like your team is going to be able to find those positives?**

MARISSA YOUNG: They've always been a very resilient group where they don't hold onto the negative too long. We always kind of regroup and talk about what we can learn from the game, what we need to adjust in the game plan moving forward.

But they have a short-term memory. They've got a lot of spunk and fight. I'm confident they're going to bounce back tomorrow and be themselves.

**Q. I touched on the pitching. Y'all wouldn't say this was your best performance. Patty Gasso and her players were very complimentary of the pitching staff. Does that help, knowing it feels like you're going in the right direction?**

MARISSA YOUNG: I love our staff. Obviously they've done a phenomenal job all year long. It's tough to see them not get the job done today on this stage.

Again, growing pains. They learn from it. They know what they're capable of. When you leave balls over the plate to a team like Oklahoma, they're going to make you play.

They can walk away from a game like today knowing they didn't hit their best stuff. That's a positive because we have to turn around tomorrow and beat Alabama.

**Q. Frankie had five homers throughout the regular season. Now three in the last two weekends. Is that a**

**change in approach or getting hot at the right time?**

MARISSA YOUNG: We've called her May Frelick for a couple of years now. She just finds her groove May post-season when we need her the most.

But it's really a testament to the hard work she puts in all season long to be ready for these big moments.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

MARISSA YOUNG: Thank you.

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