

# 2024 Women's College World Series

Friday, May 31, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Coach Jessica Allister**

**Jade Berry**

**Ava Gall**

Postgame Press Conference



Stanford 8, Oklahoma State 0

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Stanford.

We will start with an opening statement from coach.

JESSICA ALLISTER: Just really proud of the team today. Really, really proud of the way we came back. Not surprised. We've been resilient all year. We've been really resilient in the post-season. We've played really well in elimination games. We've pushed back.

Proud of the way we came out today. I told the team at the end of the game, I pick that team every time. I love the team we were in the dugout, on the field. Just really couldn't be more proud of the way we came out today. Happy to get to stay in Oklahoma City for a couple more days.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

**Q. Ava and Jade, what did y'all see from Lexi early that allowed you to have some success?**

AVA GALL: Yeah, I mean, Lexi, she's a great pitcher. She's hitting spots. That first pitch, they just threw it on a perfect lane. That next one, it was a change-up that they just hung. My eyes got big and I went for it.

I mean, all of the at-bats prior to that, we were battling, fouling them off. That's just kind of what I knew. We were eventually going to get on her. It just took one swing. That's eventually what happened.

If you look from there on out, we were scoring. I think it was just from the very beginning, Taryn's walk, that's really what set it, working up her pitch count.

JADE BERRY: Yeah, I mean, I think everybody had good at-bats from the beginning. Ava's one swing really set us all, got us motivated to start being more aggressive. I think eventually they all started falling, too, so...

**Q. The tone in here last night was that you were going to be better. What were the conversations going into today?**

AVA GALL: We were kind of flat yesterday. We needed to play with some heart because heart is contagious. It is hard to beat a team that has just a ton of heart and a ton of pride in the name on their jersey. That's kind of what the message was coming into today.

Knowing how we played in regionals and super regionals, we have to take that same energy and confidence and apply it, play for each other, play for Stanford.

JADE BERRY: I think we came out really fired. I think we all had the energy in the dugout. It was awesome to be there. This is a crazy atmosphere. Just being here is cool.

I think we came really fired up today, so...

**Q. What does it mean for y'all to see NiJaree take the ball second day in a row and fight the way she did?**

JADE BERRY: NiJaree motivates me so much. She's an amazing player. I think she's the greatest of all time. She's just a stud. Playing behind her is so fun. She motivates us because she's so good.

Seeing her lead our team in the circle, it's amazing. Because she's a stud. I think we feed off of that for our at-bats. We want to do good for each other and for her.

AVA GALL: It fires us up. Every time she strikes someone up, three up, three down. It's huge. It helps the momentum. It helps the offense put runs up for NiJaree, make it easier for NiJaree. After that home run, I came in, gave her a hug, This is for you. We're hitting, doing for you. You keep doing or job, we'll do our job. It's just that trust on both sides of the ball. It's such a good dynamic.



**Q. Can y'all get a sense of just the way NiJaree spins it, the other team getting frustrated?**

JADE BERRY: I definitely feed off of it. I think there's multiple times where she gets so fired up, I can bring up like many off the top of my head, like the Washington game when she struck a girl out, we went crazy because she feeds off of it. We feed off of it. I mean, the energy is just contagious when it happens.

Obviously she has her stops. That really gets us going, too.

AVA GALL: I think it's really deflating when you're the other team, a pitcher is just mowing every single girl down. That kind of puts confidence in us that she just has to do her job, we'll do ours.

It's fun. It's fun. We can definitely feel it when that energy starts to shift.

**Q. Talk about how important it was to get your pitcher some run support tonight.**

AVA GALL: Well, I mean, the lower the pitch count it is for her, the better it is for her. The fact we were able to get eight runs in, what, six innings, that saves another inning of who knows what.

Just giving her some runs puts less stress on her, knowing she gets to throw her game. She goes right at the batters. She doesn't have to pitch as, I guess, fearful of giving up a game-tying or game-winning hit.

JADE BERRY: NiJaree is a stud no matter what. I think when we hit for her, she gets more confident, goes at the batters. She does that when there's not runs on the board.

I think, yeah, she's pretty cool watching, play behind. Even if we don't have any runs at the board, she's going at the batter. Obviously she's a G.O.A.T.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap things up for the players. We'll continue with questions for coach.

**Q. The freshmen setting the tone against the pitcher, what does that say for their development this season?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: They're wonderful. I like sitting up here and listening to them talk, too.

They're really good hitters. They've been really good hitters all year. Obviously they've kind of managed the ups and downs that go with hitting at this level. They can swing

it.

I think we played a really tough schedule all year. I think they're realizing now that there's no pitching that they haven't seen. I think drawing confidence from that, drawing confidence from competing on these different stages in the big moments, having success in those moments.

They've been a big piece for our offense this year. It's good to see them shine.

**Q. How were you able to break through tonight?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: I mean, I think there's a couple things. I'll stick by what I said yesterday. That wasn't us. Sometimes that happens.

I think today we were more aggressive, we were more assertive. We played Stanford softball. Yesterday we just felt like we were almost paralyzed just a little bit. I don't know where that comes from.

I even thought today it felt a little bit different getting going in the stadium. It was weird yesterday. 84 warming up. There's not a fan in the stands. Intros, there's nobody in the stands. First pitch, nobody in the stands. That's weird.

I don't know that it's necessarily how we want to play softball games at the World Series. That's not an excuse by any stretch, but just the whole thing felt off.

Today just felt more comfortable, more competitive. We were a completely different ballclub. But I think it's in our approach.

**Q. In your experience at this stage, when freshmen and sophomores come in their first time, they play well, how does that help them not just for the rest of the week but also in the off-season and their development?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: I think there's a lot of confidence that's gained. I guess I'll double down on what I've talked about before, once you get here, compete here, realize the margins are so small for a team, I think that happens with players, too.

I can really do it, I can be successful at this level, I can be successful against this competition, I think it does drive the off-season work. You get a little bit of a taste of it, that a little bit of a carrot, you want more. I think it's really important.

**Q. Emily put on the show in centerfield tonight. How**



**cool has it been to see her take over for Taylor?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, I think there's a couple pieces there. I think the first piece is we see Jones do that in practice all of the time. Sometimes with outfield, you don't get to see the great plays all the time because it takes kind of the perfect ball. Nothing that she does out there surprises us because we see it in practice every day.

To see her make the transition from the infield to the outfield, just continue to get better as the year goes on, she's a really, really, really good outfielder.

After that change at second base on the not leaving early, coming out and making the two great catches, she had a good second half of the game right there.

**Q. It looked like NiJaree pitched the ball off her knee on the followthrough. Can you give us any update on her status?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: Yeah, she threw it off her knee. You are correct (smiling).

She's tired. She's thrown a lot. We've asked her to do a lot over the last couple of weeks. I think you could see that at the end, the performance that NiJaree put on tonight when she is tired. Pitchers at this time of the year, there's a physical aspect to it. Just to see her kind of battle through that, it's one of the best performances that I've seen. Absolutely unbelievable.

So I don't know, I couldn't be more proud of the work that she did. We had conversations with her, being completely transparent this morning, Are you good to go? We've asked a lot of you.

She said, Yeah, Coach, I want the ball.

I think that speaks to her as a competitor. To have the performance that she had, I can't say enough about what that means for the team, what she did today.

**Q. Do you expect her to be good to go Sunday?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: We'll find out, right? It's late. It's almost midnight. Got a day off tomorrow, which is going to be important. We'll have those conversations as we go. But we'll worry about that tomorrow.

**Q. Another elimination game where you played well. You went through this against LSU twice. Do you think that helped your younger players?**

JESSICA ALLISTER: I think absolutely. I think there's a

confidence drawn from playing with your back against the wall, digging in and competing, instead of going into a little bit of, Oh, no, panic mode.

I think you saw that play out today.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap things up for Stanford. Thank you.

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