

2024 Women's College World Series

Sunday, June 2, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Florida Gators

Coach Tim Walton

Jocelyn Erickson

Keagan Rothrock

Postgame Press Conference



Florida 6, Alabama 4

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Florida.

We'll start with an opening statement by coach.

TIM WALTON: First just congratulations to Alabama. Obviously marching through regional, super regional, getting to this point, all their seniors, a great career.

We didn't do a whole lot different today. I know the scoreboard didn't indicate that, but we didn't do a whole lot different. I think our players played with more confidence, got better swings on pitches, more hits.

The prep was the same. Everything was the same. I think it's obviously a little bit different sometimes in elimination games than it is in winners bracket games. I thought we did a good job. Congratulations to Jocelyn Erickson making a school record that stood for a long time for RBIs. Congratulations to her and her teammates for getting on base. Big day.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for everybody.

Q. Jocelyn, they brought in Johnson to face you. What were you thinking with her being a change-up pitcher?

JOCELYN ERICKSON: Yeah, I mean, we were prepared for any of their pitchers. We had faced them earlier in the season so we knew what they threw.

She had pitched me multiple change-ups already. Just ready to do something big for my team.

Q. Early on, what was the difference you were seeing

from Keagan in the circle?

JOCELYN ERICKSON: Yeah, I think she turned the page. She was hitting her spots better, more focused, more determined. It's a learning curve yesterday. It's her freshman year. I'm really proud of her for turning the page.

Q. Jocelyn, you got OU coming up. Your former team. What is your outlook heading into that game?

JOCELYN ERICKSON: As a team, I think we're just doing the same thing that we've always done, playing the same game we've played our whole entire lives. I think it's going to be fun seeing some old friends.

It's going to be definitely a competitive semifinals, so we're getting after it.

Q. Jocelyn, did it feel like normal, traffic up high in the order, feel more like Gator softball today?

JOCELYN ERICKSON: Right, yeah, my teammates did a really good job of getting on base. That's what we've been doing all season.

Yeah, I would say more normal. I'm really happy that they were (smiling).

Q. Keagan, what did you have going in the sixth inning when they had a threat going?

KEAGAN ROTHROCK: I think just knowing that I have a great defense behind me and getting them the outs that they need, the outs we need to get out. I think that's the biggest thing to remember in those situations.

Q. Jocelyn, when I asked you about the runners on base, the last couple games that hasn't been the case. How did y'all fix that, get things going more offensively?

JOCELYN ERICKSON: I think we were just playing with more confidence today, trusting each other, passing the bat. We had played this team before in season, so that helped with it as well. I think we were just trusting each



other better today.

Q. Jocelyn just said you were prepared for all their pitchers. Were you surprised to see Alabama use three pitchers today, a team you already faced, was it more expected?

TIM WALTON: Yeah, I actually thought Briski was going to start today given some of the matchups recently. With a day off yesterday, everything made sense.

I'm one of those, I don't really put too much stock into what the other team does. They know their team better than I do. We just got prepared. We prepared for Alea Johnson last time with a lot of film and some prep there, too. She didn't pitch against us in the series down there.

I think overall I give our kids credit, Jocelyn and Korbe, they do a good job at preparing. If there's any two hitters on our team that know the other team's pitchers and tendencies and things like that, it's those two.

Q. Tim, you said it's a little different in elimination games. Maybe more relaxed or whatever. Do you think the desperation factor a little bit? What makes it different?

TIM WALTON: I mean, I don't want to say anything that's going to sound negative, but Texas was really good yesterday. They weren't playing today. I think that's the difference, to be honest with you.

We came out, we were prepped, ready to go yesterday. They were just really good. They played really well yesterday. I give them more credit than I take away from our kids. We hit some balls on the screws yesterday. I think Jocelyn Erickson's ball was hit at over 80 miles an hour to right field, makes a great play, Skylar hits one at 78, kid makes a good play. A lot of things that happened well for them yesterday. We found a way to get some hits better today.

It had to do with the Gators, but I think it really had to do more with the circumstances of the team we played yesterday.

Q. Jocelyn's season overall, how special is it?

TIM WALTON: I mean, gosh, 84 RBIs, that's a ton. That's a lot of RBIs. Everything is a combination of things when you work in the pre-season, just what you can do.

One of the things you always consider, all the way through our pre-season stuff, forget about August, in pre-season we didn't have her catch any doubleheaders, trying to

preserve her for this. Down the road she's caught pretty much every game from Sundays on. She's done a really good job.

It's been just fun to watch a kid like that, that not only has talent but has work ethic, has competitiveness, has good teammate tendencies, too. She does a good job. When she's getting hit, she's not more cheery and rah-rah. When she's not getting hit, she's not down. Handles her business well.

I'm not her teammate, I'm her coach, but I feel like she's a really professional softball player. She handles her business well. It's a breath of fresh air, to be honest with you.

Q. You opted for some lineup changes. You get Korbe on base four times. Is that kind of the spark that you needed?

TIM WALTON: Yeah, it was Kendra's idea, to be honest with you. I'll give Kendra Falby credit. She said, We have to do something different, Coach. I give her credit for that, being able to be mindful of the team, understanding we got to get on base, especially at the top.

Give Avery a little credit. Hasn't had a start in a long time. Got her second post-season hit, really nice hit. Just pretty cool to see a senior like, that a good teammate, one of our leaders, to be able to pick her team up when we needed it the most.

Q. Can you give your thoughts on this OU team that you're getting ready to face. How familiar are you with them?

TIM WALTON: Yeah, I didn't even know who we were playing tomorrow, to be honest with you. I told my team that same thing. We got one game to focus on, our opponent. I couldn't tell you even the time. Everything was poured into this game.

I know they've had an outstanding season. I got to catch them a couple times. I'm not the scouting report guru. Obviously they're very mature, very old team, very professional team. They've done a lot of really good things for the game of softball, just the way they've amplified everything about the sport, the professionalism.

Coach Gasso obviously has been just phenomenal for not only the softball, Division I softball, but also for the state, really brought some great -- a lot of Sooners fans in this state obviously. They love winners. They come out and support her and her program.

It will be good. I'm excited for the matchup. You come to the Women's College World Series, you get an opportunity to play Oklahoma, you're doing something right. I am looking forward to it.

Q. Keagan, what did you see in the seventh inning to close the game out like she did?

TIM WALTON: Yeah, she did a really good job. Getting the leadoff hitter on base, she's been a thorn in everybody's side this post-season. Tennessee included. She just had a great post-season.

I think her location was better. In the first inning, obviously I'm not that close, that's the one thing about the World Series, the dugouts are really close. Her drop ball movement was really good in the first inning, especially on Cahalan. She had good speed differentials on her rise ball, I believe with Giles potentially.

It was good. Fun to see. That's Keagan Rothrock for me, multiple speeds, much better location than yesterday. Gave up a couple runs, but obviously we contributed a little bit to that, too.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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