

2024 Women's College World Series

Sunday, June 2, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide

Coach Patrick Murphy

Jenna Johnson

Bailey Dowling

Kayla Beaver

Postgame Press Conference



JENNA JOHNSON: First, I got to give all the glory to God because He's the only reason I'm here today. I want to thank Him for my career, this season.

It was a hard season, but, man, was it so rewarding. I got to end my career at the World Series. I've been three times. I'm just so thankful sitting up here today. The opportunity to play with my sister, the way this season has taught me so much about faith. I always had faith in Jesus, but this taught me about faith into people, buying into something you couldn't see.

There were some times, I won't lie to you guys, throughout the season, what do we do? How do we get everybody together? We had many team meetings. We found a way to bring it together, to click at the right time, now we're at the World Series when nobody chose us and we're here.

BAILEY DOWLING: This was the most fulfilling team I think I've ever been a part of in my life. Not one time during the season did we quit on each other. It got hard. Like Jenna said, we got to points where we didn't know what to do, but we never gave up. We kept fighting for each other. We fought to get here when nobody thought we'd get here.

I couldn't be more grateful for God making this my senior year and ending here with these girls.

KAYLA BEAVER: I think about where I was a year ago, and it's these girls right here, everybody on this team, this staff, that gave me the love back. I wanted to quit. I didn't want to do it anymore, but they fought for me and let me come in. They made me one of their sisters.

I could not be more proud for what this team has done. What we accomplished this year, and when I say 'nobody', except for us thought we would be here. If we didn't, we proved so many people long. We created a legacy for Alabama softball and for girls to come in and look up to.

I couldn't be more thankful for the coaching staff to give me a chance. God put me here. He did. It was the full circle life moment for a year ago. Getting to finish my season at the World Series, there's nothing that will ever beat that.

Florida 6, Alabama 4

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Alabama.

We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

PATRICK MURPHY: Hey, I want to say thanks to all of you for what you do for college softball. If you don't write about it, post about it, tell vice us, nobody knows what a great sport we have. So you do a great service for us. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everybody in the room.

Then I just told the team, I try to think of a good analogy for this group, and when you watch a show, a TV show, probably a lot of you have seen Lucille Ball, maybe not, maybe nobody has seen it, but there's a scene where they're crushing grapes, and they're trying to make wine. They get to the bottom of the barrel, and they have all these grapes are just done. They have every single ounce of juice out of those grapes. That's it.

That is this team. They squeezed every single ounce of being a great teammate, being great leaders, being great reps of the University of Alabama, worked their butts off, and they got here beyond anything that I could ever imagine.

It's been one of the most enjoyable teams to coach in my career.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for players.

Q. What was it like this season? What are you going to remember about the season?



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

Q. Can you go into what the pitching plan was today.

PATRICK MURPHY: I think Kayla got through four full, right? They're such a good hitting team. I just think you have to show them different looks. I think when she left, was it 2-2, we had full faith in everybody else.

The walks hurt us a little bit 'cause they're going to get their hits. You can't give up freebies. I don't think we had an error, did we?

Q. (No microphone.)

PATRICK MURPHY: The short one, okay.

You can't give them anything extra. You can't walk 'em. If they get a hit early, you walk another one, that's just digging a really big hole, so...

Q. Was bringing in Alea to face Jocelyn Erickson a matchup thing with the change-up?

PATRICK MURPHY: Yes. A couple of our change-ups were a little high. But she's a great hitter. She was awesome in the seventh. Actually, we had the tiny run at the plate in the sixth. As a coach, that's what you ask for. Just give me the tying run up to bat, and let's see what happens.

We had bases loaded I think and one out. Just maybe one hit short there. I really thought we were going to do it in the bottom of the seventh.

Q. The girls spoke on what this season meant to them. What does team 28 mean to you?

PATRICK MURPHY: I think it started with football. They lost to Texas. They had a lousy game against South Florida. Then they just kept getting better and better and better. I love being a spring sport because I get to learn from the fall sports.

Then here comes basketball. They had a couple rough outings. Then they pull it together. Nobody, nobody thought that they could get to the Final Four. Nate Oats takes this team for the first time ever to the Final Four.

I'm thinking, We can do that, we can do the same thing. Any coach that has a rough start or a rough go, whatever, you don't give up on a team. You don't give up on anybody.

You heard them, they did not give up on each other. Nobody quit. Everybody kept working. It started to kind of reveal itself a little bit. We played better, better, better, better, better.

Then (indiscernible) magic for regionals. You saw what happened at super regionals. I thought we played really well down the stretch. It's a team whose legacy is going to be they didn't give up on each other, they kept working. Doesn't matter what you do regular season, you get a whole new start and you can start fresh. I think they proved to everybody that it's not how you start, it's how you finish. A great lesson for a lot of teams.

Q. This was the first season being able to have the third assistant, dedicated hitting coach. What differences did you see?

PATRICK MURPHY: I think it was a good relationship-building year. Somebody new. At the end of the game I think we had five sophomores in the lineup. We're a young team still. The more that they learn from him, he learns from them, the relationship.

You cannot automate a relationship. You can go to Panera and it's automated order. You cannot automate relationships. You cannot do that. It's going to start one on one.

I thought he did a good job of that early in the fall. But you got to build that trust with a hitter because everybody is different. Their approaches are different. Their mental games are different. You got to learn.

We had 16. He's got to learn 16 different people, different personalities, what makes them go. You got to learn what motivates 'em. That's just going to keep getting better and better and better.

Q. Could you go into what Kayla and Jocelyn's relationship was this year?

PATRICK MURPHY: Beaver, you saw she has this big personality, this big heart. She's like that in the bullpen. Everybody got to see what she did on a daily basis. We did have six, but Lauren Esman had a pec injury so she didn't get to pitch for the last three months really. So we had five pitchers on a daily basis in the bullpen.

Beaver's love for the school just shined brightly every single day. I mean, you saw that she just loved Alabama. It's really fresh to see that on a kid who it's her fifth year. We could have senioritis, which senioritis is I'm done with softball, I'm tired, I know I have a job, I'm going to get

married, I want to be done with this. Not one of those nine seniors did that, including her.

That's kind of what propelled us as well late in the season.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

PATRICK MURPHY: Thanks a lot, you guys. I hope to see you next year.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

