

2024 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 3, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners
Coach Patty Gasso
Kinzie Hansen
Tiare Jennings

Postgame Press Conference



Florida 9, Oklahoma 3

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Oklahoma.

We'll start with an opening statement by coach.

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, tough game for us. Florida hit the ball really well today. Credit them that. We left 10 runners in scoring position, so that's tough when you look at the box scores.

I don't think this was our best game by any means. The beauty of this is that we get another opportunity to make it right.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for players.

Q. Kinzie, in the first inning it looked like Nicole thought she had strike three. Later in the game... Strike zone seemed tight. What do you tell their pitchers when they're having issues?

KINZIE HANSEN: Yeah, for sure, something that I just communicate with my pitchers to control the controllables. Keep spinning the ball, dominating through the zone. At the end of the day, you keep hitting your spot, the umpire can call it or he can't. Just keep their composure, stay steady throughout the game.

I keep telling them I'm going to do everything I can. The umpire was tight for both sides. It wasn't just us.

I think going forward tomorrow, we're just going to need to be better. It's no excuses. The pitchers did a great job hitting their spots. Some of the calls didn't go our way, some did.

I think Florida just capitalized on the ones that kind of fell over the plate.

Q. Tiare, you were able to find some offense later in the game. Early maybe the offense wasn't there. What did you see from the early offense? How tough was that for Florida to get that momentum early on?

TIARE JENNINGS: Yeah, I think we made good adjustments towards the end. By that time, I think it was too late.

Going in tomorrow, just resetting. We know a game plan. We didn't stick with it today. But good thing about this is we have another day, we know who they're going to throw, what's going to happen. It's already written. We're just going to go out there and focus on what we can do.

Q. You have a lot of seniors, leadership. Did you get the sense at any point in the game that you were pressing a little bit, whether it was offense, defense or in the circle?

TIARE JENNINGS: I didn't think we were just pressing. I thought maybe we were just trying to find ways to keep up. Every time we thought we had momentum, boom, they'd come out and score more runs.

We had good at-bats, hit the ball hard. They made some good plays. We had runners in scoring position. We couldn't capitalize on scoring.

Overall I just thought that we got on base. It's not like we were striking out or things like that. We were hitting the ball hard, things didn't go our way.

KINZIE HANSEN: This team has been in this position before. We know how to get out of this.

Our first year here at the World Series we lost the first game, came out of the losers bracket. This feeling isn't new to us.

We're not pressing at all. We know how to win ballgames, what we need to do going forward. Looking forward to it.



We're never going to give in. No matter if it's 0-2, down six runs in the seventh inning, it's never over for us.

Q. Kinzie, kind of getting knocked back a little bit, you had to learn how to deal with that. What have you learned about being able to reset, go again?

KINZIE HANSEN: That the Sooners play best after we get punched in the mouth. That's what I've learned this season.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, players. We'll continue with questions for coach.

Q. Early in the game the base running, everybody seemed a little bit off. Why do you think that was?

PATTY GASSO: That was totally my fault. I own that one. That was an unbelievable play. I'm looking up. I'm telling her, Okay, it's through, go. I'm looking for the next runner. That was on me. It was nothing she did wrong. I own that.

That was just part of it. It's part of it. They made great plays. They really played some great defense. They were playing to win. You could see that.

Q. The decision to go with Nicole instead of Kelly, talk about what factors you were weighing, what ultimately went into making that choice?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, we got a staff. I got to show the staff that I believe in them. I don't care because I know this team. I know what we need. I know them.

Kelly cannot take us all the way. She can't. I have to get these guys on the field. I've got to get them on the mound, I've got to get them the experience or we aren't going anywhere.

I thought Nicole threw some really good pitches, as did KD. They were just getting hit, hard, timely hits.

What I also thought is if we were not going to win this game for some reason, then we have Kelly rested and ready to play game two, which should have been happening right now. So that may have backfired on me (laughter). But it didn't because I have to pitch my pitching staff. I can't keep leaning on Kelly to take us all the way through.

You know what, though? This team has to step up, as well. We didn't play well enough to win this game all around. It wasn't just pitching. It was all the way around.

That's kind of what went into it.

Q. What do you feel like this team has learned through dropping games in the season that will help them tomorrow? And I want to ask you for an update on Alynah.

PATTY GASSO: They're fighters. They're fighters. It is hard to beat us twice. It has happened this season. This is really going to be a call-out. They know it. They know what's going on. They know what's at stake.

Who are we? What are we made of? We talked about really going in as an army of 21 instead of separation here, separation there, frustration over there. We can't live like that. We talked about a family, strong-knit, 21, fighting for every pitch, fighting for every out, throwing very competitive pitches. We just need to be sharper, better.

We need to be really working on all cylinders tomorrow. We can't have one part of our game good and think we're going to win at the World Series. We've going to have to have all three working for us tomorrow.

Alynah has not been cleared yet. There's still some, like, blood in her eye. Until that is completely gone, she will not be on the field. That's where they are right now. So she may or may not. Hopefully, but we're not going to do anything to jeopardize her either.

Q. You mentioned the if necessary game was supposed to be now. How does the schedule change, pushing it to tomorrow, adjust your strategy and maybe any of the adjustments you'll make?

PATTY GASSO: We have time, which is nice. We really are big advocates. JT does a really good job looking at video, creating game plans. We can go back and see what we did not do well, make those adjustments.

Same thing with our pitchers. We need time. We need a little bit of recovery, as well. So we're probably going to jump in a pool and get some of that out of us, then get back to work again and be ready for tomorrow.

It's not something we haven't done before.

Q. The few times you do lose, people say I bet Patty is ripping 'em right now.

PATTY GASSO: No. Let me just tell you, I don't do that. I used to do that. I don't do that anymore.

The approach in the game, especially as we were getting halfway through, they were up like six runs, I'm like we just got to find small victories here. You get a runner on base,



it's a victory. Have a good at-bat, walk, that's a victory. We're working to win small victories.

PATTY GASSO: Thank you.

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I just wanted them to get the feel of winning something. Quality wins in short little spurts. I felt momentum coming on our side. The score got enough out of hand, we just got to find momentum. Bring momentum. Walk off this field with momentum.

I feel like we did. So the messaging was that. We've got momentum on our side. We got to trust who we are, what we do. We got to fight. We got to be very focused and not try to hit home runs, but more just hardline drive gap shots. It's hard to hit it out here when it's, like, heavy air and so forth.

It's really just talking about how we won some small victories the second half of the game, momentum on our side going in.

So, no, I do not yell at anyone. I'm a very positive person.

Q. How important is getting 130 live looks at Rothrock today?

PATTY GASSO: Very helpful. Very helpful. I think we're going to go back and look at our at-bats so we know exactly what we were seeing.

It was, yeah, helpful to see that. She's a Haas. She's really doing a great job for that program. As a freshman, really very impressive.

Q. I hate to bring up the P word, but 'pressure'. When you're going for unprecedented four in a row, how much does that factor into little mistakes here and there?

PATTY GASSO: We have a team that's very athletic and they're very used to winning. When they don't get what they want, you can see something change a little bit. It can be up disruptive for rallies and so forth. Those are things that it's just a natural reaction.

They want to do something so bad for the team that if it doesn't happen, they'll get upset with themselves, whether it's a pitcher or hitter. That's just love for your family. You want to make them better. You want to give something to your family and you couldn't deliver. Those are things we got to go back and kind of adjust, as well, that we keep a little more steady with our approach, stay aggressive but steady with our approach.

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

