

# 2024 Women's College World Series

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Oklahoma Sooners**  
**Coach Patty Gasso**

**Ella Parker**

**Jayda Coleman**

**Tiare Jennings**

**Kelly Maxwell**

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 6, Florida 5

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Oklahoma. We will start with an opening statement by coach.

PATTY GASSO: I think one of the better games in College World Series history. A nail-biter. A little bit of everything.

From their side, Kelly will talk on this, hard to get those guys out. They have big swings, they cover the zone. Rothrock, absolute star on the mound fighting for her team.

On this side, it's Kelly Maxwell taking over probably fourth on, third on, shutting them down a bit. Some big timely hits. Really happy for Jayda. She's really been trying to help this team offensively.

I don't know that I could tell you that I believed that we would be here again, 'cause it's so difficult to get here. The way we did it was wonderful. We're blessed. We felt that. We just took advantage of all those blessings. That's that.

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

**Q. Ella, I'd like to ask you about the collision, came into second base. Could you describe it for me, what happened. A half hour later you're back at the plate and tying the ballgame. Jayda, could you describe that scenario.**

ELLA PARKER: Yeah, I just was running to second base. I kind of don't really remember a whole lot of it just because of like I guess the adrenaline rushing. Just doing whatever

to get to second base.

I know my team's got my back. Just working on passing the bat. Yeah, passing the bat to the next teammate.

JAYDA COLEMAN: Yeah, I think it really fired us up just to see her start the inning off of the line drive to the gap like that. Our team immediately started praying over both of the players because they both went down so fast. It was kind of scary.

I'm glad everything was good for both players. I think that kind of started a rally for our team to pass the bat.

**Q. Jayda, wanted to ask you about the home run. Not only that, but the conversation you had with Alyssa right before the inning. How did that at-bat progress?**

JAYDA COLEMAN: Yeah, I had been a little frustrated all game. Obviously I just want to do anything to help my team. I wasn't really able to do that.

Brito, she slowed me down and prayed over me. She was like, Surrender it all. Don't try to control everything. Go for it. No matter what, I'm not justified by whatever the at-bat is.

Even though I hit a home run, Jesus still loves me. If I would have struck out, Jesus loves me regardless.

I think that put me into my foundation. It's awesome.

**Q. The at-bat itself?**

JAYDA COLEMAN: Yeah, I was taking first pitch 'cause the other time I got jammed and popped up. I was going to take my time, really get a pitch that I wanted to see. I saw middle. I knew I needed to stay through the ball.

Going around the bases, I lost it, just started crying. Brito, just the presence that I felt with God, it was incredible. Incredible feeling.

**Q. Jayda, after you celebrated with your teammates, you and Patty hugged for a long time. Talk me through**



**anything that was said. Kelly, to have thrown as many pitches as you threw today, how did you maneuver through that mentally and physically?**

JAYDA COLEMAN: Yeah, I mean, throughout the game, coach just kept telling me how much she believed in me. I felt like I kind of kept letting her down in a way, letting this team down in a way. I was doing things I wouldn't really normally do. Just to be able to hug her in that moment. I'm not really sure what she said. I felt like I was crying into my mom's shoulder in that moment. Such relief.

KELLY MAXWELL: I mean, I knew today was going to be tough. I knew coming out the gate. I didn't kind of have my best stuff. I knew I was going to make an adjustment middle of the game. I flipped a switch, chose my fighter and went to war, I think. Just being able to attack and go out without a fight.

**Q. Tiare, what was it for you guys to stay calm? You've been down times during your career, but it was eight straight innings of that.**

TIARE JENNINGS: Today was different. We knew we were going to fight from the gate. They came out and punched first. We came out and punched again.

I think that was kind of punching back the entire game, just a dogfight. Just the presence of this team today was different all the way around. You could tell there was no press, there was no anxiety, there was no fear, there was nothing. It was just us, this team and God. We felt that through the stands, through just everybody.

Our hands are up. We know we're looking up always. There's something different. These smiles, there's something different going on with the Sooners right now.

**Q. Jayda and Tiare, what was the reset this morning, considerations?**

JAYDA COLEMAN: Well, our reset - I don't know if anyone knows this - every single time we're in the World Series, I jump on Tiare's bed and say (indiscernible).

TIARE JENNINGS: The minute the alarm goes off. The minute the alarm goes off.

JAYDA COLEMAN: Just staying in our daily routine. Keeping the smiles up, just staying the same that we are always doing. Even though we lost doesn't mean we need to change anything, not necessarily reset. We've just got to go back and play our game.

**Q. Ella, I talked to your parents after the game. I**

**asked them about the Sweet Baby barbecue sign. That nickname... If you have a big game like today, how often are you looking out there?**

ELLA PARKER: So the name Sweet Baby is actually from my 12U travel ball coach, Toni Mascarenas. I guess it was something my dad said. She was making fun of him for it. That name stuck out. It's been with me.

Sorry, can you repeat the second question?

**Q. When you have a game like today, coming in really clutch, how often are you taking in the energy from the crowd?**

ELLA PARKER: My teammates got my back, and I know everything that we're all for each other. I guess that's what drives me, is doing everything for my team. That came in today, so... Love everything about them.

**Q. Kelly, what was the adjustment you made after the third inning?**

KELLY MAXWELL: I sat down with Coach Rocha and we had a conversation of kind of what was going on, kind of what needed to happen. I think I took it personally, honestly. I knew this team was going to fight back. I was going to try to keep 'em in as long as we could.

**Q. You guys are the 2 seed; Texas is the 1 seed. Do you feel like y'all's team will be out to prove a point? Do you feel like Texas is at y'all's level?**

KELLY MAXWELL: I don't think we're trying to prove any point here. This year has been hard. But we deserve to be here. I think just staying within us and knowing we have a God that serves us, and we're going to go out here and give it our all.

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

**Q. Jayda has been in so many big games, but she's scuffling in this game. You did talk to her. What were you thinking as she came to the plate?**

PATTY GASSO: She would be a phenomenal softball coach. So she knows how to coach herself. Sometimes she has a list of I'm going to bunt, maybe I'll slap, chop. I don't know. It goes on and on. She has so many ideas.

Actually, the game yesterday, she wanted to bunt. I said, No, you need to swing. She got out. Tiare hit the home run. So I'm thinking, Why am I telling her what to do? 'Cause she knows exactly what we need and how to do it.



That's really it. You've got the freedom to be you. You've been doing this for three years now. You know what we need, so...

I didn't ask for a home run. I didn't think it was going to go that far either. It was really close, but...

Jayda has been really fighting to help this team. She gets really frustrated when she doesn't. It does affect us a little bit. Did a great thing last night. Brought the team together and kind of apologized for stepping away from them. I felt her ownership, becoming a woman, just stepping up for this team today.

**Q. Kelly talked about a little bit of a tough start to the game. Seemed like midway through the game, she found a rhythm. What does a game like this today for her mean? Maybe what did you see change in her after the tough start?**

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, I can't tell you how happy I am for Kelly Maxwell right now. I don't think she's out to try to prove anything, but she knows she's a good pitcher. When she was getting roughed up a little bit, I think she just kind of -- when she got with Jen Rocha, it was kind of like something in her that's like, Stop. I got to stop this. I need to be more competitive.

You could feel it coming out, and we could feel it as a team. I think that kind of helped rally the offense as well. They'd score, we'd score one, they'd score two. Back and forth. It's really frustrating when you're on that side, but you got to just trust your pitcher and your pitching coach. We all do.

The fact that Kelly is going to be playing in a national championship game is one of the highlights of our season.

**Q. Did you ever think of taking her out when she was struggling?**

PATTY GASSO: No.

**Q. With all these seniors up here, Ella hits the big home run. Are you looking at some of these youngsters as the next generation?**

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, definitely. We need them. They're doing some great, great things offensively. I think you just know the big names. Now you're really learning. Call her Sweet Baby, not Ella Parker. Kasi Pickering is doing a great job, very clutch for us this season and today as well. There's a lot of pitchers that are young that are watching and learning and waiting for their number to be called.

The future is going to continue to be bright even without these 10 seniors.

**Q. You talked about players waiting for their number to be called. Avery's has been called the last couple days. The way she's handled being in the lineup, especially the sixth inning today...**

PATTY GASSO: That was so big. You know when you have a player and, like, she's kind of that slapper, and then you got Alynah, who is a big hitter. They keep going back and forth. Maybe that's not the smartest thing to do because you keep sharing at-bats.

But she's been waiting for this moment. She practices hard. She does everything right at practice. Just waiting for her name to be called a little more often. She showcased herself big-time today. I don't think anybody was expecting that rope down the line that turned into a double. She had really, really big-time hits for us the last couple of days.

Alynah is sitting there doing the best she can. We're trying to play for her and get her back on the field. This girl has been waiting her whole life. These guys are waiting their life to be in this position. So hopefully we get a dose of Alynah as well. But Avery has gotten that opportunity, made the most of it. Really helped our team win today.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Ella, I mean big baby --**

PATTY GASSO: Sweet Baby. Don't call her big baby (smiling).

**Q. Big hitter is what I meant to say (laughter). Sweet Baby, okay. You're standing out there over her at second base. Describe that scene. Was she out of it? Talking to you? Her ability to come back.**

PATTY GASSO: She was talking, but she didn't want to move. I think her bell was rung pretty hard. It was a little bit scary because she's pretty tough. She just did not want to move. First thing you're like, Did something really happen?

She started to move around a little bit. We took her helmet off. She slowly got herself up. Her bell was rung. Both got hit pretty hard. I need to go back and look at it more because it happened so fast.

But we had our doctors right here in the dugout waiting to see her, gave her the okay. She passed all of the protocols, all the tests for concussion protocols.

She wanted it. We asked, Are you okay? I know you got clearance, are you good?

She goes, Yeah, yeah, yeah, get me back in there.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, it's coming to we bring in Ella. I look at her, and I start asking her again. She's like, I'm good, I'm good. She already had the bat, helmet. She was ready to go. Yeah, that's her. Sweet Baby.

**Q. Texas for about the thousandth time the last three years. What goes into the prep for a team you've played so many times at this stadium?**

PATTY GASSO: We know each other very well. Kind of feel like we're the underdogs this year. That's okay. It's good for us. We had to really fight our way through here. I'm proud of this group and how they did it.

We've got some really good momentum. We know each other very well. I don't know that there are a lot of secrets. It's going to be an absolute battle.

**Q. You've had feisty players. Jayda is that way for you guys. I imagine it maybe hasn't always been easy between you and her. How have you both gotten to this point? What did you say to her when you hugged her after the game?**

PATTY GASSO: She doesn't remember and I don't remember, except really Jayda came in, this girl has more energy than anyone I've ever seen in my life, and she uses every single ounce of it. When it's empty, it's empty. It's gassed. I mean, she lives life really, really hard - in a good way.

Sometimes her and I - and she'll tell you - we've butted heads pretty good. I've had to discipline her a few times. She always responds.

One thing I love about Jayda Coleman is she is so honest. Sometimes so honest you're like, Okay, don't say that out loud. But so honest that I know what I'm working with. So honest about our program that she will tell me things that maybe aren't going well. So honest that she'll tell me when no one else will.

I just respect the heck out of her. I think she is an absolute elite athlete. If you just knew her, I mean, she's full of energy. That's really how she lives every day. She's like that at practice. When she's tired, she's tired.

We need these nighttime games. We need more rest and

recuperation from this because she plays hard and lives hard.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap things up for Oklahoma.

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