

2024 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Mike White

Kayden Henry

Citlaly Gutierrez

Viviana Martinez

Press Conference



Thank you to the administration at the University of Texas. I'm so glad I'm a part of the great winning tradition of the University of Texas. So many national championships within their program. Hopefully we'll be the No. 1 sport in school again in the country. That's a tremendous achievement. Thanks to our athletic director, Chris Del Conte, and Sarah Baumgartner, who is here tonight. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. What's the biggest difference right now between you guys and OU? Where is the gap? How do you close it?

KAYDEN HENRY: For me being a freshman, I would say just how much veterans they have to play in this environment. I know on our end, it's loud, it's a lot of noise. It can seem like a hostile environment. For them, they have a lot of momentum and fans on their side.

It's not just that. They've been in this position before and they know how to conduct themselves in big moments, big games. They've done it four times in a row. They know how to conduct themselves when it comes to a championship series.

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: We're still growing as a team. They do have a lot of veterans. We're pretty young, still learning and growing. We've proved a lot this year, so I think we're still coming up. It's a bright future for us.

CITLALY GUTIERREZ: We're right where we need to be. Last year when we lost in supers, I said this team is going to be special in the coming years. I 100% agree to that. We have a lot of our returners coming back next year.

OU had quite a few veterans. They left the program to a high standard. I think we left our program to a high standard as well, with our four seniors leaving.

Q. How do you build off the experience going forward as such a young group?

KAYDEN HENRY: You just learn. This year anytime

Oklahoma 8, Texas 4

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Texas. We'll start with an opening statement from Coach White.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, obviously congratulations to the University of Oklahoma on their fourth championship in a row. It's an incredible feat. We know how tough it is just to get here, let alone win four. It's an amazing achievement. Especially for those classmen that were freshmen and now have four rings, that's something that drives all of us to get better, to be able to come back and win.

To my team, what an incredible effort. Great year. As I told the four seniors that left, and by the book and use it from New Zealand legacy, you leave the jersey in a better place. They have all done that, and they can be extremely proud of their efforts and contributions to the program and to softball as a whole.

I think our ladies conduct themselves in a way that you want your young kids to see and play the game. Not always perfect. I get it. We always make mistakes and everything. But they're working hard, being ambassadors for the sport of softball. So proud.

I want to also thank Longhorn Nation, all the fans, texts, well-wishers. Obviously coming into a hostile environment, 12,000 Oklahoma fans, it's not easy when you're a band of about a thousand. I really commend them for spending a lot of money, time and effort to come here to support us. It meant a lot. It was certainly great having the sendoff from the hotel this evening. Meant a lot to us, the girls, our program.



we've had a loss, what do we learn out of this experience. We've done it here with a very young team. I'm excited to see what we do next year.

We just work on how to execute the game plan and be the team we are and stay together.

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: We learn from our mistakes and losses. We don't get upset easily by those. We just learn from those mistakes, work on them in practice and keep improving.

Q. Can you explain what happened in the sixth inning when they had the big rally, how scary is this Oklahoma lineup to face?

CITLALY GUTIERREZ: I mean, we faced them multiple times this year. They're a team that's going to adjust. They're a great team.

But, I don't know, just sometimes the environment can be overwhelming sometimes. I try not to let it overtake me. I don't know. Just sometimes they just pass the bat, execute on mistakes. That's it.

Q. Kayden and Viviana, last night it was a lot of expanding the strike zone. Tonight it seemed like it was more disciplined, getting more contact. Talk about adapting to the second night.

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: So the first night we were chasing, and this morning we were practicing, just picking a zone and hunting that zone instead of chasing the wild pitches, that could be ball four, just balls in general. Picking a zone and hunting it instead of guessing pitches.

KAYDEN HENRY: Just looking to count. Sometimes you can get too impatient with the pitcher that you're facing or the moment can become too big. You have to take a deep breath sometimes. Like Vivi said, hunt a zone. You stick to that, and it's going to come. When the pitch comes, you just got to execute it.

Q. Is there anything in particular that you hope people remember about this team?

KAYDEN HENRY: Our grit. I mean, we fought this whole year. We had a great regionals, honestly, in my opinion. We have a young team. Any moment we were down, I feel like people can never count us out. We continued to fight. We showed our Texas fight the whole entire year. We worked our way to No. 1 for a reason. We'll be back again.

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: We'll continue that fight, too. Our future is bright, like I said before.

Q. You're all freshmen and sophomores. What does it say about the young players on this team that y'all are out here after a tough loss speaking and showing calm and poise?

KAYDEN HENRY: We're competitors. We all want the end goal to be here and win the championship. I just feel like we work that way. Our seniors really helped us mature and not be treated as sophomores or underclassmen and freshmen. We're one team, we're one unit. We're all at the same level, in it together, no matter what age or grade we're in.

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: Our young players have showed they're very well-experienced. They play just like the rest of us. They're our equals, so we'll treat them as that, 'cause they're great players.

Q. Vivi, did Mia Scott say what happened on that strange play at first base?

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: No.

Q. Did you talk to her at all? She seemed to be very emotional about it.

VIVIANA MARTINEZ: Just calmed her down.

Q. Y'all, what's the toughest part about this, going through all of this?

CITLALY GUTIERREZ: I would say for me it's saying good-bye to our seniors. Sorry, I get emotional (tearing up).

They set the bar really high for us. They really changed this program. Like, y'all may have not seen, like, all the behind the scenes, but they really have set the bar high for this program and for all the young girls coming in. They paved the way for us. I'm extremely grateful to have played for them and played with them.

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

Q. What's the gap between you and OU? What's the reason for it right now, really OU and everyone else?

MIKE WHITE: Just their ability to reload and continue to get premier players into their program. They had 10 upperclassmen, 10 graduating seniors, I believe, if I have the number right. How many All-Americans do they have? Anyone know? How many All-Americans do we have?

So for us to be in the same ballpark and play the game the way we did against that kind of odds, I mean, how do we only get one All-American anyway? I don't know. It's something we need to look at.

That tells us that we don't have a superstar, other than Reese this year. We did this because we worked together, played together, they believed in each other.

We didn't have a superstar pitcher. We had a pitching staff. As great as that pitching staff was, they were one-dimensional. We have to work on that. They have to come out and throw different pitches at different locations as a separate unit, as a separate player, as opposed to a unit.

We had the stuff as a unit, but it hurt us because people were able to adjust and sit on us. That's the biggest difference.

You get their pitchers out there, they're able to throw different types of pitches at you, different speeds. We got to work on that.

Q. Up and down their lineup, they seemed to hit rockets and missiles. Older team, as you said. Really big, strong bats.

MIKE WHITE: Well, yeah, they're older. I mean, you're looking at some kids that are 23, 24 years old in that lineup, and they've seen a lot of pitching. They're confident. They know they don't have to do it all themselves. They're able to do that.

If they don't, I mean, they just get moved down the lineup (smiling). Just produce or not. They have the luxury to be able to do those kind of things.

They're well-trained, obviously. They got a system going that's working. They're tough to beat right now. Hopefully we're catching up. I think a lot of the other programs are catching up. Kind of able to flip the tables here.

As I told the team, I want to be on the other side of the podium here one of these days, making that last speech more enjoyable than it is right now.

Q. What are you hoping that people remember about this year's team?

MIKE WHITE: I think, as I said, they don't know all the things we set, all the records we set this year and the improvement in the program. Like I said, leave the jersey in a better place. I think that they're pushing each other,

getting better. This is the closest team that we've had. I think that's due to the seniors pulling the team together and making sure we're pulling everything in the right way at the same time.

That's what I hope they remember.

I'm so proud of them for how they conducted themselves on and off the field everywhere we go. That means a lot to me. Even though some people don't think I'm very respectful, I am very respectful in my own way. People just don't know me, which is interesting. But anyway, it is what it is.

Q. Did you have a chance to speak with Mia about the play, give her any words of advice?

MIKE WHITE: No one feels worse than Mia Scott right now. Everything happens for a reason. She's cheeky. That's part of her MO. That's what she does. If you get caught out, you better be able to stand for it.

It was a big moment in that game. Everybody knows it. She's already beaten herself up. I know she is. Hopefully she learns from that.

I mean, that's part of how she is. She's really aggressive. Pushes the envelope a lot of times. This time it didn't work out.

Q. Your players talked about what they'll take from this forward to next year. When they get back to Austin, process all this, what do you hope they take for 2025?

MIKE WHITE: I think one of the big things, finding a way to play in this environment. It's completely different. As much as we've played in front of 8,000, this is completely different. Maybe not so much when we were playing Stanford or we were playing Florida or we were playing Stanford, you start playing OU and... As I told the ladies, you can feel the energy. There's 12,000-plus OU fans, maybe a thousand, 1500, 2,000 Texas fans. You have to be able to flip that on its head somehow. We have to use that energy in a way that benefits us.

Physically, we've got some things to work on obviously. Some of those things hurt us a little bit. We talked about the pitching. The hitting under pressure. I think they just started to push too much.

But again, we're a really young team. The future looks bright, but we know we got to get better.

Q. Did Mia just lose track of the ball?



MIKE WHITE: No, no. She was goading. She's cheeky. That's Mia Scott.

Q. You got Vivi coming up, may have turned out the same, maybe not.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah.

Q. Mac didn't seem to be on her game. What was the situation?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, no, she made some mistakes early in the game. Got the ball up a little bit. I'm not going to talk about the strike zone. I thought it was interesting. Challenged her a little bit. Definitely some things there.

You got to push through that. Not making excuses at all. Hats off to them. They made us throw strikes, and they capitalized. We talked about that. We had chances early in the game to be able to get on their pitching and we didn't. Then, of course, have you Maxwell coming in. That made it real difficult for us.

Q. You mentioned the energy. The third inning, you're leading, but they led off with a single. You switched pitchers. Is that a situation where you can sense there's a potential rally starting?

MIKE WHITE: Exactly. I thought I waited a little bit too long the other day, yesterday, to make a pitching change. With Teagan, I thought I waited just a little bit too long. I wanted to make it be a little more proactive on this one. It tended to work out.

The beginning started with -- moving on from that question a little bit, the beginning with three not well-hit balls. When it's your day, it's your day. We've been on the right side of that thing, we've been on the bad side. Sometimes the inches make a difference in this game.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

MIKE WHITE: Appreciate you all. Thank you.

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