

2025 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Ole Miss Rebels

Coach Jamie Trachsel

Aliyah Binford

Lexie Brady

Press Conference



and I was all smiles.

Q. I have a totally different question for you. There's been a lot of talk about seeding with this tournament, whether seeding 1 through 32 or 1 through 64 or potentially re-seeding once you have the eight for OKC. What are your feelings about either of those scenarios?

JAMIE TRACHSEL: It feels like there's so many objective components to it that it's hard to understand maybe what goes into what qualifications and how those are laid out.

Even for us in where we went, it seemed to be a geographical condition versus maybe like the seeding piece of it too, which there are people that have to make tough decisions. Maybe if there's more consistent components that everybody knows in the parameters that kind of know what field they're playing by, the rules of engagement, I guess.

But it's hard to get here either way. I think there's some outliers out there, but I know everyone has a tough job trying to put people in the right places. I think our parameter was a little more geographical when we went out to Arizona, just based off of how much Ole Miss has gone west for post-season too and maybe what teams are part of that.

But it's post-season and anything can happen, so you got to be able to play your best when it matters the most, regardless.

Q. With all the newcomers, how cool is it to see all that come together to where you are now today?

JAMIE TRACHSEL: It's a lot of work, but to answer your question directly, I can't even put into words to tell you how proud and satisfying it is. It was a lot of work starting last summer, and maybe part of it is identifying the right coaches.

Got the right coaching staff, the right freshman group, the right returners -- I should start with them, the right returners

THE MODERATOR: Coach Trachsel, if you have an opening statement.

JAMIE TRACHSEL: I just want to congratulate all the teams that have made it to a pretty special place. We know we're in great company here. You can have a great team, and the challenges to get here are really tough.

In saying that, I'm really proud of our team, the journey we have been on especially the last few weeks and being able to overcome going into some pretty hostile and adverse conditions against some great teams at Arizona and Arkansas.

So proud of the journey and the season that we've had. We have one more chapter in our story, and we're looking forward to having a lot to say about it here in Oklahoma City.

But very grateful, very proud to be in great company, and super proud of our team for what we've accomplished the last few weeks and earning the right to be here.

Q. Aliyah, watching you in the circle, you're very serious, no emotions shown. Can you talk me through keeping that poker face on? I noticed when you guys clinched a spot here, that faded away. Kind of take me back to that moment too.

ALIYAH BINFORD: Throughout my years, people have always told me that I smile a lot on the mound, but sometimes in my brain I have to be serious because if I'm smiling too much, I don't think I lock in.

But I knew that was a very important moment for my teammates, and I wanted them to know I was just as locked in as they were. Once we clinched it, it dropped,

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that stayed because they were committed to Ole Miss and myself and had a lot of trust and belief in me to make the right choices and bring in the right people.

So the retention of those players to our staff, and then some transfers as well, all of them playing a part, playing a role, it was up to us to figure out the puzzle to develop them, to figure out how those puzzle pieces fit together and to continue to build them as we move through the season.

And I got asked a lot throughout the season, each and every week, and my answer was always the same. I said we're going to keep getting better. We have too many new pieces to not, even as a new coaching staff to come back and have the conversations, roles and responsibilities, what those conversations are pregame, in game, and I thought we could be a team that was on the rise when it came down the stretch.

And all that actually kind of came true, but we just had so many new pieces I thought it would take that amount of time. And I think this is probably the team -- I don't think I have ever coached a team that has maximized the whole season getting better, using the lessons learned, the adversity that you go through to continue getting better throughout the season.

We lost a handful of extra-inning games until the Florida game in the SEC tournament. We had the lead, they tied it, and we won our first extra-inning game after going 0-5 off extra innings, and then losing Game 2 and coming back in Game 1, Arizona's environment to Arkansas's environment.

So I'm proud of how they've continued to get better, to buy in the investment, the resiliency that we have and the pride and the fight that we show.

Q. Lexie, I wanted to ask you about Ehren Earleywine and the impact that he has had, particularly with you guys. And, Coach, you weigh in on that as well. Was there any hesitation given the way things ended for him at Missouri even though there was a long time ago?

JAMIE TRACHSEL: Yeah, I will start with that. I talked to Ehren the year before, and so him and I -- played against him several times back to North Dakota State. So there was a familiarity there. We had conversations, both being in the Midwest. He was always really good to me.

There was a lot of time, obviously, that had elapsed. When I talked to him the previous year, just like any changes and decisions that people make in their life, the timing has to really line up.

And this past year in April, May, and June, the timing was right for both parties. And I had 100% confidence in just the conversations we had. And his body of work speaks for itself. He's an elite coach. He did it at Georgia Tech, built it at Missouri. And there's one thing to be able to win, but he knows how to build it, how to coach in it, how to develop.

And we have a lot of winners on this coaching staff, but Ehren has been incredible. But his body of work speaks for itself in that regard. And what he and Bobby Buchanan have done with their offense, that's why people text us: Man, you guys are fun to watch.

We have a lot of personality on our team, but we play our best when it's like that. But part of that is that the offense is just explosive. And been fun to watch, and all the credit goes to those guys and what they've been able to do.

Credit to our players. Lexie has had three hitting coaches in three years. And that's not easy to do, but I think she led the way welcoming him and Bobby with open arms, even though it's different than the two they had before, and buying into that and saying: Hey, tell us what you want us to do, and we're in.

But, again, just year one, really challenging, we talk about that. So you have to stay the course and really commit to the process, and things can work out. It's probably worked out sooner than we thought here this first year.

LEXIE BRADY: Yeah, I think a phenomenal coach with his body of work behind him, but just a great person. I love working under him. We worked together the first day he was on campus. We had a conversation. I was like: It's my senior year. Let's do this right away. Don't be afraid to dip your toes in the water. Let's get all into this right from the jump in the fall.

I think there was a big trust that was built between the players and him, and I think he felt open to work with us, and we were very receptive to him from the first day he was on campus. He was great in making relationships with us through the fall. He's only been my coach for a year, but I feel like I have had him for a long time. And we reflect on that once in a while.

Just a phenomenal person, a great coach. And the confidence he's instilled in our offense, you can see that play out on the field. And he knows different ways to win, different pieces to use and when. And just our ability to get here and the change in our offense speaks for itself.

Q. Could you talk about being here in OKC and what



the moment feels like and how you guys are just taking it in, especially being towards the end of your careers and being able to just take in this moment?

ALIYAH BINFORD: Yeah, the moment is just... can't really put it into words, obviously. It is our last year, and we worked our entire careers to get here. I've played on this park plenty of times but never in this environment.

And I think that's what makes it so special, just being able to do it with the girls that we have and see that we all have the same vision, the same goal and the same excitement to be here is just amazing. And it's really hard to put into words, but we're really looking forward to it.

LEXIE BRADY: Yeah, we were actually just getting on the bus, pulling in, and I was like last time I was here I think I stood in line to get a T-shirt as a kid. I think the nostalgia that comes with this place. You grow up watching the best athletes and the best in our game show out here, and I think just taking a moment to realize that we put ourselves in a position to be in those shoes is really a surreal moment. I don't know if it will really hit me until we're Game 1 against Tech.

But just blessed, I think, the progress that this program has made. And I knew that this team would be really special, but just seeing that we actually, like, made the decision to work really hard to get here is really something I'll always remember.

Q. Jamie, you don't sound like most people from Oxford, Mississippi, being from the upper Midwest. I wonder if you could talk about what you learned from your years there at Ole Miss, just about the place and how it values softball, and sort of the wider picture of the SEC just continuing to have more and more programs finding themselves in this place for the Women's College World Series.

JAMIE TRACHSEL: Yeah, I'm from Minnesota, and we had gone to the World Series, and then COVID hit, and Ole Miss called. And I didn't know too much about it, to be honest. For my first Zoom call, it was really comfortable. When I came for my visit, I spent six hours with just a handful of people because it was in the heart of COVID. And Shannon Singletary, my direct boss, was one of them. Keith Carter, our AD, best WA and then head compliance.

I sat with Keith. We sat in a team room and talked basketball and golf and Tiger Woods, and then we just ate. And I was like this is a place I felt like was home even though it was in the South and I have never lived in this area.

But the reason I made that move was just because they believed in me and trusted me and the vision that I had. And it was the same vision that they had. And there's one thing to share a vision, there's another in wanting to invest.

And I think you see the investment and the commitment they made to coaches and salaries and allowing me to hire who I believe would help us get to this point. The new stadium that we just have, the way we travel, how involved they are. It's nothing to see all our administrators at a practice, at a game, traveling with us. Shannon Singletary has been on the road for like four weeks with us, and he's part of our program. He has a great relationship with our players.

And then Oxford is an incredible college town. It's a cool college town. It's similar to when I was at North Dakota State, where there's no pro sports, and Mississippi. So they're so passionate about their programs and the schools that are in there and in the SEC because we're in that country now.

And people show up to support. And women's athletics are respected. They're invested in at Ole Miss. And being there is a big deal. And then your fans will show up and support you.

So I'm excited for the progress we've made since I've been there and certainly the future that it holds, starting with the history that was made with this group. But it's an incredible place.

It took me a couple years to adjust to the heat, I'm not going to lie. That was a little challenging. But people are friendly, they're nice. They're welcoming. And for me it feels like home. Our administration and just Ole Miss in general and the community have made me feel like that.

Q. Going to be like a double question here. For Coach, give you a second to think about this, about their offense, Texas Tech's offense going into tomorrow. But for the players, you guys mashed your way here, and now you go head-to-head with NiJaree Canady. I guess your thoughts on that match-up going against one of the best pitchers in the country as an unseeded team that maybe a lot of people aren't giving enough credit to be here.

ALIYAH BINFORD: Yeah, NiJa is an amazing player. I have been watching her. We're good friends. But I think we put in an immense amount of work. We're ready to step on the field. We're just going to stick to our plans. If we need to shift our plan, then we shift our plan.

But I think this team is ready and to prove that we also



belong on the field just like everybody else does. And we have shown that all season. So it's just another game for us. We're not going to make the moment too big. We're not going to be out there thinking, oh, my goodness, this is NiJa. Like, I mean, I'm Aliyah. That's Lexie. It should be the same thing for both teams.

LEXIE BRADY: Yeah, I think at this point in the season, every arm and every offense, every team you face is of the caliber to be here. I think like Aliyah said, not making the moment too big. And the first team that's going to settle into the game the quickest is going to probably find the most success at the end.

I think that'll be a big message for the team, just not letting the moment get too big or who's in front of you too big, or even for the pitcher who you're facing in the box make it too big.

But I think right now we have a very hot offense, and we're there to compete. And Canady has a lot of success behind her and is a great arm herself. It will be an exciting match-up, one that we're all looking forward to. But we're here to compete and we're here to win, so having that competitive mindset and settling into the game and ready to go from the first pitch.

JAMIE TRACHSEL: And I guess the question on their offense was just playing in the SEC and even the last two weekends when we went out to Arizona and faced a lot of lefties because they have a lot of lefties that bunt, that slap, they steal bases. When we looked at GCU to Arizona, I think that helped us. When I look at them, I think of that preparation.

And fortunately we're not playing on the field that Arizona has. That's a very challenging field to play a lot of slappers and lefties on, and I know they have their leadoff as their lefty, they have other lefty hitters.

But when you get to this point, you start to envision and picture who you have played against that they kind of mirror a little bit. And I think that regional, that's where I put them because we faced so many lefties in the lineup and how they put different balls in play, how they're aggressive base running, how they challenge stealing bases, regardless if they get thrown out, it's just part of their game.

We'll be prepared and ready. But I think our conference and then who we played in post-season and the environments we have been in have really prepared us for this moment.

THE MODERATOR: All right, that will wrap things up,

thank you.

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