

2025 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma Sooners

Coach Patty Gasso

Nelly McEnroe-Marinas

Ella Parker

Gabbie Garcia

Press Conference



they had a guest speaker who wrote the book, and it just resonated with me. It made me really emotional. And I thought, man, this could really help you understand your history, your childhood, just connecting better with family, trying to understand that.

So we had some really unbelievable conversations, and that book really helps girls turn into women. You either listen and you understand how you have to be the adult sometimes when you're really the kid in the family, and I think it changed some lives. I do.

Q. Patty, Missy's talked about, over the course of her seven years out at Oregon, that she's leaned on a lot of people, and I imagine you would be foremost among them. From your perspective, what is it like seeing her get to this stage? And when you're as familiar with the many challenges she's had along the way, including facing y'all a couple years ago, what has gone into this and some of those conversations that you have had with her over this seven-year journey to get here?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, it's funny. Missy is family to us. We have been together since I showed up at OU. So we have been together that long, over 30 years. She is -- we do have conversations, but she is very quiet in her own way, like very closed off, and she's very focused.

I'm really proud of her. I love watching her. I love her staff. I have worked pretty much with all of them. And to see what she's putting forth, she understands winning. She understands what you need to do to win. And she's been working really hard to get the right team.

And the one thing that she told me was how much she knows this is the team. She's got the right team. She's got the right chemistry. She's got everything covered. And a coach knows when you're missing a piece here and there, and to hear her say that, I'm not surprised at all that they're here. So I'm really excited for her.

Q. Nelly, I wanted to ask you, I know there's a lot of leaders, a lot of players that step up on this team, but for you as a team captain in a broad sense, what have

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you want to make a statement, you can. If not, we'll go to questions.

PATTY GASSO: Go to questions.

Q. For the players, especially Ella and Nelly since you have been here, but also Gabbie, interested to hear your thoughts. What has been the most impressive piece of what Patty has done in bringing this team together and building y'all into what you are now?

NELLY McENROE-MARINAS: I think the biggest thing is instilling that blue-collar mindset and championship mindset and really working on transforming this team from girls to women. I think she's just an amazing role model, and she's been doing a really good job instilling that mindset into us.

ELLA PARKER: I think it also goes into what she does for us off the field, not only on the field, but making us be in a group together, doing things other than softball, but really getting our personalities out there to really get us together.

GABBIE GARCIA: I definitely agree with Ella and Nelly on that one, that blue-collar mindset but also bringing us together as a unit.

Q. I talked to a couple of players earlier this year, and they talked about a book y'all read together, "The Forgiveness Book" I think it was. What was it about that that drew you to that, and what do you feel like the team got from that experience?

PATTY GASSO: We're not done with it, actually. We're close. But I went to a church service out in California, and



... when all is said, we're done.®

you learned about leadership and your leadership role, and how you have seen the team grow as the season has gone on?

NELLY McENROE-MARINAS: Yeah, I think the biggest thing is you only get what you put in. And the more we put into each other, the more we receive out of each other.

Just as we have grown throughout this season and just learning to trust each other, have faith in each other, believing in each other, those are the biggest things. Especially when you make it this far into the season, we only have each other, so we're going to trust each other. We're going to believe in each other, have faith in each other because it's literally us who are doing it.

Q. And, Patty, along those lines, just the leadership of this team from the beginning of the season to get to this point, how have you seen that evolve throughout the year?

PATTY GASSO: It's interesting because sometimes it is different people. Sometimes it's Nelly. Abi Dayton has a voice in the circle that they all want to listen to, some of the experienced athletes that they're hearing. But I think our team does a pretty -- there's not one voice that I'm like this is definitely the captain. I think they all understand what's being asked of them and they manage themselves pretty well.

Q. Patty, you have faced Pickens before, so you have seen the speed but still, I'm always curious, your preparation is always great for whoever you're playing. So talk about the preparation to face a pitcher that throws this hard.

PATTY GASSO: I cannot talk to you about the preparation or I might be giving a few things away.

Q. What do you think about -- she's thrown pitches that I have never seen pitches this hard before.

PATTY GASSO: Well, thank you, James (laughter). She's one of the best. There's no doubt about it. We respect that. We respect the team that we're playing. Very, very good. They play hard.

Tomorrow it's just about who's going to be better, and that's what it comes down to. So we're going to be prepared. We're going back and looking. If you want to talk about prep, looking at the games that we played, we weren't at our best. They won fair and square. They deserve that, no doubt about it. But I think we know we have more in us, and we're trusting we're going to bring it out tomorrow.

Q. Gabbie, can you talk a little bit about growing up watching Tiare and now having her in the dugout for you. That's a position of strength for Oklahoma over the past four or five, six years. How big has it been stepping into those shoes?

GABBIE GARCIA: Tiare's a great role model, and I've always looked up to her and alums before her. It's just great knowing that there's experience and that she's such a vocal leader in the dugout but also personally. It's just been a huge game-changer for me.

Q. Patty, along the same lines, talking about Tiare, just her wisdom in the dugout, her way to relate with these players, how big has that been, and can you grade her being a first base coach?

PATTY GASSO: (Laughter.) A solid B plus. Can't give anybody an A. But Fale would get hurt if I gave her an A. Tiare has been wonderful and just very insightful. Her connection with this group and her age and her experience is great. And she wants to be a coach; so she's able to do a little bit of that.

I think she's going to be really helpful this week as well because we don't have a lot of players on our team with World Series experience. I think Tiare's voice is going to be heard.

Q. Patty, you had your girls diving for fly balls today, 24 hours before it starts. Why did you feel like it's important to keep the intensity up, and how does that align with the mindset you want them to have for tomorrow?

PATTY GASSO: They dive on their own. You make it sound like I'm -- but I kind of am. I'm happy to see it. I want them to be in this venue. You get one shot. You get 50 minutes to feel this field. We have been here before, but I want them to work game speed.

Anytime we come out here, it's not like, hey, let's feel good, take a few ground balls. It's go game-ready. There are new things that some of these players haven't seen. There's outfield bleachers now, the wall looks different. There's things that look different. I really feel that's how we operate. We just go game speed. We don't do anything just kind of halfheartedly.

Q. Patty, a continuation of that, you have had the most experienced team in this setting. Have you had to do anything different? You just talked about being excited for what this group could be, but anybody else you have to lean on just because it's resetting the deck



outside of a select few?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, I think the coaches are going to be a little more vocal than maybe we normally are just to keep feet on the ground. It's easy to say we already played here, we played Oklahoma State here, big crowd, but it's still quite different.

So I think we'll be doing maybe a little bit more coaching, a little more talking or gathering together. Tiare's voice is going to be important, but these guys amaze me. This team amazes me.

And I am not concerned about them being rattled. I think they're going to come in and just get to work. That's their mentality. Let's get in the dugout, let's get to work, let's go to work. That's how we have been living through this season.

Q. Coach, you're actually the second Gasso that's played for a national championship in the last week with Jim Gasso playing for the NCAA national championship last week. Did you ask him for any advice coming into this week (laughter)?

PATTY GASSO: Where is he? Did he tell you to... no. I'm really proud of him. I will say that it's not easy to be the spouse of a coach, whether you are the male side or the female side, because there's so much work that goes into it and you're gone a lot.

And he's been so unbelievably supportive. So when he started doing this, I was really excited for him. And taking his team to the national championship game for the Christian schools is amazing, and he was so excited about it, and I'm really proud of him.

But he's been following my journey or he's been on this journey -- not following. He's been with me on this journey, and to see him get that opportunity. Thank you for asking that, actually, because it's a big deal for our family.

Q. So you are kind of a historian. You have watched the game evolve, and you're a developer of talent. So when you hear that somebody, anybody, hits 79.4, as a fan of the game and as a developer of talent, what does that say to you? What do you think when you see that?

PATTY GASSO: It's pretty amazing, really. It's setting a new standard. And there's a lot of little girls that are going to be going, Wow, I just hit 60! Only 19 more miles to go (laughter). Long levers, Pickens is strong and long levers, and she's been good for a long time. I remember her coming in here as a freshman and just like wowing

everybody. She's worked on her craft and gotten strong. And she's managed well by a good pitching coach.

So it's great for our game. It's phenomenal. Some of the pitchers in this tournament have been absolutely amazing. So it's a challenge for the Sooners, without question, but that's what got us here. We love challenges.

Q. Patty, you talked about last year just being so excited to coach again. And when you look back on this group from day one, have you found that fulfillment?

PATTY GASSO: I have. Maybe you're seeing me smile a little bit more. That's what I've been told. It's nothing against the team over the last four years. They've just been so good that my goal here was stay out of their way and let them go. If they need me, I'm here. And that's just maturity and elite athletes. Not that these guys are not elite here, but we're so new.

And I'll share this. If you asked me back in October, I would say, man, I hope we finish middle of the pack in the SEC. I didn't know, nor did any of us. There's still a lot of things to learn.

It's been a lot of coaching. It's been a lot of push. And they've taken it, and they've run with it. And they want it, and that's the difference. They want to be pushed. They want that extra ground ball. They want those extra swings. They come in and swing on their own. They do things the right way. And that's literally why we're here, because they trusted in the coaches and what we were doing, and they always, always want more.

Q. This is for Gabbie and Nelly. How does the support that someone like Dr. Lopez brings to the picture, how does that affect you guys as players?

NELLY McENROE-MARINAS: I just think it's amazing, and just being able to just kind of go out and give back to the community that has done so much for us. I think it's amazing. And so I feel like I'm so blessed to be part of that and being able to give back, like I said, to the community that's given so much to me.

Q. Patty just mentioned young girls who have just hit 60 miles per hour on the speed gun, but you guys are going out and working with girls on all kinds of levels. What's it been like to go out and see those faces and be able to inspire those players?

GABBIE GARCIA: It's an amazing feeling. When we were growing up, people gave back to us. And now knowing that we get a chance to give back to them, it's almost like



an endless cycle that I hope continues to repeat.

Personally, I love putting smiles on children's faces. I think it's enjoyable, and I also like getting the opportunity to watch them grow.

THE MODERATOR: That'll wrap things up, thank you.

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