

2025 Women's College World Series

Friday, May 30, 2025

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Tennessee Lady Volunteers

Coach Karen Weekly

Sophia Nugent

Alannah Leach

Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee 11, Florida 3

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Weekly.

KAREN WEEKLY: This team continues to make me so, so proud to be their coach, and I know our entire staff is. I'm just super proud of our staff, too. Craig with our hitting, Steph and Aubrey with the defense, Megan with the pitching.

We hadn't faced Florida, and it was a quick turnaround. And obviously an emotional night, but these guys said two things in the locker room last night. Number one, they said, Karlyn, it's not your fault; and, number two, Karlyn, we got your back.

And they showed tonight they had each other's back and had Karlyn's back, and I'm just glad we get to play another day, one day at a time.

Q. For Alannah and Sophia, what was going through your mind in that first inning when you kept stringing those hits together, and how good did it feel to start off the game that way?

SOPHIA NUGENT: In the first inning, we were really just thinking attack our pitch, attack the zone we want. We knew the umpire had a little bit of a smaller zone, so stay within that. And honestly felt like we broke it open and it propelled us to go every inning.

ALANNAH LEACH: Yeah, I would say we were just trusting our preparation and leaning on each other to keep these hits going and the energy going.

Q. For both the players, what were some of those

other conversations like, aside from talking about Karlyn over these last 24 hours, to see that come to fruition today?

SOPHIA NUGENT: It wasn't really a talk about Karlyn; it was a talk about today is a new day and we're going to focus on each other and come in to compete.

ALANNAH LEACH: Like Soph said, continuing to play freely and trust our preparation and go out there and give out all we got.

Q. Sophia, Alannah starts some games, subbed in some games post-season, but for her to start today and have the performance she had in her first Women's College World Series, how impressive is it to see that from her?

SOPHIA NUGENT: Impressive. She prepares every single day. She's always out there making diving plays in the outfield and working every day in the cages, and all her preparation came and showed on the field today.

Q. Everyone that started had a hit today. What does it say about the depth of the lineup to come out with emotions high and each be able to do something to contribute?

ALANNAH LEACH: I would just say that we have worked so hard and we have come prepared and we're just ready for whatever opportunity comes our way.

SOPHIA NUGENT: And I think it really helped to just keep everything level, breathe really hard. It was less of up and trying to get high, like high energy, it's more of a let's stay calm and let's attack.

Q. Alannah, you and Gabby were next to each other in the lineup in supers, and today to start together in the World Series. What does that mean to you, and how cool is it to be able to start alongside your twin sister?

ALANNAH LEACH: It's super cool. I grew up, obviously, playing with her, and it's fun to see her succeed. But it's

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comfortable seeing her there too, and I just love watching her play. So wherever I am in the lineup, I enjoy it.

Q. Alannah, to be able to see the freshmen contribute this well in their first showing in the Women's College World Series, what does it mean to you and the rest of the class?

ALANNAH LEACH: It just means they've worked so hard and they've been prepared for whatever they are coming to do, and just continuing to grow and learn from all of us. So, yeah, they're ready.

Q. I'm sure you were at some of the World Series when Aubrey was on the team. Do you have memories of watching her play and how cool it is to have her still with the team and you're on the team?

ALANNAH LEACH: I'm not sure she ever made it to the World Series (laughter). But I was saying to my teammates when I used to come when I was little, I remember sitting in that left field stand and being like, This is such a cool thing and such a dream of mine. So me being on the field and looking up into the stands and seeing those kids really just made me smile.

KAREN WEEKLY: This might be the first thing the twins have on Aubrey.

Q. Sophia, I know Sage coming in, besides those home runs right there, but Erin as well, how cool is it to see you catching those two girls their first appearance here in the Women's College World Series?

SOPHIA NUGENT: I think it's cool just giving them an opportunity to shine and show what they're able to do. Sage came out ready to compete. It didn't go her way a little bit, but Erin picked her up, and she really dealt on the mound tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Players, you're dismissed. Thank you.

Questions for Coach Weekly.

KAREN WEEKLY: Karen, I want to ask you about the twins. First for Gabby. You moving her to the leadoff spot for supers, what kind of mental game does it take to be able to adjust from hitting later in the lineup to now you're leading off every game of the post-season, in elimination games, and for Alannah to start tonight and have the performance she had?

KAREN WEEKLY: Yeah, I think it takes just trusting what

you're doing where you were in the lineup, we just need you to do that and not do anything different.

And I think that's why it worked. Both she and Ella just took the approach, and you could hear them talking in the batting cages last week, just be us. We don't have to do anything different just because we're higher in the lineup.

She was just having such good at-bats. Last week it was a situational thing because she'd seen the ball off Jordy Bahl a little bit better than some of the others. But I liked her confidence, the way she was handling her at-bats, the way she responded if the at-bat wasn't what she wanted. I just thought this has worked, so let's just keep going with it.

Q. Karen, how has Karlyn handled these last 24 hours, and what did you see from her in that lone inning?

KAREN WEEKLY: Karlyn is a competitor, and we all know there's multiple things in that game that lead to the end result, and we win and we lose together. Karlyn was shouldering a lot of that last night, and I think her... and that's just because she is such a competitor.

But I think her teammates really, really picked her up today as the day went on. She was ready to come out and compete. And I know she wanted the ball today, and we wanted to kind of get her right back on the horse.

Q. I will ask the same thing I asked the players. Everyone had a hit in the lineup. What does it say about the team's depth hitting to come out and perform that way?

KAREN WEEKLY: You know, even when we have struggled to put up runs this year, we've never wavered in our confidence with our team's offensive abilities. And I think just the job Craig has done with them, continuing to pour positivity in them and making sure they believe, like, hey, we're one swing away from really getting hot.

And I felt like we performed well offensively last night, and then today we just didn't miss a beat. We came in really to attack.

For example, Alannah, you watch her at-bats in practice over the last several weeks, and she's still working really, really hard. Other people who have come in off the bench, you watch, and they're not taking any reps off because they're not in the starting lineup, and really making me as a coach think twice about using them situationally and giving me a real comfort level that I know they're prepared.

Q. What was going through your mind the first inning when you start seeing the hits strung together and all



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of a sudden you guys are up 7-0?

KAREN WEEKLY: Well, I'm happy for them because it's nice when your hard work does payoff. And then also, not going to lie, I'm thinking, okay, we can take some outs off Karlyn.

And what a great opportunity for Sage to get her first World Series experience when she can kind of breathe out there. And also Erin. And Sage got us six big outs, and so did Erin. And those are huge outs.

We're taking this thing one game at a time, but we also know it's going to take an entire staff to come back from losing your first game and stick around for a while.

Q. After that Oklahoma loss, you guys had to pivot quickly. Offense was strong, dominant today. What's the mindset, the mentality, knowing how much talent you're going to face so rapidly over the weekend and into the rest of the tournament? What's the message to the players?

KAREN WEEKLY: Well, I mean, it's the World Series. Like, you come here knowing every team is going to be talented. You don't come here thinking you're going to get an easy road.

You look at every team and you're like dang, they're good. That's why they're here, and they've earned being here, and they've played really tough through regionals and super regionals to get here. So it's not going to get easier. We just got to embrace the hard, and I think we do that.

Q. How important is it over these last two weeks to have gotten those first inning starts? And how do you continue to make sure that is an emphasis?

KAREN WEEKLY: You mean offensively? Wow. If I knew how to continue to make sure we score runs every first inning, we would have won a whole lot of championships by now.

You know, it's big when you can get some momentum early. It doesn't mean you're going to win the ball game, but we've just gotten better and better. And I think we did a really good job of turning the page after the SEC Tournament and recognizing that post-season is a brand-new season. And even each weekend, we go back to it's 0-0. It's 0-0.

Now we're in a win-or-go-home situation. We were there last weekend against Nebraska, and I think our kids have proven that they can do that, and that gives you a lot of confidence when you get put in a situation and you come

out on the other side of it.

Q. Karen, over the last, you know, 24 hours, could you sense that they were just ready to get back out there, and the way their demeanor and their conversations, was there anything that you saw that lets you know that they were ready for something like this?

KAREN WEEKLY: Two things. Last night in the locker room it was, hey, get our heads up. There's no time to feel sorry for ourselves. Blank happens, and it just did, and we can't dwell on it. We can't try to pick it apart. We just get ready to play ball tomorrow. Our backs are against the wall. We have been here before. Let's go do this.

This morning when I walked into breakfast, it was all laughter and noise and joking and smiles, and you never would have known what happened last night. And that's the way you want your team to be. You watch them play, you don't know if they're up 10 or down 10. You want them showing up energetic, playing free and playing for each other every minute.

THE MODERATOR: Any more questions? Thank you, Coach.

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