

# 2025 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 2, 2025

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Tennessee Lady Volunteers**

**Coach Karen Weekly**

**Karlyn Pickens**

**Laura Mealer**

**McKenna Gibson**

Postgame Press Conference

Texas 2, Tennessee 0

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Tennessee head coach Karen Weekly and players Laura Mealer, McKenna Gibson and Karlyn Pickens.

KAREN WEEKLY: Congratulations to Texas. Outstanding program. Played a great game. Thank you to everybody involved, NCAA that makes this such an amazing event each year. It just gets better and better.

But I think my heart is full because of the young ladies to my right and the young ladies in that locker room. They're sad for all the right reasons. It's not about wins and losses; it's about the joy they've experienced being together every single day. And I think people saw that in the way we played. They saw them bounce back. They saw how resilient, how gritty and tough they were.

This has been a group that has been just so much fun to coach because they allowed us to coach them, and everything we asked of them all through the season, they bought in completely and just made it really, really fun.

My office and our clubhouse is right by the front door. And every one of these guys, they walk in, they have a smile on their face and they greet you.

When you get to -- I can't call it going to work -- but when you get to go to work like that, there's not a bad day. There's not a bad day. And today, yeah, we want to be playing another day, but it's not a bad day at all. We just wish we were going to be together again tomorrow. I think that's the sentiment you'll hear from our seniors. Just sad they're not going to be with their friends again playing ball.



**Q. For all three, could you share your perspective on what Karen was talking about, about the joy this team played with and what it meant for McKenna and Laura to reach the World Series semifinal again in your senior season?**

MCKENNA GIBSON: This team has meant everything to me this season. These girls, they're the reason why I fell in love with the sport again. The way we pour into each other is like no other. We support each other no matter what.

I think exactly what Karen said, it sucks to lose either way, but I'm just sad we don't have another day to play with each other and to support each other. This team is literally everything to me. They're my sisters for life now. I'm so proud to be on this stage my senior year. So proud of the way that we fought this season and so proud to be a Lady Vol for life.

LAURA MEALER: It was a great season all around for all of us, the ups and the downs.

We went through it together and tried to have the most fun we could have every day no matter what was going on, and just being able to finish my career here with these people is amazing.

KARLYN PICKENS: Just very special group of girls, coaches, everything. I think this year was so much fun. We all love each other so much, just wanted another day together.

**Q. For all three of you, the motto this week has been to play with no regrets. Would you say you left with that motto staying true?**

MCKENNA GIBSON: Absolutely. I mean, even just from the first game we played against OU, like, obviously the result was what it was. But even during that game, you could tell we were giving it our all. We were surrendering the outcome no matter what.

We were constantly reminding each other the story is

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already written. God's got us. Just play free, play free for each other to play another day. You saw that fight throughout the next few games. Even today, the results were different, but we didn't take a beat off. We didn't take no energy off, off of each other. Absolutely, I feel like we kept it this entire week.

LAURA MEALER: I agree. I think 1 through 25, all of us gave everything we had for this entire week.

KARLYN PICKENS: I agree with both of them. I think you saw what we're all about this week, just playing completely free, leaving it all on the field. And it was really cool to be a part of that and to see that.

**Q. McKenna, having been here as a sophomore and you have a lot of good, young hitters projected to come back, what kind of advice can you give them?**

MCKENNA GIBSON: I'd say enjoy it. It was a great opportunity for us to be here, one of the eight teams standing in the season. You see so many people at home watching. That was our thing this week was enjoy the moment, embrace the stage that you're on because you don't always get that opportunity. You fight like hell throughout the season to get here.

I'm just so proud to have been here twice in my career and to finish where we did. And obviously you want to end up standing, last team standing with that trophy.

But more than fulfilled to be here, especially with this group of girls. I'm so proud of everyone on this team for what they've done, how they've grown throughout the season. And just to end it here, it's super special.

**Q. Karlyn, I know you have one more year here with Tennessee. But you love this program. I know you take so much pride being a Lady Vol. You could go anywhere. What is it about Tennessee that you love each other?**

KARLYN PICKENS: Is everything an answer? I adore everything about being a Lady Vol, everything it stands for, the community, the place it's at. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. Vol for life.

**Q. Didn't feel like you guys had it today offensively. What was different today about -- you got a hit in the first inning, first couple of innings. What was different about facing Morgan this time?**

KAREN WEEKLY: Well, she did a really good job of keeping her drop ball, like didn't really miss a whole lot. Worked with the zone she got very effectively. And you're

facing a great team. Like, a great team. I mean, you're in the final four of the World Series, you're at the World Series, you're facing great teams.

And certainly as you inch closer and closer to the final two, it's just great softball. And I thought she did a really good job and pitched a really good game.

I thought we battled. And the key is can you string a few things together. And we just weren't able to do that. I don't think we had -- I don't know if we had a lead-off runner on. Maybe once. But we weren't able to string anything together. But it wasn't for lack of fight.

**Q. Today's home run was a little wonky with the wind, but Karlyn only gave up six coming into this event, and it's been six the last few outings. Is it as simple as chalking it up to good hitters making good on mistakes?**

KAREN WEEKLY: I think that's a lot of it, yeah. Again, this is the best of the best. And so we faced some exceptional offenses. We faced OU. And then we faced Florida. And then we faced UCLA. Then we faced Texas.

I can't give you statistics, but you could put those in the top five offenses in the country.

So, yeah, but I can't say enough good things about Karlyn. I don't think anybody else would have bounced back from Thursday night quite the way that young lady did.

And that exemplifies what we're all about at Tennessee. And I'm so proud of her and so proud of all of them for coming back from that. I think everybody counted us out. Everybody did. And we proved them wrong.

**Q. You're talking about Karlyn. Seemed like a machine, like she could throw all day long. Mike had the luxury of not starting Teagan. Did you consider not starting her at all, or did you know you were going with her the whole time?**

KAREN WEEKLY: I think it's a different approach when you're in Texas's shoes where you're not facing an elimination game. So, yeah, if we get to two games, we're probably going to see some other pitchers out there for us.

But you know going into today, Karlyn's going to get a game and maybe a little bit more than one game. You can't wait for it to be Game No. 2. You've got to go get Game 1. I wasn't really surprised at his strategy because I think he was in a position to do that, and it worked well for them.

**Q. Just wanted to ask what you saw on -- when Craig got ejected, any perspective you can share on that whole situation?**

KAREN WEEKLY: I really didn't hear what was said, and I didn't think he came too far out of the dugout. There's a rule if assistants come out and argue that things are automatic. You would hope that you get a little bit of leeway because of the stage you're on right here; you certainly don't want to lose a coach when you're playing for the biggest game of the season.

**Q. Karen, you heard what the players had to say about leaving with no regrets. Would you also say you thought your team left here with no regrets?**

KAREN WEEKLY: Absolutely, without a doubt. The values in our program, it's been your best most competitive self in all you do. That's our mission. You preach and preach all the character traits to do that. You hope they're listening. And I think we saw over these last couple of weeks that they really were and they were really buying in.

The outside world just wants to bombard them about their results. Everybody wants to talk about did you win, did you lose, did you get a hit, did you not? Did you strike her out? Did you not? It's all results, results, results.

And what we try to talk about 100 percent is process, process, control what you can control. And I just love Boo saying we surrendered the outcome. When I hear our players say we surrendered the outcome, then I know that we were exactly where we needed to be. And, yes, we played freely and have no regrets.

**Q. I don't want to beat a dead horse here, but to follow up on what Cora just asked you, did your coach share anything with you? Do you know why he went out there, why he got as upset -- I know you said you didn't hear what he said, but did he share anything with you why he was upset before he went out there?**

KAREN WEEKLY: He was frustrated with the strike zone.

**Q. You made it to the semifinals in 2023. Semifinals again this year. Just for you, I know maybe hard to answer in the moment, but what do you feel like needs to change or improve next year to take that next step and get to the championship series?**

KAREN WEEKLY: Well, it's a lot more challenging, of course, when you get in the losers' bracket. And '23 we won the first game and then lost the second one. And this time around we lost the first one and then clawed our way to today.

So I think even though it's been done, it's a different road when you can stay in that winners' bracket. 2023, I don't think we had this format where we were extending the championship to Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and you add that day off.

I think that's the key about winning is play, day off; play, day off; play, day off. And that makes a big difference. I'm not making excuses, but you asked the question, right?

But that makes a big difference, when you can kind of get into that routine and that cycle. But you've got to take care of your business on the field in order to keep yourself in the winners' bracket.

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