

2025 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 2, 2025

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Coach Patty Gasso

Sam Landry

Ella Parker

Sydney Barker

Abigale Dayton

Cydney Sanders

Postgame Press Conference



Q. Sam, what was this like for you as the game wears on going head to head with NiJa and what she was able to do, and what was the emotion as Abi does what she did there in the top of the seventh and you've got to go back out there and just the way that unfolded?

SAM LANDRY: I'm really proud of Abi. I thought she did absolutely amazing. I thought she was on NiJa all day. Hats off to NiJa. I thought she threw a very good game.

As the game went on, I just kept telling myself to -- just to leave it all out there. So that's what I did.

Q. And what was that moment like afterwards with Gerry? I know you're obviously very close.

SAM LANDRY: It's bittersweet. I wished him luck going forward. Neither one of us wanted to be where we met in postseason. Super happy for them. That's a lot of my old teammates. I'm glad they're getting to experience. I'm glad I had the experience I did here at Oklahoma. It was definitely God's path for me.

Q. Ella, Sam, and maybe Syd, if you could address this, obviously you're losing some seniors, but despite the disappointment of this game, I didn't sense a lot of slumped shoulders or sagging heads. What's the emotion for you guys as this season and this night comes to a close?

ELLA PARKER: I'm just so proud of all this team has accomplished, especially just coming from the fall to now, we've grown so much together, and just to see the amount of growth we've taken as a team, it's just so cool to see where we ended up.

We were never going to give up without a fight. So just being able to overcome that.

SAM LANDRY: I agree with Ella. It's hard to get sad in the middle of a game knowing God already wrote the story. We relied on Him. We knew it was going to turn out the way He wanted. And they're ready to go next season, and I'm ready to take a break for a minute.

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PATTY GASSO: Congratulations to Texas Tech. They earned that. They played well. They hit well. They pitched well. So well deserved. Just extremely proud of this team, who they are, first, and what they do second.

And it's been a joyous ride, and if you would have ever asked me -- I think I've already said this a million times -- but we're standing at the World Series as one of the top three teams left, with a team of 14 newcomers, and I just shared with them in the locker room how much fun I had with them coaching them, watching them grow, watching them be hungry, watching them never quit.

The amount of rebounded, like extra inning or last inning heroics and come-from-behind wins has been something incredible.

As much as I need a break, I'm really ready to have them come back and start over again because I think we learned so much and we're going to be that much better, lessons along the way. But what I hope is that they learned lessons about themselves, and turning from girls to women is really important to this program and giving them life lessons and versing them in things that will help them throughout life.

So it was an emotional, amazing, one of my favorite years of all time, I must say.



SYDNEY BARKER: It's hard to be sad when you have these girls next to you no matter wins or losses, like Sam said. We just really believed the end is already written and being here together is a blessing in itself. And like I said, it's really hard to be sad when all we're doing is praising God and giving Him the glory and just having fun out here with our best friends.

Q. Abi, how much did your previous match-ups with NiJa in the Pac-12 really carry over into tonight in your confidence going against her?

ABIGALE DAYTON I felt like I took a lot of it from the past two years. I hit off of her a couple times. But just being able to have my teammates' back and knowing they have mine put a lot of confidence in myself. But definitely understanding how she throws was in my mind. I was able to kind of use that.

But having these girls behind me, it gives you all the confidence in the world even if you don't know who you're playing, so that's nice.

Q. You always have a good perspective about things, as you sit here with your teammates and the reflecting and things like that. What's your thoughts on your career at OU and how things ended up today?

CYDNEY SANDERS: I honestly think it was like a very cinematic way to go out. God's presence was shown. I mean, Abi literally came up, 0-2, and hit a ball like that is insane.

I don't know. I'm still in shock. I think it was a great way to go out, honestly. I'm very proud of this team. Especially we literally had 14 new players. That is something that you never have seen before.

Coming to the World Series, everybody was against us. I mean, we ended up in the semifinals, and I think this team's going to go a long way regardless of if I'm not here or not. I'm very proud to end my career like this.

Q. Coach has talked about this being an incredible experience just for all these new faces, all the returners. What are you going to remember? What have you and your class learned in your one year about just this whole journey and what it takes to get back to this point?

SYDNEY BARKER: Yeah, so like Sid Sanders said, having 13, 14 new players on this team, it was miraculous how we all came together and we were able to play together in such a way we did and have the relationships

we did on and off the field.

And regardless of what happened on the field, I think what me and my class and a lot of the young players on this team will remember is how well we all gelled together and how we used our differences and our superpowers to work together.

And I think it's awesome that we can learn from our older girls here and just our veterans and our alumni and our coaches and everything of the sort.

Q. Sam, the broadcast touched a little bit on you having Geri Ann's name in your mitt. Can you touch on that, why it's important to have a reminder of her close to you and what your relationship was like?

SAM LANDRY: I met Geri Ann while she was a volunteer coach at Louisiana under Coach Glasco. I got to spend time with her before she passed away. I was very close with Coach Glasco all those years, and just seeing how he was dealing with it, wearing No. 12 was how I helped -- in my opinion, helped him keep going.

That's why it was so important to me, carrying on her legacy. She was an amazing person.

When I got here, No. 12 was taken. I knew that I had to figure out somehow to keep her going. So I got it on my glove.

Q. Patty, four straight national championships. I know there will be time to reflect, but this is one of those moments where don't cry because it's over but smile because of what happened?

PATTY GASSO: Yes. I haven't felt this in a while. So no one's feeling sorry for me about that, I'm sure.

But you always want to raise a trophy and just celebrate down at Toby Keith's place. That's kind of been our place for the last four years.

I don't know. It's hard to talk about. I'm really excited for the future, but I was really pumped for Cyd Sanders to have her best softball when it was needed and to finish that way.

Tonight was a tough night for Sam Landry. A lot of emotions for her because of her connection to Louisiana and now them all at Texas Tech. I was really proud of her because that could have been a really tough situation. And she handled it really, really well. There were a lot of emotions for her, as you already have heard.



It's hard to lose -- this was the most enjoyable season I've had in a long time. As coaches, we really feel that. Everybody kind of jumped on board with us. They believed in what we were saying. They carried on the championship mindset. They grinded on the field every single day.

And there's some future superstars on this team, and I'm really excited about that, but they had to grow through Cyd Sanders and others that have been around, Ella Parker. Still going to be a young team next year, but extremely excited about it.

I just don't want to think about it right now because it does feel -- they've done some miraculous things. And you just witnessed one that happened not long ago with the walk-off with two strikes and it being Abi Dayton. So their ability to believe has been unbelievable this season.

Q. Patty, you talked about this being one of your favorite teams, especially with some of these young players, all these newcomers, what impressed you the most about the way they were able to come together and grow and get to this point, and just how much does it mean for this year's group to get back here?

PATTY GASSO: It's just absolute trust in each other. If you would have seen it in September/October, we started to kind of gel a little more in November, but it was still so new, so many things to learn. Still at the end of the season we didn't work on such and such enough, we need to do more of that.

And just seemed like time flew so fast, and it just kept going. I can't even believe the season is over. Normally I'm like, thank God. This was, no, let's keep going, let's keep going, because it really was fun to watch them work together and believe together. They never ever, ever thought that they would lose, ever, and a lot of times they didn't. So it's been a wonderful time.

Q. What was it like watching Sam grow this year and basically give every last ounce she had at this World Series?

PATTY GASSO: I just go back to when I was recruiting her out of the portal and literally sat in an IHOP with her and made her an offer in Norman, with her family.

Her mom kind of disappeared, went into the restroom. I was like, what's going on? Are we yes? Are we no? I don't know. She didn't want to leave her family. Her mom didn't want her to leave but she knew this was right. So it started off like, yes or no, come on, what are we doing? When she said yes, I was so excited about that because I knew Coach Rocha could create something really special.

And I think Sam, no offense to anything or anyone, she's a different pitcher here.

What I loved about her, she's gone through a lot, but her confidence was very, very strong. She maintained it. Kind of in and out sometimes, but I can't tell you how fun it was to watch her have that confidence and lead us in that way.

Man, I really had a lot of fun with her. We connect really well, and she's got a very infectious smile, but she's that big of a person. All of these guys are just special, young women.

And Sam got that golden ticket and she truly thought my career's going to end at OU. When she got that golden ticket, it was such a big moment for her, and deserving so. But she's always going to be part of this program. I hope she's not going to go far away, but she's trying to go to med school here soon and try to do it here in Oklahoma.

Q. Wanted to ask about the roller coaster ride of emotions there over the last little bit of the game from being down to the last strike and Abi obviously jumps on that 0-2 pitch, and having to get refocused there going out in the seventh and just the leadup to that final at-bat with the talks you were having out there with them.

PATTY GASSO: Like I said, they continued to believe. It's like get your swing off. You've got to get there real quick. NiJaree is unbelievable. She's really, really tough, and it was hard to square her up, hard to make solid contact. Like I said, as long as they have a swing left they believe and they do. That's proof of it.

Q. Watching the team after the game, looked like they really didn't want to leave; they were just hanging out. What's that say about the team? And secondly, Gerry was in here referencing UCLA and John Wooden, talking about what you guys have done.

PATTY GASSO: Oh, goodness.

Q. Obviously the streak of championships is over, but what you guys have done as a dynasty can carry on. What's sort of your thoughts about historically and also building on what's already been accomplished?

PATTY GASSO: I appreciate those comments. Not warranted, but appreciated for sure. I don't even honestly think about that. I just do my job. That's all I'm trying to do is just turn girls into women and help them become elite softball athletes, but at the same time make sure that they learn about life so they become good mothers, they're good daughters, they're good friends.



That they just try to live the right way and do the right things, and those are the lessons that are going on that are probably more important to me than wins and losses. Like, I want them to walk away and say I'm equipped for anything. I can handle this. I can handle anything.

And losing is not fun but losing is life. We all lose at something. And it's hard, but it's lessons learned from it. I think that's probably what's most important for me, is that these guys leave with something to take with them for the rest of their lives.

Q. You've talked about the experience gained on this stage and how important that will be. How crucial is it to have so much turnover and feels like the tenets of your program, the hard work, the mindset, all of that have maintained and are embedded again as you turn the page and go forward?

PATTY GASSO: I look at the front row of these crazy, crazy athletes that we had last year that have been winning championships because they've got their rings on them and they're just flashing it out there, and they're proud of it, but they're here. And they're supporting this next movement, and I can hear Rylie Boone. Oh, my gosh. I don't know how she does it. I don't know how she has a voice left. But they're running around with signs and they're just -- they're loving our team. They love this team.

And they want to help them however they can during the game. Shay Knighten is here. I see Caleigh Clifton, they're all around. They're all helping out. But they're just very prideful and they feel it as much as anyone.

It's very fun for them to watch them carry on their legacy, but it's not their legacy anymore. This is a new legacy that's starting and that's something that we talked about in our locker room.

Q. I know expectations are so high and there's disappointment, but how important is it for you to help these girls understand how special the things they did with the conference championship and the run here in OKC?

PATTY GASSO: Okay. I've said this to you before -- I need someone to celebrate with -- they just -- we got a trophy, all right. It is the most, like, confusing thing for me. I've never seen them dogpile or do anything like that. But today was the first time I've seen them cry and that was not the emotion that I wanted to see.

It happens. It comes with it, but they just have a crazy expectation of greatness, and it happened so fast. And

we're sitting in the locker room and I'm looking at Ailana and looking at Gabbie and they're sitting next to each other and they used to -- early in the season or like in January, they were still trying to connect as a middle. And now they're sitting together and they're holding hands crying while I'm talking.

I'm like, just looking around at some of these connections and just the growth was so fast and so furious, but so beautiful to watch. It really, really was. I don't know, it was pretty amazing. I'm at a loss for words because it was so far beyond anything that I thought this season would be like and so incredibly proud of them.

If we would have won the national championship, I still don't know if they would celebrate. I don't know. Hopefully we'll know again sometime soon.

Q. What is the strategy behind maintaining a powerhouse program amid this new transfer portal and NIL era?

PATTY GASSO: Quite honestly, getting players in your program that are 100 percent bought in, that are 100 percent behind the program, the coaches, teammates, et cetera. This day and age, I think there's a lot of I'm not going to play -- I'm not playing here, I'm going somewhere else. That's fine. Didn't bother me at all. I wish anybody -- I've never tried to stop anyone if they're trying to leave because I want them to find what they want.

If it isn't here, then it isn't here. And I'm not trying to read into anything, I'm just saying that the right people need to be in your program giving everything they have.

Can I go on a soapbox for one second, please, everyone? Because I'm old enough, I don't care what anyone thinks anymore. This isn't going to be a bad thing. I see Joe, don't worry Joe, this isn't going to be bad.

And I'm not saying it -- okay, I've been in this tournament enough and there's one thing that has to change and I've got to say it out loud, and I hope the committee is going to look at this.

If we are all about women's athletics and women's sports and rah rah, do not make us play double headers to get to a national championship series. Do not do that. Don't do that. They don't do it in baseball. It should not happen.

So we were to win or if Texas Tech were to lose and they made it all the way here undefeated, if they were to lose to us and then we have to play another game right after, that is not fair. It's not fair to them more than it is not fair to us because we didn't get there on the road, they did.



But we've got to make changes. We've got to put money into this. People will watch. They'll come back and they'll watch the next day. I believe that they will because this is one of the most watched championships in any sport. It's softball is one of the tops. Why wouldn't you want to come back and watch that if game or would you rather watch us have zero energy left and you're not able to throw your best because you're just trying to scrap it together? It's unfair for the athletes at this high level.

So that is my soapbox. Please let's try to change that even if it's going to cost a little bit of extra money, these athletes deserve it. And thank you all very much. Thank you for listening.

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