

2026 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

UCLA Bruins

Coach Kelly Inouye-Perez

Taylor Tinsley

Megan Grant

Press Conference



We know this, the game doesn't know always who's supposed to win as far as what rankings and what other people say, so you've got to earn it at the end of the day, and I'm proud that we get the opportunity. I'm looking forward to us getting out there and playing great softball.

Q. Taylor, I'm going to make it a little awkward because I'm going to ask you about Megan right in front of her. What has it been like just watching her go through this season hitting the ball the way she has and being the leader she's been for you all?

TAYLOR TINSLEY: It's been awesome. I feel like I get the best seat in the house. I'm usually -- especially when we're at Easton, I sit out in the bullpen, and I watch the field from there during the game. Just seeing what Megan has been doing all year long and just seeing her development from our freshman year to now, it's just crazy how much we both have grown up and both have grown up in this program as well, just leading the younger Bruins on and just seeing the way Megan takes the field just so calm and confident all the time.

I always know that she's going to get it done for this team and for me. We both really, we have like our little connection during the game that we always have. So I know she's going to have my back no matter what, laying it out on the line. I'm always going to do the same for her. She's had a great year, and I can't wait to see what we do this week.

Q. For Coach Perez and for Megan, looking at Jordan Woolery's stats -- 34 home runs, 112 RBIs, .500 batting average -- in most seasons that is the hands-down National Player of the Year. If you guys could put into perspective what she's done this season and just how unusual that kind of production is.

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: Yes, to be able to witness that -- I was talking to Lisa about that, what Megan and Jordan have done, we just haven't seen. Player of the Year is a wonderful opportunity, but to be a top -- a candidate and top 25 and top 10 down to three, it's a very difficult choice as far as how you're going to determine who the Player of the Year is.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to get started. We are joined by UCLA head Coach Kelly Inouye-Perez and student-athletes Taylor Tinsley and Megan Grant. We'll start with an opening statement from Coach.

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: First and foremost, always just the city of Oklahoma, beautiful Devon Park, USA Softball, I'd like to thank them as well. Also to all the teams here, it's been a long journey for all of us, and to be able to get here is not an easy task. So we celebrate this.

We're excited to be here. We're excited to be back and ready to get back out there on the field.

Q. Kelly, you've been at this event obviously a lot over the years, seen it evolve a lot. I'm curious, though, just what you're expecting. First time that a local team has not been here. Oklahoma obviously has a huge fan base. They are not here. I'm just wondering sort of, there's a lot of star power. There's a lot of parity. Just what you think this is going to be like this week as an event?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: I'll be honest, it's going to be a celebration of the best teams that made it to the World Series here in 2026. So it's -- I've been a part of this for a long time, and I've also -- we've been here a lot, and we also have not been able to be here, and the tournament goes on.

It celebrates the opportunity for those that have earned the opportunity to compete, and I think you're going to see exactly that: great softball, a great fan base for the sport. We happen to be here in the city of Oklahoma, but there's a lot of people that come and support softball. So I'm excited for that.



But the impact that Megan and Jordan have had to this team to get us back here is something that will go down in history. Yes, to Jordan, Jordan, beyond her numbers -- I mean, she's the RBI leader, and her home runs are so clutch.

I say this a lot about her, that there's a lot of players that can hit, but to be able to hit under pressure and to be able to hit in critical situations to help your team win, Jordan has had an outstanding year hitting behind Megan because there's a lot of people that won't throw her a pitch.

As a result, then it gets put on Jordan to find a way to be able to score, and she's done an outstanding job. So the two of them together, lethal. But to your point on Jordan, her leadership, her ability to bring those younger Bruins and level them up, it's a big part of why we're here, and I'm so proud she represents this Bruin family.

MEGAN GRANT: I think a lot of the times me and Jordan are talked about as a duo, but I'm happy to say that I can finally talk about her individually because what she's done this year is simply incredible. I mean, honestly, she's just going out there and she's being herself, and she's being everything that we always knew that she could be.

To me, she's my Player of the Year, just being able to witness her, just like Tins was talking about with me, to be able to witness her, I feel like I get the best seat in the house with Jordan. The things that she's doing on the field, but also off the field as well. She is our leader. She is simply incredible.

Like Coach I said, she is one of the clutchiest hitters in NCAA softball.

Q. Megan, we talked early in the year when you were doing basketball and softball and kind of balancing that and your goals with that. Since then obviously women's basketball wins the national title, here you are in the World Series. You've also been getting a lot of media interviews, including SportsCenter. I feel like you're an unofficial SportsCenter anchor as many times as you've been on. How has that been like for you to get all the attention and media and all the success with the basketball and the softball?

MEGAN GRANT: It's been insane, I must say. I never expected any of this. I think my goal at the beginning of this year was just to have an amazing senior year, finish strong with this team. God has blessed me with so many opportunities that I can only thank Him for. This whole year has just been an amazing ride.

It's coming to an end soon, but like we say, I'm enjoying it, that final destination with a smile on my face.

Q. Megan, I'm curious, you're part of a group of players here, seniors that are really, I mean, known by one name. People in the softball world say NiJa, Jordy, Karlyn, Megan, people know who they're talking about. What's it like to be in that ecosystem, where obviously you're focused on what's going on at UCLA, but clearly there's broader interest, and just as your stars have evolved, what's that been like to watch that happen?

MEGAN GRANT: Surreal, I must say. I never thought I would be in this position. Usually I just put my head down and work hard and, when we're on the field, just compete as much as I can. And I think with UCLA it's so easy to get wrapped in the Bruin bubble. And that's all we think about, is we over me. It's an incredible honor to say I can be involved with NiJa, Karlyn. Some close friends of mine too. So it's really cool.

Q. Kelly, (indiscernible) the innings are going to be different pitching-wise, but for Taylor to do what she's done, regardless of what the stats say, how big of a load does she really carry for this team?

KELLY INOUEY-PEREZ: She's gotten us back to the World Series, literally, the last three years. So with that being said, I am grateful she's in great shape. She's committed to her training. She's mentally -- as Lisa would say, she's built for this. It's what she came here to do. I wouldn't want to put a load on any pitcher to pitch as much as she has.

With that being said, we didn't use her every single game the entire season, we didn't, and we put her in a position to be at her best at the end. So credit to her training, credit to her mentality. She wants to do whatever she can for the team.

Here we are on the last lap, and it's our opportunity. The good thing is she's in a great place. She's feeling good. She's ready to compete, and the team is ready to have her back, which is what the team decided for this season. We need to hit to be able to win, and that's a big part of why she's willing to do whatever she can for the team. They're playing for each other.

Q. Megan, that National Championship basketball team, what did you take from that run that you're using this week, and have you heard from any of those players as you've gotten to Oklahoma City? Is there anyone you're staying in touch with and maybe talking about this with?

MEGAN GRANT: Yes, I learned so much from that group. Also, there was a lot of similarity between Coach Cori and Coach I. I feel like the coaches at UCLA all talk the same language, which is awesome for me. They really brought out my joy and my competitive spirit, just balancing those two.

We actually do keep a lot in touch. When they got to the WNBA, I was like, okay, you guys are good, off on your own adventures. They always FaceTime me and everything. And I'm just so grateful for them, and they're always keeping in touch. Some girls still go to the games and everything. It's a really tight-knit family.

Q. Taylor, five years ago, Alexander came out and made an impression on the softball world, just was a dominant force, beat Oklahoma on the opening day and got James Madison to the national semifinals. As a Black woman, has someone who pitches, what did that mean to you five years ago, and what does it mean to you now to be in that position to be that person for people coming up?

TAYLOR TINSLEY: I love this question. Actually, Vinny and I talked about -- I think it was my freshman year. I think I'm one of three or like one of two Black pitchers that have come through UCLA, so not very many.

I remember watching Odicci Alexander just compete when I was back in high school, of course, but I always thought it was so inspiring. Even now being a senior and looking at all the other Black pitchers that are in our game now, I think it's just, it's really inspiring. I hope that I am inspiring a younger generation, which I know I am, just keeping in touch with my people back at home or all the little girls that DM me or want pictures after the game.

Just being able to talk about that with young Black girls that want to pitch and want to get involved in the art of pitching because it really is an art. It's so awesome to see. But yeah, thank you for that. I love that.

Q. Kelly, Jordy Frahm was named USA Softball's Player of the Year last night, and having played against Nebraska several times this season, how difficult is she to scout and to play against?

KELLY INOUE-PEREZ: I don't think it's difficult to scout. I think it's difficult to compete against her. She's an elite athlete. She's a competitor. She can pitch. She can hit. She can do all parts.

With that, a lot of respect. For her to overcome the injuries and to move and be back home, she's done some brave

things in the sport.

But back to your question, she's a competitor, and I love that. I love competing against the best. I love competing against people that are tough, and I think that's when you play your best. So with it, we've had some experience playing against her throughout the years of her career, and it's always a great opportunity for us to be able to go head to head.

Well-deserved Player of the Year. She's been able to take care of it on both sides of the ball as a pitcher and a hitter, and very impactful for Nebraska.

Q. Megan, I am going to ask you about being a duo with Jordan. Last year you two wanted to end the season with a combined 50 home runs. You were one shy. This year you come into it, and you're one shy of 75 combined home runs. For you, just the journey that you two have had. Is it that tap? What all goes into that as seniors?

MEGAN GRANT: I mean, it's simply connection. From the very beginning, and even before we got to UCLA, me and Jordan, we've always been kind of on that same path, like saying hey, as 12-year-olds, before the rule change, when are we going to get to UCLA? We're so excited. When we got here, we were able to make first impression impact.

We've gone through the same roller coasters of things, and we've always been together during that time. I couldn't imagine my four years without her here. Us being together, it just provides that confidence for me. She just exudes it, and it bounces off of not only me, but I feel like the whole team as well. She is simply a one-of-one player and a one-of-one person.

Q. Kelly, this is a bit of an odd question, but just tomorrow's starters, you're probably going to have a kid from Georgia pitching for UCLA and a kid from Arizona pitching at Alabama. How does that speak to the growth of the sport that these kids can see everybody play and play wherever they want to across the country?

KELLY INOUE-PEREZ: No, I celebrate that. The ability to have the opportunities coast to coast but even internationally. We've had some international players that have impacted the game. But it says a lot to the sport, the growth of the sport, the opportunities, the programs, the coaching, I mean, the support, the viewership, it's exciting.

I've been able to be a part of it for a long time. I remember what the stadium looked like -- I actually got to play in it in 18-and-under ball, so from way back, and just to see where

it is now is awesome. To see the coverage -- and I really have to credit ESPN, being able to get in the living rooms and learn more personal stories about the athletes and just expose more of the programs so that all these little girls can have these dreams and goals to be able to pursue this.

Coast to coast, I love it. It used to be just West Coast, pretty much Southern California dominating, and there's a lot of Southern California players going across the country, but they're now developing Midwest, East Coast, all over the place, which is awesome. It just says a lot about there's information, technology. Coaches have taken an investment on how to continue to be learners in the sport.

The sport is at a place right now where it's an exciting sport. Very difficult. Everyone's training at a high level. There's a lot of information, which makes it really exciting. You've got to watch it down to the last pitch. Very fun.

Q. Coach, obviously Alabama-UCLA, marquee matchup. What stands out about Coach Murphy's Alabama team this year?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: I consider Coach Murphy, I consider Pat a friend in that I have a lot of respect for his style of play. They play aggressive. I believe that their culture is strong. They can pitch. They can hit. They can defend. There's a lot of respect for the program.

We've gone back and forth through the years, and I expect nothing more than just a great, competitive ballgame.

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