

2026 Women's College World Series

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Mike White

Reese Atwood

Leighann Goode

Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee 6, Texas 3

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Texas. We'll start with an opening statement from Coach White.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, obviously congratulations to the University of Tennessee. They outplayed us today on all facets of the game. We fought hard to come back, but weren't able to capitalize on some opportunities we had. They made a really nice play on the line drive to the first baseman that kind of killed our rally.

But they also kept on scoring runs and kept the pressure on. So congratulations to them as they move on.

Now we got our backs to the wall. We've got to come out and play a better all-around game tomorrow. Challenge the ladies on that to see what we can bring, play a lot better than we did today. Felt like it wasn't our best game, and they agreed. We have to turn it up right now and come back with a better game overall.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for player questions.

Q. A week ago you lost the first game against Arizona State. Came back to win the super regional. Not unusual position. What does it take for this team to be like we have our backs against the wall, we need to fight and give it our all?

REESE ATWOOD: Into the DNA of our team is Texas Fight. It's the culture, the standards that Coach White and the rest of the coaching staff has put into us. I mean, we're going to go out there and we're going to Texas Fight, do everything we can. Pretty or ugly, we're going to get the job done to win.

LEIGHANN GOODE: Just playing together and playing for one another. We said before this game that we're going to choose somebody that we're playing for and that we don't have to tell them, but just show it out on the field. So just coming together.

Q. How would you describe the mindset and how it's different this year knowing you have to win tomorrow?

REESE ATWOOD: I mean, me and Leighann are both seniors. We have a bunch of other seniors on the team. We're kind of excited to have the opportunity to play more games in a Texas uniform.

Changing the perspective of it, more games, more time we get to spend with our teammates. It's being grateful and having the Texas across our chest one last time.

LEIGHANN GOODE: Going off of Reese, when we got done with our team meeting, Ashton stood up and screamed, "More games." Just flipping that switch and being able to go out with more joy.

Q. You didn't play Mississippi State in the regular season, but they've been making some noise in the post-season. What have you seen of them, and what's it going to take to take that team down?

REESE ATWOOD: We've seen that they have obviously a great pitching staff, and it's definitely something that we're going to be looking into tonight. It's our job as hitters to go in and do our research, scout the pitchers, be able to come out and have game plans against them.

LEIGHANN GOODE: Like she said, a great pitching staff. I've spoken to Paige a little bit on my own and through social media. Sticking with us and knowing our best can get it done. Focusing on what we can do instead of what they can do.

THE MODERATOR: Players, thank you. We'll continue with questions for Coach White.

Q. You took Teagan out after the third. Were you looking ahead, or what was the mindset?



MIKE WHITE: Just trying to change the momentum in the game. Sometimes that can happen. I just felt like she wasn't quite as sharp as she's normally been. We just needed to -- if things weren't going to come back and score runs, we had to try to conserve some energy our pitching staff.

It was a pretty hot day, first one in a while we faced. She was already up to 60-something pitches I believe.

Was just kind of looking ahead a little bit and also trying to kick-start the program.

Q. Could you describe the challenges when preparing for a pair of pitchers that can go down to fifth with the change-up, bringing Karlyn who goes to 75 plus.

MIKE WHITE: We have pitching machines now. We crank those things up. I'm pitching from about 25 feet, letting it go. You have to pick one or the other.

I think we were more prepared for Karlyn than we were for Mardjetko. They have a staff of three. I think the lowest team ERA in the country. Pick your poison.

We chose a little bit long, as I said. Also told the ladies that we got to be able to adjust off that, too. It's easy to gear yourself down and gear yourself up I thought.

Like I said, there's that one play that we get that double, at least a double down the line, we hit a run scored, one of our best hitters up.

It's a game of inches. They took the most of their opportunities when we made mistakes, hit, bat or walk. Had a home run on the first pitch that was probably too good. That's what good teams do. They jumped on us, we tried to claw back, but just a little bit too late.

But like I told the ladies, at least we made a game of it, created a little bit of urgency on their part. I thought we did a pretty good job off Karlyn when she came in.

Q. Did you notice anything pregame from your players, jitters? Didn't seem like you were locked in right away. Tennessee jumped on you. Different vibes from your players?

MIKE WHITE: I asked the players that. I feel like we weren't at our best. The question is why. Because they weren't sick, they weren't hurt, struggling in any way like that. What's the difference there?

A lot of it could have been we were worried about what

they were going to do, who was going to pitch. Really the focus needed to be on us and what we were going to do.

That's a question you always ask yourself. This one keeps me up at 2:00 in the morning. What could we have done to be better? How could I have prepared the team better? I take it. It's on me if they're flat.

I have always said you can't motivate the un-motivatable either. It is part of their job to be ready to go. Right now if you don't have the fight and you're coming back after being down, your last game of the season, man, you need a pulse check.

Q. Similarly to what I asked the players, you are not unfamiliar with having to come back. How are you going to approach this game knowing you have a shorter turnaround than usual? What's the mentality of this team?

MIKE WHITE: Game doesn't know it's our last game tomorrow, could be our last game. The game is going to reward the team that plays the best and executes the opportunities. That's what we got to do. We got to do the small game that we usually do. We didn't get any short game. We had a couple opportunities, maybe got one in-field hit with Maloney. That's what sets our table for us.

We've just got to execute better, have better at-bats. Going to go back and look at the tape. It's hard to see from the side. Were we chasing? Expanding the strike zones. Those are the things that we need to make adjustments on. But I don't know from the side.

Q. Last week you were talking about when Mississippi State beat OU that Mississippi State was one of those dangerous underdogs in the super regionals. What makes them dangerous?

MIKE WHITE: Their fight. Their belief. Just the underdog mentality. We're not supposed to be here, that's what everybody else says. We were there in '22, only unranked team to make the finals. We're most dangerous when people don't think we're capable of doing it.

We're not going to underestimate them at all. They have a great pitching staff. Timely hitting. They want to compete. They want to play. That was one of the disappointments I think, we didn't compete as hard as we could have today.

So I just challenged the ladies there. Did you have some regrets on what you left out on the field? That's the challenge, just make sure if we come off tomorrow, win or lose, whatever, that we've given everything we've got.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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