

# 2026 Women's College World Series

Friday, May 29, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Arkansas Razorbacks

Coach Courtney Deifel

Robyn Herron

Reagan Johnson

Karlie Davison

Ella McDowell

Postgame Press Conference

UCLA 11, Arkansas 0

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Arkansas. We'll start with an opening statement by head coach.

COURTNEY DEIFEL: Well, that sucked. I just want to congratulate UCLA. They played a really tough game tonight.

I don't want to take any more time other than to say I'm just so incredibly proud of our team. Really proud of our team. I am just so thankful that I get to be their coach, that we got to end here.

Love you.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for players.

**Q. Robyn and Reagan, you were four-year players here. I know not the result you wanted today, but what did it mean to get to end your careers here in Oklahoma City?**

ROBYN HERRON: It meant everything to me, especially with dealing with the heartbreak that we went through on our own field. To have a change of scenery is nice. On this stage, it means everything.

To be able to have this opportunity, I'm so grateful for it. I mean, just to make it here is a big deal. Of course, it's not what we wanted to do, but I'm so grateful that I got to end my career here.



REAGAN JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm also just so grateful that I got to end my career here. It meant everything to finish it on the big stage obviously. That sucked really bad.

It was such an amazing group. I just enjoyed every single minute of it.

**Q. How do you want this team to be remembered?**

KARLIE DAVISON: Obviously we were the first team to make it here. I think it can kind of speak for itself. I think when you watch us play, you can just see how much we love each other and how much we celebrate each other, how much fun we have together.

I know that isn't the case everywhere. I think you can see that when we play. I hope that we made everyone proud and we made history for this program.

**Q. Robyn, Karlie alluded to the bond this team has had. What is that bond going to mean to you in these coming years?**

ROBYN HERRON: It's going to mean a lot, just being able to come back and see these girls that I played with. It's a very special team.

I feel with the crowd that we had and seeing all the alumni in the front row, the first few rows above the dugout, I feel like I'm bonded with them and I don't even know them. I'm so grateful that those players that came before us got to come out because without them laying the foundation, we wouldn't be here.

I'm looking forward to bonding with them and also just being able to reconnect with this team in the future and just be remembered as the team that made it to the World Series.

**Q. Robyn, you and Coach have a unique relationship with her being your pitch caller. What has it meant?**

ROBYN HERRON: It's meant everything. I still think she's the best pitch caller in the game. Just to be able to learn from her, not even just the softball stuff, because we both



know softball very well, but just to learn life stuff, how to deal with failure, how to overcome failure, how to believe in yourself, it's meant the world. There's no better coach in the country than her. Our relationship, it does mean a lot.

I love you so much.

**Q. Ella, what has this big senior class meant to you?**

ELLA McDOWELL: Yeah, I've learned so much from everyone on the team, especially the seniors and these three beside me. They're so different and unique in their own ways. I'm so thankful to have got to know them and to continue to build our relationship in the future. I love them dearly, so much.

**Q. Ella, what do you hope to take from this experience for next year?**

ELLA McDOWELL: Yeah, I think kind of to what Karlie said earlier. This is the standard now. I really believe that this is a new era of Arkansas softball. Now that we've done it, that's going to be the expectation every single year, so...

**Q. For any of the seniors, how cool is it to know you're passing the torch to someone like Ella?**

KARLIE DAVISON: That was kind of the goal when we met early on in the season. We're obviously senior leaders now, but who do we want to invest in so we can leave a legacy.

I think this program is in really good hands in the underclassmen and the people coming up. I'm just really grateful for the opportunity to kind of pour into them and make this program better not just this year but for the future.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap things up for the players. We'll continue with questions for Coach.

**Q. What have these seniors done to elevate the program to where it's now the standard?**

COURTNEY DEIFEL: I'm cried out, okay (smiling).

These seniors just trusted us. They trusted us as coaches, us as a program. They trusted each other. They just showed up every day.

I've had the honor of talking about 'em quite a bit this year. Tonight, too, throughout this experience. They did not take a day off. They showed up every day. They cared about each other. They cared about our program. They cared

about doing things right.

That, too, is our standard. They lived that standard and held that standard every day. So when Katie is like I hope we made people proud, they made me proud, they made our staff proud, they made our university proud, they made our state proud, they made a lot of little girls proud that are now looking at them and wanting to be them.

They have left their legacy. I'm just really, really proud I'm their coach.

**Q. Last night was a long game. How did that affect coming out tonight?**

COURTNEY DEIFEL: I don't know. I mean, it was a long night. It's an emotional loss. Five lining it up with four, leaving your guts and your heart out there. We left heartbroken.

We felt like we turned the page. It wasn't our night. It's softball. Sometimes shit happens. It happened tonight. UCLA, wherever you're not at your best, they're going to expose you. They exposed us tonight.

It doesn't change that I know we belong here. We belong on this stage. I thought we handled it so well. Just proud of 'em.

**Q. There were a lot of Arkansas fans here over the two nights. You acknowledged them after the game. Talk about that fan support that's grown over the years. What were you thinking as you were saluting the crowd?**

COURTNEY DEIFEL: I was just full of pride and full of love for everyone. Like they said, everyone that came before, we had so many alums show up, just be so proud to celebrate this program and the team that made it because they've been knocking and they've poured their hearts into this program so this could happen.

I look up and I see our families, I see our university, our athletic director, everybody up there, fans. Waiting, I got a text that just said, Thanks for giving us something to believe in and follow.

I think that's the beauty of the fans, is that they believe in this group and they're proud of this group. They show up. We knew that they would. It's only going to grow from here.

**Q. I want to ask specifically about Dakota. She played the last few weeks of the season with the brace, still showed a lot of toughness. Can you speak on what**

**she meant to this group and that toughness she showed.**

COURTNEY DEIFEL: I mean, that toughness is who she is. She is going to do everything in her ability to help this team and help everyone around them. She's a competitor. She is tough, she's level, she's mature, she is seasoned, battle tested. She's so emotionally mature. I'd be crazy not to say she was a huge part of it, wanting the moment. If it doesn't happen, just infusing confidence into the next one. It's her composure and her poise and all of it. It's just elite. It's elite.

**Q. How have you grown as a coach in the last year?**

COURTNEY DEIFEL: I've learned to just enjoy the ride. We got to have a moment in the locker room. DJ started us. He just said the journey is the reward. It just hit me like so hard. Not a lot that DJ says hits me, but that one did.

Just enjoy the journey, enjoy this group. This group will never happen again. It is a group I will not take for granted because they're not all built like this.

I told them I'm just so thankful that they chose us, so thankful that we got to show up and go to work with them every day. Not just the team, but the staff. Everybody involved in our program, it's just an absolute joy.

So for me, I don't take for granted that I love going to work and I love who I work with and I love the team on the tough days and the good days.

I think for me, it's just enjoying the ride and enjoying the journey and enjoying the people that are around me. I told them, like, they make me fall in love with my job again. Sometimes this job's not that great, but they make me fall in love with it because I get to go to work with them every day. I would choose it all over again.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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