

2026 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 1, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Mike White

Reese Atwood

Teagan Kavan

Citlaly Gutierrez

Postgame Press Conference



Texas 4, Tennessee 0

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started. We'll start with an opening statement from the head coach. We're joined by Texas head coach Mike White and players Reese Atwood, Teagan Kavan, and Citlaly Gutierrez.

MIKE SMITH: Congratulations to Tennessee on their season. Obviously incredible pitching staff. Their numbers were amazing. We knew we had a tough job ahead of us, but our offense showed up today, and that's what won us the games, along with the pitching of Citlaly Gutierrez and Teagan Kavan.

Our defense was a little shaky at times, but we didn't break, and that kept us in the game. We made some great plays as well. That's what you've got to do, you've got to balance it out. We were able to reset, readjust, and take out the two games against a top opponent. We're looking forward to going to the championship against whoever it may be.

Q. Teagan, they got on you a little bit in the opener. What did it mean to come back and completely shut them down, especially with the stakes that were on the line?

TEAGAN KAVAN: I knew that they didn't get my best game from me. So I was going to try my best to give a better one today. I think it worked out so well with Citlaly. We're not in that game if she doesn't give the game she gave for us. I think we complemented each other really well. Credit to her for letting us get to that Game 2. Then I was glad to have her back just as she had my back all season.

Q. Teagan, what was kind of the difference in the plans going into Thursday and then today against their offense?

TEAGAN KAVAN: I think I was able to mix a little bit more than I did the first day. I think I hit -- I don't know what the stats will show, but I think I hit corners a little better than I did. I missed a pitch, and they capitalized on it the first day. I was able to keep them off the board today, and so that was huge just to keep our team in the game.

I think Coach PR adjusted really well, and Coach White and them calling pitches, we were able to keep them off balance all day. Reese was talking to me the whole time. Throwing after Cit, I think we complement each other, so that also helps.

Q. Cit, I think this was your longest outing of the year. Being here before, how much did that help getting this start in this key moment? Teagan, what did you think watching Cit from your spot in the dugout?

CITLALY GUTIERREZ: I definitely have a lot of experience coming out here. Today I wanted to leave it all out there, it's do or die. So give it my all, and I knew my offense was going to have my back today.

Even when things got rocky, Reese was telling us, We got your back, and they did. I thought that was really beneficial.

TEAGAN KAVAN: The second we all knew that Cit was going to throw today, she was going to give us her all and leave it all on the field. That's what we wanted to do for her as well, and then myself in my response too. We just wanted to empty the tank for what we had that today, and I think we were able to do that. It was huge for her to see that. Like I said, we're not here without her. It was a huge, huge performance for her.

Q. Reese, earlier in the week it just felt like a lot of rollover ground balls. What changed in your approach today where it was more kind of line drives?



REESE ATWOOD: I came into today and yesterday just like wanting to relax up at the plate. I think with the offense that we have, it took a lot of pressure off of me to feel like I don't have to just try too hard.

Today I just really wanted to loosen up in the box and swing at good pitches.

Q. Reese, after you lost that first game, you said that Texas fight is basically part of your DNA. How did that play out this weekend and today to lead you back into the championship game?

REESE ATWOOD: Yeah, it is inside the DNA of our team. It's what Coach White has put in us all season, just fighting back from losses. When we came out of the losers bracket after the first game, we fought so hard. We've had so many key players step up in different places, different roles, and it's Texas fight. It's what we do and we're going to continue to do going into the championship.

Q. Reese and Teagan, I want to ask you both about Katie. Odd day for her obviously, a couple of home runs, defensive struggles, takes the ball off the face. What was it like seeing her battle through those things and still come up big? What's she going to mean in the middle of that order going forward?

REESE ATWOOD: I know no one on this team or on the coaching staff ever lost faith in her defensively. She made some insane plays over at first, and we have full trust in her. We knew it was just one play after the other that she was going to get back and have our backs.

TEAGAN KAVAN: I think she stepped up in that second game and had a lot of stops that could have been hits for us, so that was huge. She just never gets down on herself. If she does, she's able to flip it right back for the team.

That's what's huge. She's able to bounce back and respond super well. She's fun to watch, and the team has all the faith in the world in her.

Q. Teagan and Cit, Tennessee leads the nation in E.R.A., a lot of attention. Is there any motivation to you guys knowing the kind of pitchers that your team is going against?

TEAGAN KAVAN: I think it's just respect for them, respect that we know it's going to be a low-scoring ballgame and that we have to keep our team in the game no matter what it looks like.

That's always my goal is just keep us in the game, especially when you have staff like that, just credit to them.

I'm just telling myself to keep us in the ballgame, and we know they're probably going to be some low-scoring games.

CITLALY GUTIERREZ: Same as Teagan, keeping us in the ballgame, knowing they have a really good pitching staff, and it's going to be a pretty close ballgame. So keeping us in the game as long as we can.

Q. Coach, same thing I asked them about Katie. They said they didn't ever have any concern about her being able to bounce back from the three errors in the first game. Did you have any worries about what mental space she might be in?

MIKE SMITH: No, not really. If there's a kid that's going to put her body on the line for this team, it's going to be Katie Stewart. She doesn't always get it done, but this is the same kid who knocked the wall over in left field trying to catch the foul ball, did catch the foul ball. We have full trust in her.

It's just an aberration. That happens. We've seen some tough bounces out there, tough hops, and she took a couple there, but she got her face in the way of one of them that was a foul ball, thankfully, but she's okay.

Q. How tough is it to come back through the losers bracket the way that you did, and then what kind of momentum off that are you guys going to be taking into the Championship Series?

MIKE SMITH: I just played into the fact that it was just one more game. We'd only played seven more innings than they had. Really it's not that big of a difference. Once you get on a roll, sometimes it can be to your benefit.

Especially when you win the first game of the two-game series, you get the momentum and just continue to keep it, and we were able to do that. Of course you need the pitching to be able to get that done. It was a tough decision on who to pick to throw, but we had confidence that Citlaly would give us the best chance to do that today. Teagan couldn't go 14. That was just asking too much in this heat.

Q. I was going to ask, it sounds like Katie's okay. I mean, nothing major?

MIKE SMITH: No, just a little cut, so just a little bit of glue, yeah.

Q. What gave you the confidence to pick Citlaly for the start in Game 1?

MIKE SMITH: Just what she's done over the last month. She's gotten stronger each one. We worked with the mental part of the game making sure she has that confidence. Sometimes she gets nervous just playing at home in a Tuesday night game, and it's like, Cit, you played for the Mexican national team and played for the national champions. She cares a lot and wants to do well and sometimes puts too much pressure on herself.

But today she was lights out. Awesome.

Q. Just having that success Thursday on Pickens, how much confidence does that bring into this, and were you a little more prepared for Sage coming into today?

MIKE SMITH: You can't believe how cranked up we had that pitching machine for Thursday, and then they threw Mardjetko. We were so far ahead of it, it was like we got to slow down a little bit.

We had pretty good confidence. I think she struggled a little bit with the sweat and the heat and everything else, getting a good grip on the ball. But we had confidence we could hit that fastball, and we were able to do that pretty well.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about Kaiah Altmeyer? She's been killing it at the plate. What has her approach been like from your perspective?

MIKE SMITH: She's a kid we brought in to hit in the top half of our lineup for sure. We thought she'd be a difference maker and started off that way for us and went through a little bit of a struggle. I think she thought she was letting her team down.

We never saw that in her attitude or work ethic or anything else. To see her come through and get the fruits of her hard work and staying with the program as we made changes. Because it's difficult. I'm rolling people out there in left field, and she could easily get down, but she never did. She kept that mentality great, was good for her team, and now she's starting lineup for us.

Q. It seems like you get asked this a lot up here with Teagan. How do you explain she throws a complete nine innings yesterday, 90 degrees today, how do you explain her handling this workload and staying poised the whole time?

MIKE SMITH: Every now and then, you're lucky to pick up a pitcher that can do that for you. We've seen Rachel Garcia do that in the past, we've seen Fouts, we've seen even Pickens, pitchers take their games to another level,

NiJaree Canady.

Teagan's been able to do that. It's tough when you look at her through the years, she should be First Team All-American. Her numbers don't show that. But to play against the top teams and get big outs in key situations warrants it, but it's just one of those things.

Q. With her kind of versatility with Teagan, yesterday a lot of ground balls, and then today it's like the drop is generating swing and misses. How special really is her stuff when it's at its best?

MIKE SMITH: You're right. I was looking from the side today, and the drop ball had a lot of bite in it, which was tremendous. Able to get some out and keep them guessing. We know what it's like when we face someone like Kenzie Brown from Arizona State, she had us guessing because she was throwing all sorts of pitches out there and couldn't really sit on anything.

That's the mentality she needed was the ability to change her game up and get away from being predominantly rise balls. She was able to mix things up. You have to do that in a Championship Series too.

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