

2026 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 4, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Mike White

Reese Atwood

Kayden Henry

Teagan Kavan

Katie Stewart

Ashton Maloney

Postgame Press Conference



for this team that maybe we don't know beyond the stats? She's leaving with all the records, two championships. What has she meant to this team?

KATIE STEWART: She's just such a focal point of this program, like she's a definition of what it means to be a Texas Longhorn. Just to see the hard work she puts in day in and day out for this team just to be able to produce the way she is, like those records aren't a fluke. She's just worked so hard.

It's such an inspiration to be able to take the same field as her.

TEAGAN KAVAN: She's the heart and soul of this program. She sets the standard for what it means to work hard and what it means to be a Longhorn. She plays this game with so much pride and represents Texas with so much pride. I'm proud of her for the legacy she's left not just on Texas, but on the whole sport. She's been an inspiration to everybody including myself.

KAYDEN HENRY: Piggy-backing off that, Reese has done nothing but just work hard. She's very inspiring to watch. When she's at her best, she's still going. When she's at her lowest, she's still going. The way she motivates our pitchers and talks to us, and she's nothing but inspiring. It's Reese Atwood. Why wouldn't you want to play with her?

ASHTON MALONEY: I absolutely love Reese Atwood. I admire all the hard work she's put into this game. She's truly been such a force the last four years. I'm so grateful I got to play by her side.

If you knew Reese as a person too, you would love her so much more than you would love her as a Texas Longhorn. She's one of the greatest people you'll ever meet. Her faith inspires me every day as well and just the person she is.

Q. Teagan, what is it about this stage and Oklahoma City that brings you to another level? You seem to do it every time you're here. Also, what is it like for you to be able to get that last out with Reese?

Texas 4, Texas Tech 1

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Texas head coach Mike White and players Reese Atwood, Kayden Henry, Teagan Kavan, Katie Stewart, and Ashton Maloney.

MIKE WHITE: Obviously what a great accomplishment it was for us to win back-to-back National Championships. The ladies deserve all the credit. They've really worked hard throughout their time at the University of Texas. We challenged them to leave the jersey in a better place, leave their legacy, and I think we can definitely say our seniors accomplished that.

What an exciting time it is right now. The stands were packed. The atmosphere was electric. It was two great teams going at each other, and fortunately we were able to come out on top.

Hat's off to the organizing committee. They're the ones who had a lot of work to do to keep this thing successful, and it's still the pinnacle of our sport. We try so hard to make it back here just to compete in this tournament, and fortunately we came out on top.

Congratulations to all the other teams throughout the year that competed. The level of softball is rising, and we're making a sport to watch as you can see by the TV numbers.

Q. For everyone except Reese, what does Reese mean



TEAGAN KAVAN: Yeah, like I keep saying, this is what you dream about. This is why you work hard. I kept telling myself in the bullpen, I was like, this is why we work so hard like for this moment, this exact moment right here.

So just trust myself. But the hard work is over when you get here. It's just going out and playing free. So I think with these girls behind me, I feel like I can do anything. So that's where it comes from.

Yeah, it means the world to end this season like this with Reese and just the friend that she's been these past years, she's going to be a friend for life. I'm just so proud of her. You couldn't write it better to end it this way for her. She deserves to end her, not career, but her career at Texas right here in this moment.

I'm just so proud of her and so lucky to be her friend.

Q. For Kayden and Teagan, last year's experience, getting that first win, how much were you guys able to call upon those experiences when you were having those 6-0 and elimination games just to stay in the tournament?

KAYDEN HENRY: I think we kind of been -- it's very obvious that this team plays very good with our backs against the wall. I think we lost the first game, but I don't think that brought our confidence down any bit.

I just think it helped us bond a little bit more together and just realize how tough we really are and how we really have done this brick by brick and we've built this team together off of straight passion and love and just let that carry us through the moments.

TEAGAN KAVAN: We take it as a challenge. We kind of joked earlier that we somehow like to play the max possible games, and luckily it wasn't the case in this series. It's just so fun to go to battle with these girls.

Yeah, I think, like Ashton said in the press conference yesterday, the thing that was so different about this team was how much confidence we had. That definitely helped us win today.

Q. Reese, you've had the best view of the first two-time Most Outstanding Player. What have you seen from her when she kind of locks in at this moment and actually cracks a smile at the end of games too?

REESE ATWOOD: Yeah, she's unbeatable when she is here at the World Series. She goes out there, and she throws her absolute best games in the hardest moments to

do so. I'm just incredibly proud of her and what she's been able to accomplish. She's just been so outstanding for our team.

Q. For everyone but Teagan, what does Teagan tell you -- we all know that she's clutch in these World Series moments. What does he tell y'all so that y'all can rise up to the challenge?

KATIE STEWART: Just throughout this whole game, especially even when we were down, she just continued to say like I believe in you. It just takes one. Like it only took one inning for us to get back in this game. So she's continued to put her faith in us. She knew we were going to break through at some point. We just keep going until we were able to pull it out.

Teagan always emphasizes how much faith she has in ourselves and our abilities. So we're wanting to fight for everything for her.

KAYDEN HENRY: Yeah, I would just say her passion. The positive source that she kind of gave to us and that energy, just making sure to say like, hey, they scored first yesterday. So what? Let's get to it. We got it. Yeah, just giving us that confidence, those positive reminders, and just showing that she has the belief in us.

REESE ATWOOD: Going off of what they said, I think she believes in us so much. She brings so much confidence going in after innings. She's always like, hey, just score one or I'll keep you here. Just so many things she does with full confidence that she's going to keep us in the game to give hitters opportunity to score even if it was just two.

ASHTON MALONEY: I tell her every inning that I've got your back, and she tells me she has mine, and she truly does. She tells us every single inning, if she gives up a run, hey, I'll keep us here. Let's go get a run. I got us. And she really does have us every time she says it, and she's a force to reckon with.

Q. Teagan, we were talking with NiJa out here, very complimentary of you all. From a fellow pitcher's perspective, what has NiJa meant to the game on the field, but also from a business sense with her salary at Tech? What has she meant to you, and what does she mean to college softball?

TEAGAN KAVAN: I have nothing but respect for her and how she's changed two programs and how she just changed the whole sport as a whole. There's so many girls that look up to her and that dream to be in her position because of her.

Just the light that she exudes and the passion for the game she exudes and the faith that she shares too. Yeah, it's really cool to get to share the field with her and to be on the field with someone who has had that much impact on the game. It's not going to stop here. It's going to keep going.

Yeah, it's huge, and I have so much respect for her.

Q. Teagan, what was it like watching Citlaly on this stage too? She set the stage again tonight, and she did it so on Monday. What was that like from you guys' perspective?

TEAGAN KAVAN: I mean, it's huge. For that to be the last game she pitches in a Texas uniform and gets the win for us, you literally couldn't write it any better. I'm just so proud of her. She works hard day in and day out and always keeps us where we need it.

She's had my back all season, and I wanted to have hers in that moment and get her that win. She means so much to this team. We have fun with her. She's probably the best person to be around. Yeah, she just means so much to us.

Q. Reese, I was wondering if you could take me back to recruiting and whether you envisioned leading the senior class to the foundation you've set winning back-to-back National Championships? That's the first part. The second part is even though you're not back, a core group is back. What does the future look like for Texas softball?

REESE ATWOOD: Going back to just being recruited to Texas, it was just such a dream come true for me. That's how the coach, like Coach White never lost faith in me and was able to develop me in four years and to make me into the absolute best player I could be. Just so incredibly grateful.

I have so much faith in this program. I believe that they can three-peat. I believe that they can four-peat. I believe with the standards this program has set and just with the culture and the love that our support staff and everybody gives us that anything that we want is possible.

Q. For anyone, just what was it like seeing Vivi get the hit that kind of broke the offense open and knowing how much you guys wanted her to feel the same way this year?

ASHTON MALONEY: I'll answer this one. I told Vivi at the end of last season, like we're going to be back here and we're going to win another National Championship for you. I understand what it's like to be on the bench watching your

team do what you have wanted to do since you were a little girl. Just I know how much she wanted to be out there on the field.

She played such a vital role in our team last year as far as just keeping us all centered, helping us be the team that we needed to be, but I know that it kills the inner competitor in her to not be out there with us. So I told her, we're going to be back here, and we're going to win one for you.

KAYDEN HENRY: I kind of mentioned to Vivi yesterday, sorry, Coach, I mentioned to Vivi, let's give America what they want. Viviana Martinez deserves her Natty playing on the field. She's the same for us playing off the field and on. She's very positive.

I was very sad for her being hurt last year, but I'm very fortunate to have her one more year.

Q. Teagan, you grew up with Bill Hillhouse as your pitching coach. How much of an inspiration was he for you this year, and what do you think he would say to you in this moment?

TEAGAN KAVAN: First thing he would say is that I did it, and I would tell him that it's his National Championship too, and he would tell me that's not true and it's all mine. He never took any credit, and he just believed in me.

My first lesson that I had with him, I left crying because I was like I'm not going to be able to figure out this dang rise ball, and I figured it out, and that rise ball has led me here. He always told me that don't let the highs get too high or the lows get too low, just remain steady. So that's what I carry with me for the rest of my life from him. Just remain steady in every moment and always just trust myself and the people around me.

Q. For Reese and Ashton, there's been a lot of speculation. Tech, Cody Campbell is calling Texas out in the media, and you guys, they had a chance to knock off Texas in softball. You guys held up your end. Patrick Mahomes is here and sent him home with a loss. How good does that feel, and how much pressure does that put on football? Because that's who they want to play.

(Laughter.)

REESE ATWOOD: Yeah, both programs are incredible sports programs, so yeah.

(Laughter.)



ASHTON MALONEY: Hook 'em.

TEAGAN KAVAN: I would like to have Taylor Swift at a game. If he's our route to her, let's bring her next year.

KAYDEN HENRY: Thanks for coming, Patrick Mahomes. Give the people what they want, Texas versus Texas Tech football. Let's go. Yeah, why not?

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach White.

Q. I don't know what else you can say about Teagan at this point, but do you think she's kind of up there with some of the best we've ever seen in this game at this point?

MIKE WHITE: You'd have to say yes on that, and she does it in a different way. Sometimes you go -- you could be so much better -- sometimes she -- she rises to the level of competition, that's what she does. Because she'll play some games and it's almost like she'll be up by runs, by the number of runs, and all of a sudden she'll give up a walk and a hit and a home run, and it's like this number of runs. It's almost like she feels sorry for them.

It's kind of crazy to say that, but today when she came in and she smelled the win, she was not giving that up. She was a killer. She was an assassin out there on the mound today and just really didn't give them an opportunity to come in, and shut the door so hard.

You've got to take your hat off to a kid like that who can do that in this situation in those moments, with that many fans watching you and all that pressure, she felt no pressure. She just wanted to do it for her team.

Q. A couple questions real quick about Citlaly Gutierrez. How tempted were you to use Teagan as the starter tonight, and what prompted you to start Cit? Why did you take her out in the fourth inning? Then she came back in bases loaded, two outs, how big was that moment? And just overall in her two game starts here, what can you say about her as a senior?

MIKE WHITE: As I said before, we always talk to our players about how they're feeling. Teagan was feeling a little bit tired, a little bit tight. We had doubts whether she could go full seven. If something happened in that seven, we wouldn't have her available for the next day, and was that worth the risk? In our minds, it wasn't. We trusted Citlaly Gutierrez to get us at least one time through the order.

It was kind of premeditated to bring in Hannah with her velocity and drop ball and off-speed curve would really

send them. It was a tough situation we put Hannah in too, being a freshman, first time out, hadn't pitched in a while. For the kid to even say yes, I want to go do that is testament to what she is.

And then we bring Citlaly in, and she got the biggest out in the whole tournament for us because without a doubt that could have gone the other way. For Citlaly to have the ability to do that for her team and rise above and not worry about it -- because earlier in the year she'd always be watching the bullpen and looking for whether we took her out or not took her out. She put that aside completely and was focused on what she could do for her team. That's the growth I've seen in Citlaly this year.

Q. When we look back at the season, I know Teagan didn't start out as strong as she wanted to, watching her grow, rise, and then eventually reach this and repeat a National Championship, what did you see from her performance today that was reflected in her work that she put in throughout the season?

MIKE WHITE: I think that's what champions do. They find a bigger thing than themselves. Obviously she wanted to sign off and have all the numbers that will end up being First Team All-American, et cetera, maybe Player of the Year, whatever, she kind of set some of those goals. She wouldn't ever tell you that, but as a competitor, that's what she's probably going to do.

As it went on, she gave up in the first game, it was 15-10 against Nebraska. So you start to get those numbers that get out of whack. But she never let that dampen her spirits for her team. She ended up putting the team ahead of her own goals.

When she was able to do that, you got the production that you got in the last half of the season.

Q. Vivi goes down 0-2 in that bases-loaded situation, and then you guys have that situation. What were you trying to talk to her about in that at-bat?

MIKE WHITE: I just told her to battle right here, to compete. She's going to be tough, but we've got to get something we can handle and just get the ball in play and see what can happen here.

She was struggling a little bit. They were pitching her a little tough. Of course walking Stewy to get to her puts a little pressure on. But she came through and got the ball in the hole, and they were able to get the forced error. Just kudos to her for really battling and competing.

We talked about competing. If nothing else, just give us

your best today and compete every single time you go up there. Don't worry about what's happened, worry about where your feet are.

Q. Mike, you've won back-to-back National Championships, and there may be other programs with more titles, but given what you've done and who's coming back and the way your players are talking feeling they can three-peat, four-peat, do you feel like Texas right now is the program to beat in softball?

MIKE WHITE: Well, that's to be seen. Like I said when we started the season to the team, we won a National Championship, but we're not here to defend it. We're here to get better because I felt like we won the National Championship but we weren't playing to a level that I think we can get to where we have everything working.

We didn't -- we had ups and downs throughout the season without a doubt. There's still some growth for us to do, but that's part of this game. If you just stay level, you're going to get left behind because everyone is getting better behind you.

We've got to look at the program itself and what we need to do and how I can get better as a coach and a coaching staff and how we can motivate the players. Obviously they're having a lot of fun. No one's leaving Texas. It's because they enjoy what we're doing there. That says a lot about my staff and the culture that my staff has built.

Q. This college softball season got so much attention because of the home run hitters and the records that were broken, and you faced a bunch of them. What does it mean to end up being the team that prevailed in this particular season?

MIKE WHITE: Well, it's kind of like when you watch the hockey Stanley Cup, the team that has the best defense at the end kind of wins. The defense is clutch. I mean, the home runs happen typically because of mistakes by the pitchers, and the home runs that Teagan gave up were mistakes. The first night, Mia Davis was right down the middle. The one to Williams was center cut a little bit.

If you eliminate the mistakes and hit your locations, you'll be in business. We always say good pitching makes good hitting. Fortunately we've got a clutch hitter on our side.

Now, having said that, NiJaree Canady is a warrior. What she's done for the sport and how she's promoted the game itself, taking two programs, look what it's done to Texas Tech softball. It's put it on the map. Now we've got another competitive school out there.

Q. What was harder, winning the first one or winning the second one? It's one thing to get there, it's another thing to stay up there. Which was harder, and what lessons did Reese and people like Ashton and Citlaly teach these guys that are coming back next year for a chance to three-peat?

MIKE WHITE: Because this is relevant, this one felt harder for some reason. Just because we had so many ups and downs. Teagan, we put a lot of work on her, we know that, and we needed someone to step up. We weren't getting that production in the middle of the season. So you start to wonder, do we have enough pitching depth to be able to get us through to that next level?

Thankfully, the pitchers kind of got together and worked hard as a staff and were able to fill that little void that was being created between them and Teagan. That allowed Teagan to have more confidence and breathe easier, so to speak.

Q. Coach, when you look back on the season, it wasn't all sunshine and rainbows. Dropping a series to OU, OSU, you can look back and point out the bad things. Did you ever have it out in your mind or the team ever feel like it wasn't possible to be back here?

MIKE WHITE: Well, nothing's a guarantee in life for sure. I think that we're looking at those losses as learning opportunities. I want to say there's no losing if you're learning. That's the way we look at it.

Going into the conference like the SEC, you get challenged week in and week out, and then even when you play a midweek game against OSU, who had one of the best pitchers in the country, that's a trap because they're playing for sometimes what they feel like is the opportunity to get higher in the rankings. We just didn't bring it that game.

Like I said, we're learning from each one of those exposures by playing better teams. We feel like iron sharpens iron, and it sharpened us for this competition. This team never felt out of it even though we lost against Tennessee. I don't think we played our best game by far, and we got beaten by a better team on the day. That didn't mean we weren't a good team.

We just had to come back, regroup, battle harder, execute better, and do better overall. We were able to do that and get onto a roll. That day when we had to win two games against Tennessee in extreme heat, that was tough. That was tough.

Q. I know I asked Teagan about Bill Hillhouse, but you

have familiarity with him too. Is he someone that you talk to about a kid from Iowa when you were recruiting her to come here? Did you think she'd be back-to-back most outstanding player?

MIKE WHITE: I had a great relationship with Bill, and we kidded each other. He played in New Zealand for a couple of seasons. Also played on U.S. men's national team when we went to South Africa, and we played and pitched together. We just carried each other over the line.

He told me about this kid he was teaching or coaching, Teagan Kavan, and I said let me know what she's like. The rest of the story is there, right?

He had a quirky sense of humor. He was always kind of funny, straight to the point, but what a great coach he was, and he helped a lot of people elevate their game as far as pitchers and built a lot of good pitchers.

Q. Do you think there's anything you've learned differently over the last two years about your own coaching style that you think has helped push you guys over the finish line?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, without a doubt. When I first started up, I was probably a little more transactional. It was about what we could do to get runs and scores and get wins and everything else and pieces on -- chess pieces and putting them on the board.

The strategy was fine, but I learned from working with Eric Thompson that I need to be more transformational, like worrying about what their character is like and how they're doing and getting to know them better, which can be difficult as a 60-year-old man getting to know. That's where the wig comes from and all the other stuff. I'm trying to get down to their level and show them I'm human too and I do care about them.

We do things like the Longhorn Olympics where I'm jumping off the diving board, just stuff do with them and show them I'm human as well and it's not just all about the wins and losses.

Q. There's no off-season for you guys anymore. I think the portal opens Monday. Earlier this week you mentioned you'll probably get into the portal a little bit more this off-season. What are the portal priorities?

MIKE WHITE: I'm not going to spill all my beans on that one, but obviously we've got to look back and look at the numbers and what we can fill. We've got a good recruiting class coming in. Madi Doty is another high-ranked pitcher coming in and several infielders. Annie Abdullah is coming

in. She's very good.

What do you put as a priority? That's the touchy thing about the portal is you're putting priority over building these freshmen coming in as four-year players, or are you going to just create the one-year fix?

I think you've got to be very careful there in what you do and how you do it. But we will look at some of the things.

Also, about my team, obviously we have 22 kids on the team, so there's a lot of kids that don't get a lot of playing time. They took that the right way, and they really worked and supported each other because that can be really tough when you're not getting your playing time. The parents supported us. The players supported us. It made it a lot easier for me to coach.

Q. You've seen a lot of great pitchers throughout your coaching career, but this senior class kind of seemed to -- it almost seems like it's the end of an era with them graduating with Karlyn Pickens, with NiJa, Jordy Frahm. Would you agree with that statement that it's the end of an era? If so, where do you think Teagan stands in ushering in a new one?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, there's a lot of great pitchers on that list you just named. Holy cow, I'll take any of them. You do see these generational pitchers. Rachel Garcia was another one that was part of that.

But I'm sure there's going to be more. That's the beautiful thing about this game and why my team likes to spend a lot of time signing autographs, even before they play a National Championship game. They know what it's like to be that little girl and have those dreams.

If you can promote softball and leave it in a better place, that's a good thing. That's what we try to do. You just don't know when the generational players are going to come along, but I'm pretty sure there's more out there, and we're going to see them come in because this game is growing and it's awesome right now.

This atmosphere and the quality of play. Look at the catches in the outfield made today by Tech, just incredible catches. I'm just blessed to be up here and be in this game.

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