

2017 Women's College World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Kelly Inouye-Perez

Rachel Garcia

UCLA

Washington - 1, UCLA - 0

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: Yeah, you know, we've got to credit Washington, and I can say one thing, I'm glad Ali Aguilar is graduating because she is a phenomenal hitter.

But it came down to just one pitch, and I believe we definitely could have figured out a way to make an adjustment a little sooner. But I'm proud of this team, and I simply said this at the end: Our softball season came to an end, but how they represented this program, the one thing that I can share with them is they're Bruins for life. So I'm super proud. I'm very proud of this one (Rachel Garcia). She carried a lot to be able to get this program back, back to this World Series. In the middle of the season I don't know if we truly believed we would get back here, but this team continued to fight behind a pretty powerful freshman right here, and the future is exciting. Once again, very simple. Things didn't go our way. Super proud of our fight. Love that we put ourselves in a position to be able to extend the tournament, and I'm very disappointed to see that we're not going to be able to play any more softball. But like I said, for us, we're more than just softball players at UCLA. They're going to graduate with a degree. They're going to be able to come back, it's a big part of our program, and with that, I'm simply going to say, let today be a day that our season ended, but tomorrow is starts literally for them to be alumni, those seniors, and we definitely celebrate our seniors. These are some pretty special seniors that have represented the program with a lot of class.

Q. Coach, from your vantage point was Taran (Alvelo) doing or throwing anything that you hadn't seen before or was she just a sharper version?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: She was throwing her curveball I think a little higher today. We kind of got her when she came up and in last time, and she threw pretty much a majority curveballs today, so you credit her. She changed thing up a little bit. She definitely did. There you go.

Q. Rachel, I know it's emotional, but what have you learned this year? I know you traveled with the team last year, but I mean, you've come a long way.

RACHEL GARCIA: I definitely think that coming into this year we were just -- our mentality was a lot different. I mean, we stick to a plan and we bought into all of it, and we're coming back next year, that's for sure.

Q. What about you personally? What did you learn as a pitcher throughout this season?

RACHEL GARCIA: I think my pitches in general, I think I gained a lot more spin on the ball and speed. Yeah, I was throwing hard before, but I just think I picked up more movement coming into this year and getting back.

Q. Coach, coming off of a very emotional end to the first game against A&M, how were you able to turn the page emotionally and reset, and how much was Lisa able to be involved in the normal pregame routine for you guys?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: Yeah, I think one thing that we've done an outstanding job of in the second half of the season is really focusing on living in the moment. We weren't our best early in the season, so we learned that really early that we had to deal with adversity. What I'm most proud about this team is being here in this tournament, in the biggest of moments, on the biggest stage, having a lot of stuff not go our way, down to -- our offensive coach was not with us on the last day, yet they were able to -- we have a little saying, no memory, no imagination. We kind of came in there with this thought. We cannot focus on the past, we cannot look at the future, we've got to live in the moment.

But they actually pulled together and figured how we weren't going to let that -- we flipped it. I'm proud of them. We weren't going to let all of this continue to be the reason. We have a lot to look back at, and I just told them that. I told them to sit up with their shoulders back and their chin up. We represent with class.

Things didn't fully go our way, and that's life. It cost us some critical moments in this World Series that I think things could have bounced in a different direction for this team because I think everybody knew that this team had a lot of fight in them. But we did have to separate quickly. It was a very emotional moment. It's not something you ever really want to be a part of, yet

what we learned is this team and this program, we support each other, and that's something that is a very, very powerful message. These girls practice way too much, put too much effort, they put a lot of hours, they put a lot of -- they go with a lot of demands. They give everything they possibly have to be able to play on this stage, and it's unfortunate when things don't fully go their way, but the most important part of this is I asked them to represent this program with class, and they did that. They came out, and really had nothing to do with it. I think we got to see -- you saw us in the regular PAC, UW and UCLA, we scored I don't know how many runs. It was a slugfest, and what you guys saw today is some experience kick in where we had a little bit of a chess match against each other and they got one, and we didn't. But it wasn't really about the sway of emotion. We were ready to play another game, and I liked our mentality coming into this game. They were ready to compete. They were ready to win. They were very confident. They were going to play for Lisa (Fernandez). And I think all of that adds to a great ability to succeed. And it just didn't happen for us in the ballgame today.

Q. What is raidery?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: You know, there's this thing that we have that we call the Bruin bubble, and the Bruin bubble is something that we get really strong with what happens in our bubble stays in our bubble, so it's kind of one of those things that is in the bubble. But I can tell you probably more than anything there's so many things and they're all silly, but it's all kind of what makes this whole experience so unique. Half of stuff that we buy into we can laugh about, but it's kind of what makes UCLA so unique. We've got this Bruin bubble that we're very proud to be a part of and it's the alumni that are here, it's the families and friends and there's a lot of expectations on UCLA softball to be able to excel, and we like that, and a big part of us being able to manage all of this Bruin bubble knowing that the expectations are high, and we love it, and we've got each other's backs, and there are a lot of people that are expecting and saying a lot of things about the program, and I embrace that because when they're not talking about you, that's a problem. So the Bruin bubble is tight. Sorry, it's one of those little things that we've just got to keep in the bubble, right?