

2106 Women's College

World Series

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Clint Myers

Carlee Wallace

Jade Rhodes

Madi Gipson

Kaylee Carlson

Kasey Cooper

Auburn

Auburn - 8, Florida State - 7

THE MODERATOR: Good evening. At this time we have Auburn University on the dais. Coach, we'll start with general comments about the game.

CLINT MYERS: I couldn't be prouder of a bunch of ladies that sit to the right and ones that are not here. They did a phenomenal job. It wasn't as pretty as we would have liked. It wasn't as easy as we would have liked. But I think you saw the fight. I think you saw the heart. They beat a very talented, very good Florida State team with great talent and great coaching. I am extremely proud of the Auburn softball team, and I think I'll stop there.

Q. Kasey, I think this game is going to be remembered for the home runs and the game-winning at-bat there at the end. Your bare-hand play to save a run in the first inning, Victoria's (Draper) diving catch, that's really what almost saved the game for you guys.

KASEY COOPER: What was your question?

Q. How important were those plays, the bare-handed play and the diving catch?

KASEY COOPER: That's what Auburn softball is, and you know, we make the good plays and the great plays come along. Playing Auburn softball, we expect you to make the routine plays, and the great plays will come. That's what our coaches live by, and they knew that when she dove for the ball that Tiffany (Howard) would be right behind her if she didn't catch it. Right when she came up, she said, guys, I got that one. We were so proud of her, and we're definitely pulling for that No. 1 on SC Top 10 right there.

Q. Can you kind of take us through what's going through your head when you're running those bases in the eighth?

MADI GIPSON: I wasn't stopping. Coach earlier in the year stopped me on a triple, and I wasn't stopping this time.

CLINT MYERS: I wasn't stopping her.

Q. Clint, when you took this job three years ago, did you have any idea at that time that this level of success would be possible this quickly?

CLINT MYERS: I'm looking for a humble way to answer that question, because the answer is yes. The answer is yes. I believed in the people I work with, that if they buy in, which we've proven that they have, and if they work and commit, great things happen. I mean, we've still got softball to play, but having the opportunity to play for a national championship is something that we've talked about since we got there, and again, it's them buying in. It's them buying into the hard work and to the commitment of practice and weight room and everything else.

Yes.

Q. Coach, staying with that topic, what was the one basic thing that you saw when you took the job? Was it recruiting, facility, players that were already there, individual conversations once you got on campus?

CLINT MYERS: No, I can answer that pretty easy. I found a bunch of young women that really wanted to win, and they really wanted to learn, and they were willing to do anything. As soon as we got their trust, they would run through a brick wall. I mean, Madi said it. She wasn't stopping. She knew she could make a triple. I wasn't stopping her because she was looking fast. Again, it is a team game. You look at what happened, Kaylee started and finished and won, and we had a little freshman, her first time in the College World Series, they wanted to win. They still want to win. There's still work that hasn't been completed.

Like I said, they're great young women that have a mission.

Q. Carlee, you probably had the best view of Vic's catch being at home. I think it was obvious that she was going to lay out for it. What was going through your mind just watching that play unfold there?

CARLEE WALLACE: Well, when I saw it go off the bat, I thought, this is going to do some damage. I was kind of thinking, oh, no, and she's like a golden retriever out there. It's ridiculous. You throw a ball, and she's like, ball, ball, and then she goes and gets the ball. Would you not agree?

She is just a -- I swear, she tracks everything down, so to be honest with you, I really wasn't that surprised she caught it, because she's just that fast, and she makes me look like a snail. No, I had no doubt in my mind that she was going to catch that ball, no way, and then if she didn't, Tiff was literally two steps behind her ready to pick it up and throw somebody out. Honestly it was kind of routine for us because if you saw her at practice, she's doing the same junk at practice, laying out for things, like man, you're going to hurt yourself. She did an awesome job, and from my view, it was really pretty.

Q. Kasey and Jade, Jessica Burroughs of Florida State has been almost unhittable throughout most of the World Series and you both hit home runs off of her. I think your home run is still sailing somewhere. What were you seeing out from Burroughs today?

JADE RHODES: To be honest, I was just trying to hit the ball. You know, Corey (Myers) is behind me saying stay in my legs, stay in my legs because that's the strongest thing on my body, so the minute I heard him say that, I was just kind of sink down in a squat and don't use my upper body at all. Just kind of use my legs.

She's a great pitcher. She faced one of the best teams yesterday, and I mean, she dominated. Coming in, we had -- we know we had to hit and see the ball and kind of just lay off the stuff that she's been getting people out with all year, and I think me and Cooper and the whole rest of our lineup did a great job with that.

KASEY COOPER: Well, when I got up, Vic and Tiff both had put the ball in play on the first pitch, and the defense made great plays, so unless I was going to do a Cardinal sin of softball, my automatic first pitch was a take. My first two at-bats, I didn't get my hips square so my body wasn't completely back to center, and my goal was to stay a little bit higher. Jade's goal is to get lower and mine was to stay a little bit higher on the backside. And it worked out for us. There's a reason Jessica Burroughs is an All-American, and she pitched a great game, and she had a great career.

Q. Kaylee, you were out there for Kasey's great defensive play but you weren't for Vic's play. As a pitcher what's it like to see your girls going all out for an out?

KAYLEE CARLSON: It means a lot. It was a dogfight out there and having them make plays and get our backs all game, that's what we do and that's what we preach, so it was nice.

Q. Coach, I wanted to ask you about (Rachael) Walters. Sticking with her in the seventh, what was the thought process because after you give up a three-run homer like that, momentum shifts, what made you stick with her?

CLINT MYERS: They didn't score anymore. They just made it a little bit more exciting. No, there were some thoughts that were going on. Corey handles the pitchers. We talked about that, and I trust him. He had a plan, and he knew what he was doing. But again, it just kind of goes back to what we've talked about all along. It's having a plan, going out and staying with your plan, even through adversity, and making things happen. And trusting the people that are out there. Just trusting them. I mean, it's a win-or-lose situation, and we made the switch the next inning. Kaylee came in, we got the three outs, and the game is over. It's the trust and the plan that Corey has.

Q. Kaylee, if you could just talk about your performance today, obviously kind of a rocky start there but coming back in at the end and getting it done.

KAYLEE CARLSON: Like, he had said, I started out pretty not so good and then having Mad(i) Gipson come in and shut it down, that's kind of key and then when she struggled, Rachael came in and shut it down. And when she struggled I knew that I had to go in there and fight for them like they fought for me, so I was just putting it out there and playing for them and then of course our team was getting our back every inning and scoring runs and keeping us in the game, so I was just trying to do that for them.

Q. Carlee, you had a big day at-bat on this day a year ago, too, the same point in the tournament. Just talk about your home run which really came at a pretty big time.

CARLEE WALLACE: Basically I had had enough. I'm being real. I had had enough. I had probably -- it was a great team win yesterday and I had no reason to hang my head yesterday, but personally being real with myself, that might have been one of the worst offensive days I have had in a while.

So I kind of just regrouped, and I just -- I was like, forget this, I'm just going to go up there and get my hacks in, which usually about this time last year when I

did that last year, and this time of year, I don't know, I just don't really have much of a choice. So I don't know, I went up there and I knew that she -- from film from last year I knew that they were going to work me outside because I popped up every pitch outside when we played them at home, so I knew I had to stay on top of the ball and keep my palm up like Coach says all the time, and it ended up working out for me today.

Q. Coach, Walters retired Alex Powers with the based loaded two straight innings. What does that say about her character and how big were those two innings?

CLINT MYERS: Well, again, you're talking about a team full of characters, and I don't mean that as a pun or anything funny, but they were phenomenal. I mean, the fight in all of them, the never quit, go out there and do your best. When you look in the mirror tomorrow, you've got to like what you see looking back at you, and they did that today. I mean, it's a game in which there's going to be a winner and loser, but if you go out there and give it your best and you train to do that each and every day, that's what they did today. They trained hard and came out on top because of the way they played and the way they fought.

Q. Jade, when the coaches came in a couple years ago, I know one of the first things they said to you is that you guys were going to go to the World Series and you guys were going to win a World Series, and I know some of you kind of chuckled, like okay, you Arizona crazies. Now that you're here and you're two wins away, has it hit yet, reflecting back to that day when they said those words to you guys?

JADE RHODES: It hits me every now and then because I have people come up to me and say that, you know, you've only got three more days of playing softball in college. I go back in my room, shed some tears so no one can see me because I hate crying. I think last year when we made it is when we all bought in. I mean, the freshmen that came in when he got here, they automatically bought in because that's all they knew. So when I first came here to the College World Series last year is when I really bought in, and now to see that we're actually going and playing three more days, like we said last year, is pretty awesome.

Q. Coach, I know this is still a long way off for them, but just in case because I don't think we'll get you guys pregame before the World Series final, if it does happen to end up being LSU, your thoughts on the SEC Tournament championship game turning into the National Championship Series, and what are your thoughts on LSU and the job Beth has done?

CLINT MYERS: Well, I think it would be pretty

awesome personally. I mean, the idea of having an all-SEC World Series championship, you know, we're on record as saying that the SEC is the toughest conference. We had four teams here this year. We had five here last year. You always pull for the teams in your conference. You know, they know us, we know them. It would be great softball, regardless. But it would really say a lot about our conference if we could -- if LSU can take two from Oklahoma.

Q. And the job Beth (Torina) has done?

CLINT MYERS: Oh, I mean, you know, the whole conference, and Beth is one of many great coaches in here that have really done a magnificent job within the conference. You know, she has had a great year and their team has had a great year, and I hope they win tonight.