

June 2, 2013



Oklahoma – 6
Washington – 2

An interview with:

**OKLAHOMA COACH PATTY
GASSO
LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN
KEILANI RICKETTS
BRIANNA TURANG**

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by head coach Patty Gasso and student-athletes Lauren Chamberlain, Keilani Ricketts, and Brianna Turang. We'll start with an opening comment from Coach and go to the floor with questions.

COACH GASSO: I'm incredibly proud of this team. Words can't express how excited we are to be here. Although our actions may not look like it, this is a very focused and determined team that had one goal and that is to get back and have a chance to win a national championship. It is difficult to do. It's been difficult this entire year.

But the pride I have in this team is about their perseverance and the fact that they are not shaken by anything. They've gone through some things, ups and downs and here we are. It's, to them, almost like another game. They're just playing it like they do every game all the time. This is with a really level keel that they have. It's just really been impressive. They impress me every time they go out on the field, just their calmness and their confidence.

We played a very tough and aggressive and hot Washington team who has had a great run in postseason. I congratulate them on really giving a fight. They were a tough team. So we're very, very pleased to be back and very pleased to be playing a great team like Tennessee. I think we're very similar, and I think it's going to be a wonderful match-up.

Q. Patty, was the third inning kind of an example? You told us all year and we've seen it all year, your lineup has speed, it has power; Turang's triple, and then you have the power of Chamberlain and Ricketts. Is that a pretty good example of your lineup all year?

COACH GASSO: Absolutely. And any time right now that Brianna is coming up, it's almost a different version of what you feel when Lauren's coming up. It just maybe won't go over the fence, but you're going to watch her run, and run fast. So her as a leadoff, finding a way to get herself to third base, and then here comes Lauren.

I mean, it's really been something special. The two of them have this little connection going on as well as Lauren having that same connection with Georgia in the two spot. So it's just -- it just doesn't stop. Right now we're a team that's peaking. We're playing very, very good softball. All the way through the lineup everyone is contributing. Even those guys that are waiting off the bench coming in to run for us. Everybody's locked into this, and it's really -- it's really exciting.

Q. Coach, you mentioned how your team is peaking and everything. You've had a fantastic run. Do you guys fear anybody at this point?

COACH GASSO: I wouldn't say we fear anyone. We respect everybody that comes on to that field. That is the honest truth. I don't think there is anyone we're afraid to play. We respect every team that comes out because they're here for a reason, and we truly respect Tennessee and their abilities. We've watched them play some and know they have a stout lineup themselves and good pitching. So it's more out of respect of two good teams playing each other.

Q. I'll ask every player a different question. Lauren, how does that rank among the longest home runs you've ever hit? Keilani, how does that rank among the highest home runs you've ever hit? And Brianna, how

many triples have you ever hit to left field?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: That was a fun one. I just liked how the crowd reacted. I'm just trying to soak up all the sounds I can right now. It felt good.

KEILANI RICKETTS: I guess that was one of my highest ones. I wasn't really watching though, but I don't know how to answer that. That's weird.

BRIANNA TURANG: Yeah, I don't know how many I've hit to left field. But, yeah.

Q. Brianna, did you just get a good pitch to drive that way or to hit hard somewhere? Or did you notice something with the left fielder and you tried to shoot that way into left field?

BRIANNA TURANG: Going up to bat, I noticed that the corners were in on me. So usually when I see that I try and get at either the 5, 6 hole or up the middle. Obviously, the left fielder was playing a little shallow as well. So I mean, I just read the defense and I didn't necessarily try to hit it over her head. But I just tried to find a hole and do what I can to get on for Lauren Chamberlain to come up next.

Q. Keilani, in the fifth inning, they're kind of chipping away to get a pair of strikeouts in that inning. How big was that for you guys?

KEILANI RICKETTS: It was big because they were getting momentum and trying to find a way to get on base. So just to get momentum back on our side was big.

Q. Keilani, we talked about a couple of weeks ago about Sidney and all of that kind of affecting you and how you're pitching. Is it that still or being back here or putting Alabama behind you? What is it?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I feel like after everything happened with the tornado and everything with Sidney and being with her team, it was definitely an eye opening experience. It just kind of changed my perspective this season. Seeing that you could have fun with your team. That's when our team was so successful and having fun with each other. I think that obviously we're trying to get back to the National Championship game, but we're having fun with each other. So we're not too focused on that because we're just making the game as simple as it should be.

Q. I know you guys have been working on this all year, but how good does it feel to get back? And now that you've been there you know what it takes to get a national title, what does it take to hold up the trophy at the end of this year?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: Just taking the same approach that we have one game at a time like we have all season, not looking too far ahead. Tennessee is a great program, strong offensively, defensively. It's going to be a great match-up.

But like I said earlier, soaking up the sounds, respond to go the crowd and enjoying these moments, because sometimes you get too caught up in the game and you forget to enjoy those things.

KEILANI RICKETTS: We just need to focus on what we've been doing and what got us here. They're definitely a team who has great leadership. They have an awesome senior class and pitchers on the mound. So I think that we just need to focus on what we've been doing, focus on ourselves and that's when we play our best.

BRIANNA TURANG: What they said, but we've been waiting for this moment for a whole year now, and it feels so great to be back, getting to play the game that we love, getting to play with the teammates that we love. I think just soak in this moment, but also stay focused and keep doing what we do and playing our game.

Q. Patty, with Keilani pitching 12 strikeouts and hitting a home run, do you see her having any weakness in a game like tonight?

COACH GASSO: Tonight, no? I'm just looking at our line score, and it's very, very good, very balanced. I mean, gave up two walks, which is fine with us with the 12 strikeouts and three hits against a very potent team. It was a complete, complete game tonight, absolutely.

Q. You decided to pinch hit for Shelby (Pendley) late. What went into that decision and the decision to reinsert her back into the lineup at third base?

COACH GASSO: Shelby struggled a little bit. Just a little long with her swing, and the Washington pitcher is throwing gas. She's throwing the ball hard. So everybody needed to get a little bit shorter, go maybe a little bit lighter with their bats and Shelby just was a little bit long.

So I wanted to give somebody a chance that has a little bit shorter swing, and Javen has had College World Series experience.

This is still a new experience for Shelby, and if this is something you have not had experienced before, it can be a little overwhelming, especially on a team like ours, playing third base, hitting third. I mean, it's a big, big deal. The team is doing everything they can.

Shelby helped get us here, and we know that; so we've got her back. She's going to be just fine and everybody's here to back her up because she helped make this happen. So it's just continuing to keep her confident and stay aggressive. But sometimes, and these hitters can tell you, they have faced pitchers who just kind of got their number and they might have a tough night. But the beauty of this game is tomorrow there is another day, and we start all over. We start all over, and she gets to start all over again. It's a new pitcher, new experience.

So I'm not worried about it. It was something that we wanted to give Javen a crack at.

Q. Speaking of their pitchers, Coach, how much have you guys -- what have you seen from them as you watched both of those girls this weekend? The Renfroe sisters.

COACH GASSO: Quite honestly, we haven't watched them very closely because we've been concentrating on our next opponents. But we'll have plenty of time to get all of our scouting reports together and the team will look at video and have a game plan prepared and ready to go.

Q. Lauren, if you could talk about the same thing, how do you go into preparing for a team that you don't necessarily know which of the two Renfroes is going to be coming at you? Does it take a little longer to prepare for that?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: Just watch the video, getting with Coach MacKay, talking game plans and a lot like that. Like she said, we have all day to prepare for that and we're ready for it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports