

2013 NCAA WOMEN'S COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

May 30 - June 5

ASA Hall of Fame Stadium

Oklahoma City, Okla.

Wednesday Press Conference Quotes (Session 1)

ARIZONA STATE HEAD COACH CLINT MYERS

Opening comment:

"We would just like to thank the state of Oklahoma and the city of Oklahoma City for putting on this tournament. It's an exciting time for the team from Tempe. We're happy and excited to be here. The World Series is getting better and tougher and more exciting, and it's becoming a lifelong memory for the young ladies that participate in it. We're just excited to be here."

On changing their hitting approach against strong pitchers:

"What has worked to this point is something we try to continue and even improve, because of the fact that it is the best softball. These eight teams here are phenomenal teams, so you are going to see great pitching every night. We're not going to change anything; we just hope it works a little better."

On the parity of the game across conferences:

"I think it also makes a statement about the 64 teams that are invited. You look at the regionals -- there were 64 outstanding regional teams in this. And then you look at the super regionals -- the 16 were there. As you've heard, there were some very, very difficult games in the supers to get here. The parity across the country is just getting very, very good -- much to our disappointment, that there aren't more Pac-12 teams, but again, it just makes that statement. With two (Big 12), two (Big Ten), two (Pac-12) and two (SEC) all the way through, it's going to be fun."

ARIZONA STATE JUNIOR PITCHER DALLAS ESCOBEDO

On her focus heading into the tournament:

"All year, we've been talking about one game at a time, so definitely just focusing on Texas. In the past few weeks or month, I've definitely been focusing more on my mentality and what approach I need to take when I'm on the mound. Coach and I worked closely in the bullpen, which is not very common, so he had some things to say to me and I listened, and it's been working out so far. Just being able to take what we worked on in the bullpen and taking it to the field, and hopefully being successful."

MICHIGAN HEAD COACH CAROL HUTCHINS

Opening comment:

"I'm sure every coach here will make that statement. We are absolutely excited to be here. In light of the recent tragedies here, we hope this event helps with the healing process in this community. We're all very sensitive to that. As far as Michigan softball, this has just been a dream season, especially for my senior class, who has from day one said they were going to get to Oklahoma and who have done everything I've asked them to do. We are extremely proud of our kids. They fought through a very tough regional and super regional, as everybody did. We all know how hard it is to get here -- it's extremely hard to get to Oklahoma. We are very glad to be here."

On the parity of the game across the country:

"As far as the Big Ten, we're so delighted. Last year we had two teams in the entire field of 64. This year we have two teams here at the World Series. It's just a statement for this game. Over the years, I've been a part of this and I've watched it at home, and every year our game gets better and better and the parity just continues to grow. Anybody can win. There are so many great institutions out there that support this great game. You just see us getting better and better. It's a lot like if you look at the NCAA basketball tournament -- upsets all over the place and everybody can play. The bottom line is you have to be playing your best ball right now to have a chance to get here. It's a statement about NCAA softball."

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On the difference between pitchers Haylie Wagner and Sara Driesenga:

"We are very fortunate. We have gone with a two-pitcher attack over the course of the season. We went with one pitcher throughout the regional, but then used Haylie Wagner somewhat in the super regional. They both give very different looks. One comes from the right side and one from the left side. I think it's going to take both of them to help us get through this World Series."

MICHIGAN SENIOR INFIELDER ASHLEY LANE

On turning the page mentally to the College World Series:

"Those games are in the past now, and you can only look forward from here on out. You've had successes, but those definitely are in the past. You just have to look forward to the next game and just stay even-keeled, go out there and do your thing."

On preparing to face a team with a two-time National Player of the Year in Oklahoma's Keilani Ricketts:

"I would say just trusting in our game. It's obviously gotten us this far and we just have to have that confidence. This is anyone's game, and we can get it done."

OKLAHOMA HEAD COACH PATTY GASSO

Opening comment:

"We are thrilled to be back and very excited about the field of teams that is here because I respect each one of these coaches and their programs and what they have done with their teams. Excited for the opportunity to get out on the field in light of what these coaches have said. The events that have gone on in the last week have been very trying on our team as well, but what we are humbled by is the idea that we can bring some kind of joy and some kind of relief or comfort to any of these kids with families that enjoy the College World Series. I think the commitment from all of us coaches and players is that we are going to leave everything on the field in hopes that those that are in attendance and watching on television are getting lost in what we are doing, and that's what it's about. We have learned a lot of lessons this week, and we are very grateful to have the opportunity to be on this field this week."

On what the last 10 days have been like since the tornadoes hit the state:

"There is so much that has happened and touched us in so many ways. I think helplessness was a feeling. How do we help? What do we do? Everybody just wanted to jump. The first thing we did was, 'Everybody go home and get your clothes and bring new clothes, OU stuff,' and just try to do whatever we can, volunteering. It never felt like it was enough. Your heart just broke. We reached out to the softball community in Moore. It was very healing Thursday that we spent together not just for those kids on that team but for our team as well. It's not ended, and it's OK because now it's rebuilding and soothing hearts, and that's still what we're about. We've learned a valuable lesson about life in the last 10 days, and it has made softball something very easy for us."

On having another chance to play in the WCWS:

"I don't think we're really focusing too much on that (losing in the championship series last year). Obviously last year was a disappointment, and it still lives in these players somewhat. But that is such a different road with different players, and it's just a different team. We really don't look back anymore. We just look forward. We're excited to play, and I agree with all the coaches here -- if it was supposed to be Oklahoma's, we wouldn't be sitting here right now. They would have given us the trophy, and we would have walked away, and that's now how it works. It's a team that's really at their best, and we are fighting really hard just like everyone else to be at our best, but it's going to take those little breaks that come along the way -- an umpire call, a safe call, a foul ball, a fair ball, a ball that just misses going out. Those are the things that you look back and remember, 'If that would have happened, we could have done...'. That's the way the game is. It's going to be really, really exciting, and we just want to get on the field like everyone else and get after it. The hardest part is waiting. Sitting and waiting."

OKLAHOMA SENIOR PITCHER KEILANI RICKETTS

On the depth of OU's lineup:

"I think the depth of our lineup, it just gets a lot of the pressure off. Not just the top hitters but also the bottom of the lineup as well because when the top of the lineup isn't at their best, the bottom picks us up or vice versa. There's no pressure on one or two players to get it done just because we have confidence in each other one through nine."

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On drawing from past experiences in the WCWS:

"Having experience here, it calms the nerves I guess, and it gives you a little confidence, but we know that we can't just live off that experience and we have to focus on what we've been doing all year and taking it one game at a time."

On having one more opportunity to play in the WCWS:

"Winning the award is definitely an exciting honor, but as you saw last year, it didn't win us a national championship. It's not a one-person game when it comes to the World Series. We know we have to focus on working together as a team because that's what's going to give us our best option."

TEXAS HEAD COACH CONNIE CLARK

Opening comment:

"Of course I would like to echo the same thing (as other coaches in regards to the tornado devastation in Oklahoma). Obviously it has been a trying time for the folks in Oklahoma, so anything we can do to take their minds off it and hopefully come out and enjoy the great competition. We had challenges getting here yesterday. Unfortunately our team missed the opening reception and some of you that were there, but we are pleased to be here. It has been far too long since Texas has been back here in '06. We just talked to our team about taking in every moment. I think that it's just a time where, and every coach has said it, very much a challenge to get here to Oklahoma City because there is so much parity in our game now and it's out there and it's up for grabs. [There are] so many great players across the country. We just told our team, 'Take it in. Soak in every moment. Enjoy it to the fullest because you don't know if it will be your first time, your last time, your only time, or maybe as a freshman, it is the first of your four trips when you're here.' We are going to soak it in. I think the team has had a tremendous season. We've had great leadership. I think we've been close in the last couple of years. Taylor Hoagland and some of our other seniors and our captains have said, 'We are going to get it done this year,' as compared to the last couple of years felt like an 'I gotta.' This group is much different in their approach and absolutely had that mentality and we are just excited to be here. Absolutely respect all of our opponents that are here and are looking forward to the challenges on the field."

On the keys to the completion of the roster:

"We did challenge seven, eight and nine [hitters] to focus on being a team within a team if you will. We need them to do what they can do to get us turned back over to the top of the order. They really stepped up to that challenge. I had one of our local reporters ask us back in Austin before we started the regionals, 'Why Karina Scott? Why is she somebody that stays in the lineup day in and day out?' You can look at it on paper and maybe that would be a question that you would expect to hear. My answer, 'She has the ability to change the game with one swing of the bat. She has great presence. She is just tremendous for us on defense and is somewhat of the glue in the infield. Communicates very well.' I do think the bottom of the order is somewhat of an X-factor. I think for us we've talked about is just staying -- and you've heard the coaches talk about it -- continue to do what you do. I think this group plays loose. They just attack. They are much better when they are reactive and not overthinking who might be in the other dugout. I think if we continue to do that, we've been consistent on it this year. I think it's anybody ballgame. That I think that is the X-factor more than anything else."

On all of the Texas players being new to the WCWS:

"I think just what we talked about earlier: just enjoy it. I think that's where, even though I feel like the rookie up here, like we haven't been here because it's been so long. Just talking about, again, doing what we do. Attack, relentless, do what we do, focus on us, and really soaking in and enjoying the moment. Staying loose. I think that's the biggest thing. We will do that with this group. We are excited to get out on the practice field. We had an opportunity a few weeks ago during our conference play we came through Oklahoma City. We stayed here when we matched up with Oklahoma State specifically. Came through, did a little tour of the field and practiced and walked through the Hall of Fame and talked to our team about the vision and what is going to happen three weeks from now and can you visualize yourselves here? I love that they had that vision, and here we are three weeks later. I think they have a great mentality right now. I don't think that they are too juiced, but it's been a while -- even though we play in a pretty full stadium at home, it's not 8,000. It will be good. I think we just want to get out on the field today and get that vision going again and talk through some of that stuff and free them up and shake off the long bus ride from yesterday."

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TEXAS SENIOR INFIELDER TAYLOR HOAGLAND

On what helped this team get to the WCWS:

"I am a senior on this team, and I am also a captain. I've been asked the question, 'What's different about this team? What is the key thing for you all this year?' I think it is a little bit of leadership, but it's easy to be a leader of a team when they are willing to follow. I think that is a really big key component for us this year."

On the keys to the lineup:

"I am just going to echo what Coach Clark said. One through nine, we are tremendous. Everybody brings something different to the table, and I think it's great that we don't have to rely on one or two people to get it done in the lineup. The top of the order always tells the bottom of the lineup, 'You do your job. We're going to do our job.' I think when everybody does the little things right, the big things come into play. Just having that trust in each other regardless of status and what you did in your last at-bat. Every at-bat is a new at-bat, so it's a new time to get it done."

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