

2018 Women's College World Series

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Lonni Alameda
Meghan King
Anna Shelnett
Sydney Sherrill
Jessie Warren
Florida State Seminoles

Florida State - 1, Washington - 0

THE MODERATOR: This is the Championship Final Game 1 press conference featuring the Seminoles of Florida State, joined by head coach Lonni Alameda, student-athletes Jessie Warren, Sydney Sherrill, Anna Shelnett, and Meghan King.

Coach Alameda, Meghan King has now thrown 33 and one-third consecutive innings without an earned run, and all 27 and a third here at the College World Series. What's going on with Meghan King?

LONNI ALAMEDA: We've got one more game to go (laughing). I think Meghan King can probably answer that better than I can. But I will tell you that she has failed here, and she has failed in a lot of big moments, and that's this game. You have to embrace the adversity and the ups and downs with it. She made a comment to me a couple days ago: If they hit they hit, if they don't, they don't. She's so free and fluid because she's so okay with the ups and downs. That's growth, that's maturity, and that's why she has the ball for us and doing a great job.

Q. Jessie Warren, that play in the 7th inning, can you just take us through that, because you kind of came out of nowhere?

JESSIE WARREN: I mean, 7th inning, down by 1, if we had a runner on first, I would say that we bunt two to get her to second, and we had a good hitter up that could maybe drive her in.

I had a feeling they were going to try to lay-up down, especially a slapper up to bat. I read her hands really well. She came around, and I just got a good read on the ball and just laid it out for the team. Yeah, saw the girl (indiscernible), she wasn't near first, so I tried to

take my time to make a good throw to first so I could get the play.

Q. Meghan, Coach talked about it, and you talked about it before you came here about wanting to redeem last time out and all that happened there. What's been the biggest difference this time? What is the difference to be on a tear like this against the best teams in the country?

MEGHAN KING: I think it's what she said before. My mentality going into this game, I know there's going to be runs hit. Like there are going to be hits hit off me. I know there are going to be runs scored. I mean, we're playing the best teams in college softball. That's kind of my mentality. Failure happens, it happens every day in our game. But I know. I've been here, and I know that my teammates have my back every play. Our defense has sold out for every single pitch this year. I'm just really lucky to have them behind me. Just kind of been my mentality is failure's going to happen, roll with it. Stop the bleeding, once the runners do come aboard. But, yeah, definitely, that's just been my mentality this World Series.

Q. Anna, talk about that one run, getting the big run on the board that made the difference?

ANNA SHELNUTT: Well, we had, coming through the lineup the first few times, saw a really great pitcher who had a lot of great stuff. We kind of (indiscernible) at first, and after we had gone through, everybody got together and talked about what she had and how we were going to accomplish it. And I think the next few at-bats for everybody, we had great at-bats. Like we made her work. We made her throw a lot of balls. And I think everybody battling earlier in the game is what got me that one pitch that I could drive out, it was the person that had her 3-2 and was battling five at-bats before. It wore her down to where she would throw me one that I could get a hit for my team.

Q. Anna, four of your six home runs this season have come since the tournament started. What is it about the big stage that brings that out of you?

ANNA SHELNUTT: I think the whole thing about postseason is that it's just a fresh start, no matter what you do in the regular season, which was all a learning experience for me. I didn't have much playing time my freshman year. So most of my learning came from this regular season. So I had my ups and downs all regular

season. I had to learn to deal with that. And I think postseason was a fresh start for me to be able to lay it all out there for my team.

Q. Lonni, after Anna hit the home run, on Twitter there was a lot of conversation about postseason Anna. What is postseason Anna, if you're allowed to say?

LONNI ALAMEDA: It's just kind of been funny, and the reason why is because when Syd went down in Oregon last year and ripped her finger, Anna came in and she was in big moments and it was postseason, and she hit home runs in Oregon and she went off in regionals and it was like, wow, where has this kid been kind of mentality. And then we came into the season, like Anna said, and she's catching every day, and she's hitting every day, and she's dealing with the everyday at-bats and it's not the freshness of just jumping into postseason, and people don't know you and they start to scout you. And we've nicknamed her postseason Anna because she hit the home run in the ACC Tournament. So sometimes you don't want that nickname, like, oh, she just shows up in postseason. But the reality is she's learned now how to endure a full season. She's a tremendous catcher. She has just grinded it out behind the plate. Catching is so much on the legs and the mentality and emotions, and for her to be able to come in and put together good at-bats for her team with everything she does behind the plate, hats off to her. We try to hype her up every day for everything she does for us.

That's where the postseason Anna comes from. She's a great hitter in regular season too. And we do rely on her on a ton. So that's where that nickname comes from.

Q. Meghan, Anna and Sydney, you guys were all on the field when Jessie made her play when the ball was in the air. What was your perspective on it? What's going through your mind when the ball looks like it might drop in and you see her flying across there?

MEGHAN KING: I think it just completely in our favor momentum-wise. Just to lay out for that and be as good and talented as a player as Jessie and read that is absolutely incredible. Just from a pitching standpoint, that's just what we're talking about every single time. Just kind of the defense selling out for every play is incredible, especially with the leadoff base hit. Just to get that two outs just off the bat is awesome, and super lucky to have her here.

SYDNEY SHERRILL: I was so hyped from that last game (indiscernible). I just knew it then. That momentum really carried on to the next play. Man, it was good.

ANNA SHELNUTT: My first instinct when she hit the ball I saw it had like three feet under it, and I was like Jessie's got that. She's a freakin' animal, and she makes those plays all the time. I had complete faith in you, dog.

JESSIE WARREN: Thanks, guys.

Q. Coach or players, all season long it's been Kardiak Kids, it's been elimination games. How do you keep the mentality of (indiscernible) with it not being one of those games?

LONNI ALAMEDA: We just talked about it, we addressed it in the locker room. We talked about it. We've been here before and we're taking a huge learning lesson from what we had with Super Regionals at LSU last year. If we can go on Twitter right now, we can go on all the percentages, and we got caught up in that last year. 87.2%, moved on after Super Regionals and hosting it. It seems like everything's in your favor.

But for this program right now the most important thing is first pitch tomorrow, and next pitch after that, and next pitch after that. So we've addressed it. We've talked about it. Granted, we've never been here before, and we have a lesson that we've learned. It was heartbreaking, and we want to make sure we stayed in the moment.

What I thought was amazing today was after Jessie made that play, that double-play, and Syd as a rookie was so hyped they brought it together because they know it's one pitch. We've been in that one pitch mentality. So we've got to bring it back together and still go after one pitch. That's maturity, and I was so proud of them for doing that, and that's what I expect from them tomorrow, is one pitch at a time.

Q. I know Anna hits the home run, and Meghan pitches a complete game shutout, but is it almost impossible to think that Jessie wouldn't have her mark on this game as you saw it going through it?

LONNI ALAMEDA: Mark on this game meaning what?

Q. Like on that big play.

LONNI ALAMEDA: Yeah, I mean, this is weird to say, but that's Jessie. Like Jessie plays, everyone looks at her offensive production, and it is amazing. And her success is amazing. But she plays third base like a shortstop. She makes those plays all the time. She loves playing the game, so we've seen her do that a bunch of times. So it was, you know, big-time players make big-time plays in big moments.

You know, it does hype us up, but it's also something

that wasn't abnormal for what Jess does. So, yes, I think every single player puts a mark on this game because now we expect everyone to bring what they've brought all season long to what we're doing today and tomorrow.

Q. Meghan, did you also think she was going to make that play? I mean, when the ball went up in the air, were you thinking she's going to make that play? Is?

MEGHAN KING: I don't really know what I was thinking at that moment. All I was thinking is I might have to lay out for this ball, to be completely honest. I was looking at the replay and I was looking, and I thought, wow, I look like I'm really going to go lay out for that ball. I'm just glad. I heard her talking to me. I always hear her in my hip pocket. But, yeah, I mean, I don't know what I was thinking. Just, way to get after it, Jess. I'm glad that wasn't me.

Q. Also about your pitching performance, seemed like Washington was trying to disrupt your rhythm a little bit. Did it have any effect and how did you handle that?

MEGHAN KING: Yeah, I noticed that with the leadoff first pitch on. Coach taught us not to get carried up in those things. Just making that a thing at the beginning of the game, as early as that is, could really have an effect on the rest of the game. So I knew they were doing that from pitch one, and I just kind of slowed the game down as well and kind of took my time out there. I mean, every single umpire calls me for it. I'm a quick pitcher. That's how I've been since I was very young. But I've just really tried to stay in the moment and embrace it and slow myself down as much as I can. I think it kind of helped me out to slow the game down.

Q. Coach Alameda, I noticed the positioning of your outfield, and Washington hit a number of sharp balls in your position just beautifully. So how many at-bats do you watch of all the players before you kind of are figuring out your outfield strategy?

LONNI ALAMEDA: So this comes all season long. We really talk about fade charts and different pitchers and different batters. So we've learned how to play for Meghan King versus slappers, Meghan King verse us power hitters, righties, lefties. So they position themselves in the outfield, and they read that. You'll see Morgan talking to the outfield and what they're looking for, and 0-0 counts, and 0-2 counts. We always address, this is a kid that is not going to beat us. This is a power kid. This is a pull kid. We give that information to them, but they make their own adjustments. So we free up them to play the game versus us telling them what to do.

Q. Sydney, what has this experience been like for you so far, just playing up the road from where you went to high school, and how special has it been for all of your family to be able to see you here?

SYDNEY SHERRILL: It's been awesome. Seeing my family and seeing all my friends has been pretty amazing. Just want to lay it all on the field. Getting this opportunity has been incredible, and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else right now.

Q. You guys have been coming back after being down and now you're a game up in this series. How do you keep this momentum going?

LONNI ALAMEDA: One pitch at a time. It's literally -- they're a great team. Washington's a great team. They've got scrappies. They're going to come out and fight and fight. Who knows what the end result will be tomorrow. But if we stay focused on the one pitch and what we need to do, the result will take care of itself. It's just something we have to stay in the moment in, and that's maturity, and that's these guys. They've got to take control of that.