

# 2021 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

**Alabama Crimson Tide**

**Montana Fouts**

**Bailey Hemphill**

**Coach Patrick Murphy**

Postgame Press Conference



She was so happy. We were so happy for her.

She was like, What just happened? You just hit a home run at the women's World Series. I can't put it into words.

**MONTANA FOUTS:** It just means so much because she's so pure. Like Bailey said, she works so hard. You would think she's a starting nine every single game for how hard she works. She's always looking to get better too, do whatever it takes. She works hard knowing she can get that opportunity. She deserves every second of it.

**THE MODERATOR:** Bailey, when Montana is the circle for you, how much confidence do you have when you take the field?

**BAILEY HEMPHILL:** The utmost confidence. She always gives us a chance to win. I mean, she comes out and she does her thing. She gives up one or two runs, we know our offense is capable of winning that game. It's nice when she strikes out 16, that helps. Every time she steps on the field, we know we have an opportunity to win.

**THE MODERATOR:** Montana, for your team, how much does it help to get this first win?

**MONTANA FOUTS:** It is huge, like Murph was saying. In 2019 I think we dropped the first one. It helps to stay in the winner's bracket. It gives us confidence. Arizona is a great team, great pitching staff, great hitters. We can hang, deserve to be here. For all the girls in 2019, it shows them we got this thing, too.

**THE MODERATOR:** As you look forward to a matchup with either Florida State or UCLA, how is that preparation going to go? Are you going to watch this game, see how it develops?

**BAILEY HEMPHILL:** Yeah, I mean, we're going to watch the game tonight, then whoever wins we'll study film tomorrow. I think we play later in the evening, so that will help, give us time to prepare.

Either way we're just going to be prepared on both sides, pitching and hitting. We'll just go from there.

Alabama 5, Arizona 1

**THE MODERATOR:** Bailey, it seems like that Montana gets better and better. Seems like every game she gets better, stronger. What have you seen from her throughout the year as she's gotten so strong?

**BAILEY HEMPHILL:** Yeah, she's just never satisfied. She can have the best game of her life, the next day, How can I get better? That mindset I think is what makes her so great. She's never complacent with what she achieves on the field. She's always striving to get better.

**THE MODERATOR:** Montana, talk about Bailey as your catcher. Talk about your relationship with her as a catcher, what she's meant to you.

**MONTANA FOUTS:** Well, we have a great relationship off the field, so I think that just rolls back on the field. I think just knowing how smart she was, how knowledgeable, she's always looking to get better on the field. As a pitcher, and she's my catcher, I think that learning from her, too, she gives me great feedback because she's been around the game so long.

I just respect her. I know she just wanting the best for the team.

**THE MODERATOR:** Bailey, what was sharing that moment with Abby Doerr, her hitting a home run, what did that mean to you? Why was there so much joy there?

**BAILEY HEMPHILL:** She works so hard. She obviously doesn't get that much playing time, but she comes in every day and she gives everything to make this team better. For her to succeed on this level, on this stage right now, that was, like, the coolest part of today, when she hit that.



THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

**Q. Bailey, you get so few strikes thrown your way. How do you stay ready when you get that strike? Montana, how driven do you think Bailey is to win a championship while you're here?**

BAILEY HEMPHILL: I think I've struggled with that lately. I've kind of gotten into the lull of ball, ball, ball. That was my focus this week of staying ready. If the count is 3-0, I'm still in it, looking for that strike, trusting my plan.

Yeah, I just have that mindset of just staying ready and still looking for my pitch, not giving into what the pitchers are trying to make me do.

MONTANA FOUTS: I think one of the best things, my favorite things about Bailey, is just because she's so talented, she pours into other people. I think that just shows how badly she wants it. If she's the only one doing it, the only one understanding, we're not going to win very many games. Her pouring into other people shows everything you need to know about her.

**Q. Montana, could you talk about your performance tonight. You seemed very comfortable out in the circle. What was your mentality going into this game?**

MONTANA FOUTS: Just, again, trusting my stuff, trusting my spin. I knew they were great hitters, obviously, experienced. They're as used to this stage as we are. I think not relying on speed, trusting spin and my defense, they made some great plays today to get us out of some innings. Just trust the process, yeah.

**Q. Montana, you said before in the past Jennie Finch was one of your role models. What was it like to have the performance you did in front of her? Bailey, what was it like playing in a bigger stadium?**

MONTANA FOUTS: I didn't know she was out there. I think that is pretty cool. She is one of my role models. I've looked up to her my entire life. I'm still as big a fan now as I was then. It's pretty cool that our team won and we did well on both sides of the ball.

BAILEY HEMPHILL: Yeah, I mean, the bigger stadium is nice. It just shows how much the game has grown in the past few years, and also the fans are invested. I mean, it wasn't a full house, but I'm excited for the next few games to see what it's like, I mean, packed out.

It's just really awesome to have that many people want to watch our games.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, congratulations. We'll see you tomorrow.

BAILEY HEMPHILL: Thank you.

MONTANA FOUTS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Now joined by head coach Patrick Murphy.

We'll start with questions.

**Q. How good of a player is Bailey?**

PATRICK MURPHY: She's awesome. She takes a beating behind home plate. She keeps coming back for more. She's kind of led the way this year in terms of resiliency, grit.

The thing that has been a key with her this year, not a lot of people talk about it, is she holds people accountable. I know it's the toughest thing in the world for that age of kid to do that with some of their best friends. But she has done it since day one in August.

I think that's one of the keys of this team's success, is they realize she's one of the leaders. When she does say, "Pick it up," they look at her, nod their head, and do better.

You absolutely need that type of kid on a team.

**Q. Talk about the decision to go to Abby Doerr there. She hits an absolute missile to give you a 5-0 lead. Talk about having the bench ready.**

PATRICK MURPHY: We kind of challenged them actually. A buddy of mine had emailed me earlier before post-season play started. We really challenged whoever it might be. They never know until maybe 30 seconds before, I'll give a nod and say, "Abby, hey, be ready here."

That was one of the things that former players told me they wish I would have done. Now I give them a little bit of a warning. The rest is up to them.

But so proud of both of them. Haney just missed hers. Obviously Abby, I think it was an 0-2 count, too. She has battled and battled and battled. She has wanted to do well for this team all season long. That was certainly the biggest hit of her career.

**Q. Regarding Bailey, certainly not the first hitter you've had who has drawn a lot of walks. Is there a learned trait that hitters pick up to deal with that or**

### **something about her that's unique?**

PATRICK MURPHY: It's just unbelievable. I was telling Holly Rowe in the end-game interview, her hand-eye coordination is as good as Kretschman and Halie McCleney. Obviously she catches, so she sees the strike zone even more. She knows what a ball or a strike is, without a doubt. Just a great eye.

She just battles. I know it was a good question before that they asked of her about how do you stay ready, because she has seen a lot of balls all year. All of a sudden if somebody pitches to her, it's like, Oh, my God, I'm going to get a strike to hit.

She was ready for it. Just kudos to her. She's one of the best we've ever had. Probably our best right-handed hitter ever at Alabama.

### **Q. What does it mean for your offense going forward if you can get it from the bottom lineup?**

PATRICK MURPHY: We do a little drill in practice called score and two, which means two people need to come up with a run somehow, some way. I might be wrong, but Savannah gets a single with two outs, then Maddie scored her from first on the double. Both of them, if they don't do what they do, that doesn't give Abby a chance to get up.

We scored in two really twice, the double for Woodard and then the home run with Abby. It was huge. It was huge insurance that we needed because obviously Miss Harper hit a home run in the top. But it was huge insurance runs for us. Two-out hitting is key in the post-season.

### **Q. Your thoughts on Montana, where does this rank among the great performances you've ever seen?**

PATRICK MURPHY: One of the best. I couldn't believe it. I keep the stats in the dugout. I think from four all the way down to nine, I don't think anybody put the ball in play. I could be wrong. But what a performance.

I mean, that's a great hitting team. Nothing to take away from them. That is a hell of a hitting team. For a kid to do that against an Arizona team that's legit, that was pretty special to watch.

### **Q. Just knowing how last year, there wasn't a game, now here in this moment it just brings back the memory of what we missed. How did it feel to be back here, the fans' excitement through it all?**

PATRICK MURPHY: It's awesome. You're coming back, it's Christmas morning. It's just an incredible feeling. Even

at our hotel, our team hotel, there was a gentleman in the lobby, I walk in, he said, "Hey, good to see you, Murph." I didn't see him for two years. Not like I've been at that hotel. It's been two years and they remembered us.

It's just a cool feeling. The whole city embraces this event. The crowd was awesome tonight. To see the facility like it is, it's really, really cool for a female student-athlete right now that's playing softball to be able to take advantage of this facility and this sport. It's a great time to be a softball student-athlete.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much for your time. We'll see you tomorrow.

PATRICK MURPHY: Thanks a lot.

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