

2021 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 7, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Jayda Coleman

Giselle Juarez

Postgame Press Conference



now in the championship finals. Can you talk about what the mindset, just kind of what the last few days has been like knowing that you guys have played all these games facing elimination?

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Jayda, offensively you didn't get started well but you finished well. Talk about staying the course. G, you give up the home run in the pitch and you're aces the rest of the way. Talk about settling in and being the G we always know.

JAYDA COLEMAN: I know just for me I knew I needed to get on top of the ball. We had a lot of pop flies at the beginning of the game, and just trying to get on top, hit the balls on the ground, and just make their defense work.

We ended up doing that, and that's how we got runners on base.

GISELLE JUAREZ: You know, I knew we were going to come out swinging. They're an aggressive team, so just understanding that I have to attack the zone and trust my stuff and trust my D and understanding that my hitters have my back the entire way, and they did.

Q. Giselle, sticking with that, was there any moment there right after that, whether it was that home run or the hit or that inning that helped you settle in? Did you make any changes there right in the aftermath of that?

GISELLE JUAREZ: Just attacking the zone and just trying to keep them off balance. They were coming out swinging and they're a good hitting team, so respecting them and attacking the zone, but really staying within myself and going at my pace and knowing that every time I get three outs, our hitters are back up there.

So just giving them the opportunity to get back in the dugout and get hits.

Q. You guys have played and won now four straight elimination games. You kind of have some new life

JAYDA COLEMAN: Yeah, I mean, we have had to go into every single game knowing this could be our last, and now we get to go into tomorrow but we have some breathing room. But we're really just going to take it the same as we take every single game. We're just going to go out there and attack every pitcher and we're going to play hard on defense and just play our game every single game.

GISELLE JUAREZ: It's been a grind, and just playing for each other has been the biggest thing, and having each other's back the entire way and knowing that if one person doesn't do it there's next man up.

So just trusting each other, trusting ourselves, and just playing our game has been key for us.

Q. You guys had quite the cheerleading there behind your dugout all week, a bunch of All-Americans and national champions. What does it mean when those alums are coming out and supporting you that way?

GISELLE JUAREZ: It's really awesome. It's really awesome to have alum and such big names behind there, and just seeing their reaction and just knowing that they're our Sooner sisters and they have our backs in the stands.

So it's really awesome to have them and just hear them and see them get the crowd going.

JAYDA COLEMAN: Just shows how much we give into this sport and how much we give into this program. I mean, they've been gone, they've been graduated for a while and they're still coming back and they're still supporting, probably losing their voices just like mine and just doing everything they can to just have our backs.

It just shows that we have heart and we'd do anything for this program and for our Sooner sisters.

Q. Jayda, I was just wondering, can you take me

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

through that fifth inning at-bat when you get the double, and how big was Mackenzie's double really just spark that inning?

JAYDA COLEMAN: I think it was a big deal. I feel like the other pitcher, she was really trying to get out of the inning and I was so glad that Lou got us rolling and we kept going.

When I got that base hit I was so excited to look at my dugout and how hyped they were. Our whole stands get really hyped for us, and it was awesome.

Q. Going back to last night, when did you guys first learn that you might not be playing the game last night and it might have been pushed to today? And then once you found that out for sure when Florida State won, how was that for you guys as far as being able to rest up knowing that you guys have had to play the next number of games to get back here?

JAYDA COLEMAN: We knew about halfway into our warmup when Florida State won. We were already kind of ready to play. They're going to make us play, we're going to play regardless of what time it is, because we'll do anything to get on the field.

But realizing that we didn't have to play, we went back, did some mobility and was able to get some rest, and it was great. It was good to go to sleep before 10:00.

GISELLE JUAREZ: Agree with Jayda. I don't really know what else to say. She said it all.

Q. I want to know how it feels to make it here. G, obviously you had to overcome injury, and to have your performance today I'm sure feels amazing. And Jayda, this is your first year and you're in the College World Series. What are you feeling right now?

GISELLE JUAREZ: I'm really excited. We worked all year for this moment. To be one of two teams is amazing, and we've just got to keep playing our game and trusting each other. It feels amazing, but it's been a grind.

JAYDA COLEMAN: I'm honestly star struck right now. This has been my dream ever since I was 12 years old and committing to this University, and I'm just so excited. I can't wait to go out there with my sisters and just give all we've got and just give all of our heart to the game that we love, and hopefully it just goes our way.

Q. I don't know if in the midst of your rally there against Alexander if you caught the crowd giving her a standing ovation as she got knocked out of the game.

Do you come away from your battle against her -- I take it you do respect her, but what kind of respect do you have for a competitor like that after what she went through this week?

JAYDA COLEMAN: You have to give her all that respect. She worked her butt off this whole week and she's been grinding and grinding and grinding and we see the plays that she's been making. She had an amazing season. You respect the hard work and you respect the competition, and just today we won, but she had an amazing season, but she's very proud.

GISELLE JUAREZ: Game recognizes game, and she is a baller. I have mad respect for her, and she gave everything she had and I think it's really awesome that they did give her that standing ovation. She earned it. She deserves it. She's worked hard, and I think she's a competitor, and she did great this year.

2021 Women's College World Series

Monday, June 7, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Patty Gasso

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 7, James Madison 1

Q. Patty, just wanted to ask you about this team winning four straight games coming out of the losers' bracket. I believe that's the first team that's ever done this that you've coached. How were they able to do that this week?

PATTY GASSO: They don't want it to be over. I think every team feels that. It's just really important to try to play your best, and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

We've been in some tough situations before and they've handled it so well, so I think going through some adversity through the season and playing in some tough environments and tough situations has really groomed this team for this type of tournament.

Q. I had a question about Odicci Alexander of JMU. Obviously she got the standing ovation when she came out of the game. Your thoughts on her?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, wow. Just wow. We didn't know a lot about JMU. We haven't ever played them, not that I can remember in my years here at OU. What a competitor. She made us better. She made us work. She is outstanding.

Their coaching staff, outstanding, cool and calm, hardworking players. A real joy to watch, a real joy to play against. I certainly have tremendous respect for them and what they've done while they've been here.

Like I said, they made us better, and more than anything, I think they've brought a lot of fans into the fold of college softball. They were fun to root for, they were fun to watch. Odicci is an incredible pitcher, but just an incredible athlete.

Some of the players that she made I think forever will be in our minds just watching that squeeze play that she dove

and made that play on against Oklahoma State. She is just a great competitor. It was honestly an honor to play against her.

But I think singlehandedly James Madison made our sport better because they brought a lot of people in that wanted to watch them. I think that's the ultimate compliment I could give a coach and a program, and they were in.

Q. What do you think about JMU? You were just talking about how great it is for the sport. How great is it that East Coast softball can compete against everybody in this country?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, tremendous for the sport. Like I said, I am sure that they brought in thousands of fans, viewership-wise, and got them on their train, and that is tremendous. We love that for the sport. We love it for that part of the country, as well.

But the fans here, I mean, I'm watching the entire stadium applaud and honor that team and their pitcher when she walked off the field. Mad respect, but really just a fun team to watch. I'm sure that this is going to be a momentum builder for their program without question.

But I really do like their coaching staff. I think not a lot of talk about them, and I love the way they're calm, they call a great game, team plays hard for the coaches, as well.

It's been great for our sport, and we need more of that in the future.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about the fourth inning, breaking through after the slow start offensively. How huge Nicole's at-bat was to lead off with a triple and for Virginia Johnson to come through with a big RBI to put you in front?

PATTY GASSO: Yeah, it was really important for some of our players that haven't -- maybe we haven't talked too much about since we've been in the tournament, to see Nicole Mendes lead us off, I thought Jana Johns had some really quality at-bats today.



It was nice to see Jayda Coleman come through. She's really been actually trying too hard, and we put some action plays on for her, like some angle down and runs and some things that will force her to swing a little bit differently, and she did. It really worked out for her.

Of course Lou is the hottest player in the tournament right now I would imagine.

I really love what those guys have been doing, and you didn't have to depend so much on the top three, although Kinzie swung it well today, Jocey kind of put the icing on the cake with her home run late in the game, but it was just nice to see different faces and different ways of getting it done besides the big home run.

Q. I just wanted to ask what did you think of Giselle's performance after giving up that home run off the first pitch and then to turn around and throw 10 strikeouts like she did. What did you think of her performance today?

PATTY GASSO: Exceptional. On the big stage, exceptional. They are very aggressive first-pitch-type hitting team, and their 1, 2 hitters are very good and they're just fishing for what they want. It's almost like wherever you throw it I'm going to hit it and I'm going to hit it hard.

It was nice that maybe it did happen in the first so it gave us more time to kind of get ourselves in order. I think Odicci did a really nice job early kind of keeping us off the bags and getting us a little bit frustrated, but Giselle, the words I kept hearing was, "We got your back, Giselle, keep us in the game, we've got your back," just constant.

Jocelyn Alo, I heard her say that quite a bit. Giselle, this is the best she's been throwing all season the last week and a half, two weeks. She's been throwing outstanding. Very proud of her and excited about what she can do in this next couple of days.

Q. Coach, you're not used to being kind of on the wrong end of the bracket, so to speak, in these things. I'm wondering, is there anything that was said or done differently after that first loss last week?

PATTY GASSO: It seems so long ago. I'm going to have to take myself back.

It was just more the gladiator mentality and people look at us like, Okay, really? Yeah, really. They do play that way. They play hard. They don't quit. It was just really that attitude. My coaching staff has done a tremendous job in preparation and understanding of what we're facing from the pitching side, so our offensive plan is in order, our

pitching plan is in order, defense challenged them today.

Our defense has not been outstanding, but they did play well today. So it's just one game at a time, one inning at a time, one pitch at a time. If any team can do this, it's our team, so let's make history.

That was really kind of the attitude, and not being afraid. You can't be afraid to lose. You've got to play to win. You can't think about, Oh, my gosh, what could happen. You've got to stay in the moment. That's really hard to do at this tournament because you start thinking about, oh, well, the time is ticking on us, we're already in the fourth, oh, my gosh. You can't do that. You've got to really stay locked in and keep your minds right where they're at, and the team did a really good job of that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.