

2021 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

UCLA Bruins

Anna Vines

Rachel Garcia

Coach Kelly Inouye-Perez

Postgame Press Conference



UCLA 4, Florida State 0

THE MODERATOR: This is the Game 4 press conference featuring UCLA. We are joined by student-athletes Anna Vines and Rachel Garcia.

Questions for our student-athletes.

Q. Rachel, obviously you didn't have Megan with you today because she's going through her injury. What was your reaction to hearing that she wouldn't be able to be with you to start this tournament? How are you approaching this World Series knowing you won't be having her?

RACHEL GARCIA: I just think as a team we have to take it day by day and focus on us. Obviously there's some outside noise going on. As long as we keep it within the team, taking one pitch at a time, one day at a time, one game at a time, we'll be just fine. Megan is going to be with us in spirit.

Q. Rachel, in the sixth you faced trouble. Your coach came up to talk to you. What was she speaking to you about trying to calm you down?

RACHEL GARCIA: It's not necessarily a heightened situation for us. I mean, I know my team's going to have my back. Obviously Anna Vines and Bri Perez making those phenomenal plays behind me gives me confidence, any situation, whether it's runner in scoring position, two outs. Coach came out to make sure we were focusing on us, keeping on track, getting after the next batter.

Q. Anna, obviously you had two hits today. One of them scored the first run. They were the first hits of your career at the Women's College World Series.

How did it feel to be able to do that?

ANNA VINES: It felt really good. Honestly, I was just thinking about my team, trying to put the ball in play and allow Kinsley to either get to third or possibly score.

But I knew if it wasn't going to be me, my teammates would have my back. It was fun, but I knew it wasn't such a big situation because I knew I had my teammates' backs.

Q. Anna, what was the atmosphere like playing in front of these fans?

ANNA VINES: It was amazing. I mean, we talked about this all year. This is our goal. But I think obviously with COVID and at least us, for our sakes, we weren't really allowed to have people in the stands. So it was just awesome to have my family, the Bruin family be there.

Q. Rachel, you talked about defense. You don't get hit hard very often. When you do, you have Anna making plays like that, how much confidence does that give you?

RACHEL GARCIA: It gives me a lot of confidence. I'm sure all pitchers can say the same. When your defense is making those outstanding plays, it pumps you up as a pitcher. Anna Vines with that play up the middle, oh, my gosh, that fired me up. Then Bri's diving play at the end. It's those moments that makes this ending very special.

Q. Anna, what did it mean to you to contribute both offensively and defensively?

ANNA VINES: It means a lot. I just want to do it for my team. I want to put our team in the best position to win, in any way that I can. It was awesome to be able to do that in defense and offense.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you.

RACHEL GARCIA: Thank you.

ANNA VINES: Thank you.



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by head coach. We'll take questions.

Q. So is that why Kirk Walker is at third base? Would you have made that send as well? Great read on his part.

KELLY INOUEY-PEREZ: I think it's part of our style of play. I mean, definitely Florida State has a style of play where they're aggressive, and actually we're the same. We focus on that.

He has great experience at third base. He knows the game. He knows our runners. That was a great opportunity to take advantage of a miscue. It paid out for a run, a big run.

Q. Maya Brady and Anna Vines both had big debuts in the first World Series action. How impressed are you with their maturity on this big stage?

KELLY INOUEY-PEREZ: Huge. Maya Brady, she's always dangerous when she comes to the plate. I told the team afterwards, every single one of my hitters made an adjustment tonight. I'm really proud. I mean, Lanie Wisz, it's her first time also on this stage, her ability to make adjustments.

I think that's the strength of our team, is to be able to -- you may fail in the beginning, but then your ability to adjust and get better is awesome.

But for those new Bruins, and we said this, we're here to create memories. Those are some pretty special memories for those girls being here for the first time in Oklahoma City.

Q. How do you and the more experienced players talk to the new players, keep them from getting a little too energetic or too low?

KELLY INOUEY-PEREZ: I'm going to say, we have experience in this. There's been some big moments. Once again, I credit the Pac-12. There's some big moments. If you watch those games, it comes down to critical moments just like this.

Obviously the World Series, this is the biggest stage that you can play on. But we take those moments, we slow the game down, we have something to go to.

The biggest part of it is recognizing when it gets kind of big or when things start going fast. We have things to be able to dial in and check back in with each other, how to slow the game down.

It allows you to be able to play your best ball if you can slow down and really find your feet, take a big, deep breath and go. We took a bunch of those tonight. We had to slow it down, make sure we could get to the next pitch because it was a little frustrating how we came out. They came out and executed their game plan and we didn't.

But it's not how you start, it's definitely how you finish. I love how this team finds a way to make adjustments. Their will to win and their ego aside to do whatever it takes to win a ballgame. We got to see that literally one through nine, everybody made an adjustment tonight. Super proud.

Q. A short week for all teams. Did you have a chance to work on anything defensively specifically or just trust the team coming off last weekend?

KELLY INOUEY-PEREZ: We actually got here on Monday. We were able to train a couple days. That's what's entire season is for, right? The journey allows you to learn as much as you can.

I think we saw one of the best, if not the best, rise ball pitcher in the Super Regional. Keely was a great pitcher which allowed to make adjustments on that rise ball. We've seen some great drop balls. Gabbie Plain has a great drop ball. We have pitchers that -- throughout the Pac that have allowed us the backdoor curve.

There's experience we gained through the journey of the season. For us, we have to trust that we're prepared. That's probably the biggest thing, is trust that you can recognize a pitch and that you can make an adjustment. For us, we call it one shot. You can't train for one type of pitcher because in a tournament like this, we have to turn it around tomorrow and play Alabama. A completely different pitcher than what we faced tonight.

That comes to the experience we gain throughout a season. It's not something you learn right here in the last week.

Q. You brought up about staying in the game. No score in the first four innings. You talk about slowing the game down. Would you elaborate more about that.

KELLY INOUEY-PEREZ: It's once again getting back to trusting that they are prepared. We do physically take deep breaths to be able to kind of get back into just feeling good about where you are.

We have a thing called Bruin magic. That's really just redirecting our focus back to being centered, being in the here and now, being present instead of worrying about bad



at-bats. We dumped all our bad at-bats before we put some runs on the board. We dumped them.

When no one got focused on what we needed to do, we stuck to the process and trusted it. And that's when the adjustments started coming.

We started to put ourselves in a position to have better at-bats. We had to dump the old ones, get to the present, trust we're prepared for that.

I was proud. Offensively we did it. Defensively we did it. Rachel clearly, balls got put in play. She put herself in a position to finish strong. That's what you have to do at this point of the season, have a short-term memory, be able to catch yourself, redirect, get back to doing what you're prepared to do. You got to see that both from the offense and defense tonight.

Super proud of the entire team to be able to have the experience to slow it down and get back what we do best. That's what we call UCLA brand softball.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much for your time.

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