

2017 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 1, 2017
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Patty Gasso
Paige Parker
Lea Wodach
Macey Hatfield
Nicole Pendley
Nicole Mendes
Oklahoma

Oklahoma - 6, Baylor - 3

PATTY GASSO: It was tough. That was a tough game. We know each other very well, and we're always fighting for Big 12 championships, so to put it on this stage is a whole 'nother feeling. Baylor is a good team that makes your defense play, and we felt that pressure tonight.

But what I love about this team is that they came out and wanted to set the tone, and they did exactly that throughout the lineup. These guys were hitting the ball hard, and I just felt we had good momentum throughout the entire game. We'll definitely clean up our defense. That's something that's not uncommon the first game of the World Series, but it didn't seem to hurt us enough. We were able to hold on. It was great to get Paige Lowary in the game along with Paige Parker, and good first win, and that's exactly what you want when you come into this tournament is get the first win and away you go. Just wasn't maybe the prettiest, but it's in our back pocket, and we're ready to move on.

Q. Patty, when Nicole Mendes gets that single to start everything off, and Pendley, who's so hot right now, you had to feel pretty good how your team got out of the gate.

PATTY GASSO: I think that was something that we really talked about and we preach, and they did a great job of that. I think the tone got set early, and it pretty much stayed there.

Our offense -- Paige Parker, Paige Lowary were good. Our offense was really good, and we've been waiting

for this explosion, and it's happening.

Our defense is really good. They didn't look so much that tonight, but I know they'll be back and ready to go. So it was a good way to start this tournament.

Q. Paige, you were very efficient tonight, only 68 pitches. What was going well for you?

PAIGE PARKER: I think just trying to give them a good mix of pitches and just come out and attack early in the count and just execute the game plan.

Q. Nicole Pendley, the last time you faced Kelsee Selman you got a grand slam. Does that give you extra confidence going into this game and facing her in the first inning?

NICOLE PENDLEY: I guess in a way, but she also owned me a lot of the other times, so I give her credit, and I respect her very much. She's a great pitcher. So I think I just went up there, kind of a fresh mind, and tried to stick to the game plan we created.

Q. Coach, this year has been highlighted by SEC and Pac-12 play; do you feel like you guys kind of were under the radar even though you are the defending national champions?

PATTY GASSO: Maybe a little, but we like being under the radar. We don't need the limelight. We don't need the headlines. We just come in and play ball. It doesn't bother our team. If anything it kind of motivates us. But we don't need the spotlight. We like where we're at.

Q. Macey, what about postseason has really turned you on? You've had some really big plays the last few games and some really big plays tonight.

MACEY HATFIELD: It's just going out there and having fun. I don't really think about making these big plays. To me they're just routine, so I like to just go out there and play my game.

Q. Patty, what were your emotions going to that seventh inning because it looked like with the errors and everything kind of snowballing on you guys that it might have gotten out of hand really quick there.

PATTY GASSO: We had Paige Parker ready, but it wasn't anything Paige Lowary was doing wrong.

Sometimes you've just got to change momentum. We had Paige Parker ready, but I trust this defense. This defense has been our staple all season long. As long as we kept trying to get the lead out, one thing that was really critical for us was CC (Caleigh Clifton) getting the out at second, and although we didn't turn the double play, we gave up the run, but we took the runner out of scoring position, which I think was really important.

It was uncomfortable. It's hard to watch because I know how much better we are. But again, Baylor creates that on us. I say this over and over: Baylor makes us better. They make us play hard, and we appreciate that. We like that.

It was a little bit touch-and-go, but I trusted this defense and Paige Lowary.

Q. Nicole Mendes, you looked so nervous, the first pitch you see you swat to left field. What was it like playing in this first game for you because nothing seems to faze you ever?

NICOLE MENDES: I mean, coming out, it was just kind of creating a game plan, and I think that me trusting in the game plan kind of took the nerves away. I felt that no matter what happens, our game plan was going to work, and I trusted in it, and it kind of worked, so yeah.

Q. Paige, Shelby Friudenberg and McGlaun have been big power hitters for them this year. How much emphasis was it to keep them in the park?

PAIGE PARKER: They are both very good hitters, so it was just trying to keep them off balance, and you know, just like our hitters were talking about, it's the same for pitchers and trusting our game plan that Coach Lombardi had. It was important to try to keep them off base because they both are very good hitters.

Q. Coach Gasso told us yesterday that she waited during the season to give you guys the bracelets that you wear around your wrists, and now that you're here and you're earned them at the World Series, what does that mindset, that mentality mean for you girls?

PAIGE PARKER: You know, championship mindset is the foundation that we try to build off of, and having these bracelets after we've earned them means so much to us. You know, it's always a reminder, I think, during the game you can just look down and see that bracelet on your wrist and know that it's go time and know that if we do embrace that championship mindset, it'll take us a long way.

Q. Both Nicoles have mentioned game plan when referencing the home run and one the first-pitch single. At the top of the first, was it something specific that early in the game you were looking

for?

NICOLE PENDLEY: Well, I think we learned from previous batters how she was attacking the zone, and we knew that (Kelsee) Selman was being aggressive and trying to get ahead in the count, so I think it was just learning from previous batters where she was pitching her first pitch, her tendencies, so I think we were just learning from the batter before us, and Nicole Mendes just starting the game off going opposite field, so I think it was just learning from each other and going with it.

Q. In the seventh inning when things are kind of snowballing, for Lea, what do you do as a catcher to kind of keep things together for you guys defensively?

LEA WODACH: I think it's just pulling the defense together, especially keeping Paige (Lowary) on her feet, on the ground, on the mound, telling her you're doing everything that you can and it's more an issue that we need to figure out with the defense rather than what she was doing. She did everything that we could ask for, so it's more just, hey, defense, let's pick her up here, let's make a play, let's stop the bleeding. We knew that we had a pretty good cushion so we were just trying to get outs. We talked a lot about not worrying about the runners that were on but trying to stop the bleeding, getting outs as quick as we could.

Q. Nicole Mendes, you've hit safely in 40 of the last 45 games; what has been your approach at the plate and your mentality each and every game to make that happen?

NICOLE MENDES: Honestly, whenever I go up there, I just want to look for my pitch, and whenever I see it, I just want to hit the ball hard. I'm not really trying to swing for the fences or make anything spectacular, I'm just trying to get my job done, and it's been working.

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Glenn Moore
Kelsee Selman
Jessie Scroggins
Maddison Kettler
Lindsey Cargill
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Oklahoma - 6, Baylor - 3

GLENN MOORE: Obviously disappointed in the outcome of the game. I thought the first inning really doomed us. Playing a team like Oklahoma, you've got to keep the score close to have a chance to win. Their pitching is too good. I'm proud of the way we fought. We're that type of team. We're not going to give up. I've never seen this team quit fighting, and they fought hard and we made a little run at the end, but we dug too deep of a hole to come out of it.

You know, it's a double elimination, and 2014, I just told the team, we came here and got run ruled by Florida, team fought back and played on Sunday and won two big games on Saturday, and I expect this team to fight like crazy to be able to do that and make a run for it.

Q. Lindsey, you guys have lost three of the last four to Oklahoma. What makes Oklahoma so difficult to beat?

LINDSEY CARGILL: Oklahoma is a great team, great ballclub. They never stop fighting ... that's really hard to keep on with them, as well. They're always fighting, always getting to battle the ball. We are right up there with them. We can do the exact same things. We just need to come together as a team and get some hits and get some runs.

Q. Lindsey, you've seen Paige Parker a lot the last several years. What makes her so tough, and was this a pretty typical game for her?

LINDSEY CARGILL: Yeah, so for me as a lefty, she does that changeup to me so that's why I switched to the right-handed batter's box. I feel like she moves the ball really well, and just that changeup.

Q. Kelsee, the big home run there, how difficult was that, and what's the mindset after you give that up?

KELSEE SELMAN: That just kind of says -- you have to think about the next pitch. That game is on me. If I wouldn't have had that first inning, we would have won the ballgame 3-2. I don't know, I've just got to think about it, next pitch. Because if you think about it, then the game would really just fall out of hand. Basically just -- yeah, next pitch.

Q. Kelsee, how good is that lineup, and what kind of problems do they present?

KELSEE SELMAN: Yeah, that lineup is really good. You have -- today they were really, really aggressive, and for me, my thing is to try to throw a lot of strikes, so I had to make a quick adjustment. Of course right after the home run I realized that the adjustment had to come. Top from bottom, they're really good. They bring different things to the table. They'll randomly drop a bunt. They're in and out, whatever I give them I have to make sure it's a quality pitch. Yeah, they're really good, and they're tough to pitch to, but I could have done a lot better.

Q. Kelsee, after what you guys did in the super regional in Tucson, how much confidence does that give you going into the game on Saturday knowing that you guys can come from behind and win two in a row?

KELSEE SELMAN: When you have games like we did in Arizona where we lost the first one and came back, that gives you a ton of confidence. This team, you see we were behind -- I was put behind 4-0 in the first inning and we came back and battled back. I have a ton of confidence in this team, and I know that they're going to battle each pitch and play by play. We have a few more games to play than we should have, but I know this team will battle back and play as hard as they can through the whole thing, so it's a lot easier.

Q. I just want to ask about that seventh inning and they start committing those errors, you guys are putting pressure on them. Did you feel like the momentum was shifting? Did you think you guys were turning this game around?

GLENN MOORE: Yeah, we've been there many times this year, and that's why we don't give up, because any inning can be a big inning for us. We play a lot of small

ball. We have a couple of kids that can hit it out of the park, and that's what we do, we put pressure on defenses, and many times it'll snowball. They'll force a play, throw one away at first, and the ball will go off the glove, and we're a fast team, so that's kind of what we do. If they can make the plays and get us out, then they can beat us, but it's a lot of pressure, and that's our philosophy is to put pressure on defenses.

Q. Maddison, you guys started in that seventh inning. Talk about just the passing-the-bat mentality in that inning and how momentum was building.

MADDISON KETTLER: Yeah, I know going into the inning we were down a lot, but just coming into that inning knowing (Paige) Lowary was coming in, just taking one pitch at a time, and it wasn't going to come with just one swing. We had to take one pitch, and I just played my game, and it passed through.

Q. Glenn, what do you see from Oregon? You faced them last year, saw them earlier today.

GLENN MOORE: Well, it'll be nice to see a right-handed pitcher, so we're looking forward to that. They're an outstanding ballclub. Coach White does a great job there. You know, they'll be tough. Everybody here is good. This is a great opportunity to play them better than we played them a year ago, so we're looking forward to that rematch.

Q. You've been a defensive highlight reel the last few weeks, and all season really. Has that always been your style of play or have you just upped it since getting to Baylor?

KELSEE SELMAN: No, it's always been my style of play. I like to go all out, and I don't mind going all out because I know my left fielder and my right fielder are there to back me up, so I have nothing to worry about.

Q. Kelsee and then any of the others who want to add to it, but I think it was the fourth inning, Oklahoma loaded the bases, a couple of bunt singles, but you really had to regroup and to limit that to just one run in the inning was pretty impressive. You want to walk us through the mindset of your huddle offer what you guys talked about or how did you regroup from that?

KELSEE SELMAN: Just like I was saying earlier, you've got to take it one pitch at a time because if you don't, if you think about the past things that happened, it's going to fold. Really just in the huddle I was just telling them to have fun. You're at the Women's College World Series. Not that we're okay with having those little mistakes and stuff like that but just have fun and relax. But in the huddle we were just talking about basically just make plays and good things will happen. So yeah, we got out of the inning with just one run.

That was on me, of course for hitting the batter, but we did really well, played good defense, and we got out of it.

Q. Maddison, had a couple hits in the game. Playing as a freshman, you've played in big games before obviously in high school, but what did the veterans tell you about staying calm and not getting nervous?

MADDISON KETTLER: I'm very confident. I mean, yeah, that result today wasn't what we wanted, but I believe in our team. You saw what we did in Tucson, and we can make plays and come through and swing the bats. I'm very confident in our team.

Q. It seems like this year a lot of talk has been about the SEC and the Pac-12, and now that you and Oklahoma both made it here, do you feel like you guys were a little bit under the radar this year?

JESSICA SCROGGINS: I definitely do think that we are under the radar. It just proves to show that we can compete with SEC and Pac-12. I mean, we just played Arizona and we upset them, and we saw them butting against us and not even win and we're here, so it just shows that we can compete with those other teams.