

May 30, 2013



Oklahoma – 7
Michigan – 1

An interview with:

**OKLAHOMA COACH PATTY GASSO
LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN
KEILANI RICKETTS
JESSICA SHULTS**

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Oklahoma head coach, Patty Gasso and Sooner athletes Lauren Chamberlain, Keilani Ricketts and Jessica Shults. We'll start with a comment from Coach and open it to the floor for questions.

COACH GASSO: I thought that we came ready to play. It was a long day of waiting; and that, I think is one of the hardest things just watching things on TV and waiting and waiting and waiting.

I think we started off a little slow, but the sign of a good team is one that answers a score, and when Michigan came up to score 1, we answered 4. So I thought the team and Keilani obviously threw a tremendous game, and Lauren doing what she does. It was great to see Shults step up and get some big RBIs for us. I thought the defense played well and a little shaky in one, maybe two innings, but after that we settled in and did our thing and did it pretty well.

Q. Can you talk about a lot of teams come here and have a little shaky inning, another team scores and it rattles the team. But you continued to pitch well. Your bats came alive, your fielding went back to being good. Just talk about how you're able to throw that bad inning behind you?

KEILANI RICKETTS: Well, once Michigan scored that kind of woke us up a little, because we knew they were going to be scoring runs. They were scoring runs all year against everybody, and

we knew we had to respond back to that. And my defense was amazing behind me.

Jess (Shults) was phenomenal behind the plate, and our defense was making plays in the gap and getting balls that would have been hit. I was just able to feed off them tonight.

Q. Patty, you've seen Keilani throw so many games, but when she starts off the game throwing over 70 and then a changeup in the 50s, I'm sure you're saying to yourself it's going to be a pretty good night.

COACH GASSO: I think that's up to Keilani, really. She loves to compete, as these other two do up here. This is the stage that they've dreamed about their entire life. So any athlete that's here needs to be ready to play, and Keilani was locked in and ready to play.

There was no doubt that she was in control pretty early throughout the game. One thing, we went out and they had runners I think at first and second and we talked a little bit about it. She answered, boom-boom, two big outs to get us out of the inning. So she responded well, and just had a fantastic game.

Q. Lauren, I had a question for you. Your first at-bat, you go up and you strike out and immediately I notice you go to your teammates on deck and are talking it over what you saw with them. Can you talk about your night of diagnosing their pitcher and having better at-bats as the night went along for you?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: I wasn't very happy with the way my first at-bat went, but passing along my knowledge, again, it's the first at-bat of the game, and I was telling them the spins I saw, the speed I saw.

Second at-bat I was looking to make an adjustment, be more aggressive with my swings and I was a little early on the drop ball, so stayed a little deeper and it worked out.

Q. Jessica, it hasn't really been the postseason you probably hoped for, but to come through with a huge two-out single tonight, talk about that and how that felt?

JESSICA SHULTS: Yeah, like you said, I haven't been having the postseason I wanted. But trying to make things happen for my team and get a hit and just be on the ball a little bit better, I feel like this is the time I want to do it.

Q. Lauren, what was that pitch? Was it a drop ball?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: I'm not going to tell you.

KEILANI RICKETTS: It was on the ground, so...

Q. Jessica, could you talk about catching Keilani tonight and what you saw the entire night from her?

JESSICA SHULTS: She had all her stuff tonight. Like you said, she was throwing the ball hard and then going full speeds. I feel like she just really answered every time. Things weren't going our way that one inning and she came back and got big outs for us, and it made us want to get in that dugout and get runs on the board for her. She came back for us on the mound, picked me up behind the plate and picked us up on the field. So I felt like she had her 'A' game tonight.

Q. Lauren and Jessica, Keilani gives you time to figure out an opposing pitcher. When she's throwing like that you don't have to score 10. Just figure it out a way to get a couple across, get the lead and ride it out. I take it that feels good in a situation like this?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: For sure. I think it gives us less pressure and the same for her, less pressure when she's on the mound. At the same time, her competitive spirit gets us pumped up. When we see her working for us, we want to work for her as well.

JESSICA SHULTS: I agree. I feel like if she wants to get the big outs for us, we want to get runs on the board. We want her to get comfortable on the mound and do the same thing. I love working behind her.

Q. Patty, or for any of you that want to address this really, saw a lot of Texas fans in the stands before you started to play. It's going to be a Red River rivalry again. Any

thoughts on meeting up with this team in the College World Series?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: It's going to be a fun game.

COACH GASSO: We're excited. We're very much looking forward to this, yeah.

Q. Patty, the first time you've been behind in the tournament, obviously your team responded really well and I'm sure you expected that. But could you talk about that a little bit? Once you got behind how your team just kind of fought back and came back right away?

COACH GASSO: Well, they're notorious for that, and a good team shows that they can respond and they do that quite often throughout the season they have. So this team has this no panic thing going on. It's a lot of game left. They knew that. They knew the more we'd see Michigan's pitcher on the mound, the more we'd work to figure things out and you could see it happening as we go along.

So it was just a matter of learning, getting more opportunities to see more pitches and then talking about what we need to do different. So they did a good job of sharing their information throughout the entire game, and we put it all together and came up with a plan that they followed to a tee. So that's what they do. They know they're going to get there. It's just hang on. Let's get it worked out, no panic, and that's what they did tonight.

Q. Lauren, we've talked about before and after and the pitch and everything else, but talk about just crushing that home run? It seemed to be one of the harder ones hit. Is that the hardest you've hit one? It seemed to be one of the more prolific homers in Women's College World Series.

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: When I hit it, well, I don't really feel it. So I don't know if it felt like the hardest one I've ever hit, but it felt good. Again, shout out to our fans. They make this game really fun, and to hear them respond to the things we do on the field is really cool.

Q. For any of you players, could you talk about what it was like to step back into the stadium today after thinking about this all year long and what you went through last year?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: It's a good vibe on this field, and I think sometimes people can get away with that. We love being here. It's a great atmosphere and a blessing to be back. We worked hard all season, and we're ready to take this one game at a time and just have a good time.

KEILANI RICKETTS: It's definitely exciting to be back here, and I think the whole team had a lot of adrenaline going into this game. We wanted to start out strong and we were able to, so we just wanted to keep it going.

JESSICA SHULTS: It's awesome to be back on this field. And now being here for Oklahoma and being back on the field for them and giving them something to watch and kind of just being there for them, I feel like it's awesome to be back.

Q. Keilani, Texas at least has seen you, unlike some of these teams here. I don't think they're going to be comfortable, necessarily, but if they know you a little bit does that give them more of a shot to touch you a little bit tomorrow night?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I feel like I've seen them just as much as they've seen me. So it's going to come down to who is going to be able to clutch up tomorrow because it's always a tough battle, especially in our series against them this year. So I know they know my stuff, and I kind of know them as hitters too. So it's just going to be who is going to battle the hardest.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports