

June 1, 2013



Oklahoma – 10
Texas – 2

An interview with:

**OKLAHOMA COACH PATTY GASSO
CALLIE PARSONS
JESSICA SHULTS
BRIANNA TURANG
KEILANI RICKETTS**

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Oklahoma head coach Patty Gasso and student-athletes Callie Parsons, Keilani Ricketts, Jessica Shults, and Brianna Turang. We'll start with Coach and go to the floor with questions.

COACH GASSO: That was fun. We enjoyed it very much, not necessarily because of the outcome of the amount of the score, because we respect Texas like nobody else. We were really feeling that this was going to be a major battle. We knew it right from the start.

But what was fun is to see every single one of these players participate in the win, whether they're starters or not. Everybody had a hand in helping create a rally or drive in runs or make big plays. Everybody had a part in it, and I was extremely proud to see this team fight. Early on, not getting panicked by the fact that Texas came out and scored early and scored two early. We just kind of took our time and were patient and created some momentum and tried to stay aggressive. It seemed to work out really well.

Q. Brianna, was the plan to drop down a five-foot bunt and circle the bases? I don't suppose you'll admit that?

BRIANNA TURANG: No, that wasn't the plan. But I was just trying to put the ball in play and get Lauren Chamberlain up to bat. That's been my main goal this whole season is to get on any way I can and put the bat into Lauren's hands especially if there are runners in scoring position,

because obviously we all know she has a hot bat. So that's been my goal.

Q. Could you sort of take us through what you saw during that whole sequence?

BRIANNA TURANG: I think because there were runners in scoring position, I saw they were a little bit back. So my goal was kind of to put it in between to where they kind of didn't know who was going to get the ball. It went a little bit over. I didn't expect it. But I just tried to run my butt off to get to first and just kind of see what happens, just use my speed to maybe put pressure on the defense.

Q. Jessica, can you talk about the inning that Texas scored the runs? It just seemed like you guys were scuffling a little bit, but then like Coach talked about, no panic. Where does that come from for you guys?

JESSICA SHULTS: I think that's been our thing all year not to panic. Our offense puts up a lot of runs and we're pretty good at answering when something doesn't go our way. I feel like we're a pretty easy team, so we don't let things like that get to us. We know our bats will come alive once we go through the lineup one time.

Q. Keilani, talk about that third inning. The top of the third was a difficult one. Texas scored, but you came back. How did it feel to get that double to spark your team's comeback?

KEILANI RICKETTS: It felt good just because I didn't have any success in my first at-bat. So I was going up there trying to be more decisive with my swing, because Blaire's a hard pitcher to be decisive with just because she has so many different pitches to not layoff of, so just being more decisive and looking at balls that were in the zone.

Q. Brianna, can you talk about when was the last time you ran a 40? Was it in high school when you ran a 4.5?

BRIANNA TURANG: Yeah, that was the last time.

Q. Do you contribute that speed to all the training you've had with softball and soccer?

BRIANNA TURANG: Yeah, I think a lot of soccer training is short sprints and I think throughout high school and throughout college I've been kind of training to do those fast, short sprints. So I think that really contributed.

Q. Jessica and maybe one other player, it's one thing to have the confidence that you'll come back when you fall behind, but it's another thing to expect to come back and have the lead when the inning is over. When you get behind, you come back with even more runs. Do you expect that to happen at this point?

JESSICA SHULTS: I feel like we expect to come alive. We have a great lineup 1 through 9, so I feel like it kind of fuels us a little bit and wakes us up a little bit. We expect to score runs, and we know Keilani does a great job on the mound and she's not going to give up too many runs.

CALLIE PARSONS: Yeah, I think we just trust each other and as we go through the game we just know that we're going to be able to score runs. There are many games where we do start out ahead, but when we're not, we always come back and fight back.

Q. Coach, were you surprised that Connie (Clark) yanked Blaire Luna out so quickly? Because I guess Keilani was having a little bit of issues that inning as well and you kept her in.

COACH GASSO: I don't know their history together, but I could feel that the momentum was shifting and I think it was a call to try to stop that momentum. I don't know the history of them enough to say that I was surprised or not.

But I know that the game prior they did the same thing and had success bringing in (Kim) Bruins who has great numbers and has done a great job. So she knows better than I do. That's all I can say.

Q. Coach, do you want to talk about just your aggressiveness on sending the base runners home? It's kind of something that

you've done all year and being aggressive with it paid off today. What is your mentality just in terms of how aggressive you're being?

COACH GASSO: I think to make the defense make plays. When you're in big games like this, everybody's tight. We're just trying to bring it. You can beat us and make a great throw like the other day. Michigan's right fielder just nailed a throw to get Georgia (Casey) at third. I read a little bit about the outfield, and Washington is phenomenal. She's got a gun in centerfield, but it's where she picks it up is what makes my decision. Is it on her glove hand, her throwing hand, things like that that I look at. A couple of things that haven't been really talked about was Brittany Williams. I put her in a hole with two strikes because she had to take that bunt. That double steal and then Brittany Williams comes up and hits that deep fly ball that was, to me, even with the lead on Texas you don't feel comfortable. That was a big shift in the game, I felt. That was huge. Brittany Williams made that happen. Callie Parsons, in the eight hole, getting three RBIs. These are the names you don't hear too much about. They quietly do their job and they do it so well. I think on this big stage today they really, really helped this team win.

Q. Brianna, you guys seem to have a it's-not-if, it's-when mentality. Where does that come from?

BRIANNA TURANG: Our team has been so close. I mean, we've always been close, but especially coming together throughout these few weeks that everything is happening. We've just been getting closer and closer. I think when you have that much trust in your teammates you really don't have a worry in the world. When you don't have a pitcher like Keilani Ricketts that's going to shut them down anyways. I think it gives us a lot of confidence to do what we do, and we trust ourselves.

Q. How big an advantage do you feel to get off to the 2-0 start so far? And now you're able to sit back and watch how everything else unfolds?

COACH GASSO: Every game is the biggest game that you've played. But this game is the biggest game there is, because it puts you in a position to have someone have to beat you twice. I think right now with the way we're playing that

would be difficult for any team here to do.

So it allows us to get a little extra rest, allows us to do our research and homework as to who we're going to face next. For two teams and being us and Tennessee, it's really a tremendous advantage.

Q. Coach, this game was obviously supposed to be played last night before all the crazy weather hit. Can you talk about how you managed to get through last night with everything that happened and heading into today?

COACH GASSO: I know everybody here and everyone around was dealing with the same thing we were. What we've learned is to stay very close. Wherever we went, we did a roll call. Everybody was calling out a number to make sure we're all together. The families followed. Wherever we went there was a group of families just following, because we know how to handle this stuff. It was a little trying on these guys because they had families in, some from out of town, that were staying in Norman, and we knew this storm was taking a path that way. So there was a little bit of anxiety and uncomfortableness.

But we just stuck together throughout most of the night and just knew where each other were, tried to get in contact with our families in Norman, which was trying. That was the toughest part of everything was just making sure -- when you're separated is the most uncomfortable thing there is. When we got ahold of everybody, we reevaluated what happened. Let it go. Got locked in and we're still on this journey. Our journey has taken some major twists and turns, and we're just staying on the path.

Q. Callie, lost in this run rule victory may be that (Kim) Bruins was a pitch away from retiring you guys in the third inning, and it was a 3-2 pitch she threw to you that you bounced back through the middle. Take me through that at-bat. If it's any different, through the 3-2 pitch, because the whole game might be very different if that goes differently.

CALLIE PARSONS: Yeah, she came out and threw two balls on me and went back-to-back low outside, and sitting up there with the 2-2 count I knew that the girls in front of me did everything they could to get on base and did their job. So I had to do everything I needed to do to fight and find my way on. The 3-2 count, I was just trying to

see the ball into the zone and get a good hack on it.

Q. Blaire Luna is one of the best strikeout pitchers in the game. Yet you all took seven walks off of Texas pitchers and you seemed to be going long in the counts like the Yankees. Were you deliberately trying to run up her pitch count?

COACH GASSO: I don't know if we were trying to run up the pitch count, but more of just really staying with our game plan and not chasing things out of the zone. I would tell you, -- and Keilani can tell you the same thing -- we've played each other so much that there are no surprises. We kind of know what we're going to get, and you have to be extremely disciplined, as does Texas. It's tough. This is the fourth time we've played Texas, but all of these kids are seniors and they've seen each other for four years. So we know some things that can get to her a little bit, and we've tried to be very disciplined and patient at the plate.

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