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An Interview With:

**OKLAHOMA
COACH PATTY GASSO
GEORGIA CASEY
LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN
KEILANI RICKETTS**

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from Oklahoma, we have Head Coach Patty Gasso and studentathletes Georgia Casey, Lauren Chamberlain, and Keilani Ricketts. Coach, an opening comment.

COACH GASSO: I was extremely pleased with our approach today. I thought Keilani was the best I've ever seen her in quite a while. She threw the same kind of game against Arizona in the Super Regional and really had complete command.

And offensively, our team just did a great job of finding ways to get on. If there's any turn to the story is that we left too many runners on base. But at this point, it's just finding ways to score, and that's ultimately what it's about.

So I'm very pleased with this team effort. They really knew the importance of this game and that it could really put them in a great driver's seat situation. So very proud of the way everyone stepped up tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Patty, how has Keilani kind of elevated her game to the point where she was able to throw this kind of a game on this kind of a stage?

COACH GASSO: I think Keilani has gone to another level, just really knows now how to get locked in like never before, and not let things really affect her.

And I've seen her really step up in clutch situations. And they had runners in scoring position and to find her way out of it. And she's been doing that all year long, over and over. It's almost like she loves the challenge.

But seeing her become truly one of the best, and it's been an absolute pleasure to watch.

Q. Keilani, I'll piggyback on that question. What was working for you today? And also I wonder I know the pitches are called from the dugout. But in a way, are you calling your own game -- are you that much on the same page with your coaches? Is everything falling into place?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I think we were just seeing what my pitches that were working, and we were just going off that.

And it helped that I was just hitting my spots, because, you know, Cal, being the great team they are, they could capitalize on any mistakes I was going to make.

Q. Was any pitch bigger than others today?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I think just using my changeup a lot today helped.

Q. Coach Gasso, can you talk about how special it is to have two freshmen that have really stepped up in this postseason for you offensively?

COACH GASSO: Well, they're such a huge part of our team and have been there all year long, but they're so schooled beyond their age. You would never believe these two are freshmen with the way they are students. They're students. We just talked about them being students of the game, students of hitting. Very great communication within the infield and just trying to understand how our defense works and they're just wonderful students who want to get better.

And to have that as what our future is going to be like is very, very exciting. And I think also seeing how Keilani and her ability to compete has really allowed them to understand this level as well.

So it's been wonderful.

Q. Keilani, even by your standards, did you feel like this was a top game for you, top performance for you?

KEILANI RICKETTS: Yeah, I definitely feel like this was one of our best games, just because we were hitting well. We were playing defense great. And the pitches being called and the pitching was it was all what you need to do to win against a team like that.

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Q. How about you individually? Do you feel like this is a good performance for you?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I think so. I just had my adrenaline going in this game, and I was hitting my spots and that helped.

Q. Keilani, when did you feel like you were locked in? Was it before the game, first inning? When did you feel like you were on today?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I just feel like I've been locked in this whole postseason.

Q. Lauren and Georgia, could you tell us what it was like from your perspective watching her do what she did to the No. 1 ranked team in the country?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: It's fun to watch her approach and how she takes the field because she gets the rest of the team on the same page with her. She lifts us up to a new level, especially in postseason. That's what you need from your team leader.

GEORGIA CASEY: It's good to know that if we don't quite have our momentum going our way, Keilani can get it right back for us by shutting them out.

Q. Facing her at practice, I would imagine quite a bit, how much has that helped you when you face a big-game pitcher like Jolene?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: It helps tremendously because 'Lani can simulate any pitcher out there with her speed and her movement at the same time. It's challenging, but at the same time, she makes us better; we make her better, so it's a winwin situation.

GEORGIA CASEY: Like Lauren said, you just have to go up there with a positive attitude. You know that every atbat with Keilani makes you better as a hitter and you just have to not get down if you don't do too well.

Q. Her changeup was working so well but so was Jolene's. Talk about adjusting to both pitchers and how they were both throwing awesome changeups tonight?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: Yeah, my first atbat wasn't too pretty with her changeup. But my second atbat, I didn't want to get cheated by that same pitch, so I just went after it with a different approach.

GEORGIA CASEY: I think that when pitchers have a good changeup, it's just about

which team can adjust better to figuring out a way how to hit that changeup, and we know that we have a lot of plans with how to work with a changeup, and we just adjusted well to it today.

Q. Georgia, was the ball you hit out a changeup and were you looking for it? Because that's a hard thing to do if you've got to fight off the fastball, you're looking for a changeup. So were you looking for it? And tell us about that atbat.

GEORGIA CASEY: Well, I had two strikes on me so I was looking for both pitches because you can't just hit on one when you have two strikes. So I was just looking to foul off anything that came hard, and I was just waiting for the change.

Q. Patty, similarly, do you think Keilani intimidates hitters?

COACH GASSO: Absolutely. Her size, being lefthanded, her strength, her speed, and when she leaps out the way she does, absolutely.

Q. Coach, you're one game away from the championship now. You won your first two. Obviously that's kind of how you drew it up, right?

COACH GASSO: Exactly. They're following the plan exactly.

You know, I think what we figured out was let's just get here. The hard part's over. Let's just get it together, work together, and take this as far as we can go.

So we're really not looking far ahead, but really focusing on one game at a time. The only thing we had on our mind was Cal. Looking at video of Cal. Preparing for them defensively. Everything about what we were doing was for Cal.

Now, tomorrow, we get to sit back and relax and watch everybody beat each other up, and then we go back to planning for whoever it is that we have to face.

So we're just really taking it slow and taking it one pitch at a time, one game at a time, and enjoying every minute of it.

Q. Patty, this isn't a strategy question, but what will tomorrow be like? Will you be here? Will you be in Norman? When do you practice? How do you go about the off day?

COACH GASSO: I don't know quite yet. But one thing I will tell you is that Jessica Shults has been bothering me for the last three months because there is an ulcerative colitis walk that's going on tomorrow. And I said, "We're going to be



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playing." She goes, "No, we're not going to be playing on that day." And I'm not even thinking I mean, this was a long time ago, so I'm not even thinking about what she's talking about.

But she had it all planned. She knew exactly where we were going to be tomorrow. So the team has decided that we're going to go out and support this cause and maybe walk a mile. We don't want to waste the day walking too hard, but it's just completely in support for Jessica Shults, and these guys as her teammates want to be there for that.

Q. You mentioned in your opening remarks, Patty, about stranding too many runners. Ten in the game, but five in the first three innings. And you've talked in the past about making adjustments for each pitcher that you face. What adjustments did you make to Jolene Henderson? Obviously the home run helped settle the game. And is there a leader in your dugout when the team is in a tight game like that, that you look to to help you?

COACH GASSO: Adjustments were I think Georgia touched on it, changing rhythms and trying these guys are students of the game. They talked with Coach MacKay. There's some strategy as to what we might be looking for and trying to set ourselves up for certain pitches. So we were really working hard for that.

When it comes to leaders, they just all want to win. Jessica Shults is our captain, but they all want to win. And I'm talking from the athlete that doesn't see the field much at all to these guys that are all right here. They're all such a big part of it, every one of them. So there's no one particular. I think they all just they all get it.

Q. Sorry if this is an obvious question or something you've already answered, but with not having a Big 12 Tournament the second year in a row, I guess it's been a while since you've played two teams back to back like this with quality pitchers. Are you liking not having the Big 12 Tournament in retrospect, and did you like the format now, and how challenging was it to get back in the groove since you didn't have a conference tournament of playing two teams like this back to back?

COACH GASSO: I'm completely fine not having a Big 12 Tournament, and that is because we don't want to beat each other up going into postseason. And that's the hard part. It's so intense when you get into that tournament. So not having one and playing out the rest of your Big 12

allows you to prepare and get a little bit of a breather. And I think that is huge for us.

And I don't think it has affected us in a negative way at all. If anything, I'd say it's affected us in a very positive way.

Q. Keilani, you're going to go out and walk for Jessica tomorrow. Will you watch the games that are played here? Will softball be a big part of your day tomorrow or not?

KEILANI RICKETTS: Yeah, we're still going to be watching the games and preparing for whatever we have, just because we're not done with the season. You know, we're still preparing for the next day.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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