

2017 Women's College World Series

Thursday, June 1, 2017
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Kelly Inouye-Perez Paige Halstead Rachel Garcia UCLA

LSU - 2, UCLA - 1

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: Yeah, I think first and foremost, want to be able to give LSU credit. They came out and they were able to throw the first punch and score first. But I'm very proud of my team. You know, they do what we've done to be able to get here and they punch back. You know, it comes down to some critical moments in the game. We practice hours and hours to be able to get to a point where you can play your best at the end, and it's unfortunate that things don't always get to bounce in your favor.

But I told the girls, you know, nothing has been very smooth for this team this year. So we're experienced in that. We're going to own it. We're going to figure out what the next step is. We get a day off tomorrow to have an opportunity to kind of regroup and recover, but we're nowhere near even thinking about being able to end our season. So I'm excited that we have another opportunity. I have a great deal of belief in this Bruin team and in this program, and now is when experience kicks in. I shared with them, in 2003 we lost Game 1, but in a whole different way. We just didn't show up and play our game, and it didn't feel really good. Today we played UCLA softball. I'm proud of them. But I also said we need to figure out how to be 1 percent better to be able to get after the next W. So we'll regroup. And like I said, your experience kicks in. In 2003 we lost Game 1 and we came back, went the hardest route, and we got ourselves back and we won a championship, so I know it's possible, but we've got to play the game one pitch at a time.

Q. You guys left seven runners on base today. That has to be frustrating to see that number, right?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: That's the game. We've also -- I told the girls today, if we had an opportunity to blow it out, great; if we had to win it by one, great. It does come down to timely hitting, but it's not really about -- you don't get the luxury when you're facing the pitchers that we're facing here at the series to just be able to

pick up every RBI, but it does come down to defense, and defense in the end does win championships, and unfortunately they were able to get away with being able to score that scrappy go-ahead run, and it made a difference. But I don't think it was necessarily about the LOBs, it's about defense, and they both played well enough to be able to win today.

Q. Rachel, were you nervous coming into today or was it them being able to jump on you early?

RACHEL GARCIA: I mean, for me it was just another game. Yeah, it's a different stadium, but it didn't bother me at all that we were in a bigger arena.

Q. Coach, you were able to speak to the umpire after the obstruction call. How was it explained to you?

KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ: I think it was explained. She made the call. I disagreed with the call, and I still stand by that. I think especially knowing that -- as a former catcher, it's very frustrating to be able to see that type of a call made with a perfect throw on an opportunity with a bang-banger. She had the ball well before the runner. It's just an unfortunate situation. So I talked to her about that, about being able to truly understand the call that she made, and she stood by it.

Q. Paige, what goes through your mind when you see that play evolve and you see the ball coming in and you're trying to plant your feet? How much do you think about obstruction? How much do you think about the play that was at hand?

PAIGE HALSTEAD: You know, you don't think about it a lot. It's a bang-bang play. Our right fielder made a great throw. You dream about making those plays when you're a little girl when you're a catcher. I don't think I blocked the pathway. She made a great throw and it was a bang-bang play. It is what it is, it's in the past, and just looking forward to moving on.