

2016 Women's College World Series

Saturday, June 4, 2016
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Beth Torina
Sahvanna Jaquish
Kellsie Kloss
Sandra Simmons
Carley Hoover
LSU

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with an opening statement from coach.

BETH TORINA: Did you expect anything less from LSU-Alabama matchup? It's going to be battle every time the two teams take the field. I want to say when a class program Alabama is.

Their four seniors, Leona (Lafaele), Hawk (Andrea Hawkins), Haylie (McCleney), (Kallie Case). I've enjoyed watching every moment of their careers. They have done it the right way.

Haylie McCleney's just one of the best that's ever played the game, in my opinion. So I enjoyed every minute of those guys.

As for our team, I thought we fought hard, played well. I think we had a lot of kids step up. I couldn't name them all at this point. We, in the locker room, decided -- we nominate the player of the game, and we decided it was a team nomination.

We had kids on the bench contributing to different things. We had people bunting, we had people hitting doubles, we had pitchers coming out of the bullpen. We had kids turning double plays. We had a lot of people that contributed to a really strong team win.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Questions, please?

Q. 6-1, were you ever comfortable or did you feel like Alabama could make a run there at the end like they did?

BETH TORINA: I don't think you're ever comfortable when you're playing anywhere in the SEC, let alone a team like Alabama, who has been in the Women's College World Series 11 times, I believe.

So I don't know if you're ever comfortable playing against Alabama. So, I knew it would come down to the last inning. I had hoped our team would be able to continue to score and continue to keep pressure, but they did a good job making some adjustments. But never for a moment did I feel like that game was over in the fourth inning.

Q. Carley, what was your reaction when Sandra hit that ball out? And just how big a difference did that make for y'all to get off to a start like that?

CARLEY HOOVER: It's great starting any game with a lead, especially to set the momentum with the lead-off home run. So I'm pretty sure I was one of the first ones that ran out there. I was pretty excited.

Q. Beth, Sandy had two home runs during the entire regular season and now she's had four in the postseason. What have you seen that's changed in the post-season and just about her performance? And then, Sandy, if you can follow-up on that same question.

BETH TORINA: I think she's worked so hard and never taken a day off in her career. And I think she studied, she's put the work in, she deserves every bit of this.

I think that she's just a veteran player and understood her job was to lead us and just maybe felt like somebody needed to step up and it was her spot to do it. And she has led us in a huge way. She's a special, special player for us. Big reason why we're sitting here today is because of the effort she's put in here at the end of the season.

SANDRA SIMMONS: I think -- I don't go out there and try and hit home runs. I wish I had said I could and I have that power.

I'm just really in there trying to find a way on for my team, especially in that lead off spot. Just trying to square the ball up hard. And I've been studying film, just trusting and not over thinking in the box and just getting the contact and kind of working my extension a little bit more than I have in the past.

Q. Were you surprised that Osorio never made an appearance?

BETH TORINA: Yeah, I was, honestly. I wasn't surprised to see (Sydney) Littlejohn start the game, because she

had beat us during the regular season. But I was surprised that they didn't go to her in relief. Madi Moore did a really nice job. She's got a big career in front of her. She did a good job against us. Littlejohn's always tough. But yeah, I was a little surprised.

Q. Beth, you talked about a team effort. Y'all scored a run when Sahvanna (Jaquish) bunted, Bianka (Bell) went from first to third, Kellsi (Kloss) hit the ground ball to second. Those are the three biggest home run hitters in program history. Can you talk about the selflessness to play small ball with those three players?

BETH TORINA: We have some standards that our program lives by and it's an acronym for Tigers. The last letter is selfless.

And so I think that like I said a big reason why we are here is because our veteran players are very selfless. That was a huge moment for those guys. I think that if our four hole hitter, one of our -- not just our best players, but one of the best players in the entire country, in this tournament for sure, is going to lay down a bunt. I think that says a lot, sets a tone for our team. Just says a lot about doing your job and that these guys would do anything to win.

So, and then Bianka moving up to third, just being in the game, in the moment, she's a great player like that.

And Kellsi, understanding that her role right there is just to do a job. I think that's huge and says so much about the team first hitting approach and not just a me over the team. It's an LS over you at all times.

Q. Kellsi, it's been a roller coaster season. You have had your backs against the wall so often. Are you not surprised or threatened even when it's close or even when you're down to potentially your last game or even when Alabama rallies late in the game?

KELLSI KLOSS: No, I'm not surprised at how this team fights. I think you've seen it over the past month or month and a half, just how much we all want this.

I think the adversity that we went through in the middle of the season, it prepared us so well for what you're seeing now.

And just the fact that the team has -- makes me so proud to be part of this and it's a special thing to see us all come together and not care who gets it done, as long as it gets done.

Q. Five of your RBI's came from players from California. I wonder when you got the job at LSU was recruiting that area an immediate priority?

And then for the three players, what did you like about LSU when you were being recruited?

BETH TORINA: I think that in my time we had players from 16 different states. I think that, something like that.

So, my priority is just to find the best kids in the whole country. And we start in Louisiana and move out from that.

But we're just trying to find the best players in the entire country, and I can't take credit for all of these guys. Some of those these guys were still from Coach (Yvette) Girouard and some have only played for me, but were found by her and her staff.

So we love the state of California, we love the state of Louisiana, we just love having kids that bleed purple and gold putting on a uniform every day.

SANDRA SIMMONS: What did I like about LSU? Just the tradition and the passion. And coming from California I really didn't see like a lot of fans, but the fan support at LSU is just amazing, and we sell out almost every year, and I just love playing there, so.

CARLEY HOOVER: Coming from California there's so many different schools in California, you lose track of the amount of schools there. When I got recruited and LSU was one of them, I loved that every single person around me just bled purple and gold, and I wanted to be a part of that. That's something that was really special to me was just knowing that the community around LSU is so strong and it's an awesome fan base. And just the every player on the team is so important and loved by everyone around them.

SAHVANNA JAQUISH: I enjoyed the atmosphere and culture that the team had. I think the minute that we got there on our unofficials and visits, you could see what the team was like and it was a family away from a family and that's what I wanted. I wanted to go far away, and I knew Beth. But I still wanted to feel family and that's what LSU did.

The fans, our players, the coaches, everyone really just cares about each other. So I drew really close to that.

Q. What was your message to the team after the loss at Michigan like that, knowing you were right there. What did you tell them in between to get them ready for today?

BETH TORINA: We pretty much instantly had to get over it. We didn't have time to sit around and think about it. We played a great game, I thought. Just didn't get the timely hits, didn't get the breaks. And this team's really strong in this situation, where they have their backs against the wall, they just have really

performed well.

So tried to talk to them about their strengths, the things that they have done well, that they have been in this situation before and they have excelled. And just really tried to move them on as quickly as we could.

Q. Not matter who it is tomorrow it's another SEC team. Knowing Georgia and Auburn as well as you do having faced both of them, do you already have an idea of who you would start in the circle or is it not that simple?

BETH TORINA. No idea at this point. Haven't thought about it. Definitely be a matchup situation. We still have Sydney and Baylee, who haven't pitched yet. We have some options there. And I'm a hundred percent confident in both of them.

I wish we weren't playing the SEC schools right now, because, of course, we're pulling for the SEC, but on a selfish note at least I have information on them and maybe I can get a little more sleep tonight knowing something about these guys already.

Q. Do you feel like you guys kind of have Alabama's number right now. You've eliminated them two years in a row, you won the regular season series? And did eliminating them last year and winning the series this year give you more confidence going into this game today?

BETH TORINA: Absolutely not. I would say that it's always a battle. They're a great program. A program that we respect. I think we understand they're capable of beating us at any moment, just look any team in the SEC is capable of beating us at any moment.

I don't think that there's really a team in the SEC that I could say that we're going to have their number or go out and dominate them. I think that we respect everybody in the league, and we're going to give them our best game and hope for the best.

THE MODERATOR: All right thank you.