

May 29, 2014



Oregon: 3
Florida State: 0

An interview with:

Oregon

THE MODERATOR: With us from Oregon we have head coach Mike White, Cheridan Hawkins, Koral Costa and Alexa Peterson. Coach?

COACH WHITE: It certainly feels better to be one step ahead than we were last time, coming out with a "W" against a good team from Florida State. There was a pitcher of the year and one of the candidates of player of the year. They were a tough opposition. I can't say enough about what Cheridan Hawkins did out there today. She did a fantastic job. Our offense started early, put the pressure on and came through with big hits, especially the lower half of the order. They came through for us today.

Hopefully we can use that for momentum against a tough Florida team coming up on Friday. I would like to thank Florida State; good friends with Lonni (Alameda). I know it's tough, but they're back in the series and it doesn't happen straightaway, but I'm sure they will continue to get better and they have a lot of depth on their bench. Congratulations to them on their season so far.

Q. You guys are known for your offense but you've got an All-American pitcher. Talk about the impact. The circle is so big, but you have a great offense to rely on but her role in this thing.

COACH WHITE: We were trying to hide that. Obviously we can't hide that now. She was a little under Jessica Moore's wing last year, obviously with that All-American ahead of her, and this year she stepped up huge. When we went back to the first game of the season it didn't look that way, but she showed great composure and worked very hard. There is no kid on that team that doesn't want it more than Cheridan. She loves having the weight on her shoulders and carries it extremely well. We're fortunate to have her take over for Jess Moore.

Q. Your role?

CHERIDAN HAWKINS: The offense and defense pick me up continuously and when I get the opportunity to help out and do my part it's what I like to do. I think they worked really hard and jumped out and scored some runs, which was really nice. It's always nice to have good offense. I think the defense also helps me be a better pitcher because they make a lot of plays for me.

Q. Cheridan, Mike came out and gave you a pep talk. Could you share what that was about?

CHERIDAN HAWKINS: It was "go

at 'em, don't hold anything back and quit playing reserved." It was "attack the zone and keep workin'."

COACH WHITE: That's a tactful answer right there! (Laughter.)

Q. Cheridan, was there nervousness in the first inning? You had a couple of nonvisits in the first.

CHERIDAN HAWKINS: Yeah, I was nervous and excited and I was working through those emotions, but after the first inning I settled down. But I definitely was nervous.

COACH WHITE: She was getting perspiration on her hand. It's a little warmer than Oregon -- just a little -- so we had to take care of that. Once she got that resin bag going with the perspiration she dialed it right up.

Q. Alexa, last time you guys were here -- that was your first time here -- what was it like for you coming back getting a chance to play? And what kind of role did you play getting the other girls ready to play today?

ALEXA PETERSON: The returners, we have been counting down the days to get here. The seniors and I have been preparing to get back to the World Series and win it since our freshman year. The day that we walked in we said we wanted to come out of here with a national championship. We were able to make it there our sophomore year, but I think we've used our experience then to really just get the other girls motivated and let them know how awesome it is to be here, and what a blessing it is to play in front of this many people and represent our great university.

Q. An offense to where the top 6 are batting .355 or better, what's it like

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to have that? A lot of people rely on two or three hitters. Talk about being in an offense like that.

CHERIDAN HAWKINS: I think we have each other's back. I think that's what it boils down to. If you're not having a good day then you look to the person ahead of you or behind you in the lineup.

Q. Because you got 11 hits today off an All-American.

KORAL COSTA: We don't address that. We know she is good and we stick with our plans.

ALEXA PETERSON: That's testimony to how hard our coaches work. They do a ton of scouting and know a pitcher's strengths and weaknesses and they prepare us throughout the week. Yesterday they did the best job they could preparing us.

Q. Mike, what does it mean that you guys have played Florida already?

COACH WHITE: Yeah, we actually played them two or three of the last four years and you know they're an excellent team. They always come out prepared. They're well coached. Rocha is an excellent pitching coach. She was back there scouting today so they will know all about us. We know a lot about them. It's a matter of who comes out and executes, really. We're going to throw Cheridan up there against them and they will probably throw Hannah Rogers, who we have played against. I think we're seeing the ball well right now. Waldrop threw some strikes. We laid off the marginal pitches and made a commitment to the strike zone. In some respects, Hannah Rogers is the same way. We have to make her come in the strike zone. If we don't, she is so good she'll eat you up.

Q. Earlier they announced this tournament will be back here until essentially 2035. Your reaction?

COACH WHITE: I think it's tremendous. Having it in a small city -- not that this city is smaller, but if you have it in Chicago it's going to get lost. So having its own identity here in Oklahoma City is tremendous. With the commitment Oklahoma City has put into it with funds and money, and USA and ASA Softball and the NFCA getting together, I think it's great to see these softball powers come together and promote the game and get it bigger. Because right now this game is as good as it gets out there. It's got all the elements that people like to watch on TV: speed, pitching, power. You have a lot of cat-and-mouse games, a lot of stories to be had, and this is a tremendous sport. We're getting a tremendous facility to be able to showcase this sport.

Q. Mike, your players did a good job of laying off the off-speed pitches. She put some in there at 35 and 36 miles an hour and your girls didn't bite. Did you practice particularly to face off-speed pitching?

COACH WHITE: I can't throw the ball at 34 miles an hour so that was a problem for me. We were trying to sit on the middle speed and react to that. She is one of those pitchers you can't go up there and guess. We said that before -- we cannot guess. We have to see the ball, see the spin and we have to react.

Like I said I thought we did a good job the first two or three innings of doing that. We got away from it in the middle innings, because you're not going to hit home runs off Waldrop. She keeps the ball down, she's off-speed. You have to be content with base hits and when we did

that we were successful. I thought the ladies did a great job of following our game plan.

Q. Mike, by taking in the early going your runners were taking two bases and forcing their defense to make some throws. Is that the characteristics of your style of offense when you get runners on base?

COACH WHITE: Very much so. If I see a weakness or an ability for us to push the envelope I'm going to do it. You can see that with stolen bases, with close plays at home plate. I've watched enough tape to know where I could push the envelope just a little bit. We have speed, we have good base running. It's something we work hard on -- taking the little things and making them work to our advantage. Our team is starting to buy into those little things and they believe there are no big things. They're all big things. Little things are big things and they make a big difference and obviously we had good base running today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you guys.

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