

May 29, 2014



Kentucky: 4
Lafayette: 1

An interview with:

Louisiana Lafayette

THE MODERATOR: With Louisiana Lafayette, to my right, head coach Michael Lotief, Christina Hamilton, Samantha Walsh and Lexie Elkins. We will start with comments from Coach.

COACH LOTIEF: All right. I'm proud of my kids. I always will be. They're on a big stage obviously and you want to play your best softball and that's not what happened tonight. In athletics, whether it's softball or any athletics, you see it happen all the time. My memory was with the Denver Broncos and Peyton Manning. You know that big stage, you're prepared, you're ready, you worked hard, you want to do your best. We talked about it in the locker room. You're excited, the venue is good, everything is rolling and you don't play your best. Why? I don't know the answer to that right now. I told my kids, we just had a little discussion about it. First thing you have to do is be thankful for the opportunity that you just were given and then the next thing, just have to have a short-term memory.

You can't be labeled by one performance. Now it's about fighting and surviving and that's what we plan on doing. I'm proud of our fans. I think our

fans were loud and they kept trying to motivate us and get us into it. We just never found our rhythm. That's the game. It's a tough game, and tonight just wasn't our night.

Q. Christina, talk about your performance. Seemed like they got on you early and some early runs, some errors and defense didn't make plays. Talk about how it felt out there.

CHRISTINA HAMILTON: I felt like I didn't do a good job of hitting my spots and making my pitches the way I was supposed to. I felt like they were inconsistent. We had some good at-bats but for the most part, inconsistent pitching. That's pretty much how that happened.

Q. Lexie and Samantha, talk about what Nunley was doing in the circle that kept you off balance and what was working for her?

LEXIE ELKINS: We talked about it and it wasn't that we didn't prepare or make adjustments. It just wasn't our game. I mean, I trust if we faced her again we would be able to do our jobs.

She was throwing us in and out, she threw that rise ball sometimes, and threw her change-up.

SAMANTHA WALSH: I think we didn't do as good of a job as we needed to sitting on one pitch. We were trying to guess. At least that was my problem. I'm not going to speak for all the hitters because I'm not sure. Instead of sitting on

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that one pitch, I was guessing when she was going to try to throw off-speed and she had me off balance.

Q. Sam, you talked about the pitcher and not hitting your spots, but she was aggressive. Can you compare her to another pitcher you saw over the season and what was the difference between her throwing hard and pitching today compared to what you've seen through the postseason?

SAMANTHA WALSH: I don't think we've seen anybody like her, and that may have been a little bit of the problem. Like she said, if we could see her again, it wouldn't be the same game. Today just wasn't our day.

Q. Samantha and Lexie, defensive errors tonight lead to 2 runs. Kentucky said they didn't feel any sense of nerves. Did y'all feel nerves out there? Was it anything they were doing in terms of pressure? What do you contribute to the slip-ups defensively?

SAMANTHA WALSH: I feel like nobody is going to play perfect. There is always going to be an error here and there. I don't think we were nervous. I think we were in a good place when we went into the game, it's just -- it happened.

LEXIE ELKINS: Like she said, they're just going to happen. We came in knowing that we were going to be playing the other seven best teams in the country. So errors are going to happen. I don't think nerves got to us, it just, again, was not our day.

Q. Coach, if you could talk about the lack of timely hitting. Part of the game tonight? Runners on in five

innings and just not able to get 'em around.

COACH LOTIEF: Well, offensively we have been hitting well for the last month and a half. This team has not had a bad game, kinda been in a rhythm. I watch a lot of baseball and I watch a lot of softball and at some point it's just not going to happen.

There is no reason to go soul searching. These kids know how to hit. They're competitors. They wanted to hit tonight. They were prepared. We knew what the other pitcher was going to do. We were prepared for it. We had a plan. These kids know how to hit and they're going to bounce back. I'm not going to sit up here and make excuses, but I'm also not going to sit up here and scratch my head, either. I love these kids. I love who they are, I love how they compete. I love what they've done. I'll come back on this stage every year and not have our best performance, it's just part of it. Nothing to be ashamed of. I'm proud of 'em. I want them to be proud of themselves. I want them to learn and grow from their experience and keep lovin' each other and keep fightin' and keep learnin' and keep growin'.

Q. Coach, obviously like you said, errors happen and obviously they happen, but when you don't hit they manifest themselves. What do you try to do to get the team to say -- to understand if you commit errors, things like this could happen. Try to get them to calm down and be more defensive-oriented?

COACH LOTIEF: That's how we played all year. We're not a great defensive team, we're not a bad defensive team, but we're not going to play perfect

softball. The expectations when we came here were not to play perfect softball. If you start breaking down the box score, you start looking at what happened, this kid is sittin' here saying she didn't throw her best game, she threw a five-hitter. She missed some spots but she gave them a pretty good offensive game, keeping them off balance. We didn't play great defense, but that's who we are.

You watched us all year, the opening round of regionals we dropped a little fly ball, but that doesn't discourage us. When we make an error or don't do something perfect, that's not our plan. We're not trying to be perfect. Just trying to play the game with a lot of energy and just keep believing in each other and I'm proud of these kids. Proud of these kids. I'm proud of how they play and proud of how hard they fight. I'm proud of who they are. I'm going to keep sayin' it. I love these kids. I love how they fight. They're good kids, and they wanted to do good on this day. You got to write something bad, say it was the Coach.

Q. You know I wouldn't do that.

COACH LOTIEF: Well it's okay.

Q. Obviously the next game you're going to face arguably one of the top teams in the country or the defending national champions. What are you going to do to get your team ready?

COACH LOTIEF: We played Oklahoma already at our place and obviously we've been preparing for Alabama in either situation, so there are no gimmes at this point. Right now it's all about us, how we recover, where our mindset is and are we going to show some fight! I'm ready to keep playin'. I want to be here Tuesday night. I don't care what

history says, I don't care about none of them. I want to come to the ballpark and fight and let's just play. Play it out and see what happens. We've got our reservations until Wednesday night so might as well stay and play! (Laughter.)

Q. Christina what happened on that play on the bunt and the throw to first where it got into right field? Was it miscommunication, a little bit of an issue with the throw over to first?

CHRISTINA HAMILTON: I made a bad throw. I spun my shoulders and -- I don't really know. I guess the game was faster than I was expecting it to, but I spun my shoulders and made a bad throw. Tried to throw it too hard.

Q. Is it good to have a day off tomorrow or is it the kind of team that wants to get back out and play and get a bad taste out of your mouth? Sorry that's cliché but what's the approach, do you prefer having a day off?

LEXIE ELKINS: Of course we want to play, but I think we need to keep in mind it's a quick turnaround. Whether it would be next weekend or we would have played 30 minutes from that last game.

We just need to get our mind-set right, put that behind us and win.

SAMANTHA WALSH: She said it all. Right now we're going to focus on the next game and put this one behind us and just go after it every pitch.

CHRISTINA HAMILTON: I don't think we have a preference for playing tomorrow or being off tomorrow. It doesn't matter to us. I feel like we're going to put it behind us and come out there and play. We're not going to sit here and figure out what we did wrong. Like Coach said, we're going to do better and play better

and then we're going to go after this pitch. We're going to keep grinding it out. We're not going to give up. We're here to play, we're here to fight and we're here to win, and we're going to keep goin' at it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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