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Baylor: 8
Kentucky: 7

An interview with:

Kentucky

THE MODERATOR: With us from Kentucky, we have Head Coach Rachel Lawson, Ginny Carol, Emily Gaines, Kelsey Nunley and Krystal Smith. Comments from Coach?

COACH LAWSON: Thanks for being in here because there is a really good game going on out there. I don't know how you guys drew that short stick. Obviously this was a hard one for us. This isn't the way we wanted it to go down, especially having so many runs early. But I'm really proud of this team. I think this team has done something special. This is the first time we've won 50 games. That's something special and a real turning point in the program. I thought just getting to the World Series -- I think it's really hard to go to the World Series.

I think learning how to go to regionals and then learning how to host and then learning how to go to supers is all very difficult, but it's a whole other level when you have to figure out how to go to the World Series. So I feel proud for this team because they are the first team in Kentucky history that's figured out how to go to the show and I think that's very special.

I want to thank -- this is truly a wonderful venue. I want to thank the City of Oklahoma City and there are a ton of sponsors, and the University of Oklahoma, ESPN, USA Softball, ASA Softball. This is an awesome, awesome venue and I'm really glad I could be part of taking our team to Oklahoma City for the first time.

Q. Coach, the last inning. How do you look back on it?

COACH LAWSON: Well, I'm always a learner, so I'm already preparing for next year. You know, number one, I thought Baylor got all of the momentum in the sixth inning. I thought they did a great job. At one point I will be honest with you, I thought about putting one of our other pitchers in. The mistake with me is that I didn't prepare them to come in, so the reason I went with Kelsey is because I'm comfortable with what they were doing. They were timing her and squaring up and they had me figured out, so a change would have been great but I didn't prepare them for that situation and it was too unpredictable.

Quite honestly my bubble thought at the time was, I was really proud of Kelsey, because there should be child labor laws against what I did to her in the postseason. She threw so many pitches, but somebody has to be the first and somebody has to be the one to have us break through. She can handle it but, she was also picked to be the one that could do that. So she was the one prepared for

this moment and she did an exceptional job with it. So moving forward I realize in order to win the World Series you have to make sure that you have a staff prepared and I think you're going to see that moving forward with Alabama and you're going to see it moving forward with Florida. When I watch what they did. What they did is really smart. They prepared all their pitchers for this moment but, they had to get there the first time and the first time they were in the show they pretty much rode one arm. So that's what I was thinking at the time.

Q. Coach, it seemed like last night, correct me if I'm wrong, but when you guys were rallying against Alabama you seemed to be more aggressive, attacking Jackie earlier in the count. If that's the case it carried over to today. The home runs early, you guys looked like you were looking to jump on Canion. If we discuss the defensive flops going into today and how it was so effective early.

COACH LAWSON: Canion is great. First of all, when you see someone throw 71 at night, Canion as hard as she throws and as exceptional as she is, you can square up on a few more balls just because of the speed difference. But our approach was to lay off the high pitch and she had it flatter in the zone than we were going to attack it. I thought that approach worked. I think attacking has been the approach we have had the entire postseason, so it was nice to see that game plan again and I felt like our team went out for the kill and that's why you saw all the runs early.

Q. Coach, really for any of you guys, up 7-0, was there a specific play or moment in the game where you just

kind of all of the sudden you felt everything shifted Baylor's way or did it gradually happen over those last two innings?

COACH LAWSON: I can't speak for them, but for me there were several plays. We pretty much went through the World Series without making mistakes defensively and we made a few. There wasn't one play that hurt us per se, there were a few plays that hurt us and some of them went down as hits, but they were plays that we were making earlier. I don't think we can look to one play.

I do know that I did feel them getting the momentum in the sixth and no matter what pitch we threw they were able to square up on it. I think you guys can answer also. That's what I was thinking at the time, was the momentum and the plays, not just the plays in the last inning but we gave 'em a couple of runs earlier on plays we didn't make.

GINNY CARROLL: I felt the same way. I don't think there was ever just one swing in particular that really changed it but I think it was gradual. We never, ever gave up. I never thought they had the momentum until the very end when they tied it up. We had all the faith in the world in Kelsey and in our defense and just one thing after another, play by play -- but we fought hard. I'm proud of how tough we stayed in it.

KELSEY NUNLEY: I would agree with Ginny. I don't think there was one play that made the difference, but I would say when they tied the game they took the momentum away.

EMILY GAINES: I agree with them. I thought we were going to hold them until they tied up with us and after that I could kind of feel the momentum shifting. Like Ginny said, we never gave up and we kept

fightin' and that's all we could do.

KRYSTAL SMITH: Throughout the season we have been a team that could bounce back when we have had defensive miscues or offensive setbacks. So being someone who is hard on myself on defense, because I'm someone who takes pride on my defense. I had a feeling that the play in the seventh could have possibly been a pivotal moment, but I had a stronger feeling that we would be able to bounce back from that, because we are someone that has been proven to show that again and again. Unfortunately the ball didn't end up our way, the win didn't end up our way, but we had a pretty good season.

Q. Crystal, you only saw Stearns once, but just from what your hitters had done against Stearns, and what you had done previously against Paul and Canion, what made Stearns effective?

KRYSTAL SMITH: I have to say that going into, I guess it was the eighth inning, I would have to agree there was a bit of a momentum swing. I know that it was a bit in my head because of the defensive miscue that I had. In my previous at-bats what I did differently was I went up with a clear mind. After speaking with my mom this morning she said "Krystal, just go up there and clear your mind." I think that was the difference in my first three at-bats and then I guess my fourth at-bat I was really trying to do too much for my team, because I felt bad for making the mistake.

Q. Kelsey, you heard your coach talk about the fact that she sort of decided you were going to be the one to carry this team and I know you've done that all year. Could you talk

about how difficult it was to process that late in the game? I know you got emotional in the dugout but what it was like to battle through those tough moments toward the end.

KELSEY NUNLEY: It was probably one of the hardest things I've ever done because I knew that I was physically giving my all but just wasn't going the way I wanted to. So, you know, I just tried to stay confident and tried to keep goin' hard and whatever happened, happened.

COACH LAWSON: I'll be honest with you, if it wasn't for Kelsey, we wouldn't be where we're at. If it wasn't for Krystal, we wouldn't even be here.

So if you guys look back and if you see what Krystal did in Westwood, that was amazing. In fact, I was in shock. Really. Because she went in there and she actually -- outside of Kelsey, I think the two of them were the M.V.P. I would have given Krystal offensive M.V.P. and Kelsey obviously defense because defense starts in the circle.

When I look back as a coach, we have so many moments throughout this season that could have been the "what-if" play that we could have gone down. We could have lost to DePaul. We were horrible in the first game of the championship game and then we came out and hit.

When we went out to LA in supers, the first game we had some defensive miscues and the team came back and fought. The fact that we came in here and had such a good showing our first game, and against Alabama I thought it was a hard-fought game. I never try to look at the mistakes, I always try to look at what it is we are doing. And quite honestly I am proud of them and I know we wouldn't actually be in this press conference in this

moment without all those plays they have made over the last three weeks.

Q. For the seniors, the position players, could you talk about what it's meant to you to be a part of what this program has done in the last four years, the three supers and being the first Kentucky team to get to the College World Series?

KRYSTAL SMITH: I don't think there is enough words to express what this means to us personally and for all our seniors. It brings us comfort to know that this senior class and this 2014 softball team has made an indelible imprint on the Kentucky softball program, and I think we can go home knowing that. We can move forward.

GINNY CARROLL: I think the thing I'm most proud of about our class is coming in, we just talked in the locker room we were the biggest class that Coach Lawson ever recruited at UK, and throughout our careers, all three of us, we haven't started all four years. We don't have any All-Americans in our class. We're not 100-percent studs, but I think the biggest thing we are is we're tough. We have been in and out of the lineup our whole careers, but at the end I think we all brought our "A" game and at the end of the day I know we're the toughest class around. Maybe I'm biased.

EMILY GAINES: Like they said, this has been an amazing experience. These past four years we've been through a lot of adversity and no one ever thought we would be here, and like they said we have been fighters and we've seen this program go through a lot of changes. We have gotten amazing new facilities and done things that no one ever thought we could.

I'm so proud of my teammates and my senior class and we're just really proud.

GINNY CARROLL: All that being said, when we beat UCLA to make it to the World Series, I was roommates with Griffin (Joiner) and we stayed up til 3 in the morning the night after we won – sorry, Coach. Our game was on ESPN and we're going to watch it, all of it. I told Griffin no matter what happened from here on out I didn't think it was possible that I could be sad. But that was before you got here and when you're still hyped and you just know it's the World Series. We didn't know when we were leaving, what happened when we got here and it's the World Series. Once you got here and practiced and played and you tasted it, then the bar is raised from making it to the World Series to winning the World Series.

Once you've tasted that, it's -- I mean, you just want to win it. Once you've been here you want to win it and that's why we're upset because once you taste it you know how close you are and how much you can do it. I told Skeeter (Nunley) after the game, she has two years left so I expect big things. No pressure.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you guys.

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