

May 30, 2014



Florida: 4
Oregon: 0

An interview with:

Florida

THE MODERATOR: Good evening, welcome to Day 2 of the Women's College World Series. With us from Florida we have head Coach Tim Walton, Hannah Rogers, Briana Little and Bailey Castro. We will begin with an opening statement.

COACH WALTON: First, just want to congratulate the Gators on a great game. I thought Hannah pitched a wonderful game and the game plan going into this was executed excellently. I thought we did a really good job. I know we didn't finish as strong as we would like. But we had such a main focus on Hawkins and the way they brought her in there, that had a lot to do with changing the eye level and the spin. We came out with a good plan and executed a good plan and I think it all sounds great. But Hannah pitched a great game and that's why we're here right now.

Q. Bailey, can you talk about how locked in you were today and did you earn anymore funnel cakes?

BAILEY CASTRO: No funnel cakes today. We've been talking all year about line drives and that was my "go-to" play of the day, to go up there with line drives and it worked out well for me.

Q. Hannah, do you feel as confident as you have maybe ever been in terms of the command of your stuff right now?

HANNAH ROGERS: Yeah, I feel very confident just locating pitches and the way I feel right now. My body feels great and the defense we have behind us and how good the hitters are hitting right now.

Q. As far as defense behind her, what's it like to stand back there and see what she is doing, 28 straight scoreless innings in NCAA Tournament play?

BRIANA LITTLE: It's just a great feeling to know that you have a great pitcher out there throwing strikes, and she has confidence in her defense.

BAILEY CASTRO: I grind for Hannah and she grinds for us, so I've got her back and she has mine.

Q. Hannah, you have been here since your freshman year and you are one win away from getting back to the finals. Talk about that.

HANNAH ROGERS: It's exciting. We will focus on our next opponent and do the things we need to do to get ready for them.

Q. How much did it help seeing Hawkins yesterday as opposed to you guys facing up in Game 1 right out of the shoot? Does that extra day of in-person scouting make a big difference? Same with the two hitters, if you guys picked up on anything preparing for today?

COACH WALTON: I think in all fairness, I think we really didn't have that much time to prepare. We had maybe less than 24 hours to put together a game plan and try to execute that. I spent most of the afternoon after we watched the game here preparing. I sat behind home plate and watched her spin the ball just to see what it looked like. And I had an iPad, iPhone and laptop tuned in to some other games and it helped us for sure. Being here in person helps you for sure.

Again, I just think our hitters capitalized on a couple of mistakes that she may have made. She wasn't getting that pitch on the outside corner that she wanted so badly. As we watched that, scouted that, when she gets that pitch she is a lot tougher because it's not a strike. It's off the corner, it's not a strike, it's coming back. But it's a tough pitch to hit if she is getting that one, because the game plan coming into today was swing at strikes

and really try to go the other way, stay on the top half and don't over swing. I think we did a good job of that early.

Q. Hannah, you shut out the top overall seed in the tournament. What does that do for your confidence?

HANNAH ROGERS: It boosts my confidence because Oregon is a great team. Going into the next game and staying with the same game plan and focusing on the location and hitting certain spots for each batter.

Q. Tim, there are going to be two SEC teams that start 2-0 this week. How has the depth of your conference and the challenge of that part of the season, how has that changed since your first trip in '08?

COACH WALTON: You know, I think the depth is obviously really improved. I said it this year: if you took the top two teams out of the SEC and you took the two bottom teams out and you bunched them all up in the middle, I haven't seen anybody better. I thought the way the whole league competed this year was what's showing right now. Showed through regionals, getting 11 teams in. It's a very strong conference. I'll be honest -- I said too, the athletic directors and the administration, they are pouring a lot of resources into the facilities and are doing a great job of supporting the student-athletes. I think that's something that -- I'm not saying it hasn't been there, because I haven't been here. These kids are treated first class, and their softball players are doing things they love to do since they were little and I think that's one of the biggest reasons for me. They're giving them everything they need to be successful as a student and as an athlete. And that's huge.

Q. Two questions. On the high pop-up they didn't catch, do you chalk that up as a lucky break? How do you look at it.

HANNAH ROGERS: I look at it as putting the ball in play and putting pressure on the other team and capitalizing and hustling to the next base.

COACH WALTON: I agree. If you're dogging it and feeling sorry for yourself and you just popped up a two-out, two-strike pitch, we're not scoring runs, doing things. It's a hustle play. It was hit high. The sun was brutal. I don't think the sun was a big part in that, I think she tripped or did

something going backwards. But it was a hustle play and you need those breaks to win games here at the College World Series.

Q. Tim, the way this team is playing, I know there are still goals to win it all but how much appreciation do you have for the way you're playing the game?

COACH WALTON: I did a radio show this morning and talked about the level of confidence that I have in each of these players; that they're doing their part. I've made that challenge to them in postseason. They set a lofty goal and each of our players need to do their part. You just don't get to the postseason and get by. You have to figure out how to get better. If you can run more, get physically stronger and mentally tougher. I give them a ton of credit for buying in and being accountable, and all 17 of the girls are doing their part to help the Gators win softball games.

Q. Coach, been in the finals once before. Come close twice? Close enough you can taste it right now?

COACH WALTON: No. This is a great spot to be in, no doubt; being 2-0 in the winners' bracket. We came through it undefeated until we got to the championship. We came through the losers' bracket to get to the championship. I don't know the bracket. I don't know how it turns, flips, moves, to be honest with you. But the great part for me is somebody has to beat us twice and I do like our chances with regard to that and the way we're playing right now.

Q. Touch on how well the defense played behind Hannah, the two double plays, Medina's play and how well the defense played.

COACH WALTON: Very well. Again, give credit to Coach Rocha and the stuff she has given me on scouting. The kid hit a ball, probably a double, in the gap and Kailee was standing right there. Medina goes to her backhand and comes up and throws a bullet across the diamond. Yeah, it's impressive. If we can play defense like that we are definitely going to be tough to beat. She is throwing the ball well, we're hitting and we can keep the defense going. We put a lot of emphasis on our defense, as we've talked about for obvious reasons. I'm proud of the way they are communicating with each other. That's making them confident. It's Katie, Stew, Hannah; and

they're all doing a great job and I appreciate that a lot.

Q. Bailey the longest home run of your career, the longest I've seen in Oklahoma City. You hit 'em longer I want to know when and where.

BAILEY CASTRO: I got a good pitch and I took a hack. That's kinda my thing. I take hacks. Felt nice coming off the bat, smiling all the way for sure.

Q. Do you guys think it's the longest?

HANNAH ROGERS: She can hit it further.

COACH WALTON: It was the easiest swing I've seen to hit the ball that far. Usually she swings out of her shoes. She can hit it far, but that was the easiest swing I've seen her have.

Q. The past trips you have made here, have you had teams in your own mind that you felt peaked by the time they got here or weren't playing well enough to win at the time they got here?

COACH WALTON: The 2009 team was probably the best team that I've seen start to finish. The 2008 team -- we won 70 games but getting here for the first time is a little different. The 2011 team surprised the heck out of me, getting to the championship. We scored 11 runs in one inning against Alabama to get that going. This team has been one of the more consistent teams. We've had a couple bad games, lost a couple games in a row for other reasons.

We've been consistent. Our 8 and 9 hitters are doing things and this has been probably one of the -- maybe the loosest team that I've coached here at the College World Series. They're loose, competitive, but they're enjoying it and having fun and doing their part. But they're pretty loose.

Q. Bailey, can you give us more detail on the home run? It looked like you hit it off the upper portion of the bat. Is that how you usually hit most of your home runs? Was there anything unusual about it? It looked great coming off the bat. How would you breakdown the swing and the trajectory?

BAILEY CASTRO: I know it was a change-up. I changed to the slap and I think that has been really effective for me. I can stay on top of the ball a little more. I think the pitch was a little

up in the zone. I kept my barrel above it, I took an easy swing and it kind of went out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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