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Alabama: 2
Kentucky: 0

An interview with:

Alabama

THE MODERATOR: We are here with Alabama head coach Patrick Murphy, Jacqueline Traina, Leona Lafaele and Molly Fichtner. We will begin with a statement from Coach.

COACH MURPHY: Just an awesome game tonight. I thought it was a made-for-TV sporting event, the way it ended, the way it played out. Two really good teams with two really good pitchers. I couldn't be more pleased to stay in the winners' bracket.

Q. Leona, you had an intense look on your face during that swing. Can you take us through that at-bat?

LEONA LAFAELE: My approach was to get my barrel there. Nunley is great; fantastic pitcher and she's been mowing teams down. Kentucky had momentum coming into the game, but my approach was to get my barrel there and trust it and that's what we've been working on; to trust your swing and get your barrel there and the results will come.

Q. What was the emotion like, bases loaded, no outs? What were you feeling?

JACLYN TRAINA: That's why you play the game. You play the game for those pressure situations. I've gotten myself into those situations before and I felt like I knew I could get out of it. When Steph came out to the pitcher's mound, she told me a plan and we went with it. I had confidence in my teammates and my pitches.

LEONA LAFAELE: It was intense, you know, it was my first World Series and that was definitely by far the most pressure I've been under. But I had so much faith in Jackie and the defense. I knew she was going to get out of it. I had total

trust in her, and when she pitched a strike I was like, "Yes, I knew you were going to do it." Even if she pitched a ball I knew that she was going to do it. I had faith in her and the defense.

MOLLY FICHTNER: I think it starts in the circle with her. She was very calm and it has a calming effect on everyone around her. I think it started with her and her confidence that we were going to get out of it and it bled to everybody else, and we knew.

Q. Coach, no nerves?

COACH MURPHY: No.

Q. For Molly and Jacqueline, can you talk about the pitching until the no-hitter was broken up? She seemed to have as much command as she has had all season.

JACLYN TRAINA: We just were mixing it up. Annie and I felt good with everything. We were mixing in off-speed, we threw the screw; throwing a lot of different things and getting in a rhythm.

Second, third time through the lineup, they're a good team, they're going to put the ball in play. We have to just make adjustments from there.

MOLLY FICHTNER: I agree with that. Jackie hit her spots. We didn't throw one or two pitches. The whole game we mixed it up a lot. They're a great team, so we had to. But she did a great job pitching different pitches.

Q. Coach, you're one win away from the WCWS finals. How do you avoid looking ahead to that?

COACH MURPHY: Hopefully we'll get to sleep in a little bit tomorrow, because we have the day off. We'll practice, do a little bit, get out of the hotel and then, you know, kind of pay attention to what happens tomorrow, because it's going to be a long day for a couple of teams. Then go over scouting reports, whoever it's going to be.

But, you know, this is the way it was in 2012 and I think the nine kids that have been here before will let the other ones know that there is no

such thing as a sure thing. You've got to keep your eyes on the prize at all times.

Q. Fifteen years ago, this was a Pac-10, Pac-12 dominated World Series -- seven out of eight teams would be out of the West. Now we end up with two undefeated teams in this tournament from the SEC. Do you think the shift is because you see better pitching and hitting consistently in your conference than other conferences? Hate to the put you on the spot, old friend.

COACH MURPHY: No, I just think there are kids all over the country. Hannah Rogers is from Lake Wales, right? Down there where Jackie is from. The two pitchers -- one is from Naples and the other from Lake Wales, Florida. I think they have grown up watching this event on television all over the country. There are good players everywhere. The game has evolved; there is great coaching all over the country now. The athletes are there, and some of them choose to play softball. We're just really lucky that we have Jackie on our side. I know the SEC. To go through a 24-game schedule is very, very tough and you're prepared every weekend because if you're not you're going to get beat. But I know the Pac 12; they challenge themselves every weekend, as well. Big 12, too.

I just think there are so many good athletes now in the south that are staying home, playing softball at all the SEC schools. We can compete with anybody.

Q. Coach, I asked you two years ago about defense, and seems like so much of softball is about -- even seeing it this week, three one-hitters yesterday, the home run ball, run-rule games and yet both games today, there were several defensive plays that were huge. The double play that ends the game tonight, who knows what would have happened. Molly throwing out the runner. If you could give us insight on how defense plays such a role and it's overlooked at times.

COACH MURPHY: Well, it's too bad, because it wins championships, for sure. The three things in postseason softball to me are, you've got to have a good starting pitcher and Jackie did her job. The key hit; Leona did her job. But the third thing is you've got to play great team defense, and Danae Hays and Kaila Hunt finished the game off. I don't think anyone expected that. I think Hunt is just so experienced at second base. I

think a lot of kids would have settled for the one out, but she caught it and got rid of it as quick as she could and we had the girl. It was the correct call.

She is very aggressive, though, you know? And it was a good shot and Leona made a good stretch. But defense is huge.

Q. Patrick and Jacqueline, what lessons did you learn two years ago on how to handle this off day and the Sunday thing that you'll apply this weekend?

COACH MURPHY: She doesn't remember.

JACLYN TRAINA: I don't remember.

COACH MURPHY: We'll definitely do something. We'll get out of the hotel. They haven't seen their families all week so they're going to get some family time. They'll probably go shopping but we will definitely go hit, take some ground balls. She is going to get in a hot tub, and a cold tub and they need to get their bodies back in normal shape.

But don't overdo it. You don't want 'em tired for Sunday. Then if they come out and watch they can't sit in the sun for six hours, because that's going to drain them more than anything. So we have to be smart on what they're going to do. I think we'll keep them under wraps a little bit, but they'll be fine.

Q. Leona, what are you thinking when you see that double play start, the ball is coming to you? What's going through that mind?

LEONA LAFAELE: Oh, gosh. Just in my head, I was just like, "Finish it. I don't care if I have to do the splits for that ball, you finish that play." I don't care if it was in the dirt, I was going to get that ball, because a lot of -- Murph is right. A lot of girls wouldn't turn that play so you have to finish it. It feels great because they're just great teammates and I can't believe they turned that play. But all I could think was finish it, and it was a great way to finish that game, my first game, So much pressure. It was awesome.

Q. Jackie, in terms of your velocity in this tournament, you're high 60s. I was told the 72 you were hitting is the fastest anyone has thrown in the tournament so far. You were talking about mixing your pitches, but velocity

makes a big difference from 43 feet. What's been the progress on the velocity?

JACLYN TRAINA: I think I've been pretty consistent all year with that. I do like to mix it up and, yeah, sometimes it is nice when you can just blow it by them.

Q. It definitely was lower last year?

JACLYN TRAINA: Yes, sir, definitely.

Q. Leona, on plays like that last play, are you able to tell when the runner is safe or out? Can you hear her foot hit the bag?

LEONA LAFAELE: I always think they're out no matter what. Whether Danae throws it, I'm just like, "What!" When they call them safe, I'm just like, "What?" I always think they're out no matter what, because I want the out. I gotta think they're out. Unless it's a Haylie McCleney, then I'm like, "Hmmm, she probably was safe." Definitely, I can't get over -- Hunt and Danae, great middle. Jackie, Molly -- such a great defense. I'm so happy and it's an honor to be a part of that.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, guys.

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