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Alabama: 2
Kentucky: 0

An interview with:

Kentucky

THE MODERATOR: With Kentucky we have Head Coach Rachel Lawson, Kelsey Nunley and Sylver Samuel. We will begin with an opening statement.

COACH LAWSON: First, thank you for being here so late. I thought today was a good game. You never want to be on the losing end of things but I thought that the -- I loved the fight that my team showed throughout the game. They were able to capitalize. They got two runs early but then the game was tight the whole time and to put ourselves in a position to win in the seventh inning. I was really proud that they did that. I thought Traina was outstanding this evening. One of the things that I was so impressed with was her pitch speed. We haven't seen anyone that's come close to touching those numbers all year and we play a very good schedule, we play a number of great teams.

I thought she was outstanding and in my opinion she proved that she is the best pitcher in college softball tonight.

Q. Coach Lawson, last night Coach Murphy from Alabama called

your team a Cinderella story. Has that been the mind-set with this group of girls?

COACH LAWSON: Well, we know we're the Cinderella story because every time we step on the field we're the underdog.

But I don't think that they feel -- I think they feel like they're prepared. I think they feel they're good. I believe that every player on our team believes that they have a shot to win every game that we're in. The thing that I love most about my team is they respect softball and everybody that they're playing against and playing with. Just because they love the game, and they love all the great athletes that they get to see day in and day out in our conference and also in the postseason. We've seen a number of great people. With that said, we know we're the underdog, but because we respect -- we respect everybody, but I don't believe our team fears. I think they know if they play their game they have a got shot to win.

Q. Coach, I'm curious about what you thought about the way your team changed the approach to Traina as the game went on. Looks like they went the opposite way in the seventh there. Can you build on that tomorrow?

COACH LAWSON: Without question. A couple of things happened. Traina is outstanding and under the lights

she is incredible. I think it took us that long to adjust visually to it. When you see bad swings early in the game and a little bit of indecision, sometimes those are visual things going on, even though they manifest themselves differently.

I definitely think that our team felt good in the seventh inning. I think they felt that was the fight that we have had this entire postseason. They know that they have more life in them. They have at least one more game tomorrow so they know they can come out and play. We are not satisfied with losing, but I think we gained a lot of confidence in the seventh inning and we felt like our normal selves that we have had since the SEC tournament.

Q. Sylver, can you take us through your at-bat when you beat out the infield roller and just the mindset of the team if you had a runner aboard, whomever was at the plate still represented the tying run.

SYLVER SAMUEL: I was just trying to get something started for the team, because we were trying to get a couple of runs on the board. I wanted to battle. I wasn't satisfied with my previous at-bat, so I just wanted to get something started so we could score some runs.

Q. Kelsey, do you see any benefits to getting back out there tomorrow and playing?

KELSEY NUNLEY: Yeah, I love to play softball. I know my team loves to play softball. So yeah we're ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Can you talk about dealing with the disappointment but having to process it, put it behind you and

playing again tomorrow? Such a big game?

KELSEY NUNLEY: Alabama is a great team and we know that everybody here is a great team. Hopefully we can take the momentum that we had toward the end of the game and carry it over to tomorrow.

SYLVER SAMUEL: We're a tough team. I know we'll battle back from this. It's another bump in the road, but we like to play extra games, so we'll come back from it.

Q. Kelsey, could you talk about the challenge of knowing that you're likely going to be playing two tomorrow? And have you done that throughout the season at any point? What do you do to prepare yourself physically for that?

KELSEY NUNLEY: Against UCLA we played two on Sunday, so I know we can come back from tonight and battle hard for tomorrow. For me I'm going to sleep a lot tonight and ice and ibuprofen so we can go at it tomorrow.

COACH LAWSON: One thing I wish I would have said in my opening statement -- I don't know if anybody saw the video board when the game started and they had Traina next to Nunley and the stats were identical. Like identical. I thought they had made a typo. Wins, ERA, all that. It was so similar. The biggest difference being Traina is a senior and Kelsey is a sophomore. When you look at the box score and see that Jackie threw 108 pitches and Nunley threw 108 pitches. I think that says something about our team. I think it also says something about the SEC. It's a tough conference.

You have two teams left that are from the SEC and a third one, I thought

we fought hard tonight and we kept the games close. I wish I had said that in my opening statement, because that's the thing that probably shocked me the most this evening.

Q. Kelsey, just from your perspective, can you review the one at-bat, but just the fact that you were keeping your team in the game through the rest of the way?

KELSEY NUNLEY: Well, the girl definitely made a good swing and the pitch was a little high, so she hit it right over. You know, it happens so you just gotta flush it and move on to the next batter.

Q. What was your mentality knowing you were going to be facing a pitcher as good as Jackie is and what was it like to pitch in this game at such a high level?

KELSEY NUNLEY: I love playing games where it's a good match-up. Every team here is good so, I don't know, I think that we played well and I think we can come back tomorrow and fight.

Q. For the players and Coach, you can mention it, too, but talk about the frustration you finally break through and load the bases in the 7th. What were you feeling at that point and dealing with the fact that you couldn't push anything across?

SYLVER SAMUEL: I think the game could have went either way. We fought, we fought hard. Yeah, we came up short, but I think that we'll come out tomorrow and play strong and start strong and we can win a couple of games.

KELSEY NUNLEY: I agree with Sylver. I hope we can carry the

momentum that we had at the end of the game into tomorrow.

COACH LAWSON: I think my bubble thought at the time was, it was awesome loading the bases. I think sometimes when you get into that situation I think sometimes people -- I thought Gaines' at-bat was good. I thought she battled for a long time and then she got froze up by the change-up a little bit. I think she wasn't expecting it because, Jackie hadn't thrown a lot of those all evening and I thought that was a key out for Alabama. Still, though, with less than 2 outs I think the fact that they were able to turn the double play, I mean, that's the way it goes. We have one mispitch and they have a home run and the game ends on a double play. That's the way softball should be played. I thought it was an outstanding TV game. You always hope for the grand slam or the hit in the gap that would have cleared the bases and I wish we would have been on the winning end of it. Either way that game was going to end on a tremendous defensive play or on a tremendous offensive play so, I personally like it when games end that way. I wish we were on the winning end of it, but with that said it was a clean game, it was a clean play. We did everything the right way and it was a great game for TV.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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