

2015 Women's College

World Series

Wednesday, May 27

Press Conference

NFCA

An Interview with:

CAROL BRUGGEMAN

ALLY CARDA

ALLEXIS BENNETT

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN

KASEY COOPER

CHERIDAN HAWKINS

EMILY CAROSONE

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome you to the NFCA's All-American press conference. With us today are six young ladies that have achieved First-Team All-American status this year. We have Ally Carda and Allexis Bennett from UCLA, Cheridan Hawkins from Oregon, Lauren Chamberlain from Oklahoma, Kasey Cooper and Emily Carosone from Auburn. I'd like to pass the mic to Carol Bruggeman our executive director who has a few words.

CAROL BRUGGEMAN: Carol Bruggeman, Associate Executive Director of the NFCA. And this press conference certainly isn't about me, it's about these young ladies. Congratulations to all of you. I thought it was important to give you background. It's just an honor for me to be here today to represent these young ladies as well as the coaches here at the Women's College World Series. The purpose of the NFCA is to support fast pitch softball coaches in their quest for excellence while uniting together to advance the sport we love. One of the ways we fulfill this purpose is through our awards program. We're very excited to honor the outstanding athletic achievement among the softball student-athletes by naming the All-American. Before we introduce you to some of these young ladies, I'd like to recap the process. We get asked a lot of questions about the process. I thought I'd recap that for you. Division I schools are divided into 10 regions across the country. In late April, all Division I coaches can nominate up to eight players from their respective regions for All-Region consideration. Division I coaches then vote for their respective regions by mid-May. And once a player earns All-Region status they're eligible for All-American status. The Division I All-American and Coaching Staff of the Year Committee, which is a group of 10 elected head coaches from across the



country -- they represent each one of those ten regions. They completed the All-American voting on Monday at an in-person meeting here in Oklahoma City. So earning the title of an NFCA All-American is the highest award, an individual award a Division I softball athlete can achieve. Just a few words from the press release. In all, there were 55 players from 28 different institutions that were selected to one of the three 2015 Division I NFCA All-American teams. The three conferences that are represented at this year's Women's College World Series had an impressive 39 of the 55 total selections, including 13 student-athletes on the first team. In all, the Southeastern Conference led the way with 19, while the Pac-12 conference racked up 13 nods and the Big Ten came in with seven selections. Out of those 39 student-athletes, 28 or 51 percent of the All-Americans will be stepping on the field here at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium. Michigan and LSU led the country with five total selections to the prestigious squads, while Alabama and UCLA garnered four each. Five programs, Florida, Oregon, Auburn, Oklahoma, and Arizona had three All-American selections. Georgia, Louisiana-Lafayette, and James Madison rounded out the schools that picked up multiple selections with two apiece. So, again, I'd just like to thank you all for joining us here today at our NFCA press conference. And at this point I'd like to turn it back over to my colleague, Brian Stanley, who is going to start the questioning for the student-athletes up here. Congratulations, young ladies.

BRIAN STANLEY: Thank you, Carol. Congratulations, ladies. And this is open to everybody. Really, what is it like to play against some of the ladies that you're sitting next to today?

ALLY CARDA, UCLA: It's really an honor and it's cool to see -- I've played with a lot of them on different teams not just in college. It's cool to see them do well and when you get the chance to play with them on the field with them and on the team in some cases I played with Lauren it's cool to see them do well for your team and for their respective colleges. So it's just fun to get out there and compete against them.

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN, OKLAHOMA: I know personally it makes me rise to the occasion when I'm playing on the same field as some of these guys. So I

think it's just an appreciation to better each other and take our play to another level when we're on the field.

KASEY COOPER, AUBURN: For me I think it's cool because I watched Oklahoma and Alabama play in the championship sitting at home in high school. And actually having almost the opportunity to play against Lauren Chamberlain and some of the girls like Ally Carda, I grew up watching them. So it's really cool to actually play against them and be a competitor against them.

BRIAN STANLEY: Talk about what was the most memorable moment you've had in your career or even if it was just this season.

CHERIDAN HAWKINS, OREGON: I'll start. I think the most memorable moment was we're saying goodbye to our field and to win, to go out with a win and clinch our tickets through the College World Series is probably the most memorable moment that I've had this year.

EMILY CAROSONE, AUBURN: For me, it was probably either beating Arizona State or winning the SEC championship. It was just an awesome feeling and with Arizona it was a great game, close competition. And SEC was an incredible feeling. It was an awesome feeling, winning a championship.

ALLEXIS BENNETT, UCLA: For me, on behalf of UCLA, it's also the Wall of Champions that we unveiled in the fall showing the history of our program and being able to walk up Easton Stadium and seeing our history each and every day. And it's beautiful and it just adds more just to the stadium and the experience.

BRIAN STANLEY: Thank you, ladies. I'd like to open up to questions now. Please state your name, affiliation and who you're addressing your question to.

Q. Emily and Kasey, this is the first time in Auburn history that you guys, that the team has put out two first-teamers in the same year. Talk about another first for you guys and getting to do it together and what that really means for you guys and the program?

EMILY CAROSONE, AUBURN: It's obviously great to be recognized. But I think both of us realize that it takes all of our team and there are 24 other girls on our team that it takes to get here and it's not about individual. It's about the team.

KASEY COOPER, AUBURN: I agree. It's people see us however it takes. All 25. Kiersten is the other side of the diamond for me. And she's always there coming up with awesome plays. I used to tell her that she should come out and her walkout song should be

ESPN da da da da because I've never seen as many great plays as she puts out at second base. It just shows how much dedication and commitment that not only the players have to Auburn but also our coaches to us.

Q. Lauren, now that your season and your career are over, can you put the 95 home runs into perspective now?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN, OKLAHOMA: It still kind of hits me in waves that that happened. It's just a testimony to the type of players that I've been surrounded by, that have allowed me to get those at-bats to get those home runs. Again, just talking about the type of athletes that I've been around that raised my play and my level of play and I've always said that if there's something that I'm chasing, I want to get it. So it was fun for me. It was fun.

Q. Allexis and Ally, can you talk about the challenges of facing Cheridan when you're in the batter's box?

ALLY CARDA, UCLA: Yeah, obviously she's a great pitcher. We faced her quite a few times in the past few years. And credit to her and Oregon, they're a great team, great hitting team, and she's a great pitcher. It's always tough hitting off her. And being a pitcher, I know it's tough both ways to kind of, I have a pitcher and hitter mindset when I go up there. So it's definitely tough. But excited for tomorrow and see where it goes.

BRIAN STANLEY: Allexis.

ALLEXIS BENNETT, UCLA: I totally agree with Ally, great opponent in Oregon. And Cheridan is a great pitcher. And every day is a new day. And it's going to be getting on the diamond and playing the game of softball. So whatever happens, happens.

Q. Cheridan, what do you remember most about facing UCLA earlier this year?

CHERIDAN HAWKINS, UCLA: UCLA is a really great team. They're really great players. And I think when you play UCLA you have to come with your best game. They have a very strong lineup. And they're a sound program. So I think it's just playing Oregon softball and trying to do what we do best, but at the same time you have to respect them as a program and know what they can do. And just like they said, just play softball tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, ladies.