



Alabama **June 5, 2012** - 8

Oklahoma - 6

An Interview with:

**COACH GASSO
DESTINEE MARTINEZ
LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN
JESSICA SHULTS
KEILANI RICKETTS**

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from Oklahoma we have head coach Patty Gasso and studentathletes Lauren Chamberlain, Destinee Martinez, Keilani Ricketts, and Jessica Shults. We'll start with a comment from Coach and then questions.

COACH GASSO: First, I congratulate Alabama for coming out and really putting up a fight. We knew coming in that they were going to bring their best, and they really were attacking tonight. They did a fantastic job.

At the same time, this was a very uncharacteristic game for us. The amount of opportunities that we gave away that we needed to make a team like Alabama work for a little bit harder.

But what we did in the locker room just now was accepted it. I think one of the greatest things that has happened in this tournament is what we did in the 7th inning tonight. Whether we won or lost, the message that we sent, and the confidence we brought is probably one of the most proud moments I've had with this team in not quitting.

They scored five runs off of one of the best pitchers in the country saying we're going to be back tomorrow. We're going to put it all out on the line. We're going to make adjustments in every way, and we're going to compete our rear ends off for a National Championship. That was the message. They accept it. We're coming in locked in and ready to fight.

Q. Coach, you talked about the 7th inning, and putting up those runs. How much momentum from that can get you going into tomorrow?

COACH GASSO: I think a lot. We started feeling momentum, piecing things together. But it shows our heart. And for us to think that we would go in against Alabama and have it easy, we had another thing coming. We had to play better ball. We did not deserve to win that game.

So to come back from an 81 deficit in the 7th, and be really one hitter away from one swing to tie the game is extremely impressive. We felt it.

We ended up with a total of nine hits, so we're feeling that we have good contact. We just need that timeliness. I still trust this team with everything that I have. I know that they'll be prepared and ready to make amends tomorrow. It's hard to beat us twice, and we know that.

Q. What were some of the factors you considered when you decided to take Keilani out?

COACH GASSO: Just could see that Keilani was laboring a little bit. I wanted to get her out and just get her rested and get her to get her mind right and help us with what she can do offensively, and give Michelle (Gascoigne) a shot.

I think one, Michelle threw a pitch that got through a gap that scored more than a few runs, and then she did a fantastic job of shutting them down and literally kept us in the game. When you think 81, don't think the game is over when you face us. So we kept fighting and kept fighting.

I thought Michelle was just a gritty performer. She had a gritty performance tonight. I was very pleased with what she did. I know Keilani, and the competitor that she is. She needed time to gather herself, and she's going to be back.

Q. As a followup, Keilani, what was going through your mind when Coach took you out?

KEILANI RICKETTS: I definitely trusted her taking me out and giving Michelle a shot, just because Michelle is a different look, and she was going to give the Alabama hitters a totally different look. She did her job. She kept us in the game.

Now I have a shot tomorrow, and I'll just lay it out there and give my team the momentum that I needed to give them tonight.

Q. Patty, Alabama mentioned that they made adjustments offensively. Can you give us an idea what you saw that they did that was different especially at the end of the game?

COACH GASSO: They changed their placement in the box. That's something we have a



plan for on the mound. I think a new day, new umpires, new everything, changes the whole landscape of everything. We just trust what we've done all season long, and we'll be ready.

Q. All the hits I've seen you get, you've been dropping them in the outfield, perfect placement. What was going through your mind when the outfield was playing you in and you get that triple?

COACH GASSO: I just wasn't going to go down without a fight. I didn't purposely try to hit the triple. I was just trying to make contact and find the hole.

Q. Destinee, Coach talked about the uncharacteristic nature of things. It seemed to be all phases at different points. It was defense. It was offense. Did you guys sense that as well?

DESTINEE MARTINEZ: We did. But we've been through it before, and I knew we were going to be able to get out of it. I mean, I know as a team we can keep battling through it.

Q. Keilani, did you feel different? Did you feel like you had good stuff today? Did you feel fine warming up? Was there a moment out there that you didn't feel as comfortable as you had been?

KEILANI RICKETTS: Yeah, I wasn't I don't think any fatigue or soreness was getting to me. I think I was just giving their team momentum, and I wasn't getting my team any momentum. That is the pitcher's role is to get those clutch outs for your team to keep them in the ballgame, not give the other team any momentum by hitting too many batters or walking them.

Q. What do you think contributed to the slow start today?

JESSICA SHULTS: We did get on the board first, so it wasn't a slow start. We just kind of, I don't know, maybe didn't get the clutch situation hits. We did leave a lot of runners on base. We are getting on base. So we've just got to go in tomorrow with the mentality that we are seeing her pretty good right now.

She had a great game. She came back with a different game plan, but I don't think it was we had some errors on defense and offense, but I feel like we're prepared for tomorrow.

Q. What are you going to do tomorrow to maybe get ready for this game? How do you

spend tomorrow facing a Game 3 and facing elimination?

JESSICA SHULTS: We don't look at it as elimination. Just leaving it all on the field tomorrow. Knowing what we have is good enough to win. Tomorrow we go in knowing that she's going to come back fighting again. Just go in with a game plan like we did in the 7th inning, and hopefully send a message from the first inning.

Q. I guess for Lauren and Jessica, is it a different feeling now after that 7th inning that you had? It seems to me an 86 game is very different from an 81 game.

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: It gives us momentum going into tomorrow, and it gives us the excitement to come out on top first. We were scoring a lot of runs, and we earned those runs. We knew we were hitting the ball hard, so we're just ready to hopefully face (Jackie) Traina again tomorrow and take it home.

JESSICA SHULTS: I feel like that 7th inning was a spark going into tomorrow. Though we didn't win the game, we were coming out, taking hacks, not going down without a fight. That's what we've been doing all year. We have to go in with that same mentality that we went into the 7th inning with, and hopefully it happens for us.

Q. Coach, during the Big 12 this season you really came back and battled to get those second wins to win the series. Are you having the same conversations that you had during the Big 12 with your team tonight after losing this game?

COACH GASSO: Somewhat. I think right now what we feel like is this game was meant to be. We didn't play well. We didn't earn it. We didn't deserve it. But we have another shot. Then in the Big 12, we've talked about having another shot. We win the first game. Maybe you don't win the second, but you win the third, you win the series. So we have a tomorrow, which is wonderful.

We've got a tomorrow, and the idea is that this game was meant to be. It's going to be great for the fans. It's going to be great for both teams. It's going to be hard fought. It's going to be wonderful for softball. We're going to be a part of history. And we're going to fight tooth and nail to go for the victory. We're going to give everything that we can.

One thing that works in our favor is they weren't comfortable enough to take Traina out of the game when they had an 81 lead. So the word in the dugout was make every atbat count. The



more you can see her, the more pitches she can throw, the more opportunities you get to see Traina is going to make us better for tomorrow, if we can't pull this off.

So we just kept really talking about Keilani getting her rest, getting her mind right, and using this opportunity not just to send a message, but to give us an advantage. I felt walking away, although we didn't have the win, we did not deserve the win. We got the advantage going into tomorrow.

Q. Can you guys address what kind of game you expect to get out of Keilani in the circle tomorrow night?

LAUREN CHAMBERLAIN: We know Keilani's mindset going into all of these College World Series games. We know she's going to come ready to play, and ready to fight for her team just like we're going to fight with her.

DESTINEE MARTINEZ: I agree with Lauren. I know Keilani will bounce back.

JESSICA SHULTS: Keilani's a competitor. So I don't expect anything else but her coming out and giving 110% tomorrow because she wants to win like everybody. So we're going to have her back.

Q. Could you address the pitches tonight? Obviously they were in the box there, but is that something else to adjust to for tomorrow?

KEILANI RICKETTS: Yeah, I could see where the hitters were in the box. And my pitchers were just run into them, and they were getting away from me; and I'm going to have to adjust those pitches to where they're standing in the box now.

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