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An Interview with:

**ALABAMA
COACH PATRICK MURPHY
KENDALL DAWSON
KAILA HUNT
JACKIE TRAINA**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Alabama Head Coach Patrick Murphy and studentathletes Kendall Dawson, Kaila Hunt, and Jackie Traina. Coach, an opening statement.

COACH MURPHY: Well, first I want to say congrats to Cal. Diane (Ninemire), obviously, is a Hall of Famer. Great lady. Great program. And just to be on the same field with them again at the World Series, it was really a great feeling for Alabama.

And I know it's extremely difficult to end seniors' careers. And it's a tough game. And all of their seniors, they had great careers. But it was a really good game by us, I thought, today.

We hit the ball. We played good defense. And Jackie (Traina) pitched pretty well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Coach, you said last year you went off the circle and talked to Jackie and told her to soak it in and get ready for this. Is she ready for the next stage?

COACH MURPHY: I think so. I can remember that. I went out there, and I said: Look, were going to be back here many times, hopefully, with you in the circle, so you might as well get used to the surroundings.

She's had every game, every pitch this week, and I think her conditioning is ready for it.

She's a Naples, Florida kid, so she's used to the heat. I think the hotter it gets, the better she gets. So I think she's ready for it.

Q. Jackie, can you talk about what you did out there and how it looked like this was

probably the sharpest you've been in maybe a couple of weeks?

JACKIE TRAINA: I haven't really changed too much. I was just throwing good pitches, throwing my pitches, throwing the pitches that I thought would get their batters out and help from Kendall (Dawson), because she's always back there giving great calls and helping me out behind the plate. A lot of it goes to her. She helps me out back there.

Q. Kendall, can you talk about that? How much did it appear to be moving to you?

KENDALL DAWSON: She's pitched great since we've been here, and I think she just continued to do that. Her ball's breaking away from the hitters.

She's jamming them up either way. Wherever she's going she's usually hitting her spot pretty well. That's what keeps them off balance.

Q. Can you talk about the pickoff in that situation, what set it up and all that?

KENDALL DAWSON: Well, what set it up is I made a mistake, and I wanted to get my team back in it. So I saw her getting off base and just Jackie got ahead of the hitter, so I thought it would be a good time to try it. And Cassie was there and I made a good throw and Jackie gave me a good feed, so...

Q. Kaila, can you talk about the power with three different home runs and kind of putting it all together today?

KAILA HUNT: I think we had great atbats. And a lot of it, a lot of our credit goes to our dugout, because they helped us out. Y'all probably don't see all the behindthescenes stuff, but I give a lot of credit to the dugout. They helped us out on some of those pitches, so...

Q. Coach and actually can I go through and have you all answer this: Can you talk about the similarities between Alabama and Oklahoma, powerful teams, homerunhitting teams, solid pitching? Can you just this matchup seems to be really interesting for that reason.

COACH MURPHY: And the colors. I can remember coming up here for the football game, and everybody we passed, I almost said 'Roll Tide' to because when I saw the 'MA' and I thought it was Alabama, and it was Oklahoma, and most of them said 'Roll Tide' back to me. So they're nice people, too. (Laughter).



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But you're right, I mean, they have power up and down the lineup. They have good speed in the 2, 9, couple spots, some really good lefties, some powerful righties. I had (Lauren) Chamberlain in Bogota with Team U.S.A. and I know what she can do. I had Destinee Martinez on that team; I know what she can do.

You're right, it's very similar. And pitching, too, (Keilani) Ricketts and Traina, that would be a heck of a combination.

KENDALL DAWSON: I think that's what got us here, both teams, because they're very good as well as our team. And it's a lot similar, everything, but it's just whoever pulls it together at that time.

KAILA HUNT: I mean, I agree. We've got power hitters, obviously, and great pitching. Jackie and Keilani, you have two of the best pitchers here in the tournament, and they're powerhouse pitchers. They throw it hard. So I think it's going to be a great matchup for sure.

JACKIE TRAINA: Definitely going to be fun. Both teams got here because we're very good, we're very competitive. We have great hitters, and we have good pitching. And it's just going to be fun. Like, they got here; they're good. We got there; we're good.

I think it's going to be fun. Who doesn't want to play against a great team?

And I just can't wait for it.

Q. You built this program largely with talent from the south. Was that a conscious move on your part to build regionally as opposed to going after kids from California and Arizona all the time?

COACH MURPHY: Well, when we started, we wanted 'grits' -- Girls Raised In The South -- because they knew all the rivalries in the SEC. And at the time, the SEC was brand new in softball. And people didn't realize what Alabama/Auburn was all about, or Alabama/LSU and Alabama/Tennessee or Alabama/Florida. And the kids in the south, they knew the SEC. They knew it because of football.

And when softball started, it was very easy to stay regionally. It was Texas, Alabama, and Florida for us for a long time. Those three states really helped us. And Georgia really got good. And Atlanta, we wanted those kids. It's a threehour drive.

We've got Tennessee kids. We've got South Carolina now.

The only really West Coast kid we've got is Kayla Braud, and she's from Oregon, so we don't really count that.

But just it's you know, their parents can come to watch more readily. It's not as far. And we've done really well with who we've gotten.

Q. Talking about going far, you guys had a pretty good contingent here in the stands. Could you talk about that and the overall attendance at this event this year versus when you first got here the first time.

COACH MURPHY: Oh, it's incredible. And I mean, Yvette Girouard sat next to me yesterday during one the games, and she looked at me and she said: Do you believe this? And I said: No, it's unbelievable.

You know, when we went in '93, we walked down the stairs, and it's probably still the same staircase, because I trip almost every single time going down those stairs, and we got to the top of the staircase and we looked down, and it was like: Wow, this is incredible.

When my kids come back from batting practice, they look down and they say that's such a beautiful sight. Now you have the stands all the way around the field.

I mean, this is the Major Leagues. This is the Major Leagues of softball. It doesn't get any better than this. The people know the game. They love the game. They're respectful. The fans are awesome.

I don't know if we broke the attendance record again. But, yes. So it just keeps getting bigger and bigger, and I couldn't be more proud to be a softball coach.

Q. Patrick, two things. One, you've had a lot of games where you have a big inning and a lot of runs and then maybe a couple, three innings without runs. How did you feel about seeing all those 1s across the board?

COACH MURPHY: I'd rather have a crooked number, but it was good to score five consecutive innings. I made a mistake. I was bringing Kendall on the ball that Reid caught, which was a heck of a play 'cuz I thought it was going to be down. It was a double play.

I'll take the oneinning, but you're right, it's usually a bigger inning, but that was fine with me.

Q. And also with this group of seniors and everything, is this what you came back for? Was that part of your thinking, that what you were leaving to go to LSU to come back because of the potential of this group?

COACH MURPHY: Oh, definitely. And the senior class was they're such great kids, and that



was the you know, I just I love the kids. And that was the most difficult part.

And I knew I called my mom and I said: Mom, I'm going to have a job until 2014. And she said: 'Oh, you got a new contract?' I said: 'No, I signed Jackie Traina.' And why would you be somebody like her? It's too good.

Q. Coach, as you know, I had a big background in college baseball and just catching up on the softball. And casual observer sees a lot of home runs, a lot of strikeouts, some walks, some hit batters, a little bunting and slapping. But I've been really struck the last few weeks about the importance that defense has played in a lot of these games. Errors, but also key plays, and maybe even we even saw mental errors today with popups and things of that nature. I remember we talked in the fall how you just had to plug the hole in shortstop. But you were really set. Looking back, can you talk about your philosophy on defense and the important role, but kind of underappreciated, I think, and how much of it is preparation and how much of it at this stage is execution and minimizing nerves, because it seems like a lot of teams today in the last few days have kind of let the stage maybe get to them and made mental errors.

COACH MURPHY: One thing that benefits us is we have 3,500 (fans) at a game almost every single game. And the last four weekends in May, we were home. We had Florida for the SEC Championship. We had the SEC Tournament. The place was packed every single game. Regionals. Super Regionals. When we get here, it's like another big crowd for us.

But definitely defense, you have a catcher like Kendall, you want to use her. And that was all her. That pickoff was all her. We practice it, but she calls it.

We have I think the quality of athlete is extremely important. I think it used to be where you saw a really good softball player, she might not be a great athlete.

Now, there's great athletes on all these teams, and great athletes make great plays.

If Kaila Hunt was a boy, she'd be making \$6 million a year playing for the Rangers at shortstop. But she gets a scholarship at Alabama, thank God.

But I mean, defensively, I think it's key. And you're right, I think it's overlooked, part of it, but you can make a great play and stop a rally quickly.

Q. Patrick, with those seniors Tommy mentioned, what role have those kids played for this team, a team with stars who aren't seniors, their role behind the scenes?

COACH MURPHY: Oh, they're huge. Olivia Gibson, if you knew her, we have a thing that we call intangibles. What are you going to bring to the table? And I have they think for about two weeks what they're going to bring to the table as a team and as a teammate.

And then about two weeks later, I say: Okay, what's the intangible going to be? And her intangible every year is: I'm going to bring love and joy to the team. Not hits, not strikeouts not great plays, but she's going to bring love and joy to the team.

And that's what she brings. She's an incredible kid. She always puts the team above herself. She's a servant leader from the word go. Very, very selfless, and that's the reason, when you have 20 young ladies on the team and that's our largest roster ever the kids that don't play are usually the ones that bring you down, not the starters, because they're happy, they get to play.

The kids that don't play are the ones that kind of bring you down. And it shows up in the postseason. If there's some unhappy campers on your team, it's going to show up in a hurry.

And this is one of the most together team chemistrywise teams we've ever had. And it all starts with the seniors, because they know their role and they shut their hole. They don't complain. They do exactly what I ask them to do. And they're great, great kids.

Q. Kendall and all three of you, is there any sense of playing for the SEC playing for the conference, trying to earn the conference's first championship in this sport?

KENDALL DAWSON: It means a lot, but I don't think it's any factor we have to think about because that just makes the game even more bigger. So we just try to sit back and try to play our best game and each pitch at a time, and our teammates have our backs.

So I don't think it's anything too crazy. We'd love to do that, we'd love to bring it home to our conference and show we have the power.

But we're just going to stick with our game.

KAILA HUNT: I agree. It would be cool to say we're the first SEC team, but it's not something that we're playing for, in a sense. I think we go out and we're just trying to play our best game.

We say we're going to play Alabama softball, and I don't think that because if you go in and you try to play for something that's maybe



bigger than yourself, almost, you'll get yourself in trouble. So I think we're playing the game we've been playing since we've been 10 years old.

JACKIE TRAINA: Same thing. It would be great to be the first SEC team, but you're not thinking about that when you're out there. You're not thinking about, oh, we're going to be the first SEC team. We're just going out there and having fun.

We get to play with the girls like our friends, our best friends on the field. What more can you ask for?

Q. Coach, I think this is the third time in the World Series history without a PAC12 school in the championship. Can you just talk about the parity that's kind of grown over the years in this sport?

COACH MURPHY: I think it's tremendous. I mean, first of all, you've got to give the Pac12 credit, because they've done it so many years. And I keep telling everybody we're still the underdog. We haven't done anything yet. Until we win it, we're still the underdog. They're always the favorite, no matter what. Oklahoma has won.

But parity across the country, if you can find a pretty good pitcher and you can surround there's athletes everywhere now. I mean, everywhere. If you find them, you're going to put together a good team.

It doesn't matter who it is, where you're at, cold weather, warm weather, East Coast, West Coast. If you can put them together and you can coach them up, you're going to have a good team. And I think it's great for the sport.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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