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An Interview with:

**CALIFORNIA
COACH DIANE NINEMIRE
VALERIE ARIOTO
JOLENE HENDERSON
JACE WILLIAMS**

THE MODERATOR: From Cal, we have Head Coach Diane Ninemire and studentathletes Valerie Arioto, Jolene Henderson, and Jace Williams. Comment from Coach.

COACH NINEMIRE: I just have to say that I have to give a lot of credit to the University of Oklahoma today. They had a great game.

They came out hitting the ball, had great pitching from Keilani Ricketts. And we just did not play our best ball today. We did not hit the ball well. And defensively, I think I don't even remember the last time I've seen this team make three errors.

But what I do know is that this team is a very strong team and I know their backs are against the wall, but I know they'll be able to come back from this. We'll work hard starting tomorrow night with our game at 8:30 and take one game at a time.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Jace and Valerie, what made Ricketts so difficult to handle tonight?

JACE WILLIAMS: She throws the ball hard. And I mean she paints the corners. Her changeup was on. It was dropping off the table. And she really just I mean, she came out and really threw a great ballgame.

She had, let's see here, 16 strikeouts and two walks. Pretty big game right there.

VALERIE ARIOTO: I think she showed why she's the Player of the Year. She did a good job of keeping us off balance. Obviously we need to do a better job, put the ball in play.

But they just played good softball. I think we'll learn from this game. If we see them later on, take that. And I think the way we battled the last

couple of innings, hopefully it's going to move on to the next game and have some energy for next game.

Q. Jolene, you found yourself in trouble a few times, able to pitch yourself out of a few jams. In those times that you weren't able to do that, what do you think went wrong and how was Oklahoma able to get those runs across?

JOLENE HENDERSON: Oklahoma is a very good hitting team. They're really patient and really just watched a lot of pitches today because I know I threw a lot of pitches.

But they were a good hitting team. And my defense, we were off a little bit today. But we'll come back strong and I'm not worried.

Q. Diane, I wonder if when they chose to walk Valerie, if you were pleased about that. Brought the tying run to the plate and also afforded you the chance to pull that steal, ended up getting runners at second and third. Did you think they might have outsmarted themselves for a moment?

COACH NINEMIRE: No. I mean, a lot of teams walk Val, but we feel like we have some good answers behind her with the batters behind Val. So I think there's some threat behind her as well. So I don't think they outthought themselves. I think it just worked in our favor.

Q. Coach, Jolene actually managed a lot of difficult situations during the game, and that could have been a lot worse than 30. Can you talk a little bit about how Jolene managed and, Jolene, if you could talk about how you managed in those tough situations.

COACH NINEMIRE: Well, she did a good job that, when we got into the jams, she was able to get the batters to hit ground balls. Our defense came up strong in certain situations.

There was a slap or a hit to the shortstop. Came home. Hendu got a play. I mean, so she did the things that she needed to do to get her defense the chance to make the plays today to get us out of some jams.

JOLENE HENDERSON: I got myself into the jams but my team got me out of them. So that's all I needed to get going.

Q. It's a little bit different setup, instead of having a day off, you got to turn right around tomorrow, but you won't know until a few hours before who you're playing. Talk about the

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mindset of tomorrow and getting right back out there and facing the unknown right away.

COACH NINEMIRE: Actually, I'm kind of glad we have to play tomorrow, because I think it would be worse sitting for a full day thinking about it. Now we know that we have to be prepared tomorrow night, and we'll be facing two teams that we've already played this year in Tennessee and Oregon.

So we're familiar with the teams that we'll be playing, which is a little plus to us. But we still have to go out and play our best ball.

And so whoever we have to play, we'll be prepared for.

Q. Valerie, final year for you. Everything's on the line these last couple of games. What do you want to be able to see out of yourself and just out of your team tomorrow?

VALERIE ARIOTO: I think this team bounces back really, really well. I hope we do that tomorrow and have a lot of energy. For all the seniors, for Jace, me, the twins, and Frani, it could potentially be our last game, any game after this. So I think we'll all be going out there fighting like it's our last game.

Q. Jolene, you faced Keilani Ricketts all the way through high school. How is she different or similar as a pitcher now?

JOLENE HENDERSON: I think Keilani has always been a strong pitcher. She just has the demeanor when she comes out that she's a strong player. She's also 6'2" and like a strong girl.

So when I played her when I was younger, she was the same way. I played her and her sister. They've always been great athletes and they're good people.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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