

2017 NCAA Baton Rouge Regional – Postgame Quotes
FAIRFIELD VS. LSU – May 19, 2017
LSU – 2, Fairfield - 1

LSU Head Coach Beth Torina

Opening Statement

"Well, it's just how we drew it up. It was -- you know, this time of year, a win's a win, and Fairfield gave us a great game. Obviously, they're talented. They've been playing well lately. So they came out and did just that here and really gave us a great game. Congratulations to them on a great game. I'm proud of how our team battled. I thought we hit some balls hard, and it didn't happen to fall in the right places. I thought we attacked it pretty well. Sydney (Smith) started out a little slow on the mound but seemed to get stronger and stronger as the game went on. I was really proud of how she was able to continue to make adjustments throughout. I think that's hard to do, and that's something that shows a lot of maturity and really stepped up for us to be able to have a big performance tonight."

Q. Coach, coming into this series, being at home, all the pressures you talked about the other day, do you almost kind of take a deep breath that, okay, this one's over, now we can kind of get into a rhythm a little bit?

TORINA: I do think it's huge to have the first one under your belt. I think it's a tough game. You're tight. You're nervous. There are a lot of those factors in it. Once you kind of get going here, once you get rolling, I think it gets a little bit easier. Not that our game tomorrow is easy by any means, but I think getting that first game under your belt is huge.

Q. Emily, what were they doing to keep your guys kind of off base in the box there?

EMILY GRIGGS: You know, they had a great pitcher on the mound tonight. You have to hand it to her for being able to mix in and out, up and down, and just making the adjustments. If somebody hit a good ball the first inning, the second inning she was doing the complete opposite. So I think just having good pitch location and making sure she switches it up was definitely something that made her successful.

Q. Sydney, I know on the box score it shows two errors, but for the most part the defense played really well, especially Shemiah Sanchez at third base. How important is that to you? You talk about it all the time, kind of letting your defense work and making it so that they stay off the base pads.

SYDNEY SMITH: I think any strength for a team is to have great defense. We have one of the best defenses. It's fun to go out there and pitch and know your defense has your back no matter what. Whether I'm struggling on the mound or not, they're going to pick me up, and they're going to do the things to help me. It's just awesome to have a defense like that.

Q. Beth, the role that Carley's done now a couple of games, coming in late and being able to shut it down even though she's not 100 percent. What does it say about her moxie, her character, what she gives you in those situations, and how do you think she approaches it?

BETH TORINA: I thought she looked really solid. I think she's pretty close to 100 percent. I thought, she looked great tonight. She really threw hard. She's kind of had that role her entire time she's been at LSU, just being able to come in and shut it down. Just thought it was a good time for that. Hoping to get a couple of strikeouts out of her right there, but we were able to get a couple of ground balls just right back to her, you know, same thing. But I always like to try to bring her in to try to step up and get that strikeout so we don't have to have the pressure to play defense right in that moment. She's great at that. She's so competitive. She wants that moment. She wants the ball in that moment, and it's fun to give it to her.

Q. Asking the Louisiana-Lafayette coach about the series or lack of a series on a regular basis between you guys. He said, look, a lot of it's my fault. I take my fair share of the blame for not having a regular series between LSU and ULL. Is it one that you'd like to see happen again just because the fans love it? They'll be packed tomorrow for the game.

BETH TORINA: Yeah, I think it will be a great game tomorrow. I think they're so talented. They are so consistent, and they're good year in and year out. I think it's a great contest between the two of us. I know it's been a while, but I think it's going to be a great game tomorrow. I think we're all excited to take the field against them. I think we're excited to take the field in the atmosphere that will be here tomorrow. It's so cool for the game of softball. Just imagine what the atmosphere is going to be like. I know it's going to be great, but it's neat for the game of softball to see a matchup like this.

Q. This is going to be a regional where you have two loud and present fan bases, I guess. Do you prepare for that? I know they can't affect your play, but obviously they can get in your ear at times.

EMILY GRIGGS: Absolutely. I think where we've played luckily all year in the SEC, the different places we've gotten to travel to, that's really prepared us for this moment. Auburn wasn't quiet. Tuscaloosa and Knoxville definitely weren't quiet. So I think all throughout the season playing in the SEC and going to those opponents definitely is going to prepare us for this weekend.

Q. Beth, I know you're not going to say who you're throwing tomorrow, but when you're facing a team with a lot of power like that, like ULL has, does that factor into your decision of who you throw tomorrow? How do you kind of manage that?

BETH TORINA: I think the matchup always factors in. Their offense always factors in no matter who we're playing. But I'm really confident in our pitching staff as a whole, confident in all four of them. I had zero reservations about putting Sydney out there tonight. I would have zero reservations about putting her out there tomorrow or any of our pitching staff. I'm really confident in all of them. I think, when you have a strong pitching staff like this, the offense doesn't matter as much because it will match up with somebody somehow. We'll see as we research them a little bit more tonight and spend the time on what the best matchup is, and that's who we'll go with.

Q. Coach, you don't have a ton of players from Louisiana, so they may not be caught up in the whole rivalry thing, but do you address the outside the lines things that are going to be going on before the game tomorrow?

BETH TORINA: I think we have 8 players from Louisiana. So it is pretty significant, actually, on a team of 21. You know, I think they all understand how good they are. They all understand how talented they are. They've been good for a long time. They've been in the College World Series. They've been in the Regional, the Super Regional. Everybody understands how good they are. It didn't really matter to us who we drew. As a 2 and 3 and 4 seed in this, we're going to have to beat somebody to move on. To accomplish our goals, we have to beat a great team. The fact that it's them, you know, they're a great team. We understand we have to beat somebody to move on, and that's our goal.

Q. It's exciting, you might get some casual softball fans because of the matchup to follow this. Is it exciting for you guys -- I guess all of you could answer this really -- to be part of a matchup like this, where you have a lot of passion, and it's not just maybe any other team?

BETH TORINA: Well, I think these guys have been a part of some huge games. Like Emily talked about, a lot of the crowds in the SEC are good, and it makes me think back to the James Madison Super Regional. What an awesome atmosphere for softball, and it wasn't even for us. The majority of the people were against us. But we all, every single one of us appreciated how cool it was for the game of softball that that many people came out to support a game like that. So I think we'll feel the exact same way tomorrow. We're going to hope and pray the majority of the stands are purple tomorrow and not red, but I think it's going to be a neat atmosphere for softball no matter what happens, and we all appreciate that our game is going. And the fact that we have so many people that want to support the game is awesome for us.

Q. Sydney or Emily, do you guys care to comment on that question?

SYDNEY SMITH: Like she said, it's cool how softball is growing. I think, no matter what you look at, the more people we have in the stands, the better. The more people that are coming to watch us play and watch us compete, it just shows how much people enjoy softball and how much it's growing and how much fun watching softball really is.

EMILY GRIGGS: I just think at some point there's going to be a little girl in the stands that comes to our softball game, and I just hope when she leaves -- Coach always says, just hope the crowd says, oh, she plays hard. So I just hope at some point we touch a little girl and she is -- falls in love with the game like we all did and just puts that drive in her.