



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

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Quotes from University of Houston Softball Super Regional Press Conference Thursday, May 22, 2008 * Houston, Texas * Cougar Softball Stadium

Head Coach Kyla Holas

Opening Statement:

“Well I just think that we are really excited to be here. We have worked really hard. This has been a really great season for us and I think you are going to see some really great softball this weekend. It is going to be a tough match up here.

On Louisiana-Lafayette’s pitching:

“If you just look at the numbers down the line, we are as similar as it gets. Offensively and on the mound, I think they have more pitching depth than us, so we are going to have to be careful with Angel (Shamblin) and make sure we can get her some run support and make sure we really try to be aware of her pitch count and keep her in and out of things as little as possible.”

On the crowd for both teams:

“I had a pleasure playing for those crowds for four years so I know 100 percent exactly what they are going to bring. I don’t know if you can ever create that during practice, but we have talked with our kids on staying focused on their jobs and doing what they have to do and keeping everything off in the stands out of it and out of the focus as much as possible.”

On playing on their home field:

“I think that anytime you get to play at home, you know your surroundings a little bit more. That is one of those things you get use to. You know how your fence is; you know how balls are going to play off, how your surface is. So I do think you get an advantage there as far as in your comfort zone. But I do think that both of these teams have played here and they have played on our field earlier in the season, so I don’t think it is going to be as much as if a team that has never walked in here before.”

On Angel Shamblin:

“We’re hoping that she got some good rest this week. We had to use her a lot. They had an advantage that they only had to use their No. 1 (pitcher) in one of those games so we are hoping she got some rest this week and was able to keep herself in a good spot physically and mentally.”

On the mentality of the team:

“This is a pretty humble group. They kind of take a workman, blue-collar approach to everything. We try to work really hard and earn what we have before us. I don’t know if we have gotten used to this position that we are in. Hopefully, with some time you do get that, but I do think that this team does play confident and they do play together and I think that you do get a good advantage that way.”

On the team playing together:

“I think that any team that makes a run as far as we have in post season looks back and says that it was the right people, not necessarily the best people. I think 100 percent this group has the correct

people in place. They are all here for a reason. They all have a purpose and they have all contributed at some point and we wouldn't be here without every single one of them."

On getting excited about how far they have come:

"I think that anytime you can do that. At some point we can look back and be excited. Right now, if we don't accomplish our goal it is going to be a disappointment. Any person who is a professional athlete, who wants to be the best, can understand that, but I think that the time for us to enjoy this will be much later once the season is over with and we are able to look back. Right now, we are just really focused and anything less than getting there will be a disappointment."

On the heat and weather playing a factor on the game:

"The only thing that I think might be a factor is rain; if a shower comes through, and causes a rain delay. I think that was one the things that was a big factor this last weekend with Tennessee and Virginia Tech. Anytime you have some time to stop momentum for which ever team has it, I think it can become a factor. We are hoping that this rain can hold off enough so we can play the games that we need to play."

On the feeling of never playing in a Super Regional:

"I think that anytime you haven't been there, you have that uncertainty of what's ahead of you. I think any game you play in post season is important, so they have played with this kind of pressure before. They just have to realize that it is just the same as last weekend."

On the fans:

"I think I see it more big picture. Just this sport in general, for people to come out and support not only a team in the city that has so many other professional sports it has to choose from, to be able to get people in the stands it is a really big deal and we appreciate the fact that they come out when they have so many other choices."

On creating softball fans:

"We have been here awhile and we have been playing some good ball for awhile now. Just to have this in this community and this area and for people to come out and see and take advantage of it. (You have to) realize that it is not just the Big 12 in this state; there are other options out there. I think it is a good opening spot for us and we hope people will jump on the bandwagon."

Junior Shortstop Jessica Valis

On the fan support and playing last weekend in the Regional:

"It was amazing having all the fan support we did. It was loud in the stadium and it was just a really exciting atmosphere. Hopefully this weekend we'll have even more fans. Even though (Louisiana-Lafayette) may bring a lot. I think just the fans and being loud keeps the intensity up is a major difference between regular season and post season."

On their defensive game:

"Defense is what we rely on the most; defense wins games, everybody knows that. We have really stepped up and communication creates defense. As long as we keep up our communication, and communicate as well as we do we should have no problem defensively."

On her first games back during the Regional:

"I definitely have become more comfortable. Our first game against Delaware State, how many games I've played on our field, I was actually nervous. It seemed so much bigger. I practice on it

everyday. After the first game and then after the game against Washington I definitely felt more comfortable and then got back to communicating well with the team.”

On playing Louisiana-Lafayette again:

“It is going to be a great weekend for our softball players. They swing big and we are going to have to focus on hitting the ball and staying on top. And just bringing our game and not worrying about them and playing to the best of our abilities and then we will come out on top.”

On the difference between last years team and this year’s team:

“We didn’t lose that many players last year and we brought in a lot of freshman this year. We just used time to getting them use to how we play. Not losing a lot of seniors, as far as softball we kind of got to play together. This is our second year playing together as a team, almost all nine of us being back. So it is just playing together and communicating on and off the field is what makes us a good team.”

On her mentality of this game versus last seasons post season match ups:

“I think with me not being able to play last year, they did an amazing job and it kind of gave them a motivational factor to go on. I think this year with me being able to play here, I am excited as heck and hopefully we can all stay on the same page and play our game.”

On getting excited about how far they have come:

“I think that staying under control right now and realizing that where we are and that we are so close to reaching our goal. Once we stay focus and get there and like (Coach Holas) said afterwards, we will be able to relax and take it all in. We are just taking it day by day and try to get through it.”

On the feeling of never playing in a Super Regional before:

“Personally, I don’t feel nervous. We have played them twice this year already and it is going to just like playing a regular-season game and I feel very comfortable.”

On the fans:

“Personally, I love the fans and them being loud. It pumps me up and I feel like I am a person on the team that can be very loud and when I hear other people being loud, especially our fans, it gets me more excited and pumps up the girls more. It plays a role and a positive one for me.”

Senior Pitcher Angel Shamblin

On playing against Louisiana-Lafayette:

“It is definitely going to be a huge challenge because they are a great team and they are not going to go down until the end. It is going to be a fight from inning one to inning seven. We have to stay focused and stay within our selves and play our game.”

On the game against Washington:

“It was definitely the beginning of what postseason is all about. In postseason you aren’t going to score a lot of runs, it’s going to be what defense holds up, the less errors and who scores the runs first. That is what we are going to have focus on this weekend, just putting the runs on and keeping them from scoring.”

On the defense behind her:

“It’s relieving pressure off of me. I know that I don’t have to try and do anything. I know I can rely on them to help me out knowing that they are back there to help me out.”

On getting excited about how far they have come:

“We just need to stay focused and play our game and worry about celebrating and doing all that later on.”

On the heat playing a factor on her pitching:

“Not necessarily because I practice everyday in the heat. I just need to stay cool and hydrated throughout the game and I have been doing a pretty good job of that.”

On playing Louisiana-Lafayette:

“We’re not going to come out here and blow them away. They are a great ball club and we didn’t beat them very much when we beat them in the regular season game. It is going to be a close game. It just helps us stay focused from inning one to inning seven just knowing that anything can happen at any moment during the game.”

On the fans:

“I think with the fan base we have had this last weekend, we can feed of them with energy, and I think that has helped us out this last couple weeks.”

Louisiana Lafayette Head Coach Stefni Lotief

Opening Statement:

“I would like to start off by saying we’re so excited to be here at the Super Regionals in Houston. It’s a relatively close trip for us and we look forward to a weekend full of good softball against a great Houston team. We’re excited to be here.”

On the familiarity of playing here in Houston:

“We played them (Houston) in three games last year. Playing them again this year we’re familiar with their stadium. We did make a road trip here and I think that’s going to be helpful. They have a very good team and all of the teams left in the Super Regionals are very good teams, the top 16 teams in the country. Hopefully we can stay focused and keep fighting pitch-by-pitch and have some luck and are able to execute.”

On how has the team has learned from being in the same position last season:

“Last year, towards the end of the season, we had some really bad injuries that happened to some key personnel. We weren’t able to overcome that. I think this year we’ve played some really good softball and everyone seems to be focus on the task at hand. We have great leadership and great team chemistry so I hope that’s not anything they forget. You build from your experiences and learn from your past but I also hope they know this is a different time and a different page for us. I think our teams is ready.”

On having three great pitchers on the pitching staff:

“We have three very good pitchers on our staff and I am very proud of every one of them. Brittany took the burden of games last year and was a 31-game winner for us. She actually had some injuries due to that so very we’re lucky to get two more quality freshmen into our program to build an entire staff. Ashley (Brignac) and Donna (Bourgeois) have done a tremendous job in giving Brittany (Cuevas) a chance to rehab, get back on her feet and get ready.”

On the winning tradition of your program:

“This is a program that has been around for a very long time. It’s deep with tradition and history and has a very good fan base and fan following. It’s a program that I think has been built on tradition. A tradition that I think these kids (ULL team) understand that there were quite a bit of players that have come before them. Some of them many years ago, and are proud to be apart of the program, like myself. Kyla Holas is one of the best pitchers we’ve ever had in our program. She is a true champion and it doesn’t surprise me that she has a great program here as well.

On facing Houston’s Angel Shamblin:

“She a senior, she’s got experience on her side and she has good defense and offense behind her. I think as a pitcher that makes it a little bit easier for you. And likewise, I think our staff trusts their defense, work well as a staff, they’re tenacious, they don’t back down and being a freshman that’s something special. They can bring that to the game and have the kind of talent that they do.”

Freshman pitcher Donna Bourgeois

On breaking the post-season slump of losing four consecutive Regionals:

“It’s very exciting to be here. Like our coach said, all of the teams here are very talented so being on the same field is a testament to all the hard work you’ve put in all season long and preseason and its going to start paying off for you.”

On the advantage of having three strong pitchers:

“I think we definitely complement each other. We’ve worked really hard to get to where we are right now and having three strong pitchers should help us as we get further into the series.”

On facing the Houston lineup:

“We all live by the motto: “Pitch-by-pitch, Inch-by-inch”. The harder you work and the less you give off means the more success you’re going to have.”

Freshman pitcher Ashley Brignac

On breaking the post-season slump of losing four consecutive Regionals:

“Being able to get here is an honor. We’re just excited to be out here and its just another step to where we want to go.”

On the advantage of having three strong pitchers:

“I know their pitcher has carried them a long way and that she was really good when we faced them when we came here. I think it’s going to be a battle going pitch-by-pitch and we’re just going to play our ball.”

On facing the Houston lineup:

“Once you get into post-season every team is going to have one through nine batters. Just like we focused in the fall, its pitch-by-pitch and inch-by-inch. Whether it’s a lineup of just four hitters or a lineup like Houston’s, we just have to fight on every single pitch.”

Sophomore pitcher Brittany Cuevas

On breaking the post-season slump of losing four consecutive Regionals:

“We’re so excited to be out here playing against great competition. We’re just ready to hit the field and get going.”