

2007 NCAA Women's Tennis
First Round: Notre Dame 4, Illinois-Chicago 0
May 12, 2007

Illinois-Chicago coach Shannon Tully

On facing difficult first-round opponents...

"The goal is always to compete well and push the other team to beat us and not give any free points. Typically we're playing a top 10 team and we know it's going to be tough. The goal is just to get on the board... if you get a set you're heading in the right direction."

On team strategy entering the match...

"In doubles, we knew they would be on top of the net so we really wanted to mix it up a lot, hit some lobs and try to keep them off the net. When we had a chance to put the ball away, we needed to execute."

On Notre Dame's play...

"I think Notre Dame today was pretty flawless. They played clean matches all the way across the board. We really had to play our best to stay with them from game to game."

Putting the season in perspective...

"With 4 new players and only three returnees [getting to the NCAA tournament] was a huge accomplishment in a transition year. I was really proud of my younger girls."

Notre Dame senior Christian Thompson

On preparing for this year's tournament...

"Everyone came in to work on whatever they needed to work on, came in for extra hitting. We know we're prepared. [Coach] Jay [Louderback] has been training us really hard to make sure we're ready."

On preparing for first round opponent Illinois-Chicago...

"It's the NCAA tournament. You know everyone in the tournament is going to be tough, so you can't take any team lightly. I think we all played pretty well today and I was happy with the way everyone played."

On NCAA tournament experience...

"A lot of the girls got the experience being down at Stanford. The last three years we've been able to watch the finals and see how unbelievable the feeling is. Hopefully we can work hard and get that feeling for ourselves this year... I think we have the belief this year to do it."

Notre Dame senior Catrina Thompson

On responding after the Big East Championship...

“I think it was a good start to the championship. It was nice to get a win again [after the loss to USF in the Big East Final]. It was better to get the loss out of our system then.”

On mental preparation...

“We’re just concentrating right now and we know there’s five matches left. Everyone needs to buckle down and stay positive.... We try to take it one match at a time knowing that every match is going to be a tough match”

On responding to last year’s NCAA quarterfinal loss to Miami...

“We were looking forward and saying this year let’s take it a step further. We have a great team again and I think physically and mentally we’re all OK; we’ve got a great shot.”

On potentially facing top teams later in the tournament...

“You’re going to run into teams like a Stanford or a Florida where they’re going to be tough on paper but we feel we deserve to be up there playing that caliber of a team”

Notre Dame coach Jay Louderback

On lingering effects of the South Florida loss...

“We were disappointed but I don’t think it lasted with our kids that long. We’ve got other goals we want to reach.”

On the effects of the three week layoff before the NCAA tournament...

“You get into a rhythm of playing matches and practice, and then you have three weeks before the NCAA’s and it changes things. It can throw the rhythm of so it was good to get back out onto the court”

Comparing this year’s team to the last year’s team...

“Our depth is much better. We have no holes. Last year we had a couple of spots where we didn’t win as much. This year we’re able to win at every position. Also, the Thompsons are both playing really well in the singles. They’re both playing better than they did a year ago. Overall, our lineup is deeper and we’re better at every position.”

Outlook for the rest of the season...

“From here on every match is mental. There’s not going to be any bad teams. Whoever we play tomorrow, either Colorado or Michigan, is going to have just had a good win so they’re going to have confidence in tomorrow’s match....physically our kids are ready to play, now it comes down to the mental part being ready.”