



SOFTBALL

POSTGAME QUOTES: ARKANSAS 7, STANFORD 3

Courtney Deifel, Arkansas Head Coach

Opening Statement

"What a day. I'm just really proud of the team, it took everybody in our dugout and in the circle, and I'm just really proud of their fight and their heart. I told them today, 'They are very very good softball players, but the thing I'm most proud of is their heart and their fight and their belief in each other.' I thought the crowd was incredible, I thought it was a difference maker from the beginning. I thought our team continued to be businesslike. I think they played with a ton of emotion but didn't get emotional and I'm just really proud of their composure and how they finished it."

RE: Staying the course after falling behind

"It's postseason, you know that whoever you play, they're going to throw punches. We expected it. I think it took us an inning to get back on track and I think the difference maker in that was Linnie [Malkin]'s at bat. I thought she had incredible composure. We thought she obviously hit one out there [in the fourth inning], she controlled her emotions, grinded away to get on base and really got something going. I think Mary [Haff] came in and did what Mary does. It took everyone today, I think Stormy [Autumn Storms] looked really good, those pitches that weren't quite 'Stormy-like' were two-strike pitches and just gave them a chance and we didn't make some plays in that first inning, but we stayed the course and continued to fight and grabbed control of the game and didn't give it up."

RE: Braxton Burnside's first-inning home run

"I think more than anything, it was a spark for us. I think she's seeing the ball well, I think she's battled to get back from her injury. I'll give her a ton of credit - she was ready to go on that first pitch, she was on time and that means she was grinding on deck and that means Hannah McEwen saw enough pitches to make Brax feel really comfortable which that first pitch. I thought it was a huge spark for us, but honestly I think there were a ton of sparks for us throughout our entire lineup. I thought Linnie was a difference maker for us all weekend, I thought Ryan was huge for us, I thought Keely grinded to get that chopper up the middle and then busted it down the line to beat it out. I just think it takes everyone and I'm really proud of how the fought for each other."

RE: Making the switch from Storms to Haff in the circle

"When Autumn came off, I thought she looked good. I just thought the pitches she missed were two-strike pitches, which gave them a chance to hang a little bit. I think if she makes that throw on the comebacker or give ourselves a chance to make some catches, we would have been out of it. She came in, we were making adjustments and when she stepped into the dugout she slipped and twisted her ankle, that's why she came out. I have a ton of trust and belief in Stormy and I knew she was going to get right back on track, I think that was an easy adjustment for someone like her. But she slipped and twisted her ankle so it was just time, at that point, to go to Mary."

RE: Hosting Super Regionals

"It's really special, and to be honest, the really special part about it is that it was our player's expectation. I think that when you look at what they've done and what they built, this is where they expected to be. I think you could see that in them over the course of the weekend, I think you could see it in this game. They knew they were going to win this. I think we knew three years ago [in 2018] we were going to win it, but this team has had a really special year, this is a really special group and they have their sights set on what they want. They're very businesslike in trying to accomplish that and I think there's a lot to be said for these super-seniors that came in and really grinded to get this program going and they go into a weekend like this with the full expectation to be hosting a super. I just think that's really stinkin' cool."

Mary Haff, Arkansas Pitcher

RE: Entering the game in second inning

"From the beginning of the game, I was always in relief. Now when I would be going in was to be determined just on how the game was going. A little sooner than I was expecting but I was ready to go in. Coach told me from the beginning I would be in relief and to just be ready."

RE: The feeling from the team to be able to come back and close it out

"I feel like all throughout the season, we've faced adversity. We threw the first punch and they punched us back. We're a team that's very persistent and we weren't going to give up and we knew we still had a lot of game left and a lot of at bats. If we still have outs left, we have hope. Obviously not the start that we wanted, but we just had to be 'plus one' and we were going to do whatever it took for that to happen."

RE: The crowd at Bogle Park

"We were talking about it in the dugout, I think we called the Hogs about 10 times. I think the crowd really helped up today keep the momentum. It was huge, it was awesome to play in front of all of those people. This crowd keeps us in games and I think it puts other teams on their heels. When you call the hogs and doing crazy cheers with the crowd, it puts the opposing pitcher on their heels. It's great just not having to go on the road and we're even more excited that it's at home at Bogle."

RE: Comfort zone after Linnie's home run

"In the postseason, you're never really comfortable. We were up one, so I knew I had to keep the lead, but with Stanford, they can hit a home run at any time and tie it back up. One run wasn't really a comfortable lead but after the second homerun, I was like 'okay, we got this.' That felt like a big enough lead for us to be comfortable, but yeah, in postseason, you're never really comfortable with a one-run lead."



RE: Pitching mechanics in game one versus today

"I think this game I was much more comfortable going in. I didn't really have those first-game jitters before the game today and I was able to just go in and have 'my stuff' from the get-go."

RE: Being the second team in program history to go to Super Regionals

"It's awesome. Great for this program and great for this team. We've grinded all season, we've gone through crazy COVID-19 protocols - not getting to enjoy this and that in the fall because we wanted to have a season and we wanted to make it to the end of this season. I think we deserve it 100%. We worked hard to get here."

RE: Comparing 2018 Super Regionals to 2021

"I think I'm a more mature pitcher than I was back then. I don't really let my emotions get ahead of me or let the momentum of the game dictate how I'm going to pitch. It was good for the redshirt seniors and juniors to be able to be here to guide the underclassmen and help them stay calm and not make this bigger than what it is. I definitely think we're a better team. I think last time we went we were just happy to be there, but now we're ready to go and win a super."

RE: Comparing her current pitching style to a few years ago

"I think I'm a more dynamic pitcher now, I don't just rely on my rise ball. I hit more of the outside of the plate more than I used to, to put a different pitch in the mind of the batter and to expand what they know I can throw. I started to sprinkle in a drop ball here and there to change the eye level as well."

RE: On doubts about returning to pitching after injury

"With this team, from the fall, there was never any doubt. This team is special. Other teams always say they have something special, but this is just different. I've been on many teams that are just good, but this team is good in every facet of the game. Up and down the lineup, our defense, our pitching, all three aspects have got us to this point and they're just going to take us further."

RE: On what it means to play for the next generation

"It's awesome. Before the game we were talking about it and how 'there's so many little girls out there' and 'that used to be us,' Motivates us even more. We all grew up watching college softball. Those are the girls that look up to us now and it helps us see the bigger picture."

Maddie Dwyer, Stanford Pitcher

RE: Crowd at Bogle Park

"Yeah, I think it we knew it was going to be a factor. We talked about it this morning, that it was probably going to be the biggest crowd we ever played in front of. Coach [Jessica] Allister said 'don't let that get to you, use it, let it fuel your playing,' and I honestly think we did a great job and we didn't let it get to us. I think it was fun, honestly. It was really fun for me, it was a great crowd to be in and I'm just really proud of the way we handle it."

RE: Stanford's response to Arkansas' comeback

"We try to change our approach to each pitcher. So you bring in Autumn Storms, who is a great pitcher, she was throwing a drop ball and then Mary Haff, who is throwing a rise ball, and I think we were all just trying to make that adjustment and get on top of the ball. And I think we stuck with it, I don't think there was ever a point where we felt like we couldn't do it and I was really proud of everyone for just having better approaches and I think the last inning, you saw that... we put the bat on the ball and put the ball in play. I'm just really proud of everyone for fighting until the end and making that adjustment."

Jessica Allister, Stanford Head Coach

RE: Opening Statement

"What a great weekend of softball, Arkansas put on a first-class event. It was a great atmosphere, it was a fun game to be a part of. We are very happy to be here and I'm very proud of our team."

RE: Arkansas' response to Stanford's lead

"I think we had our opportunities, we got runners on, we got lead off runners on and we just weren't able to execute in those moments. [Haff] has good up-spin which sometimes makes it hard to move people, you can't advance on pop ups. I think that was very evident and we struggled with that. [Haff] was tough in big moments and good job to her."