

**NCAA Division I Regional
Columbia, S.C.
Pre-Tournament Press Conference**

South Carolina Head Coach Ray Tanner

Opening Comment...

“We are very excited to be hosting a regional. It’s been a few years since we’ve been a part of this, so we’re excited. It’s a great field and I’m glad to have Coach Traylor and his SoCon Tournament Champions here, my Alma Mater and Coach Avent and his squad, and Coach Hibbs and his Charlotte team, who had a tremendous year with 47 wins. It’s a great atmosphere for college baseball. We feel like our fans are terrific and not only appreciate good baseball by South Carolina, but the other clubs as well.”

On facing Wofford...

“What happened in the past is in the past. We played very well against Wofford in the two games we played during the regular season. This is a different team than what we faced. They went through the Southern Conference Tournament on a roll. They had to play the play-in game, took care of that and only trailed one inning during the tournament and came out without a loss. We always knew they were a dangerous team offensively and we pitched about as good against them as we did against any other team we faced. We know that we will have to be at our best when we play Wofford.”

On the pitching...

“The bullpen has been pretty good all season. Farotto has thrown the ball the best he has all year and Curtis Johnson has been pitching well. I’ve got two veteran guys in [Harris] Honeycutt and [Arik] Hempy and those guys will get a little more rope than the other guys. Unless they are tired or pitching poorly we’ll hang with those guys. They’ve been around the block a few times.”

Arik Hempy, Pitcher

Opening Comment...

“I think this is going to big for our team. I wasn’t here last year, so it’s going to be tremendous not only for me but for our team to get where we want to get.”

On pitching in tough games...

“You really bear down. You don’t feel like you have to be on your “A” game but you have to feel like you can keep it close enough to trust the hitters to get us back in the game. You have to step it up to the next level.

On pitching after an injury...

“When your arm is down you have to think of a different way to go at things. You go through the season thinking you might not come back 100% and you have to think of a different way to pitch,”

Steven Reinhold, Outfielder

On the hitting...

“We really didn’t hit the ball that poorly in the SEC Tournament. We hit a lot better than the numbers indicate. We hit some balls right at people and that was a big park and the ball doesn’t carry that well there. We hit several balls to the track, and if we had been playing at home they would have been home runs. I’m not too concerned with our hitting.”

On playing at home...

“The ball seems to carry a little better here and being our home park, we’re used to the backdrop and playing at night here. You try to hit well and do the same things everywhere you go, but you always feel a little better at home.”

On post-season mindset..

“I think the teams realize its go time. Arik and I, and some of the older guys have been trying to explain how the playoffs work. You have to go out everyday and play as hard as you can because there is no guarantee that you get to play on the third day. We are looking forward to putting the cleats on and giving it all we have for a couple of days.”

Charlotte Head Coach Loren Hibbs

On being the underdog...

“If you look at the stat sheets on some of the teams in this tournament, you have two teams who have hit over 100 homeruns this season. I thought they were joking around with me when they gave me the stat sheets. It’s unbelievable. We are a team that just goes out and plays. We get off the bus or whatever it may be and we go out there and play and compete at the highest level we can compete at.”

On the team...

“The emphasis of our program is to pitch and play defense and we’ve done a pretty good job of that to this point. We’ve got a bunch of skinny guys that can run around from a position player standpoint. Hopefully we can keep a few balls in the yard and run around and create some havoc like we have all season.”

Adam Mills, Pitcher

On pitching in the Tournament

“It’s up there. I’ve never been on a team that has won a championship until this year when we won our conference championship. Having won that and then getting a chance to pitch in the regional is going to be one of the biggest games in my life. Going to an NCAA regional and getting that experience is going to be a lot of fun. I’m pretty psyched about it.”

On pitching late in the year

“I feel as good right now as I did my first start of the year. I actually probably feel a little better because it’s tough to get into it when it’s cold, but when the weather warms up that’s when you get loose and get more relaxed. I know the other guys on the team feel a ready as I do. We’re all fresh and ready to go.”

Kris Rochelle, Catcher

On getting to a Regional...

“Every year we have expected to go out there and don’t stop. I guess you can say we are at a lack of experience, but we’re about as relaxed and ready to go as you can be.”

N.C. State Head Coach Elliot Avent

On the tournament

“We’re happy to be at South Carolina, they’ve got a great baseball tradition throughout the years in Columbia and it’s obvious watching the games on TV that the fans really support the baseball program.”

On his plans for pitching

“I don’t think you can look too far ahead in a regional. If you had a situation where we had [Andrew] Brackman, Eric Surkamp, Jimmy Gilheeny, or Jeff Stallings or whoever it may be and you have Andrew Taylor or whoever to close the end of the game then you feel pretty good about keeping it the same and you probably try to keep it the same.”

On facing Charlotte standout pitcher Adam Mills

“He’s obviously impressive, leading the country in ERA. He’s got to be a bulldog and go after it, but he’ll have to because we’re going to be going after it too.”

Eryk McConnell, Pitcher

On playing at a field like Sarge Frye

“As far as balls flying out here in such an offensive park we need to just try to keep them off balance and do what we’ve done all year and keep the ball down.”

Caleb Mangum, Catcher

On the recent NC State offense and the addition of 2B Dallas Poulk

“Dallas is definitely a spark plug and gives us a lot of energy out there. We’ve hit a lot better with two strikes lately, and we’ve just been doing a lot of things well.”

Wofford Head Coach Steve Traylor

“We’re obviously excited on behalf of Wofford College to be participating in an NCAA Regional. We’ve had what we consider a great year at the College. We got progressively better as the season went on and it culminated into a pretty magical week in the Southern Conference tournament that resulted in a championship for us. We’re anxious to continue that and give everybody a run for their money.”

On having gone 0-2 against the Gamecocks this season

“I’m sure they’re a confident team coming in. Things are different, this isn’t a midweek game, this is an NCAA Regional. We’re throwing our number one pitcher and they’re throwing their number one pitcher. It’s a whole different environment.”

On his projected pitching lineup

“We feel like we’ve got two number one pitchers. Austin Redwine’s taken most of our Friday starts and Ben [Austin] has taken most of our Saturday starts. We’re definitely set up on Game 1 and Game 2 with Ben and Austin.”

Brandon Waring, Third Base

On playing in his hometown of Columbia

“It’s definitely exciting for me to be back in Columbia playing in front of the home crowd. I can get some of my family and friends come out and see me play.”

Ben Austin, Pitcher

On embracing the role as the underdog

“We’re going into this with pretty much the same odds as people gave us in the Southern Conference tournament which were slim to none.”