



NCAA Softball Durham Regional

Postgame Quotes – South Carolina vs. Utah

May 17, 2024 // Duke Softball Stadium // Durham, N.C.

South Carolina Head Coach Beverly Smith

Opening Statement

“Game one down. I thought that was a well-played softball game by both teams. I felt really good about our execution with a runner at third base. That’s what I just talked about with our team. Denver Bryant led off the inning, Riley [Blampied] had a giant double for us, and then Jen Cummings had a sack fly to get the first run. Then I think the biggest at-bat of the day was Aniyah Black with two strikes. Just a base hit up the middle to score Riley. And then Alana Vawter pitched a great game and was able to hold on to that one run lead. But sometimes game one is the toughest, and I’m proud of the performance today.”

Senior Pitcher Alana Vawter

On what was working well for her today

“I think first and foremost, the defense. We were making some big plays. Denver [Bryant] had a couple that were just crazy, unreal. Some backhand, some forehand. So being able to trust my defense in those situations and being able to know our scouting beforehand. Coach does a great job of making sure that I’m confident in knowing what my plan is for every batter. I think both of those were ready heading into the game, and we executed accordingly.”

On the importance of winning game one

“It’s huge. It’s everything to win game one. It sets you up a little bit better as you head into Saturday and hopefully Sunday to gain that momentum from every at bat, every pitch, and obviously the win at the end of the day.”

Senior Infielder Riley Blampied

On whether she thought her double was going over the fence

“Yeah, I was thinking it was there for a minute, and then it just didn’t have the lift to it. But I’m super happy with the double, getting Denver [Bryant] to third, and then scoring runs off of that.”

On the importance of the runs scored in the third inning

“We’re just trying to execute in every situation that we have runners on base. Having Denver [Bryant], there leading it off with no outs, I really wanted to move her and get her two bases. So, I’m super happy with that.”



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Utah Head Coach Amy Hogue

Opening Statement

“We didn’t play our best today. We were prepared yet had some second guessing and some uncomfortable at bats, and it carried too far into the game. Before you knew it, we were running out of outs. Pretty disappointing on day one to come out that flat.”

On Mariah Lopez’s complete game

“Mariah has been pitching great. And that’s part of what we talked about at the end of the game. Their hitters made her work. They took close pitches for balls and made her bring it a little more on the plate, and I wanted our hitters to work a little harder for Mariah and do the same thing to their pitcher. And they didn’t do it. But Mariah threw well enough to win this game and the last one we played, and our hitters aren’t finding a way to make those adjustments. Like I said, it’s been pretty disappointing.”

Senior Pitcher Mariah Lopez

On what was working well for her in the circle

“Leilani [Melendez] behind the plate got me a ton of calls today. Me and her were kind of in a groove. So that was working really well.”

On her mindset going forward as a leader of the team

“I’m just reminding the team that we didn’t play our best today, and that if we stick to who we are tomorrow we’ll be okay. No matter who we play.”

Sophomore Outfielder Abby Dayton

On what made South Carolina’s pitcher difficult to hit against

“I think it was ourselves. We were in our heads a lot. I don’t think there’s a pitcher out there that can keep this offense from hitting. When we don’t hit, it’s definitely ourselves. We’re getting ourselves out. I think we just need to control the strike zone.”

On the message to the team after the loss

“I think our team is really good with our backs against the wall. Coach said that we have one more game, and that’s all we need. We come out stronger when we lose. And I feel like at this point, we’ve got nothing to lose. We’re going to come out guns blazing.”