



Postgame Quotes

(2) USC vs. (7) Marist - Friday, May 14, 2010

**2010 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship
Aztec Aquaplex | San Diego State University | San Diego, Calif.**

(2) USC 20, (7) Marist 5

NCAA Championship - Quarterfinal Round, Game 1

USC Head Coach Jovan Vacic

Opening comment:

"We had a very good start. Our girls started the game strong, scoring six goals in the first quarter. I think that was tough for Marist, because they don't have the same kind of offensive power we have. They have a difficult time coming back. We were tough in the beginning of the game and our defense was very good."

On what he wanted to get out of the (quarterfinal) round game:

"We wanted to make sure we did not make silly mistakes and just focus on our defense - not too many silly ejections - good passing and execute the simple things. I think we did that for the most part. We got a little sloppy at the end, but I think for the most part we did that."

On staying focused in that type of game:

"That is always a challenge. I think that was part of the problem later in the game. Knowing that we were going to win the game and (sometimes) you lose your focus. I think overall, we did a good job. We played all of our players in the fourth quarter. We played mainly our girls who don't play too many minutes. It was a good experience for all of our girls to get an opportunity to play, many of them in their first NCAA (Tournament)."

USC Freshman Dominique Sardo

On being a freshman from San Diego playing in the championship:

"It's been comfortable. Leaving high school (and) coming here to (to try to) compete (and) win an NCAA title is incredible. Especially having it being in your hometown with your home fans, (in) a pool that I have played in many games in, is just an amazing feeling."

USC Junior Joelle Bekhazi

On possible semifinal round opponent:

"Well, we have been preparing all week for UCLA. It is not going to be an easy game. If they get ahead of us, we can panic. We have to relax and play our game."

Marist Head Coach Ashleigh Jacobs

Opening comment:

"It's been three weeks from our last game to now. Before the game started, we said we were going to find our water polo rhythm and knew we were facing an incredibly tough opponent; tied for first in the country, so we knew it was going to be a tough game and we had to find our rhythm,"

On the adjustments after the first timeout:

"The first timeout was really just to take a breath. We've played counter-defense before. This is the fastest team we have played all season and communication was lacking, (we were) just leaving some big openings and not covering back to where we needed to be all the way back to the 2-meters and inside and out. So it was just a time to take a breath and re-group."

On the team's first game jitters:

"This is the third year in a row we've been here and we have a lot of seniors. They know what to expect and that's why, even at 8-0 in, we are still getting good shots off, still running good 6-on-6's, good 6-on-5's. Absolutely, there is going to be that first game (nervousness) of NCAA's, going against a very strong opponent; they are not going to take it easy, they are going for a national championship. Even if we are Marist from Poughkeepsie, they aren't going to overlook us. They are going to be ready for that next game. So yeah, there was some star-struckness going on there, but I think the girls played tough and did what we needed to do at the end there."

Marist Senior Samantha Swartz

On the relief of scoring Marist's first goal:

"Getting shutout by anyone is not a good feeling at all. But getting on the board kind of just shows the rest of the team 'we can do this. we can play water polo.' This is a huge stage; it's the biggest stage. It's a great feeling to show the team that we can play."

On competing on this stage against elite level competition:

"It's a great honor. Even last night at the banquet, you are walking around with Olympians, (we're) playing Olympians. It's a great honor and it's so exciting. You come here and everybody's just star-struck. You try to play it off, but we just need to remember that we are going in here to play the sport that we love. That's why everyone's here right now, just because we love to play."