



## **2018 NCAA® DIVISION I SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**

Jack Turner Stadium • ATHENS SUPER REGIONAL • Saturday, May 26, 2018

### **Postgame Quotes**

#### **Tennessee Co-Head Coach Karen Weekly**

##### *Opening statements...*

First off, congratulations to Georgia. Great softball team. Two really great games, and I'm really proud of our girls and proud of the way we fought – the way we came back in last night's game and gave ourselves a chance to win. I'm proud of how we came out here today and just battled our tails off. Our backs were against the wall, so we knew there was no tomorrow, and I think we played like that.

##### *On the overall competition...*

"Neither team was going to go home with a loss. Everybody out there wanted to win, and wanted to win badly. Our locker room is pretty quiet out there; a lot of tears still flowing in there."

##### *On the outing from Tennessee starter Matty Moss...*

"Terrific performance. Georgia's one of the best hitting teams in the country. After the way they hit the ball against Matty [Moss] and Caylan [Arnold] up at our place, for both of our girls to pitch as well as they did over these two days, I think it says a lot about them because they had to really show some toughness to bounce back from really being hit hard at our place. I thought they both gave us a chance to win."

##### *On the performance of Georgia pitcher Mary Wilson Avant...*

"I just thought she got better as the game went along. I think the umpire's zone got a little bit lower, and a little bit more outside – she utilized it perfectly, and just kept pitching in that zone. We could just never get a ball squared up with runners on base. When she gave us pitches to hit, we hit them, and nobody was on. When she had to make pitches, she did, and that's the

key in championship play. Big-time players step up in big moments. They had more players step up and get clutch hits and clutch pitches when they needed to than we did.”

*On the Tennessee defense...*

“I thought our defense was phenomenal. Again, it’s just kids playing like they really wanted to keep on playing ball and just playing their hearts out. I’m really proud of them for diving around and flying around out there. A kid like Aubrey Leach, just so happy to have her back next year, because everybody this year saw what she can do. One of the most underrated players in the country. She does it all for us. I think you saw that on both sides of the ball – [Ciara Bryan] making that running catch into the wall in the last inning. Both teams were making incredible plays.”

*On the SEC matchups in postseason play...*

“As you watch the RPI play out throughout the season, and you watch yourself float around between seven and then 10 and 11, and you look at the other teams, you always figure there’s a potential matchup there. As strong as the SEC is, that doesn’t surprise me at all. This is our fourth year out of 10 Super Regional appearances that we’ve matched up against an SEC team. Actually, it’s the third year in a row that we’ve been paired up. Two years ago, we didn’t survive our Regional against Arizona, but had we won that, we would have come to Auburn, so this would’ve been the third year in a row against an SEC foe.”

**Georgia Head Coach Lu Harris-Champer**

*Opening statements...*

“Tennessee, what a great opponent. It was an amazing series out there. They fought hard; they’re so talented. I just thought they had a great year, so credit to them. About this team, I thought the synergy around the team was fantastic. I thought Mary [Wilson Avant] was lights out in the circle. She was really in sync with Coach [Rachele] Fico, and she threw her pitches with such ease and belief. Her changeup was remarkable. I’m proud of [her] for [her] steady pace and confidence in [her] team and [herself]. And then Cortni’s Cortni. She’s amazing. She’s the heart and soul of this team. An amazing leader for our team. I’m so proud of her. We get to watch her jack home runs every day in practice, and for her to step up in that situation, it tells you everything about her. To take a changeup to the trees is pretty phenomenal.”

*On the turnaround from last season...*

“It’s incredible. For the team, the transformation comes from within. I couldn’t be more proud of the team and their desire and dedication and determination to turn it around, and they certainly did that through their hard work and trust and the culture that’s been built from within. You just can’t say enough. And then to lose Brittany [Gray], it’s just heartbreaking, and it took us awhile to get through that because a lot of people wanted to do more to try to help the situation out. And we went through that stretch, and we were able to turn it around and get back to doing what we do. We didn’t have to do more. I’m just really proud of the team for just staying locked in and doing what they do. I think that’s the key, and when it comes down to it, like [Cortni Emanuel] said, it comes down to trust that they have for each other. It can’t just be about one person.”

**Senior LF #1 Cortni Emanuel**

*On her dad telling to hit a home run "to the trees" before the game...*

"I kept getting frustrated. I was saying 'Everybody's saying I'm out of the box; I never been called out of the box this many times.' And my dad was like, 'No one can take away what you've done. Just do you, be you, you're unstoppable.' And I was like, 'I'm unstoppable.' And he said, 'If you're not going to slap, then take it to the trees.' And so obviously I wasn't thinking about hitting it to the trees, but I knew it could be my last at-bat at Jack Turner Stadium, and I was like, 'I want to do this for my team.' When I was in the hole, I was in there preparing, locked in. When I was deck, I said '[Ciara], I need you to talk to me.' When I got up, I couldn't hear anything, I was just locked in, and it was there. So, I just took it to the trees."

*On her mindset before hitting the go-ahead home run...*

"Right before the game, we watched a video, and it was just about trusting yourself. I knew I had it in me, and so in that moment, I wasn't really thinking at all, I was just trusting what I can do and what I knew I could do. In that moment, it was just all about trust, trust, trust. I saw it there, and just took a hack."

*On using her last at-bat to send Georgia to the Women's College World Series...*

"Just being my senior year, I put my all into this team. We've worked so hard every single day since the fall to turn this program around from last year. We've just worked day in and day out. Just knowing that all of our hard work, and all of my hard work, is paying off, that's just a wonderful feeling. It doesn't even feel real, it feels like a dream. People dream of those moments, and it happened out there. I'm glad I could just do that for my team and just punch the ticket to OKC."

*On taking advantage of the moment with a third career home run in the Super Regional...*

"What's bigger is the love that we have for each other, and the love that we have for the team. The culture that we've built on this team is so much bigger than the home runs and the diving plays. We do it for each other day in and day out. That's just one way we can reward each other. But love is how we've gotten through this season, and how we've made moments like that happen."

**Sophomore RHP #5 Mary Wilson Avant**

*On handling situations with runners in scoring position...*

"It didn't even seem like it was bases loaded. We practice situations like that all the time in practice, and we all know how to manage our energy and not get too high and not get too low. In that case, we weren't getting too low, and so just keeping that calmness helps us."

*On improving throughout the game...*

"I feel like I got more locked in as the game went on, and the infield and outfield obviously help with that. They are always connecting with me and keeping me in it and locked down and calm."