

**June 4, 2013**



Oklahoma – 4  
Tennessee – 0

An interview with:

**TENNESSEE CO-HEAD COACH  
RALPH WEEKLY  
ELLEN RENFROE  
MADISON SHIPMAN  
LAUREN GIBSON**

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Tennessee co-head coach Ralph Weekly and student-athletes Lauren Gibson, Ellen Renfro, and Madison Shipman. We'll start with an opening comment from Coach and then go to the floor with questions.

COACH WEEKLY: Okay, I've got several things to say, but I'll keep it brief. First of all, thank you to the NCAA. Thanks to the committee, thanks for the ASA softball people. The field was beautiful. This is a place where every young girl wants to play, and it's a beautiful place to play. It's a place of dreams.

I want to congratulate the University of Oklahoma. They are amazing. They're an amazing team. Okay? I spent nine years with our National Team, and I think that Oklahoma team would have beaten most of the other countries that we played, even the great ones. I don't know if they would have beaten the U.S., but I tell you what, they're a great team.

I think my team's a great team. I really do. I think we earned our way here by tremendous super regional against a great Alabama team, and by beating some great teams to advance to the championship series. We schemed last night and got ready and almost won in a great game. Then we schemed all day to try to beat them again, and we gave it everything we had. I mean, we left it on the field, and they just beat us.

**Q. You talked last night about how you were going to have to find some offense, and obviously, it didn't happen. I guess, could you talk about how them switching away from Ricketts might have impacted your plans for today?**

COACH WEEKLY: It definitely impacted our plans. We knew it was a possibility, but we had never faced that pitcher. We knew she was one of the top 10 finalists for Player of the Year, so we knew how good she was. But it's hard to find information on her.

So, you know, I mean, we tried. I know it might have looked like we just weren't hitting out there. But I tell you, our kids were really trying. We were making in-game adjustments. She just pitched a great game.

**Q. Lauren and Madison, can you just talk about what your emotions are this long process you've been through and the way it ended up tonight?**

LAUREN GIBSON: With it being my senior year, obviously, I mean, ending on that field is amazing. But obviously I wanted to end with the National Championship. But I have one of the most amazing years with a great group of girls. I couldn't have asked for a better senior year. Yeah, I had a fun time.

MADISON SHIPMAN: Oh, man, I told myself I wasn't going to do this. No, it's just been a great year all around, and I'm really going to miss our seniors. I think they played their hearts out. It's a tough loss out there, but Oklahoma's a great team. Looking forward to next year.

**Q. Coach, was there a reason why you thought to pull Ellen's sister, Ivy, after two and a third after she gave up that big home run?**

COACH WEEKLY: No, I just felt like we wanted to try a change. I think as Ivy told Karen, she wasn't exactly hitting her spots, and, again, Ivy's a great pitcher. She pitched us into the 2010 and 2012 World Series and did well in both of

them. She just wasn't hitting her spots; and when you don't hit your spots against that kind of team, it's going to be a long day.

**Q. Ellen, how did you feel tonight before the game and then when you came?**

ELLEN RENFROE: I felt confident coming into the game. I knew we had a shot since we played them pretty close last night. But obviously Oklahoma's a great team. Going out I was just trying to give my team a shot. Keeping the game close, keeping Oklahoma at three runs or as close to it as possible.

Like I said, Oklahoma's proven they're a deep team. They're deep pitching-wise and offensively, so props to them.

**Q. (No Microphone).**

ELLEN RENFROE: A little fatigued from yesterday, but nothing that's out of the ordinary.

**Q. You lose some seniors, Lauren and others, you bring back a young team. You have Ellen Renfroe; you have Madison Shipman and other people. Where do you see yourself as you look forward to the SEC for 2014?**

COACH WEEKLY: I see ourselves as being very good. We're losing some great players, but we had six underclassmen on the field at the end of the game. And we have a number two ranked class coming in. We have some kids that didn't get in the game tonight that are very good. Obviously we're going to miss these seniors. They're fantastic.

But I think when you get to a certain level, you've got to just be there every year. You don't reload; you just keep going. You pick up the players to replace the players and try to get going. Obviously freshmen are never as good as seniors, but I think we'll have a good team next year. I think we'll be good.

**Q. Ralph, could you put into your thoughts about what this team accomplished? I know you wanted to win a National Championship, that was a goal. But just getting to where you did, did this team come pretty close to reaching the potential?**

COACH WEEKLY: Yes, we did. We played in a very, very tough conference, and we had a lot of tough games and we finished .27 points out of the conference lead. We finished, we won the regional, we won the super regional and



visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

we won our way into the championship playoffs. This is a great team. We led the SEC in hitting, as I said last night, against SEC opponents. We were number two in pitching, and this team can play with anybody, any time, except the last night or so. This team, the team we played last night and (tonight), was just an unbelievable team. The best we've seen all year, and I still think we were definitely in it last night; and if we had another chance, we might be in it tomorrow. But congratulations to Oklahoma. They won.

**Q. I wonder -- you've seen a lot of the greatest players over the last however many years, 20 years or so. Where does Ricketts rank in the discussions of the greats of all time in the college game so far, number one? Number five, top 10?**

COACH WEEKLY: Well, I couldn't tell you exactly where, but she's the two-time National Player of the Year, so I think that puts her up there at the top. I mean, no question. You might want to ask the players. But she's very good, and she's really a good person. I mean, she plays hard, but she doesn't taunt and carry on and things like that. She's just a really good person, and she deserves all the accolades she's won.

**Q. Would any of the players like to weigh in on where you think Keilani comes in in softball history?**

LAUREN GIBSON: I definitely think -- I played with Keilani on the USA team, and I think she's definitely up there in the top. I know a fact for me, at least, her and Chelsea Thomas have been the two hardest pitchers for me to see as a hitter. But I would definitely say she ranks up there in the Top 10, for sure.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**