



2016 NCAA SOFTBALL LEXINGTON REGIONAL

Friday, May 20 | John Cropp Stadium - Lexington, Ky.

Game 1: Utah def. Illinois 1-0

Utah Opens Regional with 1-0 Victory

Sophomore pitcher Miranda Viramontes tossed 6.2 scoreless innings in the circle for Utah, who got an RBI single in the third inning by shortstop Anissa Urtez to pace the Utes to a 1-0 victory over Illinois in the opening game of the 2016 NCAA Softball Lexington Regional on Friday at John Cropp Stadium.

Viramontes was the star in the circle, tossing 6.2 innings, allowing only three hits and no runs with six strikeouts and one walk allowed. She was relieved in the top of the seventh inning by sophomore pitcher Katie Donovan, who walked a batter to load the bases before getting a strikeout to end the game. Viramontes got the win to move to 9-7 on the season, while Donovan picked up her third save of the season.

Illinois junior pitcher Breanna Wonderly went six innings and allowed just one earned run on five hits with two strikeouts in a tough-luck loss. Wonderly is now 16-12 on the season.

Utah will advance to face the winner of Kentucky-Butler, while Illinois will face the loser of those two teams.

Utah Head Coach Amy Hogue

Opening statement ...

"It's fun to get that one under our belt. Traveling, then having that day of practice before the game – we're not used to that. Having a travel day, having a practice day and then a game, it's hard to wait that long to play. Thankfully the game got moved up to this morning so we didn't have to wait as long. We were ready to play and we're excited about the win."

On Utah's performance...

"I think we left a lot on the table. I think we showed what we can do defensively and with our pitching, but I think our offense is going to explode at any point. I wanted them to in this game, and we haven't yet, but we've got a lot more offensive prowess. I'm looking forward to seeing us loosen up and show what we've got. That pitcher is really good – I've seen her beat some good teams on film the last few days, and I knew she'd give us fits and she did a little bit, but we knew we needed to pitch and play defense and we kept that zero spot on the board for them along with the one run we got with Anissa [Urtez]'s RBI got it done. I think we're capable of a lot more offensively and I'm excited to see what we're capable of now that we have the nerves out."

On whether the way the last game with Kentucky ended would have any effect on a possible rematch ...

"We actually gained a lot of confidence in that game. It was early in the season against a top team and our pitching and defense gave us a chance to win. We scored some balls up and fell and I felt that this game was very similar to that one we played against Kentucky. We came out on the good end in this one and the bad end of that one. I think we gained a lot of confidence even in the loss, which is something we've learned to do this season in the Pac-12. Even when you lose games you've got to have them help prepare you for the very next day. I think the postseason may be very similar where you have to take the positives and roll with it and do your best to move ahead. We were close last time, a hit away from winning it, and we'll get that hit if we face them tomorrow."

On how last year's NCAA experience helped the team going into the game ...

"I'd echo what Miranda [Viramontes] had to say. We gave Miranda the ball in the first game and we've been giving her the ball in the first game most weekends. It really wasn't any different than any other weekends and she handled it just like it was any other weekend. It is different, but it didn't feel any different this year. It felt like another Pac-12 weekend, meaning its going to be hard every weekend, you go out and do what you know how to do and check the scoreboard at the end and see if it was enough."

Utah Student-Athletes

#20, Miranda Viramontes, P

On her performance in the circle...

"I was feeling really excited – last year I was more nervous about the Regional thing, but this year I was just more excited. I'm proud of the way I went out there composed and just did what I know how to do."

On what pitches were working for her...

"A little bit of everything. My drop, my changeup, pretty much what I was throwing the whole time."

On handling the anticipation of playing...

"Well we [Kay Kay and Miranda] were both up until around two in the morning. I said it was like the night before Christmas because it was very exciting."



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On how nerve-racking the top of the seventh inning was...

"We've been in a lot of close games so we're kind of used to that pressure and we play for that. I think we all stayed composed and we handled it pretty well."

On how last year's NCAA experience helped the team going into the game ...

"We didn't really know what to expect heading into it last year so that helped, knowing the atmosphere and what we're getting into. For me it just felt like another game not 'oh, Regionals game one.'"

#11, Kay Kay Fronda, OF

On her performance hitting ...

"I was just excited – and I guess I put a little extra focus since it is playoffs – but I just wanted to go out and do it for my team. When you bat leadoff you want to get on base and I think I executed that today."

On handling the anticipation of playing...

"I could not sleep. I was ready to get up go. After all the delays we were ready to just get up and go."

Illinois Head Coach Tyra Perry

On if nerves played a role in the outcome ...

"I think so. A lot of our seniors, especially, weren't their normal selves. It was a long road getting here, especially for those guys, having the drought for so many years, so nerves were to be expected. But we have to figure out a way to overcome those nerves."

On if the rally in the 7th made them optimistic...

"I was 100 percent optimistic. My team has done that over and over again and someone has come through. Especially with a senior batter at the plate, we practice on that all the time in those situations so I really felt like we had the momentum and we would push through."

On what made it so difficult to get hits ...

"I think it was us. She threw the type of pitches that my hitters hit well, we were just anxious and all coaches in the room know that there's a difference between playing to win and playing not to lose. Our at-bats were more reflective of just trying to get ahead and not just sitting there and owning the box."

Illinois Student-Athletes

#20, Breanna Wonderly, P

On them only having five hits and one run before the game ...

"Personally I was a little nervous coming in, but once I got on the field I got in my comfort zone and threw the pitches that coach called and my defense picked me up there."

#40, Nicole Evans, OF

On what the team has to do to look forward to tomorrow ...

"We have to come out doing what we have done all season. We are a great team and we just have to believe that, when we come out and play our game no one can hang with us. Just believing in ourselves will be the key to staying in this tournament."

On what made it so difficult to get hits ...

"We just needed to adjust quicker, like coach said, she's the type of pitcher we can hit easily, we just need to adjust. We kind of talked to each other a little more about that."