

Women's College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Sunday, May 17, 2026

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Tiger Park

LSU Tigers

Coach Beth Torina

Alix Franklin

Jalia Lassiter

Paytn Monticelli

Maci Bergeron

Postgame Press Conference



name every player in the dugout for how they conducted themselves and the energy. It was a total team effort. We executed the plan beautifully. We knew that the plan was not going to be won in one moment or won anything; it was going to be executed death by a thousand cuts, is what we've talked about, continuing and continuing.

They did that, pressure throughout. Pressure throughout the whole weekend. Never let up. But just couldn't be prouder of this team and excited about what's in front of them.

Q. Paytn, they handed you the ball in a big moment. What was it like for you out there stepping out there and what were your emotions?

PAYTN MONTICELLI: Honestly, I was nervous. Not nervous to face the team that we had on the other side of the field. But just like I had butterflies. It's all good feelings. I wasn't playing scared or anything.

I was just trying to acknowledge the fact that this was a big game, and it was easy to kind of settle in after that first inning because my teammates like they had my back and they gave me the breathing room I needed to kind of just take a breath and take a second and realize that I was okay.

But it was super fun and a great opportunity and a great team to play against. It was a great challenge, and we're super excited for what's next.

Q. All players, you guys talked about playing free all season. Y'all clearly did that today. How fun was it to go out there and get that win?

JALIA LASSITER: It was just awesome. We talk about our presence a lot. We had our plan, we knew athleticism was going to do that. It was just our presence. We're just a great group. We're just fun together. We love each other to death we just knew to be ourselves and we went out there and did that.

Q. Maci, what does it mean to not just win this regional, but dominate the way you all did, you

LSU 7, Virginia Tech 2

BETH TORINA: I want to say congratulations to Virginia Tech, an incredible season, incredible team. I can hardly remember an opponent that was just that classy, that well put together. They just do what they do at a really high level. They don't gimmick it. They don't do anything except they win softball games. A really incredible year for them and really an honorable opponent.

And then I don't even know where to start on our team. I'm so proud of the entire group. I'm proud of their growth. I'm proud of the senior leadership. I've been a part of a few of these, fortunately. And every time our seniors have decided that it's time to go, those have been the ones that go the best.

This senior class has just been incredible this weekend. They've been incredible down the stretch. So many cool stories baked into this thing, too. I mean, the day that Alix Franklin had, and Maci, and Jay always has a good weekend I think.

And the story behind Paytn Monticelli, the fact that she just threw the regional championship like in her journey and her story, it makes me feel super emotional just to think about what she just did out there and the journey it took for her to be at LSU and standing on the mound in that moment. Avery Hodge isn't up here.

But our senior class was incredible in making this thing happen. I could name every player by name. I could



outscored your opponents 23-2?

MACI BERGERON: We trained all season long for this moment this weekend. I'm super proud of everyone we executed. We had a lot of energy in the dugout. Couldn't have asked for a better team to be around, coaching staff to be around. They make it easy to play here.

Q. Alix, break down your highlight reel catch. And, Jalia, you can chime in because I think you had the best seat in the house right there.

ALIX FRANKLIN: Actually, Jalia and I have probably practiced balls at the wall I don't even know how many times. Shout out to Easton, our manager, who hits it to us all the time. I just can't even believe that happened. Jalia, thanks for celebrating me. But that was just so awesome. I've never played the outfield before. So to make that catch was really, really cool. And I'm just glad that we're going to Supers.

BETH TORINA: I tell them all the time that on your journey to the World Series, like, there will be a play. There will be one play that if you hit that ball a hundred times, you catch it once. It's just like you have to go for that play. We've had one every time. Maybe we'll have another one next weekend, too. When she made that play, that's all I could think about, like, there it is, there's the one. That's the catch. That's the play.

Q. Jalia, you kicked off that rally when you were down and they didn't score again. You guys led the rest of the way. To come through as one of these seniors in a big spot to kind of kick things off for you guys to get the win how did that feel in that moment?

JALIA LASSITER: It was awesome. I'm always one swing away and I really believe in that. And when I fouled that pitch back, I just told myself I'm there. I know it was one ball a little high and if she missed I knew I was going to do damage to it and just as the support I have in the dugout and people around me, I'm always one swing and they just let me be me and I'm that spark, and I just kind of go for it. So I was just excited to kind of do that for them.

Q. Maci, just ending your career here at Tiger Park just like that, you know, it's obviously emotional. Cheers of happiness, of course, but what does it mean to you to just have the weekend series you had and end it like that?

MACI BERGERON: It means a lot to me. Obviously there's parts of this season that didn't go the way I wanted it to. But having the weekend I had for Regionals and taking my team to Supers and them do that means

everything to me. Our fans came out this weekend. They were awesome. Our support staff. Couldn't have asked for a better crowd this weekend. I'm just grateful to be an LSU Tiger.

Q. Paytn, after they got those runs off you in those first couple of innings, what adjustments did you do?

PAYTN MONTICELLI: Honestly, I just trusted myself more and didn't try to force my pitches. I don't know if that makes sense. I feel like when I try to force things, I honestly end up just piping it and it's not a good pitch and it's slow.

So the next inning that I went out there I was like, okay, I have everything I need to succeed, now I'm just going to go. And that's kind of been my phrase that I've been saying this week to my other teammate, just go.

I was like, wait, let me just say that to myself. I actually just went for it and didn't hold anything back.

Q. Tell us about your triumphant return to the third base coaching.

BETH TORINA: Back like I never left, that's what I told them. Just I'm the pitching coach, so I understand pitching. So sometimes out there I can see something on the other pitcher a little differently. I wanted to give it a shot. I was very good luck out there. I think Sandra's lucky she didn't lose her job today, because I was pretty good luck out there. I got to give Jalia her 5 on her way around the home run. That was really fun. Loved it.

Q. You touched on your seniors, but how poetic is it for Jalia and Maci to get the ball rolling in this game, in their final home game at that?

BETH TORINA: I think when you have seniors that are so important to you, it can go a couple different ways. Sometimes they're panicking that it's ending. Sometimes they're checked out on you. But these four are so bought in. They're such a huge part of what we're doing. They've fought all year to be great, to be in these moments, and when your seniors can do that for you, I think it makes your team really, really special at the end.

So, so fun. Jalia's been doing it all year, been grinding it out. I mean, she's having an All-American-type year, in my opinion, but then how cool is it to see Maci have the weekend that she had too just really, really makes your heart happy to see Maci do that.

When I think about just the story of Paytn Monticelli transferring multiple times and just fighting to be the pitcher

that she always knew she could be and then standing out there on the mound today is a really incredible, incredible thing for her.

Q. Jalia said it better than I could, she's a spark. So she's just been doing this all year for you guys. She kicks things off again today. So for her to do that on this stage with going into Supers against another really good team, what are you expecting to get out of her in these last couple of games with her?

BETH TORINA: I always say she makes us brave. She makes us brave. She steps up to the plate. She's fearless. She's not afraid to execute the plan. She's not afraid to go for it. She never is. And she's going to come back and give us great feedback. Even if she doesn't get a hit, she comes back and makes the team feel like they can. That's a really, really incredible thing to have in a lead-off hitter.

Q. Heading to super regionals, you guys obviously have a lot of momentum, but specifically for your defense, I think, was it two runs all weekend? What can you just say about them and their performance over the Regionals?

BETH TORINA: Yeah, this has become an elite defense. I mean just absolutely elite. I think the left side of this infield, Sierra Daniel, Tori made some incredible plays too. But I think we can't look past what the left side of this infield does especially, Avery making the move to third base and a really selfless move, and now I don't know if I've been around a third baseman like that in my career, the things that she's able to field cut off and then her incredible arm.

And Kylie, I mean, the ball that smoked at Kylie, I don't know if I've ever seen that play either. She made it look so easy, flipped it over to first. So it has been easy just an elite defense.

And then outfield U, out in the outfield, that's what we like to call it, and it was that today. And just making all kind of plays all over the place. Alix, and huge credit to Sandra, teaching Alix all the things she did this year working with this defense. Taylor with the infield. They've done an incredible job with this defense, so a big part of why we're in all the ball games.

Q. Virginia Tech's coach came in and said that his team felt carrying momentum from last night they're three outs away from being eliminated, then their big rally. He felt like they carried momentum to start the game. Did you address that with your team about being ready if they are carrying it over before you got to the third inning and that's when you changed the

narrative?

BETH TORINA: I felt that myself. Like I sat in the stands and watched that game. I felt like that would be something for them today, that they would have some momentum.

I just also thought that we would be a lot for them to handle. They had had all their pitchers in the games. They had to do a lot of things to play that game. So winning that game yesterday really set us up for success today.

Bryce talked a lot. He gave an incredible speech before the game. Talked a lot about making them feel our presence, like whether we score or don't score, making them feel us. And I thought our dugout was awesome in that, too. Just the energy coming from our side of the field was incredible. Jalia starting it off. But there were just a lot of things, and his speech was all about making them feel our presence. So I don't think that ever became a factor because of that.

Q. Paytn retired the last 16 hitters she faced. Did you see her getting into a groove when that was beginning?

BETH TORINA: I saw her smile, finally. Like inning 3 after we scored the runs, I saw her smile. She slowed down. Her pace was super fast the first two innings. I did get on her a little bit after the second, and I was like, your job is competitiveness, your job is energy. We don't even care what the pitchers are, that's why you're out there today. She's so competitive, just what she brings to the field.

That's why we chose her today because of what she brings to us in that. Obviously she has great stuff, there's no doubt. But we chose her for that reason.

She finally was able to breathe a little bit. She talked about being nervous, but I saw her smile in the third inning, and I was like, all right, we're good. We're back. We're fine. She slowed down and we're smiling.

Q. You talked about playing your best softball. You guys feel like you're almost there? Are you there? Because you guys played really good this weekend? Where do you feel like you're at when you're playing your best softball?

BETH TORINA: This team's definitely peaking at the right time. We got this one right. I think we went through some stuff early. We were hard on them in the fall. We wanted to make them tough. Then we went through some stuff early. I think that's paying dividends now. I do feel like we got this one right.

Would it have been nice to win a couple more earlier and not be the 16th seed, sure, it would have. But they're playing really good now. At this point, it's us against us and less about the opponent on the other side of the field.

Q. I believe you spoke before the Regionals started about your pitching depth. Three different pitchers, you gave up only two runs the whole time. Obviously this time of the year, that's very important. But you guys were really on point with that the whole time.

BETH TORINA: Yeah, three complete games is pretty incredible this time of year, it really is. Honestly, I hadn't thought about it. I did think for a minute in that game -- I did almost go to Jayden. There's a spot where the lefties were coming up, but I almost did go to Jayden but Paytn kept cruising through it. But the fact that we got out of that without Jayden in either of those games is really incredible. It says a lot about Cece and Paytn and the depth of this staff and what Jayden did on Friday night, I think we got that one right, too.

Wanted to really put our best foot forward in this postseason and set a tone, and Jayden is responsible for that, the way she came out, struck out the side to start the postseason. I wanted that feeling for the team, and she gave us that.

So I hope she gets credit for a lot of what we did this weekend, even though she wasn't maybe in the last two games.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the next step, you're going to be going to Alabama next weekend, and what that entails.

BETH TORINA: So I've heard. I guess they won. Alabama's just had a great season. Their pitching coach used to work for us. We've pulled for them all year. We always do. He's done a great job with their pitching staff. We've gotten to see a lot of them. They've had an incredible year, impressive year.

So we'll start getting to the film and figuring out what our match-up is. It's always interesting when you get somebody from your league, but you haven't seen them all year. So we'll start from scratch and start to see what things we can bring to the table, and excited to continue on and see where we can go from there.

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