



# 2013 VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

DIVISION I • LOS ANGELES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, HOST

Galen Center | Los Angeles, Calif.

Thursday, Dec. 12, 2013

**Pre-regional Press Conference**

## BYU QUOTES

### **BYU Head Coach SHAWN OLMSTEAD**

#### *Opening statement*

"Thank you to the University of Southern California for hosting this event. We're obviously excited to be here. It's exciting for our team, it's exciting for our program, our school, to be here two years in a row and be at this stage. We're excited about the opportunity to compete with USC here at the Galen Center. I think it will be a great match between two teams that are playing really well right now."

#### *On unique challenges that USC presents*

"Each opponent presents a unique problem or matchup. As a coach, you look at it individually. You look at each team. You look at each player. They're going to be a little bit different than the teams we've competed against in the West Coast Conference. They're going to be a little more physical; a little bigger, taller, stronger, across the board. Other than that, we've played ranked teams on the road and we've done very well. We've competed very well. We've gone into hostile environments against great opponents. We showed that last week. I don't know if there are any really unique challenges but I think it's another opponent. The uniqueness about it is the matchup. We're one of 16 teams remaining in the country. Apart from that, the girls just look at it as another opportunity to improve and compete. They've done really, really well with those opportunities."

#### *On USC's second-year setter [Hayley Crone]*

"A veteran setter is going to be a lot more familiar with situations as the match unfolds; transition, out of serve-receive, and those kinds of opportunities. As you watch their setters play, they do know where they are situationally as the play unfolds and they're comfortable in transition and serve-receive. It's not a bad thing from a coaching perspective. It's a good thing. They know who to get the ball to when they need it. It's always nice to have a veteran kid running your offense because you can get a little crafty from the setter position but just knowing where you are, the moment of the match, or the particular set, that's all very important from that perspective."

#### *On what point in the season he realized this team could get this far*

"The conversation with Jennifer Hamson redshirting—she's a first-team All-American that we redshirted this year [to play basketball]. That conversation began a year ago from right about now. The discussions were kind of brief here and there. At first, everyone said 'are you stupid, do you want to be working at the nearest In-N-Out next year or in two years down the road?' We let Jenn play basketball and then Jenn came to us. The reason that I'm giving that background is because I believed we still had a really, really strong team. I'm not going to lie. The addition of Tambre Haddock, that was a surprise. From day one, from the first day of practice, that kind of confirmed what we thought. We had a good team in Alexa Gray, Ciara [Parker], Tia [Withers Welling], Kathryn LeCheminant. We have all these kids returning, now look at what this kid adds. I think Jenn saw that as well and the excitement of being able to focus on basketball and then focus on volleyball. We practiced at a really, really high level without Jenn. The turning point was when we opened up conference at home against No. 2 San Diego, a team that had just beaten USC, and we spanked them. I mean we beat them good in three sets and put a kind of an exclamation mark on that. From there, they went through the rest of the first half of our conference season undefeated. That's where I think everyone said 'okay'."



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*On what Tambre Haddock offers on the court that is unique*

"She knows she's got the green light if there ever was one [as does Alexa]. What I love about Tambre is that if she gets blocked or hits it out, the kid is going to come back with a full head of steam. She's not going to get tentative. She's not going to look to tip the ball or roll-shot the ball or just keep it in. She's going to come back even harder. She's going to jump a little higher and she's going to hit a little harder. That's what we liked about Tambre. She's brought that physical part of the game to our team. It's unique when a kid gets blocker or hit it out, that they just find a way to put the ball away. It's one thing to keep preaching it to them, and they'll still do it, but she brings that to our team. She's an unbelievable addition to our team and our program. She engages with everyone on this team and she also brings experience of playing in the NCAA tournament for two years from another program. She was at Northern Colorado and was a starter since she was a freshman – so two years of playing on this stage and that has been a real asset for this team."

*On the key to beating USC*

"Listening to these two players, I like their approach. I'm not saying that this is just another match. I get what it is. The kids get what it is. That's been our approach to every match. Here's our opponent. Here's what we do best. Here's how we can better ourselves. They've shown that they are getting better and better at the right time. We're just going to work on improving ourselves. We'll get after it. With a team like USC, you've got to put the pressure on them. You've got to dig them and block them and try to touch their attacks; receive serve well. If we can shore up our side, I like what we can do. I like the way that we can compete. We've shown that ability to do it against both ranked and unranked teams. This is a group that's not just pleased to be back where they were last year. They're hungry and they're ready to get after it for something more."

**ALEXA GRAY, So.**

*On unique challenges USC presents*

"I guess they're different in that their conference is really strong. They have to be a bit more physical, hit the ball harder to get the balls down, but a volleyball team is a volleyball team and they're just another opponent."

*On a particular turning point in the season*

"I think probably the San Diego game was where I felt that we could come back to the sweet 16 and even further. I just knew that our team had a lot of fight and a lot of heart. I could see that in the players and how we practice. After our first tournament, we got off to a rocky start, but after that, we just kept getting better. I was really excited because I knew what we could do and what we could do together."

*On the key to beating USC*

"On our side of the court, we need to stay clean and be aggressive, hit the ball hard. If they score a few points, we'll come back even harder. If they're up, we're going to keep fighting, and if we're up, we're going to keep fighting even harder to gain momentum to get as far as we can."



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### **TAMBRE HADDOCK, Jr.**

*On unique challenges USC presents*

"What we focus on is just focusing on ourselves and making sure we're doing the things and improving in practice every day. Just worrying about us and improving is one of our focuses."

*On a particular turning point in the season*

"I just remember from the beginning of the season, our coaches always believed in us, but I would agree. The San Diego game – that's when we believed in ourselves. We knew what we were capable of and we knew what we could bring to the court every time we stepped out there."

*On the key to beating USC*

"We talked about not giving them any points. We need to stay aggressive from the service line. Serve-pass is always the key to matches. Just keep attacking, keep aggressive, and don't ever back down kind of attitude towards the game."