

**2015 NCAA Men's Golf Championship Match**  
**No. 7 seed LSU vs. No. 5 seed Southern California**  
**Wednesday, June 3 – Concession Golf Club – Bradenton, Florida**

**Chuck Winstead**  
**Head Coach**

***Opening Statement ...***

“Well, hats off to USC and Coach Chris Zambri. We don't have the opportunity to play with them very much. Maybe a couple times a year, but they've got five great players and played really well today. Proud of my guys. Obviously the Concession Club, it's a challenging golf course, and to be able to play around here the way they did this week, we're very happy about it.”

***On the team meeting held before their final round of regionals when in 10<sup>th</sup> place ...***

“Well, through the 10 years that I've done this, we've made nationals, and I don't have the exact numbers, but I want to say maybe we've made five of the last six or something like that. Almost every time we've had to play well the last round. Regionals, as any college coach would know, it's challenging no matter where you are, no matter how good you are. So I gave the guys examples of John Peterson, Andrew Loupe, Sang Yi, Austin Gutsell when they were at Virginia Tech and had to play a great round the last round, showed them the progression in scores, 305, 291, 284. You know what I'm saying? And I think I need to be a better coach and get the 284 on the front end because these guys are great players, but for whatever reason, we've had to do it. I showed them the examples. I told them I believed that they could do it, and I told them that if they didn't believe they could do it that it wasn't going to happen.”

***On Ben Taylor adjusting to life at LSU after transferring in 2013...***

“Yeah, like he said, he had a relationship built with Garrett (Runion), and Garrett has done a phenomenal job coaching him. From my perspective, he came over to the team, fit in with the guys, and you know, I'm obviously proud of the putt. But the other guys up here holed putts, too. That's the one that is going to be shown as sealing the deal, but it's like the last free throw that goes in. In golf, at least from my perspective, it happens over about a two-and-a-half mile stretch out there, and there are putts missing, and all of a sudden one goes in at the end. I'm proud of all of them.”

***On how he will remember this team in the future ...***

“I mean, I'm obviously proud of them. We did in some ways have a breakthrough last year making match play and then winning our first match against UCLA. We played and lost to a great Alabama team, who won the national championship. To come back, lose Smylie Kaufman and Curtis Thompson and have Eric Ricard and Brandon Pierce step into this lineup this year and play the way they did, I don't know all the scoring averages out there, but I'll put those two sophomores up against almost any sophomores relative to what they contributed to my team. You know, so I guess for me, I'm proud of all of them. It's more than golf. I'm proud of them just the people that they are, and I'm happy for them they get to experience this.”

***On the team's ability to rest and focus the night before the NCAA title match ...***

“Well, I don't know exactly what time they went to sleep, but it probably was later than I wanted them to. It's still exciting. The Golf Channel does such a great job showing the championship, that when you see – and all of you guys that care about these guys and what they do – when you have success and then you're able to go back to the hotel room when you're 18 to 22 years old and you get to watch yourself on television, it's hard to go to bed. You're excited about the opportunity to succeed and you're excited about the opportunity that may exist to win a national championship, and then you get to go and watch yourself – the rerun. It's on until midnight. My guess is that these guys probably, even though the text message and the message was turn it off, I'm sure they were up late.”

***On the support the team has received from LSU's former players and athletes ...***

“LSU is a special place. I'm a homer, but it's a special place. It doesn't matter what sport you play. It doesn't matter. I mean, Tiger Stadium is a special place, but I promise you, it's not the football. It's the people. It's the people at Alex Box for the Super Regional coming up this weekend, and all those people – it doesn't – men's golf, women's golf, it doesn't matter. If you're successful, even if you're not successful, they love these guys because they carry a banner that means so much to those people. I don't know how to put it into words. When you're there, if you're on campus or you're there and people that go to Tiger Stadium feel it, it's real.”

***On the difficulty of playing eight rounds in seven days at Concession Golf Club ...***

“It's long. I didn't play. It's long. But all that to be said, (Mariah) Stackhouse (from Stanford) and who from Baylor – how phenomenal did they play coming down the stretch? And all I kept telling these guys, they played phenomenal golf coming down the stretch, same format, nobody looked like they were tired, grabbed their bag and hit shots out of the lake to nothing and then to make birdies coming in? That was special. That was really great. It's like I said yesterday, you can't, I mean, it's the national championship. Tired doesn't work.”

**Ben Taylor**

**Senior – Leatherhead, England**

***On his two-putt on the 18<sup>th</sup> green to win the championship ...***

“My first one I had into the grain up to the slope to get to the top of that tier, and then it was very quick going to the hole. Surprisingly past it, just over that bunker, it can run off the green, so we knew it was a very fast putt. Having said that, I didn't hit a very good putt, didn't even get it anywhere near the hole and had that eight-foot putt down the hill, and it was straight downgrain. It was relatively straight, just broke a touch off the left, and we hit that putt in the practice round so I was quite confident with the line and hit a good putt. It never looked like missing.”

***On being able to putt out on the 18<sup>th</sup> green to win the championship ...***

“I was thinking the same thing actually because yesterday was fun hitting that shot close and I wanted to putt it because it obviously feels nicer to hole the putt, but having said that, you're always going to take the win, of course. But today was special. Coach (Chuck Winstead) said to me numerous times today and said to me before I hit the last putt, I've holed a million of these putts, it's just one more putt, and we knew we were going to hole it, we had the perfect line, and it was a very special moment for me to end my college career. Holing that nine-foot putt to win the national championship was very special.”

***On winning NCAA Division I and Division II National Championships ...***

“It's an awesome feeling. I'm very lucky to, having competed for two very special schools. Nova Southeastern, it was a very good school, and winning the national championship with them was amazing, and I actually won that with Garrett (Runion). He was my coach, and to make the transition to LSU and to be guided by Chuck (Winstead) and Garrett again is very special. To win both national championships is awesome, but to come here to Concession and hole that putt to win the Division I national championship is very, very special.”

**Stewart Jolly**

**Senior – Birmingham, Ala.**

***On how far away the national championship seemed on the last day of regionals ...***

“I don't think it felt that far off because we knew that we were due to play a good round at regionals, and we've been doing that all year. We've had several tournaments where we started off poorly, but we have

played very, very well in the final round, and we started after the second round, we all got together and had a little talk, and we all started believing in each other. Well, we obviously believed in each other the whole time, but we started getting our minds wrapped around that we could actually make the comeback, and we went out there ready to play and played phenomenal and got ourselves here.”

***On comparing last year’s team with this year’s team ...***

“I think that they’re both very special teams. Last year, I feel like we were actually pretty close to being able to do what we did this year. It was just a couple of things went Alabama’s way, and that’s why we lost the semifinals. And then this year we got a couple of things go our way, and here we are. Just a couple of breaks out, I mean, small things. It doesn’t take much to get the momentum from matches going certain ways. I mean, we played great.”

**Zach Wright**

**Junior – Phoenix, Arizona**

***On comparing last year’s team that lost in the NCAA Semifinal to this year’s team ...***

“I don’t know. I mean, last year we went there, and I guess we thought we could make match play I’d say. Once we got there, we were so excited to make match play, and then this year, I guess we came here expecting to make match play. Going on and trying to do this, last year it was kind of like a shock, so when we did get to match play, we weren’t exactly prepared for it I’d say. This year we were definitely mentally there.”

**Brandon Pierce**

**Sophomore – Covington, Louisiana**

***On getting in the lineup for the first time this season to help the team win ...***

“I mean, I was coming back after a winter break, didn’t know where my game was going to be, had a couple good tournaments, and I knew my goal was really to step up and make the lineup because I hadn’t done it the previous spring. I worked really hard over the fall on my swing and just technical stuff, and it so happened that I made it into the top five and started traveling with the team and just kept on going.”

**Eric Ricard**

**Sophomore – Shreveport, Louisiana**

***On getting in the lineup for the first time this season to help the team win ...***

“I knew that somebody needed to step up, the team, because we had three really solid players, Ben (Taylor), Zach (Wright) and Stewart (Jolly). I needed to work hard to make the lineup and contribute to the team.”