

NCAA Women's Tennis Championship
First Round Match: Valparaiso vs. Notre Dame
Friday, May 12, 2006
Eck Tennis Pavilion, Notre Dame, IN

Jay Louderback, Head Coach, Notre Dame

On his team's performance...

"I thought we played really well. The scores weren't really close, but the Valpo kids fought hard. I thought their No. 1 doubles team played some long games, even though it was 6-1. From the first point in the singles and doubles, everybody played well."

On playing a competitive schedule...

"We play such a tough schedule all year, which makes such a big difference. We played a lot of top-30 teams this year. The experience we've had really helps us coming into a tournament like the NCAAs."

On playing Michigan tomorrow...

"We always have good matches with Michigan. They always play well against us. Bitsy Ritt, their coach, is a competitor and it shows in her team. Her team competes really well and they're always fired up. It's going to be a good match. If we just come out and play like we usually do, we should be okay. It'll be a good match, but our kids compete really well and I think that's something we're going to need tomorrow."

On his team's chances of making the NCAA final...

"We're good enough. There's a lot of teams that are good enough to make it to the final. Teams ranked anywhere from 2 to 30 in the country are really good. Any of them can win on any given day. The parity in women's college tennis is the best it's ever been."

Kristina Stastny, Notre Dame

On the victory...

"It's really exciting to get past the first round, but we're just taking it one day at a time."

On playing at home in the NCAAs...

"We have the crowd behind us. We're at home, so we're really comfortable. Right now we're really confident with each other and with ourselves. It's a huge advantage to be here."

On team bonding...

"The team atmosphere has been amazing this year. All of us have been getting along. And to have victories to go along with all of the getting-together and bonding, it's just been remarkable."

On the team's expectations...

"I feel confident that we can go all the way. This year has been amazing. It's kind of been a snowball reaction. Right now we're a big snowball."

On Coach Jay Louderback instructions...

“He told us before the match ‘Don’t expect it to be easy’. It’s college tennis, and everyone’s good. He told us not to let our guards down.”

Tim Maluga, Valparaiso Head Coach

On comparing Notre Dame to Valpo’s 2005 first-round opponent, Northwestern...

“I agree that they are both elite teams, but I thought Notre Dame was a little tougher. Depth was definitely better, from Nos. 4, 5, and 6, I thought it was definitely better here today. They’re going to be a tough team to beat.”

On improving next year...

“The key to avoiding this type of outcome would be to do better during the year to get a higher seed so we’re not playing the #1, 2, 3 or 4 team in the nation. I really think we could have competed with the teams earlier today. They were probably better than us, but at least we had a chance. Our next goal would be to move up so we’re not playing one of the top five teams in the nation. Getting here is great; we’ve been here two years in a row, and now we want to see if we can advance past that.”

Rachel Janssen, Valparaiso

On comparing Notre Dame to Valpo’s 2005 first-round opponent, Northwestern...

“They were both about equal; they both had their strengths. I didn’t see a huge difference. I would consider them both at the top of the ranks.”

On the NCAA experience...

“It makes us want to come back next year.”

On playing the Thompson twins...

“I feel that we played pretty well. To stay in there and stay in the points with them. You just want to be able to compete with them and to get a game is good. We hung tight with them.”

Jill Dierberg, Valparaiso

On the NCAA experience...

“This is a great experience and we’re just glad to be here. It was one of our goals, and we achieved it and that makes us very happy.”

On her career...

“I’ve loved every minute of it. I don’t think I would have ever dreamed of being able to make it to the NCAA tournament. To do that two years in a row it’s just been awesome. Even just playing some of the best individuals in the country is a good experience. I love Valpo, and I love what it’s given me academically and athletically.”