

Washington paints a perfect

Portrait of a National Championship

Last season saw Coach Heather Tarr lead the University of Washington to its 15th consecutive postseason appearance despite the loss of All-American pitcher Danielle Lawrie and injuries to Ashley Charters and Lauren Greer. Lawrie redshirted the season in order to compete in the 2008 Olympic Games for Canada. At the beginning of the 2009 season, the team seemed to have almost every gear needed for a fine tuned machine but was missing a 3-hole batter to help with run production. This was solved in April when Jen Salling joined the lineup as a transfer from Oregon. Danielle Lawrie has known All-American shortstop Jen Salling since the two were in seventh grade; both are natives of British Columbia and members of the Canadian national team that reached the medal round at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. This proved to be the final cog in a well defined machine. As the season progressed so did the Huskies. By the time Regionals were drawn up they were nationally ranked at 3rd and began its run for the title. This was the time that everything started to fall into place for the post-season.

On Thursday May 28th, the games went pretty much according to the seeding with the exception of Michigan beating Alabama. When the winners played on Friday, both



Washington and Florida won their games, and moved to the games on Sunday. By Saturday night, all of the previous title winners had been eliminated from the tournament. The teams left for the Sunday May 31st games assured that there would be a new title winner and it would come either from the PAC-10 (Washington) or the SEC (Alabama, Florida or Georgia). Sunday proved to be a long and interesting day of play. Georgia and Washington started the day with a 4 hour 15 minute marathon

before a winner was decided in the bottom of the 9th inning when Georgia scored on a bases loaded walk to force a second game scheduled for later in the day. Florida and Alabama took the field and it seemed to be a one-sided game with Alabama in the lead until the bottom of the 7th when Florida scored four runs to clinch the win and advance to the finals. The Lady Gators had advanced behind the leadership of Los

Alamitos, California native, Stacey Nelson, senior ace pitcher. It was dogs vs. dogs with the Lady Bulldogs of Georgia and the Lady Huskies of Washington taking the field in a do or die game for the remaining spot in the championship. This time Washington got the early lead and kept building on it to win the game 9-3 and advance to the finals.

The Championship series featured the team from the farthest point southeast in



the Florida Lady Gators as the SEC representative and the team from the farthest point Northeast in the Washington Lady Huskies as the PAC-10 representative. Monday evening June 1st saw the top two teams in the nation square off. The first two innings were scoreless. Then in the top of the 3rd Washington got the offense going and scored four runs with two singles, a

walk, stolen bases and a throwing error by the Florida catcher. Washington added two more in the 5th and 6th innings. Florida could only muster five base runners during the contest as the Huskies won easily 8-0.

The atmosphere on Tuesday evening was electrifying as both teams took the field expecting big games. The crowds seemed to be particularly loud and poised on the edge

of their seats with anticipation. It was a festive evening as the Governor's honor guard presented the colors and Lt Governor Jerri Askins threw out the 1st pitch. Florida struck first pushing two runs across in the top of the 1st inning but Washington came right back and tied the game in the bottom half of the inning. Washington scored again in the bottom of the 3rd inning to take a one run lead. After the 3rd inning the game turned into a pitcher's duel as Florida's Stacy Nelson struck out five and Washington's Danielle



Story and photos
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Center: A photo portrait of Ashlyn Watson at the plate. From far left to right: Niki Williams lays down a bunt; The Huskies celebrate; Teammates holding the prize; Holly Rowe interviewed Washington Coach Heather Tarr; The Women's College World Series Champion Washington Huskies.

Lawrie struck out eight. Then it seemed that time actually slowed down and then stopped in the top of the 7th inning, when Florida had two runners on base with one out. The Huskies Lawrie struck out the final two batters of the game to preserve the 3-2 victory. It seemed after the last pitch all was silent for about 10 seconds, then in unison the Washington crowd realized it was over and started yelling and then the Lady Huskies joined in and celebrated with a large pileup at home plate.

Washington has proven that there is no home field advantage in the playoffs. The Lady Huskies softball team caught a flight out of Seattle on May 13th and headed to Massachusetts for the opening weekend of NCAA tournament play. They were able to win 3 out of 4 games to advance to the Super Regionals. The Huskies stayed on the East Coast for a super regional against Georgia Tech in Atlanta where they defeated Georgia Tech in two straight games to qualify for the WCWS and a trip to Oklahoma City for the World Series.

After winning the National trophy, the Lady Huskies found out that before next season there will be lights added to their stadium as a result of donations made by their boosters. The lack of lights was a key reason they spent the last three weeks of the season on the road. Although they were the higher seed they had to travel because their field was without lights and games could not be televised at night. The lights will be dedicated to the 2009 Lady Husky National Championship team.

The Washington Lady huskies have a lot to celebrate after winning the National championship title. They were able to use powerful offense and great defense to stop the opposing teams. If this year is any indication then the Lady Huskies are poised to come back to Oklahoma City next year and make a run for two in a row.

