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Softball Rallies To Stun No. 10 Tennessee In Wee Hours Of Sunday Morning At NCAA Region VI Championships

Seventh-seeded Flames advance with 6-5 victory over the second-seeded Lady Vols.

May 23, 2004

[Box Score](#)

Ann Arbor, Mich. - In the wee hours of Sunday morning, the UIC softball team rallied from a three-run deficit in the sixth inning off one of the nation's top pitchers to advance at the NCAA Region VI Championships with a 6-5 triumph over #10 Tennessee at Alumni Field.

It will now be a quick turnaround for the seventh-seeded Flames (44-22), whose contest with the second-seeded Volunteers ended at 2:09 a.m. EST.

UIC, which has won three straight games in regional play for the first time in school history, will meet #3 Oregon State at 12:00 p.m. EST on Sunday with the winner moving on to the regional title game versus top-seeded Michigan at 2:30 p.m.

Tennessee, which opened the tournament with a 10-0, five-inning victory over the Flames, finishes its season with a record of 55-16.

Trailing 5-2 heading into the bottom of the sixth inning and facing Lady Vols' ace and Southeastern Conference Pitcher of the Year Monica Abbott, who was on in relief, UIC mounted its most impressive comeback of the year.

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Junior Cameron Astiazaran went 2-for-3 with three RBI in the Flames' upset of No. 10

Senior [Alycia Creese](#) got things started with a single though the left side of the infield. After Abbott fanned sophomore [Nicole Shepard](#), rookie [Elizabeth Jacoby](#) rocketed one off Tennessee third baseman Kristi Durant to reach first and pinch-hitter [Tonya Maosi](#) followed by drawing a walk to load the bases.

Sophomore [Joyce Cathey](#) (2-for-2, 2R, RBI) pulled UIC within a pair of runs with a single up the middle. The knock also chased Abbott from the game as the Lady Vols went back to starter Stacey Jennings to try and stop the Flames' rally.

Junior [Cameron Astiazaran](#) (2-for-3, 3 RBI) didn't let that happen, driving in a pair with a single up the middle of her own while also pushing Cathey to third.

Jennings got sophomore [Michelle Miller](#) (2-for-4, RBI) to ground out to third, but then while facing junior [Sara Hernandez](#) uncorked a wild pitch, which allowed Cathey to scoot home with the go-ahead run.

In the top of the seventh, UIC turned to its own ace, senior [Alison Aguilar](#), to close the door. The California native did just that, retiring the side in order for her first save of the year.

Rookie [Chelsey Barclay](#) (9-6), who worked one inning of relief, picked up the win for the Flames.

Abbott was handed the loss, surrendering five runs on five hits in 1 2/3 innings in the circle. She closes out her standout rookie campaign with a record of 45-10.

Due to heavy rain washing out most all of Friday's action, a lengthy day of softball led to the first pitch of this elimination contest being at 11:59 p.m.

UIC got on the board first versus the Lady Vols as [Michelle Miller](#) delivered a two-out RBI single in the bottom of the third inning for a 1-0 lead.

Tennessee didn't let the Flames savor their lead very long, leveling the score in the top of the fourth on a run-scoring single by Angela Brewer off UIC starter [Brittany McIntyre](#).

Lady Vols starter Stacey Jennings tossed the first 3 2/3 innings, but when sophomore [Nicole Shepard](#) laced a single with two outs in the fourth Tennessee called upon Abbott to keep the Flames at bay.

After being shutdown by Abbott on Thursday, UIC plated its first run off the Lady Vols' ace in the bottom of the fifth inning to take the lead back, 2-1.

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With one out, [Joyce Cathey](#) chopped an infield single and advanced all the way to third when Abbott threw wide of first in a late attempt to cut down the runner. [Cameron Astiazaran](#) followed with a single up the middle to plate the go-ahead run.

For the second time on Saturday the Flames' lead didn't last long as Tennessee bounced back with four of runs in the sixth to take the lead back, 5-2.

The Lady Vols opened the inning with back-to-back hits, which put runners on the corners and chased McIntyre from the game.

Freshman [Chelsey Barclay](#) entered and hit the first batter she faced.

Two pitches into the next at-bat, the skies opened up and the game was delayed by rain for eight minutes.

Things didn't get better for Barclay after the delay, tossing two more balls to walk Jennings and force home the game-tying run.

Lauren Mattox followed with a two-run single up the middle for a 4-2 Tennessee lead. Sarah Fekete made the score 5-2 with an RBI groundout to short.

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