



# POSTGAME NOTES

GAME 2 ■ #18/18 MISSISSIPPI STATE (2-0, 0-0 SEC) AT KANSAS STATE (1-1, 0-0 BIG 12) ■ SEPT. 8, 2018 ■ BILL SNYDER FAMILY STADIUM

## TEAM NOTABLES

- MSU moved to 2-1 all-time against Kansas State and 12-12-2 all-time versus the Big 12. Mississippi State has now won 37 of its last 42 non-conference games.
- Saturday's victory marked the first road win against a Power Five non-conference team since MSU defeated Baylor, 30-21, on Sept. 16, 1995.
- Senior defensive end Gerri Green and senior quarterback Nick Fitzgerald served as MSU's captains. Kansas State won the coin toss and deferred to the second half.
- One Bulldog made his first career start: linebacker Willie Gay Jr.

## OFFENSE

- MSU had seven plays of 20 or more yards against Kansas State to bring its season total to 19.
- The Bulldogs eclipsed the 200-yard rushing mark for the fourth consecutive game and the eighth time in the last 10 games dating back to last season. MSU closed the game with 384 yards.
- Both Kylin Hill and Nick Fitzgerald rushed for over 100 yards, marking the first time MSU has had two 100-yard rushers in a game since Fitzgerald and Aeris Williams both went over the century mark against BYU on Oct. 14, 2017.
- For the second consecutive game, MSU collected over 500 yards of total offense. It is the 23rd time since 2014 that MSU has posted a 500-yard total offense game.

## DEFENSE

- Mississippi State's defense went eight consecutive quarters without allowing a touchdown, dating back to the second half of the 2017 Tax Slayer Bowl. MSU opened the 2018 season without allowing an opponent in the end zone for six straight quarters until Kansas State scored on a passing strike with 2:20 remaining in the third quarter.
- Over the last 15 games, Jeffery Simmons and Montez Sweat have combined for 38.5 tackles for loss.

## PLAYER NOTABLES

### QB NICK FITZGERALD

- Returned to the field since suffering a broken ankle during the first quarter of the 2017 Egg Bowl (11/23/17).
- Rushed for 159 yards on 19 carries to record his 15th 100-yard rushing game of his career and the most rushing yards of his career since collecting 258 yards on the ground during the 2016 Egg Bowl.
- Rushed for over 100 yards in six of his last eight contests.
- Surpassed Dak Prescott as Mississippi State's all-time leader in quarterback rushing yards and now ranks second place in SEC history behind only Tim Tebow. Now ranks fifth in career rushing among all position players in MSU history with 2,645 rushing yards.
- Has thrown at least two touchdown passes in seven of the last 13 games he has played, dating back to the 2017 season.

### RB KYLIN HILL

- First rush of the game was a career-long, 47-yard rush that set up a first-quarter field goal that gave MSU its first lead of the contest.
- Caught a 16-yard touchdown pass with 14:20 remaining in the second half to put MSU up 10-3. Hill has made two receptions in his career and both have gone for touchdowns.
- Closed Saturday's game with a career-high 211 yards rushing on 17 touches.
- First Bulldog to rush for over 200 or more yards in a game since Nick Fitzgerald (258) against Ole Miss on Nov. 26, 2016 and is the first MSU running back to rush for over 200 yards since Anthony Dixon (252) against Kentucky on Oct. 31, 2009.
- Rushed for a career-high two touchdowns.

### WR AUSTIN WILLIAMS

- Reeled in the first touchdown pass of his career with a 13-yard reception with 10:18 remaining in the third quarter.

### WR STEPHEN GUIDRY

- Reeled in career-best two receptions to set a new career high of 42 receiving yards.

### TE DONTAE JONES

- Career-high 21 yards receiving off of his lone reception of the game.

### LB ERROLL THOMPSON

- With Kansas State driving in MSU territory, intercepted the first pass of his career with a one-handed snag. (4:48 Q2).
- Added seven tackles, including his first sack of the season.

### S JOHNATHAN ABRAM

- For the second consecutive game, led MSU's defense in total tackles with eight.

### DE MONTEZ SWEAT

- Collecting two sacks, Montez Sweat brought his career total to 14.5 sacks to move into 10th all-time in MSU history surpassing Keith Joseph (1989-92).

## MISSISSIPPI STATE at K-STATE BY THE NUMBERS

**49,784** – Attendance Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

**1,439** – Career rushing yards by **Alex Barnes**, who moved from 20th to 16th in school history during today's game.

**384** – Rushing yards by Mississippi State on Saturday, the most surrendered by a K-State defense since Nebraska tallied 451 yards in 2010.

**211** – Rushing yards by Mississippi State running back **Kylin Hill**, the most allowed by the Wildcats to a single rusher since 2015.

**64** – Temperature at kickoff, a 29° drop from last week's kickoff (93°).

**23** – Distance of **Dalton Schoen**'s first-quarter touchdown... Three of his four career touchdowns have now gone for at least 20 yards.

**19** – Receiving yards by **Alex Barnes**, a new career

**6** – Tackles by **Walter Neil Jr.**, a new career high.

**2** – Out of three punts by **Bernardo Rodriguez** held inside the 10.

**1** – First career interception by **Wyatt Hubert**, the first pick by a K-State defensive lineman since 2016.



/// Sept. 8, 2018 /// Bill Snyder Family Stadium /// Manhattan, Kan. /// Att: 49,784 /// Temp: 64° ///

 **18/18 MISSISSIPPI STATE** (2-0/0-0 SEC) ..... **31**

 **K-STATE** (1-1/0-0 BIG 12) ..... **10**

### RECORDS...

Saturday's game was the third all-time meeting between K-State and Mississippi State with the Bulldogs holding a 2-1 advantage... K-State has dropped its last three home games against ranked non-conference opponents as the last was No. 11 USC in 2002... The Wildcats are now 8-17 against current members of the SEC (minus long-time conference foes Missouri and Texas A&M), as their last regular-season win against the league was in 1982 (Kentucky)... The Wildcats are now 67-5 in non-conference home games under head coach **Bill Snyder** since 1990, while they are 55-4 in September home games under Snyder since 1992.

### BARNES UP AGAIN

Running back **Alex Barnes** carded 75 rushing yards on 17 carries... Barnes now has 1,439 career rushing yards, moving from 20th to 16th in school history during today's game.

### LONG SCORES

Junior wide receiver **Dalton Schoen** hauled in a 23-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter... Of his four career touchdown receptions, three have been 20 yards or longer... In 2017, Schoen had a 70-yarder against Central Arkansas and an 82-yarder against Texas... His only score shorter than 20 yards was 12 yards against the Longhorns last year.

### RARE PICK

Kansas State redshirt freshman defensive end **Wyatt Hubert** recorded a third quarter interception... It was the first pick by a K-State defense lineman since **Matt Seiwert** had one against Missouri State in 2016.

### CAREER HIGH AGAIN

After setting a career high with four tackles last week against South Dakota, sophomore defensive back **Walter Neil Jr.** came away with six tackles, including five in the first half.

### RUSHING DEFENSE

Mississippi State ended the game with 384 rushing yards... It was the most allowed by the Wildcats since they gave up 451 rushing yards against Nebraska in 2010... Bulldog running back Kylin Hill accounted for 211 rushing yards, the most allowed by a K-State defense to a single player since DeAndre Washington of Texas Tech had 248 yards in 2015... Nick Fitzgerald added 159 yards as they teamed to earn the first double 100-yard rushing game against the Wildcats since Trevone Boykin and Aaron Green of TCU in 2015.

### BERNARDO'S BOOTS

Back-up punter **Bernardo Rodriguez** landed the first punt of his career inside the five and finished with two out of three punts inside the 10.

### GETTING IN THE BACKFIELD

Defensive end **Reggie Walker** notched another tackle-for-loss, marking the fifth straight game with a TFL dating back to last season. Over that stretch, the Hendricks Award watchlist member, has 7.0 TFLs including 3.0 sacks.



## POSTGAME QUOTES - MISSISSIPPI STATE HEAD COACH

Mississippi State 31, K-State 10 | September 8, 2018

### JOE MOORHEAD, MISSISSIPPI STATE HEAD COACH

#### *Opening statement ...*

"I am very pleased. It was a great non-conference win against a quality opponent. I have the utmost respect for Coach Snyder and his program. We knew it was going to be a physical game and one where they were not going to beat themselves. We knew it was going to be a tremendous challenge. To walk out of here with our first power-5, non-conference win since 1995, it is a great accomplishment for our team. We did some very positive things in all three phases. We need to be a little bit better with the penalties - I think we had 11, so we need to clean that up. The physicality showed on both sides of the ball rushing for almost 400 yards. We held down the team that prides itself in running the ball pretty well, and lastly attention to detail. In a margin of error lead against an opposing team like Kansas State it is very small. We executed with more precision today than we did against Stephen F. Austin. I am very pleased. I am excited to get out of here with a win and to be 2-0."

#### *On Kylin Hill and the offensive physicality...*

"It starts with the guys up front. I thought Coach (Marcus) Johnson's group did a great job blocking, that includes the tight ends and Coach (Mark) Hudspeth. They did a great job creating vertical and horizontal movement at the line of scrimmage. Some of the things they do with who we are reading and throwing the ball and kind of slowing them down at the second level. Hill certainly runs with his tremendous physicality. He runs behind his pads and also has that second gear to take it the distance."

#### *On Nick Fitzgerald's performance...*

"At the beginning of the game I think he was a little amped up. He had some throws that were there and had an overthrow to Osirus (Mitchell). He had Austin (Williams) early in the endzone which was the same play he completed later in the game. He made some very good throws. He did some great things by improvisation when it broke down by scrambling. Much like last week, we have to work to continue to maintain our productivity and explosiveness while increasing our efficiency and completion percentage."

#### *On rushing offense...*

"In a game like this, just looking back with people asking questions what the offense is going to be, you want it to be 50-50, but when it gets to a point where one phase of the game is taking over and performing very well we will continue to ride it out."

#### *On penalties...*

"They all stand out but certainly the targeting penalty for Jonathan (Abram) hurts for this game and the next. Having the offsides that took us out of a third-and-one and a delay of game that took points off the board on a field goal. Those are the things that do not get you until they get you. They kind of get crossed over but same thing as last week we cannot accept them in victory or defeat."

#### *On playing Kansas State's Offensive Line...*

"We did very well. We talked for a very long time about not just our starters but also the guys that fill the roles through there, and there was very little drop off. To be able to do that with the rest of the guys, it gave some of the effect to a very experienced and talented offensive line particularly left tackle."



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## POSTGAME QUOTES - MISSISSIPPI STATE PLAYERS

Mississippi State 31, K-State 10 | September 8, 2018

### **NICK FITZGERALD, SENIOR QUARTERBACK**

*On being back on the field...*

"It felt great. It is always good to go out there and finally get to reap the rewards of all the hard work that you have put in with your teammates all offseason, since this past January. It was amazing to get out there."

*On running the ball early...*

"I think even after the first scramble and first hit I was kind of back into it. I thought I was going to be a lot more nervous before the game than I was. I was confident and felt good about it. I think we just played."

*On his accuracy...*

"They played a very good and technically sound defense. They are not going to be out of position. They are going to cover you well. They did a good job covering. I just have to put the ball in better places and hit some of the deep shots that I overthrew. That is just going to come with more working with my teammates and we are going to get that going. We are going to get that accuracy going."

*On the run-heavy offense...*

"I think it just kind of came down to me not throwing the ball well. Our offensive line did an incredible job creating holes and running was working so that is what we did."

### **JEFFERY SIMMONS, JUNIOR DEFENSIVE TACKLE**

*On having something to prove today...*

"I was watching film and (Dalton) Risner, a preseason All-American, was pretty good. We came out with a purpose. We were talking about it all week. We were not worried about all of the hype with him. Honestly, we just came to play our ball today. We have big, aggressive guys so we came to play our ball."

*On having their way with K-State's offensive line...*

"Like I said, we blocked it out. We were hearing about it and our coaches were talking about it. We know they had a talented offensive line so we came out with a purpose. The play all started on the defensive line for us today."

### **ERROLL THOMPSON, SOPHOMORE LINEBACKER**

*On his interception...*

"I just read off his eyes and marked my landmark and my depth and direction with the quarterback's eyes and broke on it."

### **KYLIN HILL, SOPHOMORE RUNNING BACK**

*On his game today...*

"It's crazy. It's a dream come true. I don't even know how many yards I had, but the team just kept telling me to keep running. My offensive line did a terrific job. They played unbelievable."

*On Nick Fitzgerald and his impact...*

"It was big, having (Fitzgerald) back. You have to respect him. He's a great overall player, a great guy and he has NFL talent."

*On getting better as the game went on...*

"It was just playing football. I'm so used to the game. It's football. Once you get used to the game speed, it's just the game you played all your life."





## POSTGAME QUOTES - K-STATE HEAD COACH

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### **BILL SNYDER, K-STATE HEAD COACH**

*On whether this was from Mississippi State being a good team or K-State struggling...*

"Well, it's more of the latter. I wouldn't take anything away from Mississippi State because they are a very fine football team, but as I've said so many times, it's not about who we line up and play, it's about us. We just haven't played as well as we're capable of. I thought there was some promise up until maybe the last 5-6 minutes or so in the ballgame. I saw some things, maybe things you don't see but I saw some things that tell me that maybe we're making some headway in areas that had been an issue for us, but we didn't finish the game that way."

*On offensive struggles...*

"Obviously, you just look at the numbers. I mean, in the first three quarters of each ball game, in those six quarters we've gotten six points on the board. And that was in the last two and a half minutes of the third quarter today. So we're not starting very well but that period of start time is lasting a long time. And then to only end up with seven points on the board, and we got the seven points because the defense got the turnover and the offense went on and got a short field to get the touchdown. So not very productive."

*On Offensive line play...*

"Well the main thing, I say the main thing but I'll have to see the film again because it varies from player to player, but more than anything it's just being a little more stronger and more forceful in the initial phase of our protection so that we don't get so much push. When you get on your heels and you get pushed back - a lot of the problems we had throwing the football was just the fact that we did have pressure on him and the quarterback really couldn't see out. You've got big guys in front of you, (Montez) Sweat looks like he's seven-feet tall. I know he's not that tall but he sure looks that way. But they get tall on you, and the closer they get, the less you can see and that created some problems for us. We had a number of throws that went into the ground. You saw throws that were just errant. You saw some throws where we had wide open receivers and you threw the ball in the wrong place. And part of it, not all of it, but part of it is just not being able to see out, so we've got to do a better job. Would I say our pass protection's not capable? No, I think they're quite capable, but by the same token, we've got to be able to do it. We're just a little soft right now."

*On being surprised at the blitz packages from Mississippi State...*

"I wasn't surprised by the blitzes, I was surprised at our reaction to them, which wasn't as productive. I haven't seen the tape, so there might be something out there that I hadn't seen, but based on what I did see, they were identical to what we had seen. We didn't know they were coming all the time, but we knew most of them were coming. I thought we had executed very well during the course of the week, especially on Wednesday and Thursday, against the blitzes, but it didn't happen that often today."

*On the secondary...*

"It was 357 yards or whatever it was, it was probably displeasing and there were a lot of reasons for that. I thought we defended well against most of the deeper throws, that was pleasing to me, or I was happy that we did. I think it was some of the underneath throws, they had some crossing routes - which is not anything we haven't seen and worked on, just the execution against them was not very good. Consequently, when you go back and look, I'm going to guess they were 8-out-of-12 on third down. They got a lot of third down plays on those little dinks that we didn't defend well."



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## POSTGAME QUOTES - K-STATE PLAYERS

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### WYATT HUBERT, REDSHIRT FRESHMAN DEFENSIVE END

*On the running game of Mississippi State...*

"It was definitely the quarterback draw, we just couldn't stop the run. They were running it on second and third down and we were anticipating the pass too much. We just weren't being disciplined on our zone reads. We knew that the quarterback had the ability to run, so we prepared for the quarterback run and the running back run. We were just undisciplined and we weren't gap sound."

*On the struggles of the defense...*

"We lost that game not because they were better but because we were just really undisciplined. The four up front and the linebackers were having trouble and we couldn't all get on the same page. That hurt the secondary and that hurt the defense as a whole."

*On the play of the secondary...*

"I think the secondary played great, we just have to get more pressure on the quarterback."

*On the size of Mississippi State's offensive line...*

"We anticipated a bigger offensive line, but at the end of the day they really weren't much bigger than anything we play against every week. I don't think that was a factor in anything at all."

*On the tough start to the season ...*

"It sucks. We're not doing what we're supposed to be doing and we're not playing to our ability. That is very frustrating. It's very tough right now. "

### ALEX DELTON, JUNIOR QUARTERBACK

*On the struggles of the offense to score...*

"We only put one touchdown on the board, you don't win games doing that. It's frustrating. We don't have consistency in our offense. That's a lot on us as quarterbacks and we got to be better, and we got to be better to lead this offense."

*On the effect of Mississippi State's rush ...*

"They had a really good pass rush. Those d-lineman and the linebackers, they got after us pretty quick and put our offensive lineman in a tough spot. A lot of the stuff we prepared for and we just didn't execute it today."

### REGGIE WALKER, JUNIOR DEFENSIVE END

*On what he is taking from this game...*

"We've got to fix some stuff on our defense, fit better, tackle better, stuff like that."

*On confidence...*

"I wouldn't say it hurt our confidence. We know what we did wrong, we hurt ourselves more than anything. I feel that we have to go back to the drawing board on Monday and get it fixed."

*On Mississippi State quarterback Nick Fitzgerald...*

"He is a great running quarterback. He found those holes and he hit them. He's hard to stop"

*On improvement from last week...*

"We did improve from last week, but were not perfect and they did execute on what we did wrong."





**DA'QUAN PATTON, REDSHIRT JUNIOR LINEBACKER**

*On the biggest issues with the run defense...*

"I felt like we weren't sound in our responsibilities and what we needed to do."

*On Hubert's interception in the third quarter...*

"It was very big. It made a momentum swing for us and got the sideline excited."

*On the team's confidence...*

"I don't think it hurts our confidence by any means. We did a lot of great things tonight. There are a lot of things that we can build off of. I think we can take those things that we did do well and keep that confidence that we do have."

*On things to work on...*

"Just being sound and knowing what we need to do. Eliminating mental errors."

*On things the defense did well...*

"We came out strong. We had great effort on the ball, no one let up."

*On the physicality of Mississippi...*

"They were physical, we were physical as well. It was great to experience a physical team like that. They came with it every play, it was a dog fight."

