

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. UAB
February 20, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: Big emotion swing on that final out. The big review and they overturn the call, how do you keep the team focused in situations like that?

CL: It's just playing the game. I knew when I saw our guys coming out, and it was such a great play by Dustin [Skelton], but we felt like he was safe in the dugout when we saw it from our side. We had a pretty good idea [they would overturn the call].

Q: Graham Ashcraft coming back [to Mississippi State], did you expect to see his best today?

CL: I did. He supposedly he had thrown really well last week and he was really good tonight. Tip your hat to him and we hope he has a great year.

Q: Jake [Mangum] said that at this point last year he wouldn't be surprised if Mississippi State lost that kind of game. Where do you think this team's resolve, patience, ability not to get frustrated, stands right now?

CL: It's pretty high. I think that's what they learned last year and that run at the end of the year. Fighting threw the beginning part of the season, I think they have learned to play with a lot of grit and a lot of toughness. They like to come from behind, so they don't pout a lot in the dugout and they just keep playing. We have some really talented kids. When you are letting Jake Mangum walk to the plate you know you are about to get a really good at bat.

Q: You put Brandon Smith in there in a dirty inning when you took Peyton Plumlee out. Is that indicative of your confidence level in him or were you just trying to cover your bases?

CL: Brandon is a high-level strike throw, so we knew he would come in and throw strikes. Our righties matched up, believe it or not, with all of those lefties [in the UAB lineup] our righties matched up better. We felt like it was the right matchup and he would come in and throw strikes.

Q: After three blow out games this weekend, are you happy to have a game like this and see your team pull through late?

CL: I kind of like the blowouts, but it was good for us to play late. I felt like we weren't good offensively [tonight]. I'm an offense guy, I like to hit and like to have some fun there, but we are not going to hit every day and we still have to be able to win games. It was fun to see us get that win and see our closer [Cole Gordon] go out there and have to compete.

Q: Not knowing what the weather is going to do, the Southern Miss series has a good chance of being really good?

CL: Really good, I think our kids are really excited about it. We [as a coaching staff] are excited, the fans are excited about it. It should be a lot of fun. It's two really good teams, so let's hope we get some good windows in the weather. I was really surprised how well the field played today with all the rain we've had. It looked like we hadn't had any rain. That shows you how well it drains and how good our grounds crew is.

Q: Cole Gordon says Peyton Plumlee pitched pretty well, what did you see?

CL: I thought Peyton was really good early, but I thought he got a little tired. He didn't throw too many balls, he threw too many strikes in the middle of the zone in that inning. He left some balls over the plate, but I thought he was really good tonight.

Cole Gordon

Q: The offense took a while to get going but bullpen was outstanding, how would you assess things tonight?

CG: That's what we expect. We always know our offense is going to pull through at some point. We expect to pitch it well and we expect to defend it well, so we did that tonight and if you can do that often, you will have success in no matter what game it is.

Q: Were you expecting to go two innings when you went out there?

CG: I don't have a thought in mind on the innings, I just go until he tells me not to. I want to keep going back out there as many times as he'll let me. So, no matter what happened, I was just ready to keep throwing.

Q: Did they tell you something immediately after the out was called on the bunt? You all did not start celebrating after it was called.

CG: No, after they called the meeting we knew we needed to stay focused. We knew that it could get overturned. So, we knew we needed to stay focused no matter what and just be prepared for the worst.

Q: What did you see out of Peyton [Plumlee] when he was on the mound?

CG: Peyton looked good. Peyton looked like how we had seen him all fall. He's aggressive in the zone, he [has] multiple pitches, multiple out pitches. So, it was exciting to see that though, over a course of a couple innings, I think it was four and change, two-thirds. That's what he is capable of, he's capable of running out there as a starter and going 5 plus or reliever as you saw this weekend and coming and shutting it down. It's exciting to see him back and see him pitching so well.

Jake Mangum

Q: It took a while for the offense to get started, what were you guys seeing out there?

JM: [We just saw] a good pitcher. Graham Ashcraft, a former teammate of ours, pitched really well. He's mid-90s with a lot of movement on his fastball, hard to square up. He threw three or four pitches for strikes. When you do that against anybody you're going to succeed.

Q: That cut fastball was giving you all some trouble earlier in the game, is that what you guys were seeing?

JM: Yeah, he had a two-seam and a cutter. He had the same pitch kind of going both ways at the last second. It was hard to square up [...] It's a hard ball to square up, a lot of movement and a lot of [velocity].

Q: What did you see on the two-run single you had?

JM: I saw a passed ball and it got the back-side runner in scoring position. I hung a change up and I was able to keep my hands back and hit a line drive.

Q: What were you looking for in that situation? (refer to question above)

JM: Just a pitch to hit. Just anything over the plate and just be ready to hit.

Q: Do you think Graham Ashcraft's pitching and this matchup was a good tune-up for this weekend?

JM: Yeah, absolutely. In the SEC, you expect every weekend to see mid 90s with movement and balls to be pitches for strikes. It's a really tough league, but you are going to get games like tonight, a midweek game, where last year I think at this time of the year we would have lost that game for sure. We stick with our approach throughout the game and good things happen for us.

Q: Do you think patience is one of the biggest qualities this team has?

JM: It is more of avoiding frustration. When you are 0-3 or 0-2, whatever it is, and you're having a rough night, you don't feel comfortable in the box, a good arm is on the mound, it's a midweek, the crowd isn't there to get everything going, you just have to take a deep breath and not get frustrated. That last at-bat, I was 0-3 with three terrible at bats and in this game, you have to flush things. If you don't, you are going to get swallowed by it. I thought our guys did a great job with that. Cole Gordon, "won the game". [They] review it and the guy went back to first. Two pitches later, he's on third. That's a big turnaround. When you think you won a game, now you have

two outs, runner on third and [Cole] just kept going. It was a great team win for us tonight, easily could have lost that game against a good team and a good pitcher.