

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. Jackson State
February 26, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: You came out the first couple of innings hitting them right at people and then the ball really started to drop. What did you feel like the key to the offense was today?

CL: Pitch selection, and [hitting pitches] up [in the zone]. The velocity wasn't very high, so you really had to slow it down and try and get base hits. It's just really hard to face those guys sometimes. We had a couple really good balls early that they just ran under. Marshall [Gilbert] gets us the lead and then we are able to put some pressure on them after that. I think that was huge.

Q: Speaking of Marshall [Gilbert], is he beginning to hit his way into the lineup?

CL: He sure is. He's got a feel of what's happening in the inning, so it's not always just a swing for him, it's hitting a ball back side or moving a runner, maybe that's being an older player, but he's had a couple of really good games for us.

Q: With the catchers, there has to be a dilemma in a good way. How good of a feeling is that to know you have four guys, especially three, that you can really count on?

CL: They're all bouncing around in that DH role and pinch-hit role and that's how we are going to use them. Marshall [Gilbert] and Dustin [Skelton], they can play the infield to, so that gives us some flexibility there. When you don't have catching, it makes you really nervous. So right now, having that ability to use one as a DH and have the other one ready to catch behind the other guy if we had to pinch run or something. That flexibility is huge. They're all playing pretty good right now.

Q: Trotted out some fresh pitchers tonight, how do you feel they performed?

CL: I thought Eric [Cerantola] was really good in his start. I thought Bryce [Brock] was really good for his first two innings. I think he may have gotten a little tired on us there in the sixth. Tyler Spring was pretty good. I thought Brandon's [Smith] inning was the key to the game for us, because that game could have [become] really tight there. He came in as a young kid and just threw strikes and that's all we ask of you. We were pretty happy with him.

Q: What's been so effective for Brandon [Smith]?

CL: He's a strike thrower, just good velocity, three pitches for strikes. He's going to make you beat him. He'll give up a hit every once and awhile. He's usually not going to walk a guy, hit a guy, get himself in a jam or fall behind in count and throw you the three-one fast ball down the middle. Brandon's [Smith] going to pitch ahead in the count and hit his spots.

Q: What do you know about Southeastern Louisiana?

CL: [They're a] tough, hard nose, gritty team. They are well-coached. They like to put pressure on you. We don't know who we're facing yet. I know they have started out pretty offensive the first couple of weekends of the year. We have everybody, we'll start [Peyton Plumlee] tomorrow. We have a full bullpen available that will get those guys some work. They are a really good program, very similar to Southern Miss in a lot of ways, you're going to play against some tough, gritty kids.

Marshall Gilbert

Q: You're swinging the bat well lately, how well do you feel like you're seeing it?

MG: The ball, honestly, looks a little bigger than normal, I'm not going to lie. Coach [Gautreau] really helps us get ready for our swings, helps us get our swings off and tells us what our scouting report is, so that helps out a lot, too. As far as making contact, I'm just trying to hit the ball hard every time regardless of where it goes.

Q: Take us through the home run, what'd you see there?

MG: I saw a fastball first pitch. Coach Gautreau was telling me to see something up and just put a good swing on it and keep my head on the ball the whole time. I felt like I got through all of those progressions and ended up with a good result.

Q: It's hard to get lucky as a hitter, it's like you get hot and you stay hot. How do you feel right now?

MG: I feel like right now it's going really [well], like you said, those hits that don't really end up as hits start to fall and that's when you know it's going really [well]. Right now, I'm just trying to maintain my head and make sure I stay level and don't get too high or too low. There're times where you can make three loud outs, line out three times and then not have anything to show for it, so right now I'm just happy with everything and the way it's going.

Q: Do you feel like you're pulling yourself into the lineup more often?

MG: I feel like every day I come out there trying to earn a job, make sure that I stay in the lineup, make sure that every day I'm there to help my team out as far as that goes. If I'm not in the lineup, then I'm pushing whoever is in the lineup to get even better.

Q: What is it about the catchers hitting so well?

MG: I think it's coming in every day, including Luke [Hancock], we have four catchers that are all trying to get starting spots. So, the competition there is that you have to bring it every day, because if you're not, you have three other guys that are. That part helps out a lot because the intensity level is really high all the time, including during practices.