

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball  
Postgame Quotes  
Mississippi State vs. Maine  
March 8, 2019**

**Head Coach Chris Lemonis**

***Q: Talk about Ethan [Small] and JT [Ginn]'s performances today.***

CL: The last couple of weeks they have been really good. Both of them were still good today, Ethan walked his first two guys of the year. And I give them [Maine] credit, they put some balls in play, found some holes, put a little pressure on us. We maybe don't make a couple of plays that we could make that caused us a little bit of stress early, but they both just compete. They're really good. It's nice having those two guys run out there, game one and two.

***Q: Are you pleased with how JT responded?***

CL: We thought about it, because losing one day of your week is not easy and so it was good that he was able to get out there and compete. We didn't have to stretch him too far even though his pitch count was normal, just his innings. He could have probably run out there and thrown another inning but we felt like it would be better to use the bullpen.

***Q: When you have two pitchers like those guys, does it change your strategy sometimes?***

CL: It does. I know we are always going to be in the game with those two guys out there, for the most part. Our offense, we're not a real type of bunting type team so early in the game we probably should with Ethan a little more because we haven't given him a ton of runs. I think this is his first win, even though he has pitched really well. There is that point, especially with SEC play, as we get into it, we know those Friday night games are going to be tight.

***Q: Has your team exceeded expectations or is there where you thought you would be?***

CL: I thought we would be pretty close to it. I'm not sure if we would have lost another one or won another one or whatever. We have a pretty good team. I thought this week [that] there's been a little sloppiness in there [...] We talk about our standard all the time and what we're trying to achieve and I still feel like this team can play a little better. That's our goal all year long. Hopefully we can come out and play a little bit better. They've done a great job of managing our schedule to this point.

***Q: Was there any reason for taking Jordan [Westburg] out?***

CL: He dove and kind of tweaked something. It was just precautionary. He could have stayed out there. Unfortunately, with Jordan, he plays like his tail's on fire. Fifteen innings into the [doubleheader], I just didn't want to take a chance with him, so we took him out. And Gunner [Halter] is a natural shortstop. People have seen him play second base but he has grown up his whole life playing short. You could see that on a couple of plays that he made.

***Q: As he's in a slump, what is Tanner Allen telling you as he comes back into the dugout?***

CL: Tanner Allen is in a great mood, believe or not. He is the most upbeat player you will ever be around. He's just missing a couple of pitches here and there. He has had a little bit of tough luck and a little bit of just trying to feel his way through it right now. We have him and Rowdey [Jordan], probably two of the best hitters we had last year, they've been in a little bit of a scuffle but in this game it kind of goes like this. What I applaud those two guys for is you wouldn't know it. If you came and hung out in our dugout, you wouldn't know they've had a little bit of a tough stretch. They show up every day ready to go and they [have] probably as much personality as anybody on the team. I haven't seen them put their head down and pout at this point.

***Q: As well as JT is pitching, are you kind of hesitant to use him in the lineup or as a pinch hitter?***

CL: We only use him on certain days. When he's sore or on gameday, he wouldn't have pinch hit. He wouldn't have pinch hit in the first game today and probably won't pinch hit on Sunday because that's usually the day he's the sorest. Maybe Tuesdays or Wednesdays we'll give him a chance or an opportunity. If he was just a position player, he would be in our mix every day. But, like you said, he's so good on the mound. There [are] just so many limitations he has on him.

***Q: Do you see him getting a start in the DH role?***

CL: He can be in a DH role at some point in time, just depending on where we're at and what we're doing. So much of his time is spent pitching, even the practice time. It just makes it a little tougher.

***Q: Do you feel like you have the team where you want them for SEC play?***

CL: I do. I think we've figured out our roles. We've [had] a chance to see our guys in some different environments. We've played on the road. My biggest concerns coming in [to the season] was the bullpen. Maybe they've exceeded expectations because those guys have really done a nice job. I think that's what makes us really special in some ways is we have a power bullpen and we know we have a couple of really good starters. And our offense is gritty. You can say we're power, or speed, or whatever, but they're just tough and they show up to compete and they love to play the game.

**JT Ginn**

***Q: How was the pitching tonight?***

JG: The fastball was good tonight. I feel like command was shaky at some points, but we just [let Maine] hit it in after the first two innings and I was able to get it out. Then I get to the bullpen and let those guys switch it up.

***Q: What was going on in the first three inning when you were giving up some hits?***

JG: It was just a tough inning, it happens. We had some long innings with a lot of pitches. We got in the dugout, and Coach [Scott] Foxhall and I talked. We said that we've got to get some of these balls early in the count, early in the inning, and just try to keep the pitch count down. We had to get to the sixth or seventh or wherever I could go. Our bullpen tonight, was like it is always, [was] lights out. I wanted to give those guys a chance to win the game.

***Q: Was it helpful that you knew fairly early about this doubleheader?***

JG: Yeah, it's always good to get yourself a day's rest, stay in a routine. Doubleheaders are a grind anyway, because you're out there for 18 innings. You've got to get out there and grind it out.

***Q: Does it surprise you how much success you have had as a true freshman?***

JG: I wouldn't say it was easy. I worked for it, and we all work hard in practice every day. I try to go out there, execute the game plan, and stay true to myself. I've been fortunate to have some success so far. Hopefully we can keep it going.

***Q: Ethan [Small] seemed annoyed that he gave up a few walks today?***

JG: Yeah, he's a little annoyed, but he's good. He's always good when he goes out there. He's going to give you a good outing every time he gets on the mound.

***Q: How does this series prepare you for SEC season?***

JG: You're out there to play, and everyone is staying in a rhythm. Everyone is getting in their game, and you're locked in for SEC play.

***Q: Is it your goal to get in the starting lineup [as a hitter] or are you just doing what you are doing?***

JG: I'm just doing whatever I can to help the team win. Wherever they want me, that's where I'll be.

**Jake Mangum**

***Q: How are you feeling with these two wins?***

JM: Two good wins. Anytime you win, that's good. I think we're 14-1 right now, so sign me up...We look good. We have a little day off tomorrow, we'll get some things going a little bit, straighten some things out that we need to work on, get a good lift in and be ready to go on Sunday.

***Q: How surprising has this start been to you?***

JM: Not surprising. Going into the year, we knew what we could do. We're a team full of talent, and we're playing together really well. I think the offense could click a little bit more. We've got some good bats in the lineup, but we just need to string some more [good at-bats] together in the row. Wednesday night, we scored 14 runs, so you can't really be too picky about it. I think we look great, I think we're in a great spot. We've got two games before SEC play, so it's time to get going.

***Q: How did Maine try to pitch to this team both games?***

JM: A lot of arms. It was more off speed today. There were no fastballs coming my way, at least. For the other guys, I don't know. It seemed like everyone got pitched the same. Maine had some good arms. They had some guys out there who were throwing three pitches for strikes. Anytime you can do that, it's tough to hit.

***Q: What is the confidence level of this team?***

JM: It's awesome. We scored five runs that in game two, so it's almost like there is no way they could put four more on the board. Our staff has been outstanding. The offense just needs to pick it up a little bit. You can't be too picky about it, because hitting is hard. Hitting is a very hard thing to do. I felt great the first game, and just like that in game two, you start missing barrels. It's amazing how quickly things can go away from you. That's why you've got to put in work even when you're doing well. When you're 8-for-8, you have to work like you're 0-for-8. If you don't, it's a very quick turnaround. Baseball will slap you in the face. The team looks great, and we can't ask for anything more out of the [pitching] staff. For the offense, we just need to string some more consecutive [at-bats] together instead of being so sporadically throughout the game and put up some more runs.

***Q: How crucial was stealing bases today for the offense?***

JM: It was good. Anytime you have guys in position to run, you have to take advantage of it. We took some bags today. On one of my at bats, Gunner was at first, and I took a curveball for a strike that I would have loved to swing at, but it got one of our guys in scoring position and we drove it in. If you steal a base, you're in scoring position, so you have to take advantage of it. It's so important.