

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. Maine
March 10, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: First time this year you had a tight ball game where it was the offense that needed to come through. From a coaching perspective, is that something you want to have happened before conference play starts?

CL: I guess. It's probably good in that way and we came out on top. Our bullpen has been so good that it's been a luxury. Today we had a little hiccup there in the middle of the game and just didn't throw enough strikes. It was good for us to fight back and have to come through. I hope we don't see that too often. If somebody beats us, they beat us. In the ninth, Cole Gordon gives up a couple hits, I can live with that. We just have to pound the strike zone.

Q: Dustin [Skelton] said that the pitchers were all around the strike zone there in the sixth inning. What were you seeing from the dugout?

CL: We didn't command. We may have been there, but we were trying to hit a spot and missing a spot. I [don't] think we came in and had our off-speed [pitches working] or the ability to command our off-speed. You have to be able to come out of the pen with your breaking ball.

Q: You put a pretty quick call on Keegan [James] early in the game. Was that more from throwing him midweek or was he just not on today?

CL: No, I think his pitch count was somewhere in the seventies. I thought in the fourth and the fifth [innings] he gave up some balls. We got out of the fourth, [I think] we had a double play but we had [about] three line-drive outs. Then we came out in the fifth, and he gave up two runs. I think we were just trying to go to a hot hand, and we wanted to give Peyton [Plumlee] some opportunity out of the bullpen.

Q: Cole [Gordon] had been so good. Would you like to see him come through in that kind of situation?

CL: Yeah, it was huge. It was nice to see him just keep competing, keep throwing. He was close with his breaking ball [most of the inning] and finally got his breaking ball in on the last hitter. For him, being a closer for the first time or pitching at the end of the game, and I know he's done it some, but that's what happens in the ninth sometimes.

Q: Could Jordan Westburg have played today?

CL: He could have. He dove on Friday night, and was sore. We're probably being a little easy with him right now, but if we were having to play another day, he could've played possibly.

Q: Was there any thinking of putting Colby [White] back out there for the ninth, or do you want to get [Cole] Gordon back out there?

CL: We felt like we could run Cole for a couple of innings.

Cole Gordon

Q: The bullpen has been dominating so far, without any scuffles, you don't like to see those walks, but a good test for the guys?

CG: It happens in baseball. You are going to have ups and downs. The good thing about today is, though, we were able to stay ahead and our offense kept us in it. Regardless, we're going to struggle and it's just nice that our offense is there to pick us up.

Q: From a pitching perspective, you guys have been so dominating all year, you are supposed to carry the offense. Was it nice to have to have rolls reversed and the offense got the job done?

CG: I think they have been right on the edge all season, hard hit balls all the time every game. Some of them weren't falling and today they fell. [We] had a couple of big home runs. That's what we are going to be about. We're going to be about picking each other up, we're a team and that's what happens in baseball.

Q: Would you have liked to see some runners there in the ninth so you know what you would have to do in a similar situation with the SEC coming up?

CG: I think I would much rather there [have not been] runners on the base there. It's what happens and you have to battle through it and find a way to get it done. I'm just glad that we were able to come out of there with a win.

Q: What is the collective mindset now that you have the pre-SEC season knocked out of the way, great recorded, climbing into the top ten, but now it starts all over?

CG: Yeah, the SEC record starts over, but we have Grambling on Wednesday. We're going to keep doing what we do. We're going to keep playing hard, we're going to come out and practice hard. We're going to stick with our process, stick with what we do and hopefully that will allow us to be successful throughout the rest of the season.

Dustin Skelton

Q: What is different for you at the plate this year?

DS: [I'm] just getting pitches to hit, trying to get a fastball over the plate that I can hit and put a good swing on it.

Q: Is the park playing differently for you guys now that everything is complete?

DS: I think the lofts are allowing some air to flow through there. Last year it was like the air was flowing right-center to right. Now it's definitely flowing out left-center to left.

Q: You have seen a lot of pitchers from them and were you able to get it going a little bit more today?

DS: Yeah. We knew that we had to come, it was an early start, so we had to come out ready to play. We knew that we had to get those first couple right off the bat.

Q: You guys had a tight game, it was an offensive game that you had to get some hits to win. How did that change your guys mindset?

DS: Our mindset really didn't change. We knew that we had to go out there, we had to make pitches, execute the times we need to and go out there and get good hits, get good, timely hits and everything else will take care of itself.