

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. Auburn
March 22, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: What were you seeing from Ethan Small?

CL: [He was] just competing. His stuff has been a little more electric maybe in some of the earlier games in the year. He just had good stuff tonight but he just competes, puts the ball in the zone. We got him a lead early and then he ran with it through those middle innings.

Q: One of the first time this season the bullpen struggled?

CL: That's the hard part. We scripted it and did it the way we've done it all year. [Jared Liebelt] comes in and has a tough inning because they get the chop ball and the other ball that chops through. They did get a good hit off him and we give up the two in that inning. Colby [White] has a tough inning but we don't walk anybody in that inning, we don't make any errors. They just get a couple of hits. You have to tip your hat to Auburn at that point, swinging the bats at the right time.

Q: Were you disappointed you couldn't nurse that four-run lead longer?

CL: I thought that was the key to game to for us and for them. They were able to hold us and get a hold. We don't take advantage of it, because if you score another run or two and extend that game out, then they probably go to a guy they don't want to use and concede that game. Instead they were able to leave their guys in there, keep it close and didn't take advantage of that.

Q: Did you pinch hit [Marshall] Gilbert to get the bats back alive again?

CL: No, we were just trying to match up the left to the right. We have been doing that piece pretty much all year. Marshall has been hot, Josh [Hatcher] has been hot but their guy was good against a lefty. We were just putting a righty bat in at the time.

Q: Was Rowdey [Jordan] playing in?

CL: Probably a little bit, still had a chance, it was only a step or two. Probably step or two would've helped a little bit at that point. That guy was the eight-hole in their lineup. Got a fastball late, just got it up.

Q: What was the discussion with Auburn starting pitcher Tanner Burns in the first inning, with his delivery?

CL: It was that illegal pitch, not being squared with the plate and everything with the umpires there.

Q: Are they trying to eliminate that modified stretch?

CL: I think they are trying have you differentiate between, 'hey, I'm in the stretch or I'm in the wind up.' Just the way your angled, they're just trying to get that through. That's all that was.

Q: In your opinion should that have been balk call or a run scored?

CL: I don't know, they call it before a pitch. It really wasn't on a pitch. I don't think it's something you get warnings on. That was what the discussion was about because it didn't really happen during a pitch.

Q: What are some ways you want to see this team bounce back tomorrow?

CL: Just come out and compete. The good thing about our sport is 12 hours later we will be right back out here playing. We have JT Ginn on the mound and we have a really good ball club. There is another good ball club in that other dugout. In our league, you have to have short term memory and be able to come right back out and play hard. We played hard tonight, I don't fault our guys. We just came up on the other end of it. Our bullpen has been out strength and I'm sure it will be our strength tomorrow.

Ethan Small

Q: How comforting was it to get run support?

ES: It has been something that has kind of been lacking until later innings, so that was nice early on. Our offense, I think we hit some balls really hard today, and just kind of went that way, I guess.

Q: How did you feel about the tight strike zone?

ES: There were a few that I felt like were strikes, but to me it wasn't a big deal. Really, your stuff has to be good as a pitcher to make them swing at it anyway.

Q: As good as the bullpen has been, there are going to be nights like this, right?

ES: Right. It's baseball. I feel like I've said that a few times this year. We will be fine. I feel like this is the same story as Southern Miss was. That 1-0 loss to them. We'll be fine. Bats are going to come around and we'll get two wins.

Q: Is this a situation where you just have to tip your hat to Auburn?

ES: Yeah. They played really well and they just beat us.

Q: How do you attack Auburn's offense?

ES: For me, everybody's offense kind of the same way. Of course, you try to exploit some hitters' weaknesses. Really, I just pitch to my strengths, which is locating fastballs in and out, and then throwing changeups down.

Q: As a veteran, do you tell the guys to get over it and come back and get a win tomorrow?

ES: For sure. I would say, I mean I know we're not used to losing that much this year, so everybody is kind of mad about it. I think we will carry that into tomorrow and play well.

Q: Was giving up the home runs a situation where you got comfortable with the lead and tried challenging hitters?

ES: Yeah, for sure. I felt like the first one was a little bit lucky. I feel like it went about 306 [feet] and the fence is 305 [feet]. The second one, I just left the changeup about belt-high and he hit it out. For sure, especially with the pitch count being kind of high and getting into those late innings, I was just trying to pound the strike zone.

Q: What kind of challenges does it create when you lose the first game in a series?

ES: It means you've got to show up tomorrow and put it behind you and know that tomorrow is a new day. Our team is good enough to beat that team, it will come really comes down to whoever plays better is going to take it.