

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball  
Postgame Quotes  
Mississippi State vs. LSU  
March 28, 2019**

**Head Coach Chris Lemonis**

***Q: What were you seeing from Ethan Small tonight?***

CL: Just the command. His command is always so good, and he really threw that breaking ball for strikes tonight. He hadn't had to use it a lot, but with all these left-handed hitters, he commanded his breaking ball and his change up. The bottom of the fifth was a long inning for us with two video replays, it wore on him a little bit, so we got him out a little early tonight, but I thought he was really good.

***Q: Even before you got [Small] out, you had [Trysten] Barlow warming up. Did you see something the previous inning?***

CL: It was just a long inning. [Small] kept trying to get loose. I don't know if you noticed, but in those long replays he'd be out there warming up. He was just trying to get loose. He was at 77 or 78 pitches at that point, so we knew it would probably be his last inning. He was going through the heart of the lineup and it's [a] pretty good [lineup].

***Q: Your pitching staff had 17 strikeouts in this game tonight. Is that something you expected or even to keep them off the base paths like that?***

CL: No, I think it's a credit to some of our guys pitching. We threw our frontline guys at them, and they had really good stuff tonight in some of those spots. The punch out was big for us tonight.

***Q: Justin [Foscue] had a couple of more home runs tonight and now has nine on the year. Did you see that type of power as soon as you got here?***

CL: No. He didn't have a good fall. We sat down after the fall [and talked about it]. I don't do the swing, that's coach Gautreau's job, and Justin has a lot of accountability for his swing, as well. We sat down and talked, and he tells me now I made him mad. I told him 'you don't scare me when you hit.' It was a lot of back side stuff. He really went in the cages and worked in the off season. When he came back in spring training that's when I knew. Balls just started jumping out to the pull side. Just like you saw tonight, that big, high ball. He started hitting that all of the time. He's just taken it into the season.

***Q: Jordan [Westburg] and Justin [Foscue] are hitting the ball but struggling some in the field. Is it positioning or is it mental for them?***

CL: I think that fly ball tonight was just one of those things. I think they're probably not playing their best, but they've been pretty good. They're out there for the first time as full-time guys. Westburg played some other positions last year, so I think he's getting use to shortstop. Foscue is figuring it out. We're working. We've spent a lot of time defensively, but it's part of their development piece.

***Q: How deep does this lineup run right now?***

CL: It's good. With [Josh] Hatcher back there, and we have [Brad] Cumbest this past weekend who jumped in and played great. Marshall Gilbert is giving us some great at bats and Landon Jordan [is too]. We have some guys that we can play in there. The first five or six never change. With Rowdey [Jordan], we have a little more length in that line up.

***Q: How early in the spring did [Justin] Foscue start scaring you?***

CL: That first day or two back we could tell it was a different swing. If you're going to play a corner position at this level, you got to be able to hit the ball out of the ball park a little bit, and he made some really good changes to his swing.

***Q: We're you planning for the steal with two out in the ninth?***

CL: No, I wasn't thinking [steal], but with his type of speed, you got to. I thought Cole [Gordan] had done a great job picking a few times. Once it gets to two out, and we got past the point of their lineup where they weren't going to get a double, I think you got to steal the base and hope you put the ball in play, and it finds a spot. They had some balls find some spots there late.

***Q: What does it say about your bullpen coming in and getting out of tough situations?***

CL: They all had good stuff. They've been through the war. I have a fifth-year senior and two seniors. It's older, mature guys who've had good years. They're confident, and they're pitching well. Even [Jared] Leibel, I saw him when I was walking in. I said, 'hey man shake it off and be ready to go tomorrow.' He said, 'Hey coach they hit a couple of good pitches.' If that happens to a freshman, his head is down, but these older guys, they've just been here too long. They understand there are good hitters in the box. I thought they all had great stuff. Sometimes if they hit us, they hit us. I worry more when we're not throwing strikes and not showing poise on the mound.

***Q: Jordan [Westburg] has ten hits in the last four games. What's working for him?***

CL: He's just staying on some balls. He made an adjustment after Florida, and it's put him in a better spot. He's able to get to some more pitches. He didn't really change his swing but more his approach.

**Justin Foscue**

***Q: When was the last time you hit two home runs in a ballgame?***

JF: It's my first time.

***Q: How does it feel for the first time?***

JF: It feels great, especially in a game like that against LSU. It felt really good.

***Q: After a questionable call, were you kind of perturbed?***

JF: Yeah, I had that ball on the white line...so I knew coming at my next at bat with two strikes I have to protect inside, because he is giving that to [the pitchers]. I also have to protect the slider away, so he gave that fastball high and in, so I put a good swing on it.

***Q: Did you know it was out off the bat? And what about the second one?***

JF: Yes, I squared that thing up. I really didn't know right off the bat if it was gone. I got it off the end and I really did not know if it was going to get out of here because it is such a big park, so I just did not know.

***Q: What did you think of the bomb that Elijah MacNamee hit right in front of you?***

JF: Well, he told me he was going to cheat to one. I said don't cheat with your upper half, I said cheat with your timing. He got up in the count 2-0, and I said here is your pitch right here. So, he put a good swing on it. Did that ball leave out of the park? That was a bomb so I'm happy for him.

***Q: Is it kind of a shock to you to look up at the scoreboard and see that you have nine home runs in over a little into a month into the year now?***

JF: No, it's not a shock. I am supposed to be doing this.

***Q: How hard was it to keep the lead up?***

JF: Yeah, we barely hung on there. They put some good hits together, that's what these SEC games are all about, who can make the last play. I think [Cole Gordon] did a great job in the ninth. He made some good pitches so that they couldn't put any good swings on them. It was good for him.

***Q: How resilient is this team, because there was a chance knowing how good LSU can be that the game could've been taken away?***

JF: This team is very resilient. We have been through a lot the last two years. [We have] a bunch of leaders in the group. We know how to come back from games, and get hot in games and keep the lead. The most important is we have toughness. We know it's not over until the last out's made. This bunch is very resilient

***Q: What do you think is the biggest growth of you as a hitter in the past year or so?***

JF: I think just utilizing my power. I think last year I didn't utilize it enough like I should have. I was missing pitches. This year I'm not missing pitches. That's what I worked on in the fall and spring. When they make a mistake, I better hit it or I'm not going to get another one.

***Q: Has it helped with knowing that Elijah MacNamee is in front of you, and Dustin Skelton behind you, proving they can take balls too?***

JF: This lineup is deadly one through nine. I don't understand how you can pitch to us. I don't understand how you can pitch around us. You cannot pitch around me because you have Skelton behind me. You can't pitch around Mac because I'm right behind him. The three guys ahead of Mac, you're not going to pitch around them. This one through nine is deadly, it's not easy.

#### **Cole Gordon**

***Q: You're in the bullpen, getting loose and LSU is kind of tacking back into this game. What is your mindset right there?***

CG: That's what we expect...They're are a quality team, and we obviously know that. [I just had to] stay focused whether it was a seven-run lead or a one-run lead. My mindset was going to stay the same, my job was to go in there and get outs and let my defense play behind me.

***Q: What were you doing with your breaking ball?***

CG: I was just throwing two, a couple kinds of breaking balls, just trying to keep them off balance. They are a talented team, so if you leave fastballs over the plate, or really anything over the plate, they're going to hit it and they're going to hit it hard.

***Q: What were you thinking on the two-seam fastball you threw?***

CG: I was just trying to get the ball off the plate, and maybe give him something to roll over, get a double play, and it just worked out a little better. I was just trying to get a ball off, not something to hit obviously. I was trying to get something off the plate he couldn't get to.

***Q: Are you surprised he took it?***

CG: Yeah, I mean, a little bit. I'm just trying to make it where it is, and then whatever he does, he does. As long as I can get what I need to get done, then I will let the rest take care of itself.

***Q: Most of the time this season you come into the ninth, tonight you came in the eighth in a pressure situation. What is the difference in mentality for you?***

CG: I do not think it changes. I try to play it one pitch at a time, whether it is going to be one inning or nine innings. I just have to concentrate on the first pitch I'm throwing and then go from there. I'm just trying to get that guy out, and the tying run is on second. So, I'm just trying to get that out.

***Q: How would pitch against your own line up?***

CG: You just have to attack with your best stuff. It's challenging because at that point it's your best stuff versus their best stuff. When you come here, when you come to an SEC school, you're going to face that every weekend. So, it's just pitching with a lot of confidence, I do not know if there's necessarily a game plan that's going to work with them because, like I said, they're good hitters. So attacking with your best stuff and being confident with it.

***Q: Do you ever take a moment to look at how far you have come in a year?***

CG: Coming back for this last year, I'm trying to take every moment in. When you think baseball is over with [and] you get another chance to play, you just have to soak it all in. [I'm] trying to tell that to the younger guys. It goes by fast. Five years feels like nothing. Just every moment, I'm trying to take in and keep growing. There's always growth. Baseball's a hard sport so you can always get better.

***Q: What does it say about your bullpen being able to continue to come in tough situations and get out of it?***

CG: They're hard-nosed. That's kind of what we try to pride ourselves on, is just being competitors. No matter happens, whenever we come in we're just going to compete. We see that day-in and day-out. You see it in practice, you see it in our little drills we do. There's a lot of competition going on, just a lot of guys who are competitors. To be in a bullpen you have to be a competitor, you have to be a guy who wants to go out there in those situations, because if not you are going to get beat.