

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. Texas Southern
April 16, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: Was there any forewarning of a big offensive showing tonight?

CL: I didn't think so, we've just been okay offensively lately. The guys have been putting in a ton of work, trying to get back to our approach. I think you saw that a lot tonight. Not so much in the hits, but the walks...the long at-bats. He had a couple nine-pitch at-bats, just guys grinding it out. And that's what we do. We've been talking about it all week. Do what we do. All year long, we've been a gritty offense with some length to it and I thought we were very good tonight in that aspect.

Q: You focused on two-strike approach this week, how much of that did you see tonight?

CL: We saw a lot of it. I told the guys in the locker room, the at-bats were great when we got hits, but also the at-bats where we took a walk in a big situation. We've been swinging out of the zone a little bit lately and just being a little big, so you can see the work in tonight's game.

Q: What were you seeing from Gunner Halter tonight?

CL: He looked nice and relaxed and on those balls. He had that first big swing, maybe the swing that opened up the game for us a little bit and [gave] us some cushion. The best swing he had all night, I think he hit to the wall and the guy caught it, but some really good [at-bats] by Gunner.

Q: What have you seen from Gunner as he's transitioned from second base to third base with him not playing every day?

CL: When you're not playing every day it's tough for guys, but he's been great. He's working, Marshall [Gilbert] is the same way, [Landon Jordan] came in late and played for him. He's a really good player. In this time of year, it's hard to get everybody in enough and it was nice to see us put some guys in and get good [at-bats] out of them.

Q: When you have a big game like this, how much do you worry about staying locked in?

CL: For us, because the last couple weeks we haven't been great offensively, I think it was good for the guys to feel good, getting some of those at-bats and getting some of those swings. I told Jordan Westburg this was the first time I've seen him smile in a couple days. This game can be tough on you sometimes. For him, it was a nice at-bat.

Q: How good was it to get some young guys in tonight and have success?

CL: It's good. It's good for the morale of the team, but also, we put all those [left-handed pitchers] in there because we're going to need some of them tomorrow. The arm they're throwing against us tomorrow is one of the best in our league and we may need our left handers a little more.

Q: What do Jordan Westburg, Tanner Allen and Justin Foscue mean to the team?

CL: They're ballplayers. They show up every day. They've been in the lineup every day and they've all had their own – I looked up and [Tanner Allen] was hitting three-something and about a month ago, I felt like he couldn't get a hit. They're all pretty resilient and water usually finds its level. [That's] kind of what our hitters have done. It's a good group of talented hitters.

Q: With Jake Mangum only one hit away from the SEC hits record, is there a sense of relief and do you feel like it's weighed on him at all?

CL: I think everybody will be ready when it's over. I was thinking we might get him up there in the ninth, or the eighth. He's such a good player. It bothers all of us probably more than it bothers him, knowing Jake and his mentality. We gave him a hard time because he missed a couple balls out in center field today. He's as good a center fielder as I've ever coached, but he's got a mindset. He just plays.

Justin Foscue

Q: What does it feel to have a game where everyone is hitting hard?

JF: It's awesome. It's just a total team effort. When you get everybody to contribute together as a team, I think it's a big confidence booster for everybody and it lets the pitchers relax.

Q: How well were you seeing it tonight?

JF: I think I got two good doubles and one cheaper. I think I was seeing it well, I was just trying to slow the game down. I was getting really antsy the last week and half trying to force some hits. Tonight, I just tried to relax up there and let the pitches come to me and I was seeing it well.

Q: How do you stay locked in for tomorrow?

JF: We know that tomorrow is a new day. [We have to] go out tomorrow like we did tonight. [We have to] have the same confidence we had tonight, put it in tomorrow's game. We have to know they are going to come to play.

Gunner Halter

Q: How difficult was it to get accustomed [to the rotation at third base]?

GH: It kind of just changes game-by-game due to the pitcher and who's on the mound that day. We have some depth at third - me, Marshall [Gilbert] and Landon [Jordan]. All of us can play well. Coach just kind of divides us up and lets us do our thing. Whenever we get our chance, we try to do the best we can.

Q: How well did you see the ball at the plate tonight?

GH: I am seeing the ball a lot better than I was at the beginning of the year. [In] this league, there is no mercy and I figured that out really quickly. I hope to be in the lineup a lot more.

Q: What is your day-to-day to mindset?

GH: I'm just doing whatever I can to help the team win. Whenever I get my chance, I'm taking full [advantage] of it. Hopefully, I'll be in there more, daily.

Ethan Small

Q: What was working for you tonight?

ES: Early on [I was] just really fast ball heavy, then I kind of saw some swings that made me feel like [I needed to start mixing it]. In the third and the fourth, and maybe even the fifth, I had three pitches pretty much where I wanted them, so I think that's a big key.

Q: How great was it to get the crooked numbers on the board?

ES: It feels great. Anytime you can put up 19 runs is really special. The hardest part about it is sitting on the bench so long that you get a little complacent sitting there. Really proud of our guys and how we bounced back from last weekend.

Q: How did it feel to bounce back?

ES: It's huge. Of course, everybody's emphasized how good our practices were and how hard we worked. The biggest thing is just flushing it, just completely forgetting about it and kind of being a little mad about it, too, and wanting to play really well at home.