

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. South Carolina
May 16, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: What got into your offense tonight?

CL: It was close early on. I thought we had some good at-bats early, we just didn't have a lot to show for it. Being able to separate that game was huge. (South Carolina) is down some arms over there, so it gets to a point in the game where you decide, 'Are we going to pitch for today or for tomorrow?' I think that's a little bit of what happened, so we were able to get going. We had some great at-bats. Tanner Allen had an unbelievable night. Some of the home runs, I thought (Dustin) Skelton's home run (just put us at), 'Alright, the game's over,' at that point in the game. It was nice to see some of the young guys come off the bench and get some swings in.

Q: Seeing younger guys like Landon Jordan and Brad Cumbest get their first-career home runs, what does that do for you as a coach?

CL: I'm excited because I need them. Landon Jordan is a kid who, the last couple of weeks, I haven't had a chance to really get him in there and his BP's has been really good, and his practices have been really good. I keep tapping him on the shoulder, saying, 'Hey man. You look good.' I know he's ready, like "Put me in." So, it was nice to get a chance to see him play tonight. The same with Brad [Cumbest]. Brad's been fighting it a little bit, but we need him with Elijah [MacNamee] out. That little combination of him and Josh [Hatcher] in right is important to us.

Q: How special has Ethan Small been in your eyes?

CL: When you can beat another SEC team and it's not your best night, that says a lot. His velocity was really good, too. He had his best [velocity] early, but he just couldn't command as much as he normally does, so he fell behind. But he kept us in there. That game was close for the first three innings and [he just competed]. Luckily, we were able get him out and not have to stretch his pitch count tonight.

Q: Do you see the same adversity that you like with Ethan Small as you're heading into postseason?

CL: I like him more when he's dominant. When pitches like [he did at] Texas A&M, it's a lot easier. Ethan, he's been through the wars. Nothing's going to catch him off guard. He's pitched at the highest level and he's one of the best pitchers in the country. He's a huge weapon for us.

Q: How encouraging was it to see Josh Hatcher take advantage of the opportunity he has right now?

CL: It was good. We need it. We need that help. Going into last weekend and picking up for Mac[Namee]. That's a big piece and Mac's a tough guy to replace.

Q: Are you pretty satisfied with how this team is and what shape they are in overall right now?

CL: We are. We're good. We're in a good spot. We're getting some guys to pitch a little bit for us right now. Eric Cerantola, I'm really excited about, and even Spencer Price tonight. The team's playing. We're not playing perfect, we'll goof something every night it seems like. But we play hard and there's a collective group that competes, which I like. We've been, as an offense, they make you pitch and make pitches all night long. There's never a pitch you can take off, so that's been a really fun part to watch.

Q: Hatcher and Hancock in the line-up, that's two lefty batters against a right handed pitcher. Was it that simple or was there more to it?

CL: It was that simple. I think lefties hit 100 or something points higher so you're just trying to put your lefties in there. Sometimes it's that simple. You're just trying to match it up. Sometimes it's not. I thought those two guys matched up tonight and were pretty good.

Q: Is it just part of the course with Tanner Allen getting a good amount of hits?

CL: Early on, somebody else is hot and now he is. That's usually how our lineup works. They play off each other a little bit and somebody's the ebb and flow of the lineup. It's nice to have him hot right now. He's picking up a lot of big swings. [He's] picking up some guys. We'll get an out and then he'll get a good swing off. He's been really good. You like them all hot right now.

Ethan Small

Q: What were you feeling out there tonight?

ES: It was one of those things [where] the routine this week was a little shaken up. I left my bullpen out to try to recover with that short rest. The ball was jumping out of my hand really well. I don't think I threw a fastball tonight during the first inning so I felt good, but I felt so good that it kind of felt off a little bit. From there, it was kind of a fight to really figure out my release point. The last couple of innings I wanted to keep going but we scored so many runs.

Q: Postseason schedules sometimes alter pitching schedules so, was it good to get this weekend to see how things might be in the upcoming weeks?

ES: One hundred percent. I think I got better today. I know, if that's going on, how to fix it from now on. I think that's a big key. I haven't run into a lot of trouble this year, so I'm glad I got to face some adversity and work through it.

Q: How does it feel to be passing names like Jeff Brantley and Chris Stratton on the strikeout list?

ES: It feels like one big blur, this season. It's gone by so quick and having those types of numbers, it's just incredible. Those guys are incredible guys, pitchers, people and to even be in the same conversation with them is really an honor for me.

Q: Did one particular pitch begin clicking for you in the third where you sat down seven in a row?

ES: I don't think so. I think I was flying open a little bit, leaving a little too early. My windup was a little too quick. Once I slowed everything down and just committed to throwing strikes, I [wasn't] going to throw another ball. I know I did, but that was just the mentality. I'm just going to make them hit it. Especially with that lead and just trying to settle down, then my curveball started clicking, too.

Landon Jordan

Q: What did you hit out and what was your approach that at-bat?

LJ: My approach was fastball away. The first pitch was a changeup and then he hung me a slider and I got the [barrel] out.

Q: What's the attitude like in the dugout when everyone is hitting the ball?

LJ: It's awesome. Everyone is going up there confident. I told Jake Mangum 'It's a hit party' and he said, 'You need to save some for me. I only got one tonight.'

Q: How did it feel to hit your first career home run?

LJ: It was crazy. It felt like a dream. It's something I've always dreamed of and it was awesome.

Q: What was the reception like when you got back to the dugout?

LJ: Everyone was congratulating me. Coach [Gautreau] couldn't get over it. He was like, 'man, you haven't seen a lefty in so many games and you wait for the lefty to hit a jack.'

Q: How locked in is this offense right now?

LJ: I give all the credit to Coach [Gautreau]. It's crazy how much he knows our swings. Every little thing we do, every at-bat, he's coming to talk to us. He's awesome. We're really locked in but, without him, it'd be a different story.

Q: Having so many comebacks on the year, do you even blink when you see you're behind on the scoreboard?

LJ: Not really anymore. We know our offense. We can swing it; we can put up ten runs in an inning. We get down, stay the course and keep doing what we do.