



2019 NCAA Starkville Regional
Mississippi State Postgame Quotes
Dudy Noble Field
Starkville, Mississippi
Friday, May 31, 2019

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Opening Statement

CL: "It was a great college baseball game. The atmosphere was electric, a very good opponent in the other dugout. We had to fight to the end. I was proud of our guys. We had some really good at-bats after we fell behind. We had to keep adding on the whole day. I had the opportunity to use a handful of guys to slow down their offense."

Q: What were your thoughts on Elijah MacNamee and his return to the lineup? What was his week of practice like leading into the game?

CL: "We were able to get him back swinging this weekend so Saturday and Sunday, he took some cuts. Then, we got some live at-bats this week. Some of our guys who are not pitching in the regional gave him some live at-bats so he was able to work. He had some good at-bats. I thought he was really good today. He had two really good swings. One thing about Elijah, he is a great eye. As a four hole, he hits for good average. He has power. He drives in runs. Then, he has a great on-base percentage too. I knew if he did not hit, he would still move our lineup around and keep it moving. We have been a really good lineup all year, and they all complement each other really well. When he has been out, that is kind of shuffled that a little bit. I thought having him back in there was huge today."

Q: Can you give an update on JT Ginn?

CL: "He was just sore. Then, he got in that long inning, and it just tightened up on him a little bit. I thought he was really good for three innings, but we had that really prolonged inning. Could he have thrown? He is telling me he can throw. You could see it on his face. You just can't leave him out there. We will evaluate him and see where he is at. We put Brandon Smith in a tough situation, poor kid has been pitching great for us. That us really tough to do. Liebs [Jared Liebelt] got us out of it. We were able to get through it."

Q: How big is it to have a bullpen like you do?

CL: "It is the experience side. We ran a freshman out there. You kind of see that was a tough situation, but we were able to go to two seniors [Jared Liebelt and Cole Gordon]. Those two seniors who went out there, I thought Cole was excellent today. Not what we wanted to do, but this is survive and advance. You win, and you move on. Then, you figure out tomorrow. We have a deep bullpen. Those guys are pretty durable too. I think we will have to use them again sometime during this tournament."

Q: What has the last month been like for Jordan Westburg, and how big is it for his confidence to get a big hit like he did today?

CL: "That was huge. Right before he got the hit, I kind of told Coach [Jake] Gautreau and said, 'Man, let his hard work pay off.' When you are going through a struggle like that, poor Westy [Jordan Westburg] has been swinging until his hands bleed. Almost too much probably. Your heart goes out to these kids when they struggle. I put him back in the two hole again because he is a guy who gets on-base a lot. He had a couple of walks, and he had some good swings. Then, he probably had the biggest hit of the game right there. It was well deserved for all of the hard work he has put in."

Q: How big was to play a tight game like this to start the post season after the ups and downs of the season?

CL: "It was a little bit of everything today. We took the lead. Then, we lost the lead, and they tied it back up. There was a lot of emotions today. The fans were unbelievable. I felt like the dugout was rocking at times when we were in there. It got the kids used to it, and it is what postseason is about. Every team here is very good, and they are playing good. They want a championship, and they are excited to play. It is all across the country. I don't care what seed you are, that kind of stuff does not matter now. You have to go out there and earn it. I thought our guys did a great job."

Mississippi State Shortstop Jordan Westburg

Q: What has the journey been like for you the last month and half struggling at the plate but being able to come up with a big two-run hit today?

JW: "It has been up and down, up and down. Coach Lemonis and Coach Gautreau have kept their confidence in me. It is just grinding through it – to come through it in a spot like that is awesome."

Q: What extra element did Elijah MacNamee bring back to the lineup today?

JW: "He has been our four-hole all year. For him to be back in the lineup and hit balls hard all game like that is huge. We have confidence in him, and he has confidence in himself. He is a veteran guy. He is always going to be a leader for us and try to make us play as hard as we can. For him to get in the lineup is huge."

Mississippi State Relief Pitcher Cole Gordon

Q: What was your mindset coming into the game after your team scored three runs in the seventh inning to give you the lead?

CG: "I knew I had to come in and make a couple of pitches. That game was back and forth all day. They have a really good offense on that side of the field, and they showed it all day. They came out there and hit good pitches. My goal was to go out there, fill it up and force contact if I could. If not, just make good pitches to help the other guys out."

Q: What happened to start the eighth inning?

CG: "I missed. Then, I walked a guy in five pitches. That is the guy that hit the ball in the gap. It was a realization for me that I had to get back in it. I had to make a few pitches because it was time for the game to turn at that point. Just changing and drawing what I knew I was confident in. What I knew I could throw out. Coach Fox [Scott Foxhall] and I were on the same page the whole inning so it worked out to get in there. We ended up adding a lot of runs, and we weren't going to settle until we got a lot more."

Mississippi State Left Fielder Rowdey Jordan

Q: How did the home run feel?

RJ: "It was great. It is awesome playing in a regional when everything is just elevated. The competition is elevated, the emotion is elevated. It was nice to come through in a situation like that, awesome feeling."

Q: What was working for you today in your offensive approach?

RJ: "Just putting good swings on good pitches is what was working for me today. Seeing the ball deep and putting good swings is what worked today. In my last at bat, I got ahead 2-0 and was looking to do damage. I missed the 2-0 pitch. I was up ahead a little bit. Then, just put the barrel to the ball, and it got up into the air."