



2019 NCAA Starkville Regional
Mississippi State Postgame Quotes
Dudy Noble Field
Starkville, Mississippi
Sunday, June 2, 2019

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Opening Statement

CL: "A great night. The atmosphere, the way we played and the way they played. You have to tip your hat to Miami. They are a very talented team who spent the last 12 hours on that field."

"Our guys, I thought our starter Peyton Plumlee was awesome. Then, all the guys we ran out of the bullpen did their job. We played great defense and had some clutch hitting. We faced some really good arms tonight, and I thought they threw some guys with really good stuff. We just had some big hits. It was nice to get Jake [Mangum] back in the mix. He was a big part of tonight with some big at-bats. He was awesome, and overall a fun night at the ballpark."

Q: What was it like to capture the win and advance to super regionals?

CL: "Everything and more. It is not just tonight ... We have the best fans and atmosphere – it is the pinnacle of college baseball. I know there are some other great places, but I know there is nothing better than Dudy Noble. It is a fun place to compete. When you get those big hits in those moments, it feels like the place is rocking."

Q: How important was the middle relief?

CL: "They have been big for us all year with the element that we can match you up in our bullpen. Trysten [Barlow] has had some really good bullpens this week. Sitting there today in the office watching that game, Miami had a bunch of young guys in the lineup that are really good. I thought our pitching coach [Scott Foxhall] did an awesome job today and all our pitchers. It was hard to take Peyton Plumlee out because he had been so good, but we knew the matchup was there. It worked out for us."

Q: Was it like everything was right in the world when Jake got his first hit?

CL: "In the at-bat that he had the double, I turned to Jake [Geatreau] and said 'He is out of it now'... We looked at each other and knew Jake was back. The next at-bat he hits the ball in the gap. I am happy for him. He is everything he says, and he is the epitome of a ballplayer. It was hard watching him fight through it in his senior year, but he is the ultimate competitor. We knew he would fight out of it. Like I said last night, he has been really good in his work. It was just to the point of getting that one hit and getting it off his back."

Q: How did all three phases, pitching, defense and hitting, work all weekend?

CL: "You are hoping for one of those two teams in front of you to have a blow out. We ran out there and one of the guys was throwing 95 miles per hour. Their pitcher was really good tonight and so was their bullpen. I thought our guys were really good. Everyone was locked into the game. It was two of the better teams in the country, and they were fighting it out. Fortunately for us, we came out on top."

Q: How big were the double plays, and how well Jordan and Justin work together in the middle of the infield?

CL: "I am really comfortable with those two. Shame on me probably for putting Justin Foscoe at third base earlier in the year, but moving him to second base has been a huge part of our defense getting a little bit better. He is very comfortable there, and he is really good at the double play. He turned a couple yesterday, and we turned a couple today. He has played really well. [Jordan] Westburg has been solid all year. The ability to turn the double play is huge."

Mississippi State Centerfielder Jake Mangum

Q: The team is 4-for-4 for super regionals in your career. Mississippi State is the only team to make it the last four years in the country, what does that accomplishment mean to you?

JM: "I liked to think I helped, but it took a team effort all four years. Freshman year, we were loaded with big leaguers all over the field. Sophomore year was Brent Rooker's historical year. Junior year was a crazy ride. This year, it has gone really smoothly all year. It has been a crazy four years, and that is because of the boys in the locker room. It is awesome. We look to keep going and stay alive."

Q: Did it feel like a weight being lifted off your shoulder

JM: After the infield hit, the second hit was my bread and butter type hit. You take what they give me. The ball was on the outside part of the plate, the third baseman is in to cover the bunt and they are going to give me the six hole – that is what I do. When I got that hit, I was like all right. You are back to basics, and you will start rolling. It was big one, and I know Jordan [Westburg] was going to get the job done."

"Everyone on our team is going through scuffles, but the one thing everyone has done is kept a positive attitude because we've been winning all year. It is miserable to be struggling and losing. When you are winning, it's easy to stay positive. That's a testament to the guys in the locker room."

Q: What will it mean to you to be able to host a super regional next weekend?

JM: "We hosted a regional and a super regional my freshman year and packed the place out. Mississippi State baseball means a lot to the people. They came, and they were loud. You cannot even describe how much it helps. In college baseball, you do not have stadiums like this. When you get opposing teams to come in here, it almost shell shocks you. I am still not used to it. Last night in the first at-bat, I was like this place is insane as it erupted. It helps a lot ... We need everybody to show up next weekend and help us get back to Omaha. Their presence matters. It is a big reason why we are here."

Mississippi State Starting Pitcher Peyton Plumlee

Q: What's the past year been like?

PP: "The past year has been pretty tough on myself and my family, but I knew this is the place I wanted to be. Looking at other options was not going to be an option for me. I give a lot of credit to Coach Lemonis for having the faith in bringing me back and having the faith in me all year even though probably countless times I showed him that he should not have had faith in me. He kept his head up, I kept my head up and kept playing in front of these fans one more year. This year has meant the absolute world to me and my family. I give all the credit to the guys and the coaches."

Q: What was your approach coming into this game facing a powerful Miami lineup?

PP: “Looking at Miami’s lineup, it kind of resembled a team like Arkansas who is super aggressive. You knew you had to make good pitches to good hitters when you have a lineup full of them. I knew that the best way to be effective for myself was to be able to move the two seam down in the zone and keep it away from them. I knew they were going to be aggressive and try to pull the ball and try to hit home runs and doubles all night. I knew that if I could stay away from them. I knew if I could keep the ball down in the zone and move it to the defense – we have played great defense this whole year. I give a lot of credit to those guys behind. Just seeing a lot of the big swings, taking advantage of their aggressiveness and try to get those guys out in three pitches or less.”

Mississippi State Left Fielder Rowdey Jordon

Q: What does it mean to you to be the regional MVP?

RJ: “It means a lot. It was a big weekend, and we got three wins. I battled through some adversity at the beginning of the year. Being the MVP this weekend means a lot. Like Jake [Magnum] said, playing hard and not letting it get in your head is huge.”

Q: What about the fly ball in the ninth, did you lose it in the lights?

RJ: “That ball was the highest ball I have ever seen in my life. I looked over to Jake and knew I didn't really want it. Jake looked at me and said 'Take it, take it, take it'. I just felt like it was not going to come down, but I finally found it. It was good to get the second out.”