

Mississippi State Quotes vs. Lipscomb NCAA Starkville Regional – May 29, 2026

Head Coach Brian O’Conner Opening Statement

You know, first, I’m really proud of Duke Stone. He just absolutely attacked the pitcher's mound today and executed his pitches and certainly to go out in a 1st game of a regional and go 6 innings with no walks and 10 strikeouts is impressive. And we're proud of him. We knew he was the right guy to get us off to a great start this weekend and obviously Vito [Vytas Valincius] and his teammates, you know, the 1st 3 innings, you know, last time we faced their left hander, he held us at bay for 5 innings before we got to him. Today it was 3, even though in those innings, I thought we were hitting some balls hard. But, you know, certainly opportunistic offensively and a few of those innings and just proud of our guys overall. I think anytime you play this time of the year, you also got to be clean defensively. And I thought that we handled the ball really well on the infield and did a nice job. There weren't too many opportunities because this guy was locked in. But proud of our team and proud of the opportunity that we have in game 2 tomorrow night.

Duke Stone

On almost transferring last summer to starting game 1 of a regional

Yeah, I mean, I just remember last year down at Tallahassee, I didn't even get to wear a jersey, and I was just glad to be down there for an experience, and just, glad to be a part of that last year to kind of know what it's going to be like and stuff like that. So, just happy to be here and, ready to go out, just ready to go out there and throw strikes and just let the defense work behind me.

On preparing for Lipscomb

I was kind of been struggling against right handers this year. I mean, the stats show it, so it's just mainly just because I would never land a slider, a curveball in for a strike early in an at-bat. Just kind of got me behind just throwing like chase pitches. So the main thing for me to go in today and just land, all speeds in the zone. So that's what I worked on all week and was able to go out there and do it today.

Vytas Valincius

On approach at the plate and breaking it open 2nd time through the lineup

I think it was the approach. I mean, the 1st 3 innings we were smacking the ball against them, I mean, they were eventually going to fall. So, I just think we stuck with their approach and we got to

On settling in as everyday left fielder

When your numbers called, if you're ready. I mean, I just think it's, like, not getting sad or mad about it. It's a long season. Like Coach Oak always says it's about the team, it's about us,

whatever, whatever the decision he makes, I'm with it. I mean, I'm just out there trying to do my best every time.

Head Coach Brian O'Conner

On his first regional as State head coach

Oh, it was great. I got to tell you, after the national anthem and I go in and get my dugout card and walk out for the ground rules. I just took a quick second to look around, right? And, You know, every day you get a chance to play or coach in this stadium. You don't take it for granted. The passion, the belief that these fans have in these young men that wear this uniform and how proud they are is just awesome. So, you know, I took a couple of seconds to take it in. I got to tell you that, last night I got one of the better night's sleep in my time here as the coach. And that was because of the confidence that I have in these young men and how they've went about their business since their 1st day on campus, starting in the fall and how much it means to them. It's special, you know. The atmosphere here and, how they rally behind our guys, you just really feel like they're with us.

On Jacob Parker having a big game as a true freshman

I enjoyed it, I can tell you personally. As a coach, you need to enjoy this as well, right? And the guy takes incredible swings. I've talked about this before all year about him. You know, his poise that he shows as an 18-year-old. His parents have done an incredible job of raising those two boys. You know, a lot of times, a freshman comes into this league or this level, or the magnitude of the stadium, or the NCAA tournament, and, you know, they press or whatever it might be, and that's not him. I had complete confidence that he was going to put good swings on the ball today and be aggressive and go for it. And so just seeing him do what he did today was fun and his team was rewarded for it.