

Mississippi State Quotes vs. Louisiana (Regional Final) NCAA Starkville Regional – May 31, 2026

Head Coach Brian O'Connor Opening Statement

I want to start off by talking about the Ragin' Cajuns. The job that Coach Deggs did this year, his staff and his team, pretty special, right? About five or six weeks ago, kind of dead in the water. What he did and that team did this year, with a very young ball club, is really impressive. I've always admired him over the years and the style of play which his team plays with. They put pressure on you and continue to stay in there and fight and play the game the right way. Congratulations to them on a terrific year. Extremely proud of our ball club. These two guys sitting with me, if you recall last night, I talked about Ryder Woodson and that he'd be able to put last night behind him and be ready to go tonight. He certainly did. This rookie here [Jacob Parker] and the job he's done this year, obviously being the MVP of the regional is pretty special. Super glad that he decided to go to college and wear this uniform. Proud of this whole team. I thought McPherson was outstanding. It worked, right? Our plan that was laid out about 10 weeks ago was for tonight. For him to go out there and give us four to six innings in a quality start in a regional. The work that him, Coach Parker and our medical staff did to put him in the position was really outstanding. Just really proud of this group. We got more baseball. Next opportunity is next weekend in Athens and we look forward to the next opportunity of the next game that we have in front of us.

Jacob Parker

On journey throughout the season

There was a reason for that. I needed a lot of work. I trusted my coaches and their decision for that. When the opportunity arose, I kind of seized that moment and took off from there.

Ryder Woodson

On the offensive explosion in the regional

We all say every time before we go up to hit that we're all due. Every single time we go up to hit we're all due. Offense is going well, everything's going great right now. Look forward to this coming weekend.

Head Coach Brian O'Connor

On Jacob Parker

You bring up the most important word, pace. That's the most important word in development. There's the technical part of it that's really important, and he listened to the technical part, right? To become a great player, the most important word is pace on how you work. The first three or four days of fall ball, him not knowing how to run the bases. What I mean by that is he knows how to get to first, second, third and to home, but baserunning decisions that need to be made. I remember after about a week in saying to me, coach I didn't even know this stuff existed, how important that stuff was and seeing him improve as a baserunner. Standing out there with him, I think it was the fourth day of

fall ball in right field and talking to him about angles off the bat in the outfield and see him grow throughout the fall defensively. You're right, you can see the swing and say wow, that's pretty special. It's the little nuances of the game that makes a player great, and he's kept his eyes and ears open every day. Him and his team is being rewarded for it as well. You all have heard me say before the maturity out of him. Been around a lot of 18-year-olds in my coaching career, he's right up there with any of them on the maturity that he shows. The pitch recognition was the biggest part of his development. In the fall, the pitch recognition was not good. That can be trained. He listened and trained it, and it's made a difference for him.