

**2019 Mississippi State Baseball
Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State vs. Youngstown State
Saturday, February 16, 2019**

Head Coach Chris Lemonis

Q: Talk about a pretty good sweep on your opening weekend.

CL: It was a good weekend, all around, with all the festivities. I think it just worked out great. Our guys got to get out there and get comfortable. It took us a couple of innings on Friday night, but they got out there and did a great job. I was impressed this weekend. We pounded the strike zone, we made a lot of plays on the weekend. Those guys had a really good offensive weekend. It was nice to get them out there and get the butterflies out for players and coaches. Taking everything in was nice.

Q: What was your impression of how you guys defended this weekend?

CL: I thought we were really good. We punched out a lot of guys, so there weren't as many opportunities. We had a lot of punch-outs, but I thought we played good defense. The play by [Justin] Foscue, we had been working on that one a lot, and it was a really nice play that he made in the eighth inning.

Q: Was the pitching staff as good as you could have drawn up for those guys?

CL: It was really good. I was talking earlier, we had J.T. [Ginn] who gave up the [home run] in the first, so that introduced him to college baseball a little bit. He settled in nice, though. He got stuck in some of those long innings, because we were having some big offensive innings. He was really getting into a groove around the fourth or fifth inning, so it was really nice to see him out there and having some success.

Q: Did you expect this much fire power from your starting lineup?

CL: Yes, I had been hoping for that next step. When [our staff] took over, we knew that there were some really good sophomores in there and some young players. Obviously, everybody knows that Jake [Mangum] is a really good player and Elijah [MacNamee] with the way he finished [last season]. Put them together as a group, because right now they are playing as a unit, and we're seeing some guys do some special things.

Q: How special was it to see Hayden Jones get one out of the yard on his opening weekend?

CL: It was neat. I don't know what was more impressive: the home run or the guy he threw out by six feet. We had to tag and retag. He's got a chance to be a special player. He really loves to play the game and he's a nice talent.

Q: Was there anything this weekend that stands out that you didn't get to do that you wanted to do?

CL: I got one guy, Bryce Brock, that I was trying to get in. If we had gotten to the lefty in the ninth [inning], I was going to get him in [the game]. He's my one guy. He's one of our really better match up guys that we have in the bullpen that we didn't get in there. He'll probably be running out there next weekend, but they just had such a heavy right-handed line up that we didn't get to use him.

Q: How did you think Keegan James threw?

CL: He threw really well. He pounded the zone, made pitches when he had to and velocity was really good, especially early. I thought he threw some nice curve balls. He's been working on his breaking ball a lot.

Q: What did you think about Spencer Price tonight?

CL: It was nice. It was emotional for him. It took a lot for him to get out there and Trysten Barlow was another one that we threw out there. It was kind of the comeback tour today. Both guys ran out there and pitched well. Spencer was really good. Getting back out there for him and pitching on the bump against somebody else's hitters was a really big day for him. Hopefully, moving forward, we can use him a little bit more and his slider is really good.

Q: Any idea of who will get that Wednesday start on the mound?

CL: We'll announce it probably on Monday. I have to meet with [pitching coach] Scott Foxhall and get with him and see how everybody recovers. It will probably be a staff day for the most part. One guy will get three or four, we have to have everybody on deck next weekend, too.

Q: When games like this have such a wide margin, do you learn as much about your team that you would have liked?

CL: I think so. I think in our environment our guys had to go out there and play. That first game was a close one. We saw a lot about them on Friday and we were able to blow some of it out. But we'll learn a little bit more about [our group] this week for sure.

Tanner Allen

Q: You had thirteen RBIs on the weekend; did you notice a pattern to how they were pitching to you?

TA: To be honest with you, I think I got pitched every way that you could get pitched this weekend. They had a great staff. Obviously they did not have the velocity that we normally see on the weekends, but those guys could pitch. Off-speed, fastball, they could throw it any way that they wanted it, but when you have guys hitting in front of you like Jake Mangum and Rowdey Jordan and Jordan Westburg, you get a lot of opportunities to get some RBIs and I took advantage of that this weekend.

Q: With the guys you have hitting behind you, it seems like this line-up may be a little more explosive than last year?

TA: Last year we had a great line-up, but this year, most of us have at least a year under our belt. As you could tell, it makes a big difference.

Q: What pitch did you hit out for your home run?

TA: I hit a fastball out. It was an up-and-in fastball and I was able to put a good swing on it and get it out at right-center.

Q: After the way you guys opened for last season, how much more juice did you all have this weekend?

TA: You know, playing in front of the best fans in College Baseball will give you an adrenaline rush and get your heart beating, and it gave us a lot of energy. We came out playing with energy, took care of business, and swept the weekend. We finished on a good note. A bunch of guys came in, like Trysten Barlow, Spencer Price, guys coming off surgery, and they did great. I am happy for them.

Q: How big is it for the locker room to get a lot of guys at bats, and a lot of guys as many innings after a long fall and spring?

TA: It is awesome. Everybody talks about how we are tired of playing each other and we want to play some other teams. All of those guys work so hard and they deserve every opportunity that they get.

Q: With the pitching getting so many strikeouts and fly balls, we did not get to see a lot of defense this weekend.

TA: That should say something about our pitching staff. We have a very strong pitching staff. Coach Foxhall is doing an outstanding job with those guys. I have confidence in every single guy that takes the mound for us.

Q: Did it surprise you at all how well you guys hit the ball up and down the lineup this weekend?

TA: I mean, you have nine guys who can hit the ball out of the ballpark whenever they want. It is a pretty good lineup. We have a long way to go and this is a great start, but we are not done yet. We have a lot of work to do, we are going to come in here tomorrow and review the film, study our mistakes and learn as a group. So that is what we look forward to.

JT Ginn

Q: What was it like taking the mound at Dudy Noble?

JT: It was awesome. It was everything I imagined it to be and more. It was good to get out there and get my start. It was fun.

Q: Once you settled down, what was working for you after that first inning?

JT: I guess I was a little amped in the first inning, but I settled in after that. I had more fastball command and that was a lot better later in the game. Then, the breaking ball was good there [late in the game, too].

Q: You pitchers can't say enough about the run support you got this weekend, what was it like to see them bashing balls?

JT: It definitely makes it easier when you get out there and your [offense] can put 13 or 14 runs on the board. It really does help because you can go out there and just relax and pitch a little bit.

Q: Pitchers don't like giving up home runs. After that was it just 'alright, I got that out of the way'?

JT: It is going to happen. It is just part of the game. You just have to get back in there, next batter, next pitch mentality. All I could do was go out there and throw strikes and let the defense work behind me.

Q: How easy was it to get locked in with the emotions today?

JT: Like I said, we had a lot of run support, so it was easy to go out there and relax. You know you can afford to throw strikes and you don't have to be as perfect. Being out there and being able to relax and do my thing and let my defense work behind me. It was a good win.

Q: You got your first start on the mound, how anxious are you to get your first plate appearance?

JT: Whenever they're ready for me, I'll be out there. I'm ready to go.

Q- Is there anything about Mississippi State that exceeded your expectations so far?

JT: I mean everything really. You can't beat this place. It is awesome. The atmosphere is something you can't put into words until you get to experience it. It's been awesome for sure.

Q: How were the emotions out there today?

JT: There were definitely some butterflies, that's for sure. It was opening weekend and my first time to be out there. I don't think it was too much of a factor, I just had to settle down a little [after the first inning].

Hayden Jones

Q: Your first hit in a Bulldog uniform turned out to be a pretty big one, kind of take us through that at bat.

A: I already told my parents and all of the guys when I got back in [the dugout] that I don't even remember the pitch. I just remember swinging and making contact and the ball going up. It was an unbelievable moment with all of the guys and all of the fans going crazy. It was just an experience to really live through. It was just unbelievable.

Q: What was the feeling like running the bases knowing you just got your first collegiate home run?

HJ: You get the chills for sure. It's one of those things that you can take for granted kind of. It doesn't happen very often, especially as a freshman. Your first hit isn't usually a home run. It was just really nice knowing that the guys are there for you. Having Jake [Mangum] talking to me before and saying "hey, you're going to get your first hit." It was one of those positive things and all of the guys are there for you.

Q: How did you feel like you handled things out there behind the plate?

HJ: "I feel [I handled it] pretty well. As a freshman coming in, with such a big fan base, I wasn't as nervous as I thought I would be. I feel like I caught well and lived up to what I knew I was and what I could do.

Q: You guys scored 35 total runs this weekend, what is the mood like in the dugout?

HJ: It's crazy. It's a different environment that's for sure. It's hard to explain; the energy is all positive. We were down 3-0 in the first game and everyone was still up, nobody was down. Something was going to happen and we all knew it.

Q: How much easier is it for you to ease into a game like you did playing behind Dustin [Skelton] like that?

HJ: I think that it was nice getting a feel for everything. The first game, I came out and got a feel for the fan base and everything that was there. I got my first at bat under my belt and, after that, I knew I was ready. The nerves weren't too bad coming from the fall to the spring, that's what helped me the most.

Q: The light display after the home run, did that add more to the experience?

HJ: Oh yeah. I got halfway to second and the lights were starting to go. It was just, wow. I remember smiling to [Kyle] Cheese[brough] right when I rounded third. I [thought] the guys were going to give me the silent treatment, honestly, but it was an experience for sure. It was just crazy.