

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Mississippi State Bulldogs

Chris Lemonis

Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee 12, Mississippi State 2

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Coach Chris Lemonis. Before we take questions, please give us your general thoughts on today's game.

CHRIS LEMONIS: Not a really good game. Two poor games in a row. That's about as much as I can say about it.

Q. Are you concerned with going 0-2 here this week about how that may affect your team's chances of hosting through Super Regionals?

CHRIS LEMONIS: I think it's a concern. Our resume was really good coming in, and I think somebody would have to do something pretty amazing to go over us, but it's always a concern. You're trying to build your resume every day, and we came in with a really good one, and we played just two tough games the last two days.

Q. What did you kind of tell your guys in the dugout after the game today, kind of recapping the weekend? What was your message to them?

CHRIS LEMONIS: Well, I didn't think we played real tough all weekend for just -- or all week, whatever you want to call it. Didn't like our body language, didn't like the way we went about our business. Obviously, we got hammered two games, so in postseason, it's just deflating.

I did remind them -- I wasn't here in '18, they didn't win a game. In '19, man, we got ten-run ruled in our last game, and we went back and got to work and got to where we wanted to be.

So as disappointing as this is, as frustrating, as embarrassing as it is, we still have everything out in front of us, and we have the opportunity to go back home and work and get ready for our regional.

Q. 1-4 now in the SEC tournament. I know a lot of times you come in here with top eight aspirations and resume-type stuff, but as you mentioned, that's three straight ten-run rule games, but it hasn't slowed you down. Do you think this tournament maybe needs a little more emphasis, or do you kind of see it as just kind of something you've got to before you get to the regional?

CHRIS LEMONIS: We try to emphasize it. Shoot, we had two hard practices. Now, maybe I could have moved all my pitchers up and done that. In hindsight, that's probably what I should have done, but our pitchers haven't pitched great when we moved them up, so there's a reason we didn't move our pitchers up.

Man, we came in here to win it. There's no doubt about it. I know everybody talks about how you're going to play the tournament, but when we left town, our goal was to come here and win the tournament to move us up into a better seed, to have an experience here in Hoover.

I know everybody says it and everybody's got stuff already laid out. I don't think there's a coach here that doesn't want to win it. We're too competitive. Same goes for our players. Nobody comes here not to play good baseball, especially this time of year.

Q. Just following up on that, that being the case coming in here to win it, obviously, you wanted to play good baseball. What do you chalk it up to, the reason you haven't played good baseball, this tournament especially, and going back to that game in 2019 as well?

CHRIS LEMONIS: I don't even remember the game in 2019, so I'll stick with this year. If you're going to win in tournament baseball, you've got to pitch and defend. Obviously, we pitched very poorly while we were here. We didn't defend. We've defended okay today, but we didn't defend the other day.

Then we have to compete and be offensive. We did see two of the better starters in the SEC the last two days, and

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then we played from behind. So I know our hitters pressed a little bit, but we've still got to be able to play from behind. You're going to see -- from this point on, you're going to see good pitchers from all the way out, and we just have to do a better job. You have to set the tone on the mound and defensively in the field.

Q. I know guys like Parker Stinnett, those kinds of guys, guys that will go at least a couple weeks without actual game action, is that kind of the thing over the next seven, eight days, just scrimmages and trying to get guys the things they need. What are your plans over the course of the next week?

CHRIS LEMONIS: That's the plan. I don't know exactly which days or what, but we're going to have to have a couple scrimmages. We're going to have to get some arms some work, get some at bats for our hitters. We'll have to create some competition and atmosphere without people in the ballpark here over the next couple of days so we can be ready for a regional.

Q. Next weekend, you've got to win at least three to advance. Do you feel like maybe this week has given you any semblance or idea of maybe who is going to be that third starter for you or perhaps a guy that could be a starter in a 1 versus 4 match-up?

CHRIS LEMONIS: No, not right now. I mean, we just haven't pitched good enough. If we had a guy out there right now, we would have used him. We'll have to figure it out this week in our scrimmages and things like that. Also, a lot of it depends on match-ups, how we match up in this regional will be huge for us.

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