

**2017 NCAA Baton Rouge Super Regional – Post-Practice Quotes  
LSU – June 9, 2017**

**Mississippi State Head Coach Andy Cannizaro**

*On how it feels to be back at Alex Box Stadium...*

“This is great. This is such a special stadium, and there have been so many great players and teams and championships that have been won here. We get a chance to come here and compete for a chance to go to Omaha. In college baseball, if you’re going to go to Omaha and you want to compete for national championships, you’re going to have to go through LSU. There’s probably not a better place in the country than to come here and bring our team that nobody expected to be here. We feel like we’re playing really well and we’re confident. We’re excited about the challenge and we’re looking forward to the opportunity of coming in here and competing against an awesome LSU team. We’ll see what happens.”

*On if being overlooked has motivated the team...*

“It’s been that way all year. At the very beginning part of the year, everybody said this was going to be a massive rebuilding type of year. We lost 14 guys off of last year’s SEC Championship team, including 12 to the draft. Everybody was saying ‘Hey man, get acclimated to Mississippi State. Hey man, win whatever you can. Good luck and start recruiting.’ Here we are five months later sitting at the Box with a chance to go to Omaha. Our players have been incredibly resilient all year long. There is so much fight and so much heart with our guys. They don’t give up. We have 25 come-from-behind victories this year which lead the country. Every single ball game, our guys keep going, keep pressing forward, and they never give in. We’ve had ball games this year where we’ve come back from six, seven or eight runs. We’ve had games where we’ve been down all game and we win it in the ninth. We give up a lot of runs early and keep pecking away. We’ve done it in a lot of different ways this year. I can’t speak highly enough about what our team has done this year and the fight that it has. Here we are standing here against LSU, who is probably playing better than anybody in the country right now. We’re excited about our opportunity, and we’re ready for the challenge.”

*On where he has seen the team grow the most since the last time they played LSU this year...*

“I think the biggest thing that (the team) has done is realize where they are as a program right now and where the talent level is and the things they have done to put themselves in this situation right now. We played solid baseball for three days against those guys (LSU). We played in two really close ball games. We didn’t do nearly enough to win any of those games in Starkville at the end of the regular season. Listen, they are the most dynamic team in the country. One through nine in their lineup, they have guys that can get on base, steal bases, and hit it over the Intimidator (billboard over right-field fence). They have freshmen that are hitting home runs, freshmen All-Americans and first-round draft picks. They have everything you’re looking for in a college baseball team. I give them all the credit and all the respect. They are a phenomenal team and that train is rolling right now. Here we are. Nobody expected us to be here. Nobody thought we would still be playing. Everybody thought our guys would be in summer ball right now. Here we are. It’s big, bad LSU against Mississippi State this weekend with a chance to go to Omaha. There’s not a better storyline in the country.”

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**Miss St. Players– June 9, 2017**

**INF Ryan Gridley**

### **On preparations for the super regional...**

“We went through two really hard practices at home and we look ready to go, in my opinion. I think there are guys that are really excited to be here. I don’t think a lot of people expected us to be here at this time, but that’s fueled our team to drive us to get to where we are now.”

### **On motivation from Andy Cannizaro’s time at LSU ...**

“No doubt. This is where he came from. You’d be stupid to say that it doesn’t mean anything or that it’s just another game. You can’t say it’s another game. This is a super regional, and this is the place that he came from, so it means a lot to us and we know it means a lot to him.”

### **On Andy Cannizaro playing against LSU as a player...**

“Yeah, we talked about it at the SEC Tournament. I remember he was telling me at Tulane...about his College World Series experience and how they had little pitching and they went through it and how they swung the bat well. It kind of reminds me of us right now. We’re swinging it really well, we’ve had some pitchers step up, and that’s brought us to where we are. And hopefully that brings us to the promised land in Omaha.”

### **On being swept by LSU at the end of the season...**

“At the time, it sucked, no doubt. It hurt our pride. You get three taken from you in an SEC format and it bites you, but it’s past us now. We’re a different ball club than we were three weeks ago. We’ve got some new guys that have stepped up, like for example Jacob Billingsley. I’m really excited to see what he can do. He’s had a phenomenal regional and did really well in the SEC Tournament too. I think he’s on a roll and I can’t wait to see what he can do in the super regional.”

**OF Brent Rooker**

### **On series in Alex Box last year...**

“I remember the atmosphere being one of the best in the country. It gets really loud, they love their baseball down here. They’re really knowledgeable fans. They get really into the game, which makes it a fun place to play.”

### **On past performances against Alex Lange...**

“I think I have eight at bats in my career against him now. Obviously, he’s one of the best arms in the country. He’s going to throw his fastball anywhere from 92 to 95 mph. His breaking ball is as good as anyone’s in the country. He’s going to do everything he can to keep the ball down and away and make his pitches. When he executes, he’s really tough to beat. So, what you have to do is take his mistake pitches and take advantage of those.”

## **LHP Konnor Pilkington**

### **On starting tomorrow night and what it means to the program...**

“It’s going to be huge. It’s going to be huge for our program too, which was in the same position as it was last year. It’s going to be a good show. We’ll come out, give 100% effort, and see what the results are at the end.”

### **On preparing for the Alex Box atmosphere...**

“They’re going to be a lot different. We have our Super Bulldog week at home. I feel like that is a good comparison for us. Alex Box is always going to be a rowdy crowd. Their atmosphere is crazy and wild, they’re going to be shouting. You have to contain what you can contain and have enough energy to go out there and throw the ball in the strike zone.”