

Lipscomb Head Coach Jeff Forehand

Opening Statement

JF: “Well, that was fast. It seems like since we had that late night game the other night to right now, it seems like a whirlwind, but we wouldn’t have it any other way. These guys have worked so hard to put us in the spot where we are. I’m proud of Lipscomb University for the chance to play in one of the best places in the country to play ball. We’re looking forward to seeing what tomorrow’s going to bring.”

What have you learned about your team since you were here last?

JF: “Well, after that last trouncing, you figure out, either you’re going to stay down or keep climbing. We got our rotation set a little bit better after we left here. We got deeper into some games on Saturday and Sunday with our starters. We got some guys that were starting, put them in the bullpen. A lot of times, those moves work and sometimes they don’t. But just like these young men that were sitting right here, the resiliency of what we’ve been through. We were here in 2023 and lost 11 in a row. We lost three down here, lost three in Auburn. That’s one of those things developing a program that we have to keep pressing through. We’ve only lost two series in the league this year. We came back and got that big one on the road, we could’ve gone anywhere from being the winner of our division to the two-seed or gone all the way to the eight and won five games. I think getting the rotation straight, getting some people in the right spots has put us where we are right now. After coming down here, we learned a little bit, we had to take a beating to wake us up, but at the end of the day it was well worth it.”

What do you remember from Mississippi State pitcher Duke Stone from the last time you faced him?

JF: “Yeah, pick your poison. Y’all have seen it more than I have. Do you want Valincius, who’s going to be a first rounder? Do you want Duke, who’s going to be wherever he’s going to go. At the end of the day, we need to be prepared for more velocity than we’ve seen recently. We compared him to one of the starters at Florida Gulf Coast when we were preparing. I just found out this morning that he was going to go. We were actually preparing for Valincius at the beginning. But I believe Duke started that 26-0 game. It’s hard to look back at what he did that game because he was just out finishing it up. He threw a lot of fastballs and probably didn’t have to use his whole arsenal. We know we’re going up against a giant. Duke’s a really solid starter in the SEC and we’ll see if we can combat some

of the things that he does. But you guys know that we're climbing uphill and if we can get off to a good start, I think we'll be more competitive this time than we were last time.

Lipscomb Infielder Cam Pruitt and Outfielder Aaron Stelogeannis

What's the journey been like since the last time you played here?

CP: “Our journey has been great as a team. We’ve gone through lots of ups and downs. We stayed nothing but steady through it all with our discipline. It just goes back to doing the simple things right, staying focused, keeping a level head. We’ve done nothing but prepare and prepare and hammer the small things. That led us to this moment here. That’s just a testament to our coaching staff and other players we have. We’re just staying focused and level-headed. Keeping our eye on the prize.”

AS: “Yeah, it’s been a long journey, but a fun one. All the grinding on the little things every day, through the ups and downs. It’s pretty cool to be able to come back here. This is one of the coolest places to play in college baseball. We’re excited, no matter where we are, and we’re ready to compete.”

Do you think having played here earlier in the season will give you an advantage?

CP: “100%. I think coming here in late March has actually been a great eye-opener. Now we know what we’re stepping into, and we know how to handle it. Overall, it helps everybody, everybody on our team knows what’s going to be happening and the environment we’re all going to be in. We’re going to be ready.”

Do you think your first meeting with Mississippi State can give you confidence that you can compete with them again?

AS: “Yeah, I mean, we talk about it all the time. Keep grinding until that moment hits. That game was a great game. Every game we play, we’re competing downhill like we’re going to win. It doesn’t really change anything. It gives us confidence, but we feel like we can compete with anybody.”