



## **MISSISSIPPI STATE ADVANCES WITH 9-8 WIN OVER SAMFORD**

***MSU will face Oklahoma needing two wins to advance to Super Regionals.***

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – The second elimination game of the NCAA Tallahassee Regional saw the Mississippi State Bulldogs build a big early lead and then fight the rest of the way to fend off fourth-seeded Samford. Despite streaking out to a 5-0 lead, MSU (33-26) saw Samford (37-26) bring the tying run to the plate in the ninth before reliever J.P. France set Samford down in order in the bottom of the ninth to preserve the 9-8 win and pick up his second save of the season in a game played on Mike Martin Field at Dick Howser Stadium.

Mississippi State moves onto the regional championship where the Bulldogs and will need to defeat third-seeded Oklahoma twice to advance to Super Regionals. Mississippi State advanced thanks in large part to a gutsy start by redshirt-senior Jacob Billingsley. The Senatobia, MS., native pitched seven innings, allowed just four runs and upped his record to 5-3 on the season.

Offensively, Mississippi State was once again propelled by the long ball. The Bulldogs came into the Tallahassee Regional with 32 homers on the season and have hit seven in three regional games including two more in Sunday's win over Samford. Saturday's hero Elijah MacNamee once again went yard as did Jake Magnum.

Mangum set the tone early with a leadoff homer in the top of the first. Saturday afternoon's hero MacNamee got right back into the swing of things with his sixth hit and third homerun of the regional going over the right field fence for a two-run homer making it a 3-0 MSU lead. MSU extended the lead to 5-0 in the second on a Rowdie Jordan RBI double followed by a sacrifice fly by Luke Alexander.

Samford gets on the board in the third with a balk plated a runner from third to make it 5-1 and then went on to load the bases with one out. Ayrton Schafer cut into the lead with a two-run double making it 5-3. A sacrifice plated another run as Samford closed the score to 5-4. Anthony Mulrine's chopper over the third baseman evened the game in the fourth.

With the game tied 5-5 in the seventh, Mississippi State put runners on second and third with nobody out and Hunter Stovall cashed in with a two-RBI single putting MSU back on top 7-5. It was the 18<sup>th</sup> straight game Stovall has reached base. After Stovall moved up to second on a ground out, Alexander plated him with another base hit extending the lead to 8-5.

The runs continued to pile up as Samford cut the lead to two on a solo HR from Brooks Carlson. MSU got the run right back in the top of the eighth via a Tanner Allen RBI double.

Samford continued to battle back with a solo homer off the bat of Mulrine, once again narrowing it to a two-run game with MSU in front 9-7. Just when MSU thought they were out of the eighth a two-out error followed by a walk opened the door for Samford to once again cut into the MSU lead as Troy Dixon took advantage singling home Max Pinto making it 9-8. France ended the threat with runners on first and

second and a 3-2 count, the fifth-year senior got a called third strike to send the game to the ninth where he would seal the victory.

The first of two possible games between the Sooners and Bulldogs is slated for a 6:00 p.m. first pitch on Sunday.

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