

## **2022-23 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes**

### **Mississippi State at Vanderbilt – March 4, 2023**

**Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: Where did this game slip away in Nashville?***

**CJ:** “I thought it was the whole first half. We just didn’t play well offensively in the first half or defensively for the most part. Offensively, we had 11 turnovers. We struggled to finish early. It was very odd. It was almost like they were too hyped. They were rushing things a little bit. It was a physical game, but the turnovers were just tough to overcome.”

“We really guarded their actions, and they have run really good stuff. They weren’t scoring on it. It’s almost like once that was over, we took the foot off the gas. They made some shots with their hands down. I have a ton of respect for those guys. I was super impressed with them especially with their offense. Unfortunately, they made 12 threes. They shared the ball. They have a lot of parts to their team. They ended up having four guys in double figures and shot 12-for-25 from three. Only nine turnovers, and normally we turn people over more than that. I thought we were playing from behind the whole second half. We were playing behind for the majority of the game. It was just too much to overcome in the end.”

***Q: You had 11 turnovers in the first half and only three in the second half. Was there any adjustment at halftime?***

**CJ:** “We certainly talked about it, but we’re not getting better at ball handling. It’s just decision making that is going on or not going on and just the rhythm. It was like we wanted it too bad or something. I’m not sure. Obviously, I’ll watch the tape. That’s why we had a chance there in the second half to come back. We just couldn’t tie it or overcome them. We had some opportunities with some late shots. We just didn’t make the key shots to give us a chance to actually win the game.”

***Q: You changed and went into a 1-3-1 trap. You didn’t stay in it long, but did you feel that it seemed to make a difference?***

**CJ:** “They scored in the 1-3-1 one time. I debated during the huddle. I listened to my players, and they wanted to do it at that particular time. In the end, I’m always the one that pulls the trigger. It’s on me how it goes. Those decisions are tough decisions you have to make. Certainly, I thought we tried to get them out of rhythm here and there even though they have a bunch of shooters on the court. But sometimes, they get in such a rhythm offensively. You have to try and switch it up.”

“I told the team before the game. We talked about that they developed into warriors individually and collectively. I wanted them to show everyone who was here tonight what they’re made of. They did. You outrebound someone 45-to-24 on their homecourt. There wasn’t a lack of effort by the Bulldogs. I’m very disappointed. I’m hurt. It stings, but I’m also impressed and proud of our guys. Anyone that watched that game and has a clue about competition knows the kids in the room played their tails off. They scratched and crawled all the way to the final buzzer. They had opportunities to get the game where we wanted it and get the chance to win the game. Unfortunately, we just ran out of time.”

***Q: Vanderbilt shot 48 percent from three tonight. Did they do anything different from what you saw on tape?***

**CJ:** “[Jordan] Wright and [Tyrin] Lawrence really played well and especially in the first half. It kind of surprised me. I knew they could shoot the ball, but they’re not high volume three-point shooters. Some of our switches, I probably didn’t give them enough credit. Some of our guys weren’t as aggressive on our switches with them.”

“Number 5 [Ezra Manjon] is just a load. It’s impressive that he plays the position that he does. He doesn’t shoot the three, but he effects the game and impacts the game so much on both ends of the floor. We were having a hard time with him. We were trying to stay, trying to switch and trying to back off. He would just take the slack up, get around the basket and shot fake you. He didn’t score a ton of points, but he scored 15, had 7 assists and had 0 turnovers. He was the straw that stirred the drink for them tonight. We knew that going in. He just played really well.”

***Q: What was the difference between Shakeel Moore in the second half from the first half?***

**CJ:** “I don’t know. He’s been battling an ankle injury. He tweaked it on Thursday and didn’t practice on Friday. During the Thursday practice up until that point, I thought he had one of the better practices that I’ve ever seen. Coming off a 20-point game, we were really excited about where he was at. Then, that injury happened, I don’t know if he was just uncomfortable and had to get his rhythm back. He certainly got it going there in the second half. Tolu Smith, wow. That was a physical game around the basket. If they wanted to, they could call one every time down the court. He certainly battled.”

***Q: Talk about D.J. Jeffries’ performance. He made some tough baskets especially in the first half.***

**CJ:** “He played a lot of minutes and rebounded the ball. He got double figure defensive rebounds. We made four three’s, and they made 12. That’s hard to overcome. That’s a 24-point differential there. It’s just hard. We had some. Eric Reed [Jr.] had a beautiful look. Shawn Jones [Jr.] had a beautiful look. Even Shak [Shakeel Moore] toward the end was a pretty good look. In those situations when you’re down three, I tend to run home run plays. You know they’re going to foul. If you run traditional plays, they’re going to foul you. That was our best shot to actually get a look, and we did. Unfortunately, I think he rushed it a little bit.”

***Q: Because so many games for your team have been must-win type of games, do you feel like your team is a little bit more uniquely prepared for the SEC Tournament than other teams?***

**CJ:** “I don’t know, we will see. Everybody is going to prepare, play their best and leave everything out on the floor. It’s a one-and-done situation all over the country that’s going on as we speak. Our starts next Wednesday, we don’t play until Thursday. It’ll be a big stage for us. I don’t worry about it at all. These guys have proved to me that the environment, on the road and where we play is irrelevant to them. They’re going to compete, leave it on the floor, represent our school and our fans in a competitive manner. That’s what we really talked about. Certainly, we are all disappointed. We’re going to regroup, and we’re going to be ready on Thursday to play.”