

## **2021-22 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State vs. Georgia State – December 14th, 2021**

### **Mississippi State Head Coach Ben Howland**

#### ***Opening Statement***

**BH:** "I'm just really happy about the win. I'm very excited about the way that we played defense tonight. This was a really good showing after two tough losses in a row. It was a good bounce-back game against a good team that won their league last year and will probably represent their conference in the [NCAA] tournament again this year. We did a great job defensively and offensively. I thought that those 24 baskets scored were amazing, and 21 of those were assisted."

"Derek Fountain played amazing tonight, and I'm just so proud for him. Derek [Fountain] led the team in rebounding. He does a lot of the little things successfully like screening and blocking out, which is always key."

"I thought D.J. Jeffries really got off to a great start offensively and took good shots. D.J. had three three-pointers in the first half, and I was really happy to see him play through contact, especially on his basket late in the first half."

"Iverson [Molinar] was very efficient tonight as he scored 18 points on six shots. It was just a great all-around team performance today. I thought Cam Carter gave us some great minutes today. We're starting to put Cam back in the lineup more for defensive reasons. He has been bringing the enthusiasm and toughness. He plays extremely hard."

#### ***Q: Would say that tonight was a good example of Iverson Molinar not forcing things as he had 18 points on only six shots?***

**BH:** "I would like for Iverson to take more shots but always make the right read. I thought that he made the right reads tonight and took the right shots. Iverson is such a smart kid and a smart player. His assist-to-turnover ratio is second in the conference right now out of every player in the SEC. We want Iverson to continue to be aggressive and score but only when that presents itself. We did a much better job of being patient offensively, and the score indicates that when you look at the final tally."

#### ***Q: How much did you guys need this win tonight?***

**BH:** "I was really excited about tonight's game. We really needed this after two tough losses against two good teams. Minnesota is very good, and Colorado State is now in the top 25. It is heart-wrenching to be tied up with less than a minute to go at home and get beat. Then, to be up by eight points with six minutes to go, and let the game slip away."

"We're going to learn from those experiences. We watched the entire game against Colorado State in film, and I think it helped us in the game tonight. These kids really care. We have a great group of young men who are in this thing together, and I'm very proud of them for the effort tonight."

#### ***Q: What was the reaction from you as the head coach watching Isaac Stansbury hit that shot on his birthday?***

**BH:** "I was so happy to see that ball go in. Andy [Andersson] Garcia had a shot, and he knew it was Isaac's turn and his birthday. I was so excited when I saw that ball go through the net. The Stansbury name is synonymous with Mississippi State basketball. Rick Stansbury was here for 20-plus years. This is where Isaac grew up. I was so pleased for him and the fans here. He's a great kid and influence on these players. What a great way to end your birthday."

**Guard Iverson Molinar**

**Q: *Judging from your performance tonight, you had 18 points on 6 shot attempts. Pretty good night and you let the game come to you.***

**IM:** "Yeah, I did. The coaching staff is awesome. They kept pushing me to relax and be the player I can be. I'm thankful for them because they push me. They taught me to let the game come to me."

**Q: *What was different about tonight? Was it something mechanically or confidence?***

**IM:** "Just confidence. I worked hard after the games. After Minnesota, I was in the gym right after the game. It is just a confidence thing and reps. I got a lot of reps in last weekend. I watched film and learned from that. Coach [Howland] told me I needed to relax and let the game come to me, so I was patient today."

**Q: *The team's percentage from the free-throw line has gone up since the start of the season. How much has that helped?***

**IM:** "It's really big. They're free shots, and we need to take advantage of them. Some of the players like Javian Davis and his leadership, it's great. We shot in practice today 91- of-100. It was because of Javian Davis. He would get us to focus and had us maintain our focus to make the free throws that we did today. It's all of the leadership, and it shows how mature this team is."

**Forward Derek Fountain**

**Q: *What do you think was working out there for you tonight?***

**DF:** "I didn't let the moment get too big. I played hard and figured whatever happened would happen. We played as a team and brought the energy. I just did my best to step up from that four spot."

**Q: *Can you talk about that energy after Isaac Stansbury's shot at the end?***

**DF:** "It was a great feeling. We always try to set him up to score when it's a big lead at the end of the game. He doesn't really try to score. He lets the game come to him. Today was his birthday so it was very special to see him score."

**Q: *You had three steals tonight. Was defense a focus during the offseason, and how would you assess your defensive performance tonight?***

**DF:** "There's always room for improvement, but I thought I played hard overall. I didn't focus on one specific area [during the offseason]. I just worked very hard and good things started to happen."

**Q: *What did it mean to you to have the bigger role tonight? Do you think you made the most of your opportunity?***

**DF:** "I appreciated Coach [Howland] for giving me the opportunity. I started a bit last year. So, this wasn't a completely new moment for me. Like I said earlier, there's always room for improvement. If I play good, I always appreciate it, but there's always room to get better."

**Q: *What was the team focus coming in tonight after a disappointing last two outings?***

**DF:** "We were just focused on playing our hardest. We played with a chip on our shoulder tonight. As a team, we wanted to make up for the last couple of games. You never want to lose [three] in a row. Overall, we just really wanted the win."

## **Georgia State Head Coach Rob Lanier**

### ***Opening Statement***

**RL:** “We had some of our best practices; three out of our last four practices were some of our best of the year. I think we came into the game tonight with the right spirit [and] effort. Defensively, I thought we had some rust to start the game, but they defended us. We didn’t make shots. They did a great job defensively, and they deserve a lot of credit.”

“The ball not going in the basket really created some frustration in our guys that chipped away at us on the defensive end. A lot of credit to them. They really guarded – they’re a good defensive team, and they guarded us. They were coming off back-to-back losses. They played like a team playing on their home court that needed a win desperately, and they were determined not to give us anything easy. They didn’t, and we couldn’t rise to that challenge. It was a frustrating night. We have to get back to work and pick up the pieces, get these guys playing a lot better.”

### ***Q: Did the pace decide what you wanted to do tonight?***

**RL:** “Yeah, we wanted to push the pace a little bit. We know that they play at a slower pace. They’re big, they’re physical and they rebound the ball really well. We had some tremendous defensive possessions. We wanted to get stops and get out and run, but they made some shots and made some three’s.”

“Again, their defense really stifled us. It affected our defense, and they took advantage of that. They didn’t pound us on the glass in the first half, but they didn’t miss a lot of shots, either. Our guys got a little bit frustrated because I know they came in to play. The fact that we started out okay the first couple of minutes, but we couldn’t sustain it. I think the guys felt frustrated.”

### ***Q: It stayed a single-digit game even when Mississippi State took the lead in the first half for a good bit of it, but it seemed like none of the guys you usually rely on could get into their rhythm.***

**RL:** “Well, you know what—again, credit to Mississippi State. When you’re struggling to score, even the easy shots wind up being under duress a little bit, mentally, because we had some good looks early that didn’t go down. We had some chippies at the rim that we didn’t finish that we could’ve used. We missed some free throws. Again, I think a lot of that is a byproduct of when you’re struggling to score everything seems to get a little harder, and that was the case. Like I said that credit goes to them.”

### ***Q: Aside from their foul shooting, it seemed like you tapped into more of the success on that end in the second half. Is that something you can take away is that you played a more complete 20 minutes in the second half?***

**RL:** “I thought we had some stretches throughout the game. Start of the second half, we came out with some fire and got some stops. We got a couple of runouts and made a couple of shots. When we got it right to [down] 15, it felt like we could make a game of this. Then, putting them on the free throw line kind of hurt us. We had too many turnovers. When you’re playing a team that dictates pace the way they do, possessions get magnified. So, poor shots or turnovers get amplified by the fact that the game was going at a slower pace. Again, credit to them.”

### ***Q: What does it take to get to that point in translating from practice to games?***

**RL:** “That’s the magic that we have to find. Certainly, that’s part of the frustration that I think the guys are experiencing. When you have a good week like we had, you want to see it [translate to the game], but again, I think that’s why I’ve said several times you have to give Mississippi State credit.”

“We’re a team that’s trying to get it going and build confidence and grow and build the team that we’ve got the ability to become. Their defensive effort tapped into some of our weaknesses and created some of the frustration that you saw throughout the course of the game. Just a matter of time and continuing to work through adversity is a real test for us, and I think we’ll be up to it.”