

## **2022-23 Mississippi State Basketball Postgame Quotes**

### **Mississippi State vs. Mississippi Valley State – December 3, 2022**

#### **Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: Coming into this game you knew that you had a pretty big mismatch. What are some things that you wanted to get done today?***

**CJ:** “We were pretty honest with our guys with who we were about to play. So last game, we talked about playing against the game or playing against the standard that we have. That was a big discussion item leading up to this game. I thought, for the most part, they did a pretty good job. We were guarding early, and they made some tough shots, I think their first four shots were three’s. A couple of them were really tough shots so kudos to them.”

“The other thing that I knew was that we would get a heavy dose of zone. I thought it was going to be 50/50, but it was 100 percent every possession. That gets to be a drag at times, but it was so good for us to go against zone. We haven’t seen that much zone. We needed the reps and live play. Certainly, we do it in practice, but you can’t make that up. It’s such a different feeling in the game. We did a pretty good job, I thought we executed when we called the set. Our point guards were getting them organized. We got the shots that we were looking for and didn’t settle.”

“That’s the thing when people play us, at least thus far, with the inside presence being better than the three-point shooting right now. It would be easy to jack up an early three, but they didn’t take the bait. Instead, we really moved the ball and explored the inside first. Then, the three’s we did take, I thought were good shots. Certainly, we would like to make more of them, but we could have shot 30 something three’s this game if we wanted to, and they didn’t do that.”

***Q: You talked last week about Tolu Smith getting more touches in different ways to avoid getting double teamed. How do you feel like he did that today?***

**CJ:** “Even though they were playing zone, we didn’t give up on Tolu or Will (McNair Jr.) around the basket. I can’t speak for them, but I would imagine for at least Tolu it’s hard to double team in a zone. You’re sitting on a middle man in a 2-3 so he probably felt like he had a little bit more space than he usually does.”

“I was a little bit disappointed in him early because I felt like he was begging for fouls or expecting to get fouled rather than going in there and finishing the play to get the and-one. He struggled a little bit early, but obviously he only missed four shots, the majority of them were early in the game. It was good for him to feel good and get some touches. I know his free throws are a work in progress, but he had 24 points, six rebounds and he had only one turnover all night long.”

***Q: Two questions – talk about Shakeel Moore’s performance. It seemed like he let the game come to him. Also, can you provide an update on Dashawn Davis?***

**CJ:** “I agree not just with Shakeel but with our whole team. We’re continuing to work on making the simple plays, just station-to-station. Don’t hunt the dimes, don’t hunt the ESPN highlight dishes, just find the people who are open. The assist will amount if you just share the ball and move the ball. Don’t turn down open receivers.”

“In particular, Shak (Moore) did a really good job tonight doing that. He kept it simple and just tried to not do too much. He made some shots. He missed some defense assignments which disappointed us, but he was under control. Six assists and one turnover, we certainly will take that all year long.”

"Rams (Dashawn Davis) is progressing. He would've played today if we absolutely needed him. But obviously, we felt like we were in pretty good position with what we had available. He's still not at 100 percent. He's getting closer. He did some work on the court this week with us, not live segments but five-on-zero and some individual breakdowns. Hopefully, he'll continue to progress in the next couple days. We'll reevaluate him on Monday."

**Forward D.J. Jeffries and Guard Shakeel Moore**

***Q: What do you think were some of the things you all were able to get accomplished during today's game?***

**SM:** "We did a better job than we did the last game. We had more ball pressure, and we just were doing what Coach [Jans] wanted us to do. We had eight turnovers the whole game. So, I think we did a good job on the offensive end and handling their zone. I feel like we got better in those two areas."

**DJJ:** Piggybacking off what Shak said, I think working on our offensive skill sets, moving the ball around, finding guys and limiting turnovers."

***Q: Shak, for you, how good did it feel for you to get a couple buckets today and try to get back in the groove offensively?***

**SM:** "It's always good to see the ball go through the net. I'm constantly working. It's going to come together at some point. There are many other ways to impact the game."

***Q: For both of you guys, defense is a big part of your identity. At times in the first half, it seemed like things were a little bit off. Does this give you confidence in these types of games knowing you can fall back on the physicality of the defense?***

**SM:** "Most definitely. Like you said, that's what we rely on. That's our identity, and we take pride in it. Whenever offense isn't going well, we can always sit back and rely on that."

***Q: We talked to Coach Jans earlier this week, and you guys have two games in the span of close to two weeks. He said for him, he loves it, it's practice time for his players. With you guys being veterans, how much have you relayed to the other guys how important this time is?***

**SM:** "It's really important, it's time to work on us. We have a big gap in between. So, it's time to sharpen up things that we're struggling with."

***Q: Back on the offensive side, you make shots in practice. What could this offense be when these things start falling?***

**SM:** "Amazing. I would say some of our guys aren't fully playing to their strength offensively, and that's okay because we're going to get it together. When that happens, it's going to be a tough night for everybody."

**DJJ:** "When everybody finds their rhythm and everybody gets into the groove, I think the offensive will be scary. With the defense we play, it'll be even better."