

2022-23 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes

Mississippi State at Ole Miss – February 18, 2023

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: What was the difference in your team getting the win tonight?

CJ: “Getting stops down the stretch We were playing from behind the last few minutes of the game. Our huddles were good. They were encouraging. They were forceful from player-to-player. Guys on the bench that weren’t in were getting after them a little bit.”

“We just kept talking about getting stops. We just kept talking about relying on our defense, everyone checking and everyone rebounding. If we got enough stops, we would score enough points. Personally, I thought Rams [Dashawn Davis] made some big shots. He stuck with it, because he didn’t have a great game offensively leading up to that point. Shak [Shakeel Moore] as well made the free throws, and Dashawn made some tough mid-range jump shots.”

Q: Do you feel the offense-defense substitutions with Shakeel Moore and Eric Reed Jr. really paid off tonight.

CJ: “It did. Eric is a really good defender. Sometimes, Shak gets in his own way a little bit, and he hunts some steals. At that point, we didn’t need a steal. We needed solid defense. We knew what we had with Eric. Shak understands, and he’s got no problem with it. At that point when you have the opportunity, you might as well get those defenders in there and try to help your defense as best you can. It’s not like Eric can’t make free throws or run our offense either, but we play a little defense for offense down the stretch.”

Q: How huge was the stop that Eric Reed Jr. got at the end of regulation on Matthew Murrell?

CJ: “[Matthew] Murrell is a big dude, and Eric just showed his toughness and his heart. He had some pride on the ball and blocked the shot. I think Murrell was a little surprised by it, but that was a big play. You never know if he doesn’t block it what kind of quality of shot they are going to get. So, that was really good.”

Q: Offensively, is having Cameron Matthews 1-on-1 at the elbow a called play?

CJ: “We’ve got three or four different things that we try to put him in space on the baseline and on the foul line area. People aren’t defending him on the perimeter. So, he’s good at taking that slack up between the ball and the defender. When you get guarded like that, some kids can’t adjust to it. He’s been able to adjust to it. He takes that slack up and uses his athleticism to put him at the rim.”

“His free throw shooting continues to be a positive for him. If a guy doesn’t shoot free throws, you don’t want to put him in that situation. He’s been making them. It’s a nice little thing for us. At the beginning of the game the way they were guarding him, he was getting the cut in there, the short corners and the dunk spots. The guy was focused [to double team] on Tolu [Smith], and he was just finding himself open. He was making shots and drops. Obviously, we got out of the gates really well.”

Q: Tolu was taking on double teams and had three assists early. What was the key to him beating those double teams?

CJ: “It was really good, and we knew they were going to double Tolu. We just kept talking about it. We call it doubling monster. We just kept telling our fours to just follow the monster. When your man goes, just follow him to the rim. Tolu knows that’s his first look, and it worked out very nicely to start the game.”

Q: What do you feel was causing the turnovers especially in the first half?

CJ: “11 first half turnovers, and eight of them were unforced. Not confident post entries and float passes. Nothing against Ole Miss and what they were trying to do, that certainly was the difference. We had 11, and they had three [in the first half]. That was our big talking point.”

“In the last five games, they have not been turning the ball over. They average 8.6 turnovers in the last five games. They have really shored up their ball handling and their decision making. That was the game for us. They had 10 or 12 points off our turnovers of the 33 that they scored going in at halftime. They ended up with 19. We’ve been really good too in that department. So, that’s disappointing.”

Q: Postgame, Cameron Matthews said they rely on the dentist. What are your thoughts?

CJ: “In the fall when we won a game, I would be a little disappointed in our quality of play. Coach Williams would look at me and say, ‘Coach you won, it doesn’t matter.’ I don’t like the fact that we had 19 turnovers, but I love the fact that we won. As we prepare for Missouri, I’m not going to get too caught up in it and especially going down the stretch. At this point, we got to win games in any fashion or form.”

Q: How encouraging is it when you are playing a rival on the road and your guys are sticking together in a tough situation?

CJ: “I wasn’t expecting anything else. I really like our group. I love coaching them. I’ve been telling them that for the last couple weeks. I love the fact that they’re reaping the dividends of it. It makes it a lot more fun. There are always guys that want to play more, and that’s just how it is. Even the guys that are playing 30 minutes want more etcetera, etcetera. At this point, you have to do what you can do for your team. When you are coming down the stretch, you have to play for one another and encourage one another. That’s kind of been the motto for the last 48 hours.”

Q: I like that your team lets you coach them, can you comment further?

CJ: “For the most part, but I give them a lot of leeway too. I know playing for me at times isn’t a walk in the park, and I get that. I probably give them more leeway to give me a look or even bark back once in a while. That’s OK, and I have no problem with that. They’ve got fire in their bellies too. They got pride, and I get how that works. We’ve been really good with that. We got great kids, and they’re coachable. I love that part of our basketball team.”

“I’d be remiss not to say that Ole Miss could’ve easily won that game. That’s really hard, and I have so much respect for Kermit Davis. Any coach in the league would tell you how great a coach he is. I’m happy for us, but I always feel bad when that happens to other people too.”

Forward Cameron Matthews

Q: How did you guys get it done today?

CM: “Just us being together as a team, holding it down, sticking together as a team and being able to come out on the road with a win.”

Q: How does a team that has 19 turnovers and shoots less than 50 percent win the game?

CM: “We kept the game muddy, real gritty and just grinded this one out.”

Q: What was the message at halftime from Coach Jans?

CM: “As long as we take care of the ball and rebound, everything will take care of itself.”

Q: What did it feel like to lead the team in scoring?

CM: "It just felt good. Everything was just clicking today. Everything was going at the free throw line, and everything was just coming together."

Q: This year you are shooting free throws well, What has caused that change?

CM: "I think it was just mental. I just went up there believing in myself and knowing that I'm going to knock them down."