

2022-23 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes

Mississippi State vs. Florida – January 21, 2023

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: Is there a feeling of frustration in the locker room after having a chance to win the game and come up short?

CJ: "Frustrated is a good word. There are others we could insert in there as well. We obviously have lost some games recently. After a loss, I don't let my emotions keep me, and I don't say much. I address the team briefly, but it's not what you think it would sound like. It's pretty low key."

"Tonight was a little different. I told them I felt like we lost the game in the first 10 minutes in hindsight. We just didn't play true to who we have to be in our basketball personality and our character. There's a lot to it, but I'm around them every day. At this point, they know how we need to play to be successful and to win games. We weren't playing that way on both ends of the court. We took silly shots, which for us, are like turnovers. They converted them into three's."

"We were up 3-0. Then, all of a sudden, I'm calling a timeout before the media timeout, because we are not playing our style of play that we have to play to this year. It just set the tone. They're [Florida] on the road, they're feeling good and they're more confident than they were to start. We're not, and they got rhythm."

"Defensively, it was as little bite in the first half as our team has had in a long time. We didn't turn them over at the rate we normally do. We weren't flying at shooters. They were shooting some horse shots and no discredit to Florida. They ran their stuff well. They shared the ball. They had some pace and tempo to them. We talked prior to the game that you can't allow them to run their stuff and catch it where they want to catch it. We have to disrupt them and throw them off. We just didn't do it. In the end, our loved ones are going to hug us and tell us way to fight back. You didn't go away. I would hope so. I would hope that we would continue to fight, scratch, and try to find a way to win the game. That's what you're supposed to do. That's what you do. We just dug ourselves a hole, and we were playing uphill the entire night. We're disappointed."

Q: What did you see with Will McNair tonight? What do you say to a guy like Tolu [Smith] who expects to be a guy playing down the last eight-minute stretch of the game?

CJ: "Tolu gets it. I'm not worried about Tolu. Will was 5-for-6, Tolu was 5-for-15. Will was catching it deep, having some patience and scoring. Tolu was struggling to finish. It's just a reality. We have a great relationship. We talk in real terms every day around here. He's disappointed, but he understands. He may not like it, but he understands. The score was going in a right direction when Will was in the game. Who knows how the next game will unfold or the game after that. Tonight, we just felt like he gave us the best chance to win the game down the stretch."

Q: Did you feel like tonight was a must win considering the gauntlet ahead of you?

CJ: "At this point, I feel like every game is a must win. Where we are at is new territory for us. Every game is the Super Bowl for us, that's how we treat them. This was no different. I was well aware of what was looming. We were all in on preparing for this game. In the end, I've got to figure out a way to do better and get them to play better early. They have to understand that we don't have a lot of room for error. We don't have a large margin for error. We have to stay in our character of how we have to play to be successful. If we get away from that, the game changes really fast. That's just reality. I think our guys know that deep down, but sometimes it's hard to stay focused like that. They're all must wins at this point."

Q: Is it just other teams coming out hot from three or are you seeing that your guys aren't necessarily where they are supposed to be?

CJ: "The three-point line has become a problem for us. We're getting beat at the three-point line by a large margin. We are probably never going to be winning the three-point category very often. The discrepancy between how many they're making and how many we're making is hard to make up in most games. It's not always about the shot, but it's what we are doing before."

"We're just not getting into the ball enough. We're not dictating enough. Our foot angles aren't where they need to be. So, they're passing the ball exactly where they want to. They're not throwing the ball to disrupt the shooters rhythm. We do something called flyby where we are all in on the shot. We didn't see many of those in the first half. We did in the second, but we didn't see many in the first half. You have to give them some credit. They got good players. Will Richard is a good player, he was 4-for-5. Riley Kugel is a freshman who had a previous relationship with Mississippi State. I think he's as good a shooter as they have. They played well and they hung on."

Forward Cameron Matthews

Q: Obviously a frustrated locker room with getting close again. Are you guys tired of losing at the buzzer?

CM: "Yeah, a real frustrated group of guys. We work too hard to be getting this close every game. We know these are the teams we can beat. We've just got to get back to the drawing board, figure some things out and get back right."

Q: Cam you're one of the guys that's been around for a few years, and you know there's a lot of losses like this last season too that were close. What's the message you try to send to the rest of the locker room to keep moving forward despite getting similar results?

CM: "I just try to lead by example, and try to get everybody on the same page, listening to Coach Jans. It's because it's about the little things, attention to detail and stuff like that. It might not be about the last play it might be about five before, or 10 plays before. Everything adds up."

Q: "Y'all obviously fought hard to get this game from a double-digit deficit to a one possession game at the end. What do you think it was that allowed Florida to sneak away with the win?"

CM: "We didn't play that well in the first half. We were just kind of flat and stagnant. I think we just really picked things up in the second half and settled down. We strapped down on the keys and our gameplan."

Q: "Obviously some big minutes there for Will McNair down the stretch. How much do you guys trust him to step in sometimes for Tolu Smith there in some big minutes?"

CM: "I trust everybody on my team, from the first guy to the last because we all get in the same amount of work in. I trust everybody. [They were] Big minutes from him [McNair Jr.]. It's really just no difference. We get the ball inside, and we trust them to make the good plays."

Q: "I'm sure you heard about it in the locker room from Coach Jans, but they were 10-of-24 from three. What's kind of the breakdowns there?"

CM: "Yeah that one from half-court was crazy, but the ones in the first half that got them that big lead kind of hurt a little bit more. We guarded the three-point line a little bit better in the second half. We've just got to do it for 40 [minutes]."

Q: "Could you take us through that last possession and what you saw?"

CM: "I just thought about tipping, I just tried to go get it and put it in. I don't really remember a lot else from the play."

Florida Head Coach Todd Golden

Q: Do you think that y'all started to relax a little bit when Mississippi State kept coming back?

TG: "I don't think it's a relaxation issue, I think we have good shots. I thought Collin [Castleton] had a great drive and missed one. Again, they were playing fearlessly. They were playing like they had nothing to lose. That pressure that they were applying just caused us to be a little more tentative because we were not trying to turn it over. I think we got some huge stops down the stretch in the last two or three possessions that won us the game."

Q: When you called that timeout with 10 seconds left, did you want them to add 10 more seconds?

TG: "We only had six seconds to get the ball in the front court. So, I communicated to the referee, [to] say when it's time because I wanted to use my last one. The referee was up the court a little bit and saw we were struggling to get across in 23 or 22 seconds. So, I spread it out and made sure we got that timeout and reset the 10 seconds."

Q: How is [Alex] Fudge doing?

TG: "Obviously I don't know. He took a little hit, but he was in great spirits just now in the locker room. He was happy that we won and hopefully it's something minor that he can get back [from] and ready to go next week, but we've got to make sure he's healthy."

Forward Colin Castleton

Q: What were thoughts on the game down the stretch?

CC: "I was telling them on the radio, we didn't have a good second half. They came out on a great run. They are a good team and are well-coached. They have a lot of energy and fire, and they care. We just hit timely shots and had good defensive possessions."

Q: What happened on that last possession?

CC: "Defensively, they were just pushing the ball. I knew they were trying to drive the attack because that's what most coaches teach when you're down by two in a close game. You have to get a good shot or a foul. I was just trying to be present; I think I hit the ball a couple of times. I just tried to hit it as hard as I could to get it away."

Q: They were coming back in the second half, how did y'all stick to them?

CC: "They have a lot of fight too. They're very aggressive, they're a big team, and they have a lot of guys that can rebound. They make it a dog fight, so we just tried to fight them as much as possible. Even though we had a little smaller of a lineup that coach has been implementing a little bit, we just have to have that fight in our heart and that's what it comes down to. Being able to get in there and throw your body on the line."