

2022-23 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State at No. 8 Tennessee – January 3, 2023

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: Were you expecting that kind of start to the game, and how would you assess it?

CJ: “I didn’t see a 16-0 run to start the basketball game if that’s what you’re asking. I have a ton of respect for their program and how they play. Their coaching staff has got it right where they want it. They’ve got the kind of players that fit their style of play and fit their culture that they’ve created. You can see it on film. Certainly, we saw it up close and personal the last couple of hours. I don’t care where you’re playing especially on the road against a really good team, you dig yourself that big of a whole, you’re going to spend the entire evening trying to get back in the game.”

“I was definitely surprised. I thought we would get off to a better start. We had it at the rim, and Tolu [Smith] missed that bunny [early in the game]. Certainty, that had nothing to do with the end of the game margin or verdict, but I felt like our confidence dropped a little bit after that. It’s got to be a situation where we had a hard time making our first basket. I’m sure the rim for them looked huge after the first couple of makes they had. We just spent the entire evening playing catch-up basketball.”

Q: What went into the decision to give Tyler Stevenson the start today?

CJ: “We had talked about it with the staff leading up to the game. We didn’t make the final decision until we got to the arena. We lost two in a row was one bullet point. The other was we’ve been playing Cameron Matthews at the three more, and KeShawn Murphy has been playing more minutes. When you have those three stacked like that at the four, our rotation has been Tyler coming in for Cameron. Then, KeShawn coming in for Tyler. So, we don’t really get him a run until 10 minutes left in the first half. We thought with their lineup and their size that Cameron would play more three. It just made it on paper easier for me to get the rotations that I wanted. Certainly, it had nothing to do with Cam’s play or Tyler’s play for the matter. It was more just to try and switch it up a little bit. It also was what I explained about rotations.”

Q: After a game like this, what’s the message to the players to get them rallied and ready for the game against Ole Miss at home on Saturday?

CJ: “This game teaches you a lot. What we’re going to learn and grow from it will be later, it won’t be in that locker room [after the game]. It’s a pretty solemn group in there right now. There’s not much to be excited about, it’s a tough night for us. We’ll get back and have no choice but to regroup. We all know what’s looming on Saturday. We didn’t even talk about that. We talked about the game itself our approach, our mentality, how we need to play and what our margin of error is or isn’t for that matter.”

Q: Is there one thing you can point to that isn’t getting done now, or do you feel it’s a combination of factors?

CJ: “I don’t know if I have an intelligent response right off the top, I don’t know. I think we might have played our best game of the year thus far against Marquette. Certainly, you couldn’t have predicted the future, and no one would have known that.”

“As I look back, I’m not sure why, but we did. I remember telling the team and the other folks around me. Certainly, we were excited about how we played in Florida and winning against the teams we did. I told them that we were still scratching the surface of who we can be with all the mistakes we were making with early season basketball games.”

“Unfortunately, the last few games before break, we hadn’t played as well. We got beat by Drake. Now, we’re heading into SEC play and the competition has taken a serious uptick. The type of players we’re competing against is different. It is what is. I know there’s going to be great competition each night.”

“Alabama and Tennessee, from the looks of it, are probably better teams in the league this year. Who knows how it will unfold. Seeing most of the teams thus far on film, I would say they’re going to be in the fight to the bitter end to try to win a conference championship.”

“We’ve got to look at it like it’s a marathon. We’re not happy with the result and how we have played. I’m not happy with how we prepared them or had them ready to play. Come tomorrow and the rest of the week, we’re going to have to get our minds to where we need to be, and we’ve got to get prepared for another basketball game.”

Forward Tyler Stevenson

Q: The team got down 16-0. What was it they were doing, and what were you guys not doing?

TS: “I want to give Tennessee a lot of credit. They came out, and they played hard, physical and executed well. We came out flat, and we got to start the game with more energy. I know we will do that for the next game. We just have got to practice the same way and translate it to the game.”

Q: What was your mentality starting tonight’s game?

TS: “I just want to go out there play hard and let everything else take care of itself. I knew they were a physical team. So, I wanted to match that and play hard. I wanted to play with high energy, and let everything else take care of itself.”

Q: How do you think this team will respond to this adversity going forward?

TS: “I think we’re going to respond well because this feeling is definitely not a good feeling. All the guys feel the same way. We’re going to pick up the intensity in practice and play tough. We’re going to make it translate to the game and have to start winning.”

Q: What is the message to the team about how big the next game is and being able to flush this one?

TS: “Really, we just need to stay together. We need to play hard, play tough, play physical and everything else will take care of itself. We’re going to hit our shots. We’re going to stay in the gym, keep working and we’re going to start to get back to winning.”