

## 2023-24 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State vs. Tulane – December 9, 2023

### Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

***Q: You came out, got a hot start, and ran away with it. What did you feel this group did this week to turn the corner and get over that two-game skid?***

**CJ:** "I've said all along since Georgia Tech that our response in terms of mindset and approach in practice was good. It was good. I know a lot of fans don't want to hear this from me, but it's about winning the games. I get it, okay, I understand that. That's what we're about too."

"Against Southern, we played better than our result. It's a bottom-line situation, we were obviously crushed. We've been extremely disappointed. But after that, then, you never know. That's when I said last time we met after that game when that happens, you lose two in a row, one you're not supposed to lose at home, questions start coming in from outside. Other people, people getting into players' ears, questioning who's playing, who's getting the minutes, the shots. And then, maybe even internally on what we're doing, and what we're trying to do."

"I think we had enough veterans that believed. We had a good enough culture, if you will. They stayed the course, and our practices since then were really good. It probably wasn't ideal to have that long between games because we had to sit in it all week long, but what I've found is that these kids are much more resilient than coaches. They can pick themselves up off the mat pretty quickly. Certainly, we're pretty pleased with how we started the game and to get the win."

***Q: Coming into this game, it was really important to get that get-back type of game in. Do you think you did that today?***

**CJ:** "Time will tell. These games are funny. They unfold the way they do, and every game is different. It's got its own chapters, etcetera. I hope so. I know our guys are feeling good right now, and we'll give them tomorrow off. We'll get back on the court on Monday and Tuesday. As a coach, it's a good time obviously to spend a lot of time with the individual and their craft, because we're on Christmas break now. So, they loosen up their allowable hours. We can get in the lab, if you will, and work on their shots, their game and their fundamentals. Coaches always love this time of the year, and hopefully our players will too. I know we're looking forward to trying to get better here in the next few days."

***Q: Shak [Shakeel Moore] mentioned that the team had to get some paint touches and ended up with 31 assists. Talk about the way you guys were able to spread the basketball around today.***

**CJ:** "Yeah, we've been focused on that since the Georgia Tech game. We were pretty disappointed with our lack of paint touches, our lack of playing for one another and making plays not just for yourself but others. That's when most teams are at their best, and we're certainly no different. It's carried over to this game as well, and we pondered into them that we thought we'd have a physical advantage in the painted area because of their matchup [zone]. More times than not, if you can get the ball in the middle of it, usually you'll get a quality possession. You're not necessarily going to score, but you'll break down that defense and try to get in an advantageous situation for the offense. So, yeah, our guys took heed to it."

"I thought Rams [Dashawn Davis] and Shak [Moore] started the game off great. Rams' stat line may not reflect how well he played, in my opinion. He was really getting after the ball. He was really aggressive and almost stubborn with driving that ball. Maybe, he turned down a couple of rhythm shots, but he was trying to play the way we felt we needed to play."

***Q: You mentioned culture. How big and important is that for a team with as much experience as you guys have and that identity to fight through adversity?***

**CJ:** “Yeah, I mean it’s something you’ve got to work on every single day. Everyone talks about it, and most team sports that are out there [talk about it]. We’re no different. We’re still defending it if you will. What you choose as a staff, what your tenants are and they know what ours are. They know what the standard is every single day. Usually, over time, that flows on to the court, and you play that way.”

“So, this was a big game for us. I’m not going to hide behind it. It was obvious. We lost two in a row, and we’re playing a team that had some good numbers and were 6-1 if I’m not mistaken. You didn’t know. You think and hope that they’re going to respond, but you really don’t know. I loved our team’s response. I loved the togetherness they showed, and they played the right way.”

***Q: Josh Hubbard had 22 points in the first half, how impressed have you been with him as a freshman?***

**CJ:** “Yeah, I mean I’ve talked about him a bunch, and I love doing it. He’s prepared his whole life for these moments. I know his history, his background and his family, obviously. He believes in himself. The confidence that he plays with is because of all of the blood, sweat, and tears that he’s poured into his game and his craft.”

“When he gets it going like that, it’s fun to have him on your team. Our guys knew it too. They’re trying to find him. Certainly, they changed their coverage on him in the second half and rightfully so. But what I was impressed with is he didn’t force it. He made the right reads. They were double teaming off the ball screen, and he was giving it up and playing the right way. He had an excellent game.”

***Q: What was the routine when you guys got here? Did you get a sense yesterday that your team was locked in and focused on this one?***

**CJ:** “We were good. We’ve been good for the most part in terms of what you’re asking about. I got a little nervous yesterday, last night, just because with an 11:30 start, you know you’ve got to get a lot done in the morning. That’s an early start. We didn’t have a shootaround time for obvious reasons. We put a lot of stuff in this week with the length of time and with how unique their matchup [zone] is. We tweaked a lot of things that we do. Then, we added more things than we had between games all year long. When you do that, one guy will mess up on this out of bounds play or this new set. So, I’m like, ‘Man, did we screw them up and give them too much to try to get on the court?’ But they were great. They were really good. They stuck with the gameplan and got it onto the floor.”

***Q: With the response that you guys had coming off a two-game losing streak and the mental fortitude it takes, how much does that show you where you can look at that going forward and push that to see how strong the team is?***

**CJ:** “You know, I’m confident in our group. I like our team. I like the individuals in our locker room, the coaches that are with us every single day. I think we’ve got the right people on the bus, if you will. Like I’ve been saying, when you have adversity which we’re in, and we’ll have some more. That’s just the way it is, we had plenty last year. You’ve got to be able to rely on each other, believe in each other and stay the course. All of those things come into play. I’m confident that we’ve got enough veterans and enough guys that get it, that we would come out and have a good response like you said.”

***Q: You talked a lot about the outsider noise that came after the loss against Southern. Why do you think the players were able to tune that out?***

**CJ:** “We didn’t really talk about it as a group other than the potential of it. The social media aspect of it. It just kind of is what it is at this point and what’s going on out there. It was more like, ‘Hey, we’ve got to stay the course. We’ve got to believe in each other. I’ve got to continue to believe in you, and you’ve got to continue to believe in us.’ As much as your inner circles love you to death and you’re the star in their world, I understand that. But at the same time, keep it in perspective.”

“I get what they’re going to say to you. I understand how that works, but they’re not here every single day. They don’t know what we’re doing every single day – the good, the bad and the ugly. The rhythm of your individual contributions or not, and then where we’re at as a team. I just really warn them to understand who’s telling you what. At the end of the day, you’ve got to trust and believe in what we’re doing, and what we’re trying to do. From the way their attitude was today, their body language, their demeanor, it didn’t feel to me like that was a problem at all.”

**Guard Shakeel Moore and Guard Josh Hubbard**

***Q: What went into this weekend to get the turnaround type win during this game today?***

**SM:** “A lot of preparation. A lot of just getting after it in practice, having a chip on our shoulder and fighting through adversity. Our goal was to come into this game and impose our will.”

***Q: When did you find out you were getting the start, and how did that feel?***

**SM:** “It was the last time we came in after warmups with about 15 minutes left [before the game]. I knew that, and I was locked in.”

***Q: With a lot of veterans on the team, who were some of the vocal leaders this past week and what was the message in the locker room?***

**SM:** “All of our guys. Me, DJ [Jeffries] and especially Tolu [Smith] with him being hurt and everything. He’s usually been the loudest on the floor. Hubb [Josh Hubbard] as well. Our young guy [Hubbard] is really vocal on the floor, in practice and it helps us out a lot. Mook [Cameron Matthews] too.”

***Q: In the first half, Josh, you hit five three’s. What is like for you when you get in the zone and just start feeling it?***

**JH:** “It’s just a confidence thing from when I was young. I just built a lot of confidence in my shot, and I just have the same rhythm every time I shoot it. When I get the chance and when I’m open, I just have to let it ride.”

***Q: What are your impressions watching someone like Josh Hubbard do the types of things he does as a freshman?***

**SM:** Beyond his years. Well beyond his years, and it’s amazing to see. It’s amazing to have him as my teammate and to watch him go out and compete every night and in practice. It’s nice to see it.”

***Q: What is your mentality in your sixth man role?***

**JH:** “I accept any role that Coach Jans gives me. I just want to help the team anyway that I can. Obviously, we all have roles on this team. To be a great team, we all have to accept it and play our role. Once we all do that, we can be an unbelievable team.”

**Q: *What was the preparation and the process like yesterday for an early game like today?***

**JH:** "It was a lot of motivation like you said earlier coming in off of losing two [straight] games. We were motivated, and we were ready to play. We stayed positive, and we didn't hang our heads. We knew we had a whole lot of the season left. So, we just wanted to get this win on the road."

**Q: *Why was there no worry in the locker room after the Southern loss?***

**SM:** "It was just a wakeup call. [We needed] To come back together and get back together. We just grinded it out and get through tough times of adversity."

**Q: *What does it mean for the team to respond in this fashion and put up over 100 points?***

**SM:** "It means a lot. I didn't know we haven't scored that much since 2018, but it means we have a lot of weapons. [We have] A lot of guys that are talented on our squad. If we all believe in one another, and if we continue to believe in our coach, we'll get the job done."

**Q: *You guys dished out 31 assists, talk about what you guys were doing offensively there.***

**SM:** "Coach [Jans] stresses paint touches. Anytime, we have a chance to get it in the paint, something good always happens. We're just sharing the ball. The last two games, we didn't have that many assists. When we have more than 20, all things end well."