

## **2023-24 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes**

### **Mississippi State at Missouri – February 10, 2024**

#### **Guard Shakeel Moore**

***Q: How big was it for the team to break through and gets its first true road win of the season?***

**SM:** "It was huge man. We prepared all week for this. We prepped day in and day out, and we really needed it big on our resume."

***Q: You're personally on a tear recently with five straight games in double figures and you made four three's tonight. What's been different for you confidence wise over the last few weeks?***

**SM:** "Just staying in the gym, staying consistent and staying true to myself. Playing at my strengths and not overdoing it. I just feel like the work finally showed."

***Q: On the fourth three-pointer you made, you turned to the bench before it went in. Did you realize you did that?***

**SM:** "Sort of, but I was sort of in the moment. I didn't even realize it all happened, but somebody just showed me the video. It was awesome."

***Q: On the road, you guys have had different struggles. Tonight, it felt like you guys imposed your brand of basketball on the other team. How were you able to do that compared to these past games?***

**SM:** "We all stress getting back. If you don't know what that means, it just means getting back to our true identity, and that's our defensive end. Hounding others on defense, being competitive, being hungrier, being grittier and that's what we did."

***Q: After the Georgia game, Coach Jans said he challenged you at the beginning of the week saying you guys had to get two wins this week. What have you guys learned about yourselves being able to accomplish that with a little extra pressure attached to it?***

**SM:** "We can put our minds up to anything, and we can beat anybody. I just feel like if we continue to trust each other, continue to play our roles and play the way we're supposed to play everything will fall into place."

#### **Forward Cameron Matthews**

***Q: You almost had a triple double. What did it feel like being able to affect the game in a different way?***

**CM:** "I just go out there and try to be the best version of me. Whatever my team needs, trying to be the leader I can be, I guess tonight was a little bit of everything. Shoutout to my teammates for getting me to go hard every day. Coach Jans, the coaching staff, everybody."

***Q: What do you feel like you guys did differently tonight to that that first true road win?***

**CM:** "I feel like that started at the beginning of this week. After that loss in Tuscaloosa, we kind of just came together and said we had to get some jobs done this week. We just had a different mindset going into the week."

***Q: Coach Jans mentioned that there was a player meeting to go over some concerns. Why do you feel like you guys were able to come out of that all on the same page and get these two wins this week?***

**CM:** "I think that this group of guys just like each other. We all want to win. So, I feel like it wasn't too hard to all get on the same page, just getting back to what we do best."

***Q: How big will this week of rest be going into the game against Arkansas?***

**CM:** "It's really huge for us. The momentum going into this upcoming week, for the rest of the month and going into March."

**Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: You guys have had issues on the road for various reasons in the past. Tonight, it felt like it was the first time you guys put your brand of basketball into the game. How do you feel like that was a difference tonight?***

**CJ:** "It's obviously hard to win in this league regardless of who you're playing. There are so many good players, good coaches, etcetera. Certainly, harder on the road, and we just weren't able to put 40 minutes together in our previous tries. We talked a lot about it. I told the team I was tired of hearing about it, tired of talking about it and that we needed to overcome that hurdle tonight and take care of it, and they did."

***Q: You guys forced 20 turnovers tonight. What went into the defensive approach going into Missouri tonight?***

**CJ:** "We were trying to kind of get back to our baseline. Last year's teams was one of the better teams at turning people over. We generated a lot of offense off our defense, and our offensive numbers are better this year. It's almost like we got away from who we need to be and how we need to play. We've talked a lot and tried to get them a little more revved up on the ball, dictating a little bit more on the ball and trying to speed people up with the idea of hopefully scoring off our defense. Fortunately, tonight, we were able to do that."

***Q: Shakeel Moore, obviously gets four made three-pointers and over the last five games all in double digits scoring. What are you seeing from his confidence watching how he's able to pick it up?***

**CJ:** "Locally, there always was a lot of talk about who was going to be our third scorer. We talked about different candidates, and that was always the first person that I brought up was Shakeel Moore. That he had the capability, the skill level, and the experience in order to do it."

"I was just talking with one of the coaches in practice yesterday or the day before, saying it'd be a shame if Shak didn't get his practice into the game, because he'd been shooting the cover off the ball in practice. We just had our fingers crossed that it would translate to the game, and it did. His confidence is through the roof right now, and the whole team knows it. We started running stuff for him when normally we would run it for Josh [Hubbard]. But tonight, we were running stuff to get Shak shots."

***Q: You said Wednesday night after the Georgia game that you told the guys this had to be a 2-0 week. For them to take on that challenge without a starting player like D.J. Jeffries due to injury, what do you think about the guys this week?***

**CJ:** "Yeah, it was our rallying cry. Obviously, we said it with some perspective that we were totally focused on Georgia on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. But at the same time, we kind of set the week's itinerary, if you will, that we needed to go 2-0 for a bunch of different reasons. One, which we've talked about with the lack of road wins on our resume or whatever you want to call it. I'm just happy for them. I'm proud of them. They were focused, our huddles were really good. They've stuck together, and they celebrated it just a few minutes ago."

***Q: Tolu [Smith III] and Jimmy [Bell Jr.] are knowingly strong presences on the interior, but they grabbed about half of your rebounds tonight. What did you think of their performance especially on the glass?***

**CJ:** "We felt going in that we had a physical advantage around the basket. One of the things we talked about was owning the paint. It's one of the things that's easier to say, harder to do. But we feel like we're best when we play inside-out and try to win the rebounding battles that happen each and every game. Tolu and Jimmy are veterans and got a physical presence about them. It always helps when they're snatching balls like that."