

## 2023-24 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State at LSU – February 24, 2024

**Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: There was a big moment Cameron Matthews went down in the first half with two fouls. Then, KeShawn Murphy had some big minutes there. What did you like from him on both sides of the court?***

**CJ:** “Yeah, it wasn’t a big moment. It was a bad deal. That was a scary situation for him to get two. He did that a lot earlier in the season, and he’s gotten better at staying away from silly fouls. We’ve talked to him about how important he is to our team. He’s just got to stay away from silly fouls. I don’t want to take any away from his aggressiveness because that’s his game but just the silly ones. He was disappointed obviously, but I thought our guys stood up. I was proud that they handled it and kept it together. No one dropped their head, and we figured out a way to get through the half and get to halftime.”

***Q: We’ve talked about certain trust you have in the players. Obviously, KeShawn Murphy has been working his way back into the rotation. Where is your trust level at with him right now, and how that’s evolved since he returned to the team?***

**CJ:** “Yeah, he’s a willing defender. He’s been really working at it. He’s receptive to what we’re trying to do with him on the defensive side of the floor. It doesn’t take much to figure out that he’s very talented offensively.”

“Obviously, he’s got great length, and he just give us a different look when he’s on the floor with his ability at 6-10 to play the four or even the five if we want to go that way. He can stretch the D [defense], and it just gives us another scorer around there. He’s underrated with his driving and passing ability. He really sees the floor. He just keeps getting better on the defensive end, and because of that, he’s on the floor more. It’s been really, really good. He’s been a big shot in the arm for us the last five or six games.”

***Q: Can you talk about the physicality of your team staying the course for the full game as well, and what you saw shift in the second half to really take control?***

**CJ:** “Yeah, we were really good on the glass in the first half on both sides, both offensively and defensively. That was a thing we talk about most games, not just this particular game. Then, in the second half, we were fine on the offensive glass. We were fine, we were good. I didn’t think we were great on the defensive glass, especially the start of half. I think they got four or five rebounds in the first five or six minutes. That’s something that we talked about a ton. Then, I thought the difference was our guys really settled in defensively. I thought our ball pressure, I thought our ability to guard the ball, and everybody got into it. It just kind of kept them at bay.”

“They’re really good at getting to the rim. They lead the league in percent of their shots at the rim. That’s something we really focused on coming into this week of doing our work out front. Doing our work on the ground, trying to avoid those situations as best as we could. Then, if we did, we’d really have a good technique without the ability to take charges anymore and then clean it up on the glass.”

"I felt like out front our guards with Rams [Dashawn Davis], Shak [Shakeel Moore], D.J. [Jeffries], Shawn [Jones Jr.] and those guys were really doing their job getting the ball. It let us get out and run a little bit and open up the lead."

***Q: Since returning from injury, D.J. has made three of his four triples. Obviously, it's a small sample size, but how big of a development could that be if he stays consistent with it in these next couple weeks?***

**CJ:** "Yeah, I haven't told him this yet. Hopefully, he doesn't pay any attention to these press conferences because I'm sure he doesn't. We talked as a staff that certainly we didn't want him being injured, and we're glad he's back, but he's slowed down a little bit because of it. I don't know if he's just not completely trusting it mentally yet, but his game has changed a little bit, in our opinion, for the better. He's not dribbling the ball east and west as much. There's more economy in his game. Then, his confidence in his shot. Like you said, it's a small sample size. We don't have enough shots to know if that's going to be the way it's going to be moving forward, but certainly it adds to the floor spacing and another guy that they have to guard."

"What I do love is he's back making defensive plays. I mean, he was really good in the first half on some of the defensive things that he did. You'd have to really watch to understand what he was doing. Then, he was just happy and celebrating in the locker room even though he didn't play a ton of minutes, but he was celebrating."

***Q: You've talked a lot all year about opportunities in this conference. You've put yourself in a position for a big week with Kentucky and Auburn coming up this next week. How do you view these next few games going forward?***

**CJ:** "I haven't thought much about it until a few minutes after we left the locker room. Certainly, it's a quick turnaround. It was a solid score that Kentucky had today [against Alabama]. Obviously, they [Kentucky] handled us very easily at their place, so all of their guys will be super motivated."

"You know, it's Kentucky. Everybody gets excited. I know our fans will be excited. We're going to have a rocking Hump. It's just a great opportunity for us. We'll certainly worry about Auburn later, but this was a big win for us. They were playing really well."

"We've got a lot of respect for Coach [Matt] McMahon and their staff. They had this thing going with big wins at South Carolina and a home win against Kentucky. I think that helped us. I think that helped keep our guys motivated. It's something we can keep talking about with how well we were playing the teams that they beat. We respect that, and I think it helped us in preparation."

### **Guard Josh Hubbard**

***Q: It seems like the last few games you guys as a team have decided, 'Look, we've got to prove something.' What is different in these last five ball games?***

**JH:** "Man, we were just motivated. Our expectations were way higher with the way we started SEC play. We had to get a road win. We had to show the world that we can win on the road, and that's what we did tonight."

***Q: We continue to see you grow throughout the season. You started to get confidence from your guys. How have you taken that on, and what do you do to continue to do that throughout the rest of the season?***

**JH:** "They build my confidence every day in practice. We push each other, and we play hard. They instilled that in me from the start, and I instilled that in them. We push each other. We just rely on each other to get a win each night."

***Q: It's so rare to see someone come into this transition from a sport on the high school level to step into this role. Did you anticipate that this season was going to flow the way that it did for you personally?***

**JH:** "No sir. I mean, I had high expectations for myself, but I never knew it's been like this. It's easy to vision something in the future. But when it actually comes and it's more than you expect, it's just a blessing."

***Q: How do you describe what Chris Jans expects of you all defensively? How do you encapsulate that expectation?***

**JH:** "Man, it's just hard work. He has a certain way he loves to do things. We believe in him, and we trust him. He's a winner. He knows what it takes to win each and every night. Defensively, you just have to bring effort. As long as you bring effort, you'll be fine."

**Forward KeShawn Murphy**

***Q: What does it mean to you to have the confidence of your teammates?***

**KM:** "I just have so much motivation behind me. It's been blood, sweat and tears over the past year, and I found an opportunity to express that."

***Q: You talked about wanting to fill a role on this team and do what the team needs. Obviously Cam [Cameron Matthews] went down with the two fouls, and you got to step up and play big minutes in the first half. How did you handle that and your mindset?***

**KM:** "Cam Matthews is a senior. He told me to come out there aggressive and take over. Cam's been here. He knows what I need to do, and I was a big part off the bench. I'm going to continue to do that."

***Q: Coach Jans has talked about guys on this team having to earn trust with the coaching staff throughout the year. You were gone for a bit and had to come back and work your way back into the rotation. Can you take me through the process of earning that trust back to the point where he's putting you in for those big minutes?***

**KM:** "Practice. At practice, I work every day. I come in and do what I've got to do. I grind every day. He started to build that confidence. I started to provide in the game, and more minutes would come."

***Q: What does knowing you have trust from your coaching staff do for your mindset?***

**KM:** "It keeps me going. It motivates me to keep going more, and I want to get more minutes. I feel like I can get more minutes. The grind never stops."

***Q: When you have that feeling that you can take another step forward, what does that do for you?***

**KM:** “It makes me feel like I can do anything. I just feel like I can build more trust with the coaches and my team, and we can become a better team.”