

**2024-25 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes**  
**No. 14 Mississippi State vs. No. 20 Missouri – February 1, 2025**

**Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: Missouri pretty much dominated from start to finish. What did you see out from your team's energy in the first half?***

**CJ:** Yeah, definitely was a dominating performance by Missouri. Congratulations to Coach Gates and their staff. We knew they were a really good basketball team before the ball was tipped. I told everybody that would listen to me that they're the best team in the country, not just the SEC, that nobody's talking about. I know they ranked 20th, but they just looked really good to me all year long, especially on tape in their recent games."

"Unfortunately, I sensed it a little bit. I tried to do something about it verbally with a couple of guys before the ball was tipped. Usually, you can settle in, and the competitive juices will take over. When it was 35-31 late in the first half, I remember thinking that we could get to halftime. Maybe be where we're at now, or maybe get a little bit closer that we could regroup and come out and get the crowd behind us."

"It just went from bad to worse. All of a sudden, it was 14 at halftime in the last three minutes. It was a bad stretch for us. It just took the wind out of the crowd's sails. At halftime, you're doing what you can do to try to get them to understand there's a lot of basketball left, and we're going to have to really take it segment-by-segment. You can't get it back all at once. We started that way. I think we cut it to ten. Then, it was just downhill after that."

***Q: Missouri hit 15 three's tonight, some of them contested, some of them uncontested. How were they able to hit so many three-pointers?***

**CJ:** Yeah, it's our third home loss that we've had this year. That's been a tale to tape 16 [versus Kentucky], 15 [versus Alabama] and 15 [versus Missouri] and efficient doing it, not with a bunch of attempts. So, we're going to have to really break it down as a staff and go backward a little bit to change some things because it's not working. It's not a one-off, it's been consistent. There's a lot of teams in this league that are capable of shooting a basketball like that. You all know how I don't believe in the saying, 'They just made shots.' Sometimes, they make a shot or two, but not 15 of them. We have something to do with that, and we're going to have to try to fix that ASAP."

***Q: I know you have multiple capable scorers on this team, what do you need to do to get those guys going?***

**CJ:** Yeah, we just got beat in every category. That's just the bottom line. I told the team, since the staff and I arrived, I'm guessing we've played 50-plus games in the Hump. It's got to be around there. We've had some tough nights, and we've had some tough losses. We haven't won every game that we've played at home, but I don't ever remember that feeling that I had this afternoon. I was embarrassed for all of us, it starts with me. It's my responsibility to have the pulse and get them ready to go, either via game planning or just motored up and motivated. Obviously, we weren't."

"In the first couple of possessions of the second half, we had some guys that got after the ball in a different mindset than they did the whole first half. That's where I told them, 'The cat was out of the bag, what were we waiting for?'" Do you think at 4-4 in the SEC and coming off a tough game against Alabama that we were just going to show up and win because we weren't playing a top 10 team?" "I feel awful for our fan base, for the administration and for everybody that that loves Bulldog basketball. It was an awful feeling, and I never want to have it again. We're going to do what we've got to do to make sure that it never happens again."

***Q: You have a week before your next game, what is your plan to get your team in the right spot physically and mentally?***

**CJ:** It's going to be a long week. It's something we talked about. We're going to have a little bounce on our step going into the bye a week, or we're not. Certainly, the 'or not' is what won out. So, I haven't got my mind around exactly what our plan is going to be. I thought I had it, but it may need to be altered now in terms of practice time. But we'll have plenty of time, tape, and work on the court and work off the court to try to make sure that this never happens again.

***Q: You play Georgia next week and then a string of ranked opponents, what do you have to do to be prepared for games against ranked teams?***

**CJ:** I just don't feel like over the course of not every game but too many of these games, we're just not playing the way we need to play on both ends. It has always started with defense, rebounding, and toughness. In this league where there's a very small margin of error, you take your foot off the gas, and everybody's going to take advantage of it. We've been able to do that to other teams, too. We've just got to understand that we've got a margin of error that's small, regardless. We've got deficiencies. Most of the teams do, but they're all really, really good, but they do. We've got to play to our strengths and understand what our strengths and weaknesses are. I've got to figure out how to get us in a better position so we can have more success."

**Guard Josh Hubbard and Forward KeShawn Murphy**

***Q: What do you feel like happened on the court today?***

**JH:** "I feel like we didn't come out with our pop. I don't think it was from the Alabama game necessarily. I think we just kind of overlooked them. Just at the beginning, if we would've came out better, more prepared mentally, I feel like our minds were not on the game. They crashed, got offensive rebounds and hit some threes. We talked about it, and we just didn't execute."

***Q: What caused some of the struggles against their defense especially the trapping in the half court?***

**JH:** "The first and second possession, they did it. We just adjusted quickly. I feel like we did a great job actually in those ball strings with the traps. Just needed to execute more to score on them."

***Q: What were they doing to give your team trouble on the perimeter?***

**KM:** "They were just heating up the ball a lot. Pressuring us outside the scoring area and just being more dominate on defense. I feel like that's what we lacked in, and it showed."

***Q: What words do you have to say to yourselves and your team to keep going?***

**JH:** "Positivity, moving on. We can't let this game affect our next game. I think that's the main thing. Just going back to the drawing board and picking up some things that we did this game to learn from it. Get in the film room and get some extra shots up, I think that's the main thing."

***Q: What are some of the biggest things you think you guys need to work on?***

**JH:** "Be more grimey, just boxing out. Getting to the ball. I think we just need to execute that more. Get our DNA back of Mississippi State Basketball."

## **Missouri Head Coach Dennis Gates**

### ***Q: What are your thoughts after this dominant win?***

**DG:** "Well, I thought our guys went in, got free and executed the game plan top-to-bottom. I thought, ultimately, we didn't play well in the second four minutes of the first half. I credit Mississippi State for responding to the initial run. I thought our guys just closed the game. For the last 30 minutes of the game, our guys did an unbelievable job of staying connected."

### ***Q: What did you see from Caleb Grill tonight?***

**DG:** "Well, it's something that we've seen already in practice. That's why he always has the opportunity to shoot it. I want these guys to play with confidence, and that's what he was doing. Just playing with confidence, and his team rewarded him with open shots."

### ***Q: Josh Gray had 10 points and 11 rebounds against a physical Mississippi State opponent. Talk about his performance today.***

**DG:** "He was ready for this game all along. I thought our guys did a great job, specifically Josh Gray, in recognizing what we needed to do. To have a road victory in this conference is an unbelievable opportunity and a feat."

### ***Q: Coach, you've had four wins against top-16 teams this season, two of them on the road. Has this team reached its ceiling?***

**DG:** "We've yet to reach our full potential. I'm excited to see the day that we do, but I think we are trending in the right direction. I'm just thankful these guys are playing hard for us."

### ***Q: This was your 100th career win today, 50 at Cleveland State and 50 at Missouri. What does that mean to you?***

**DG:** "It just means that I've got the right players playing hard for me. Ultimately, we recruit how we recruit. But, once we recruit them, they become family forever. That 100 belongs to a lot of kids, a lot of individuals. It belongs to our athletic director who gave me my first opportunity, Scott Garrett, President Harlon Sans but also our current administration, and the Missouri family as well."

## **Guard Caleb Grill**

### ***Q: What does this win mean to you, how did the team do it so impressively?***

**CG:** "Well we know going into the Ole Miss game this was going to be the toughest four-game stretch in conference play. At least, what we thought. Ole Miss at home and then we got two road games: Mississippi State and then Tennessee. Then, finishing off that four game road trip with Texas A&M. So, going into the Ole Miss game, our mindset was just to get back on track after that Texas game."

"Then, we got back on track. We had a full week off. I think that preparation and what the coaches did to help us get prepared for this game was important and impactful because you've got to take advantage of that off week. Some teams maybe go one way versus the other. We turned it in the right direction. I give all that credit to the coaches for putting us in that situation and giving us a good amount of rest, while also staying on us and getting us in the gym and working throughout that whole week."

### ***Q: Your ability to come in and jump start the team with that shooting. The range seems unlimited as deep as you were.***

**CG:** "I give credit to the other guards and the bigs out there. Just all teammates because I couldn't get open if they didn't make hard cuts. I remember Tony Perkins had a really hard cut on one. My guy left with him, his got left with him and I'm wide open. So, really in the stat sheet, it looks like

Caleb just made another three, but realistically Tony was the one who made that play happen for me. So, it's just the unselfishness that we have from the cutting. The unselfishness and the willing passers to do labor and draw two defenders and make the right plays. I think we just played for each other tonight. That was the best basketball we can play is just how we were able to move the ball and make shots. We were getting open looks from everybody. Everybody stepped up and played well tonight. That was one of the most fun games I've played in my college career."

***Q: As a leader on this team, how exciting is this? How far can this squad go?***

**CG:** "We're going to enjoy this. But, by the time we get back tonight, we're going to really look at Tennessee. They're really physical, and a good defensive team like Mississippi State. The coaches will put up a game plan, and we've got to execute that game plan like we did tonight. So, we just have to move our focus to the next game and not really worry about the game in the past. If we keep doing that, working who's next and what's next and how we have to perform against the next opponent, I think we'll put ourselves in a really good situation at the end of the season."