

**2024-25 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes**  
**No. 24 Mississippi State vs. No. 6 Alabama – February 25, 2025**

**Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: This is the second time that Alabama has made more than 15 three's on your team this season. How can you improve your three-point defense over the last three games of the season?***

**CJ:** "They were terrific tonight, not just from the three, but in most facets of the game. It becomes contagious, especially when you have a team that's so capable of shooting the ball from the arc. It just became contagious. They started making them fairly early. Obviously, they have guys with great range. We weren't locating them in transition, that was when it kind of started. Their confidence grew and grew, and I'm sure the basket looked very big to them."

***Q: Your team got two big wins but followed them with two disappointing losses. What is the feeling in the locker room right now?***

**CJ:** "It's tough. Like you mentioned, we had back-to-back wins going into Oklahoma. At that point, with the number of games we had left, we felt like we were hitting our stride and that we had kind of figured it out. We were playing better than we were earlier, and the mood and vibe was really good. We liked how we played for the most part."

"Then, like you mentioned, we had the back-to-back road games. It started at Oklahoma where we just didn't play as well. and then certainly tonight we took a left turn. This league will do that to you. You have to take care of the opportunities that you get. You've got to be able to pull your person off the ground and regroup. You've got to understand that you can't let that turn into a snowball effect."

"I'm glad we've got three days instead of two to figure out what just happened and to make sure our guys are ready to go on Thursday and Friday, and ultimately ready to play another game on Saturday."

***Q: How much more difficult is Alabama to stop when Mark Sears is distributing the ball like that?***

**CJ:** "He just looks like he is playing at an elite level again. There were so many expectations for him prior to the season. I don't think anyone could've quite lived up to what people expected of him after the great career that he's already had and all the milestones he's reached individually and as a part of the team. I think it was, in part, unfair to him."

"He's obviously playing at an elite level right now. Not just tonight, but in some previous games. When he's doing it both, scoring the basketball and driving for himself, but then you add in when he's finding others, it makes himself and them very difficult to defend."

***Q: Do you think anyone can beat the version of Alabama that you saw in the first half?***

**CJ:** "They were awfully good. They were good in most facets of the game. We knew it was going to be difficult. We had a chance at our place to get a win, and we just didn't finish the game. They're playing really well. Obviously, it's a great environment. Again, they would've tough to beat tonight for most teams in the country."

"There are a lot of good teams in our league. There are probably more teams in our league that have 'Final Four potential' than in the history of any league just due to the numbers that everybody has put up, and the quality of the teams that we have this year. They're definitely one of them."

**Forward RJ Melendez**

***Q: Defensively, what are you seeing right now and what have you guys been talking about over the last few games?***

**RJM:** "We've just got to stay together. Honestly. I feel like our connection hasn't been as strong as it has in the last few games we've had. I just think they had a great game. We've just got to be better defensively. Coach [Jans] has been harping on it every day this week on how we've got to get better. We find a rhythm sometimes, but we got too comfortable with those two wins."

***Q: Your team got two big wins but followed them with two disappointing losses. What is the feeling in the locker room right now?***

**RJM:** "It's not the best, obviously. We've just got to keep our heads up. There are three more games left in the [regular] season. So, we've got to move onto the next one and focus on LSU. We just have to prepare for the next one because every single game matters at this point."

***Q: Do you think you had a matchup issue, or was there something defensively that you need to fix on your end?***

**RJM:** "I think it was more our effort. I don't think it was there the whole game. That's just the point where we broke down. Our effort wasn't there from the jump. They made a run, and we didn't know how to respond. We just let it fall out of our hands."

***Q: It was a tough night offensively for you guys. What did Alabama do defensively to force a poor performance?***

**RJM:** "I don't think they were doing anything special to us. We just weren't executing to what we were supposed to. We were a little stagnant on offense, and I feel like that is our major issue. I think we're great offensively, we're hard to guard and we've got a lot of guys that can make plays. We just have to stop being stagnant on the offensive side."