

2024-25 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State at SMU – November 22, 2024

Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: How did you feel about how your team handled their first true road game?

CJ: “It’s hard to win. People take it for granted, and they understand that the other team has a plan, good players and a staff that is game-planning. There’s a lot going on out there, and these guys had a tough start. They had a lot of physicality, and we hadn’t seen that all year. So, why wouldn’t it be a problem? I didn’t like it, but having some time to think about it, I think it’s natural for that to happen. We talked a lot about how we’re going to have to stick together. There’s going to be problems and adversity, and they did. I’m super proud of them. Hopefully, this will be a big win as the season unfolds.”

Q: What was the difference between the shooting in the first and second half?

CJ: “We talked about it a lot in our huddles. What are we doing? We can’t win if we’re doing our own thing ... Then, it becomes my turn. That was the most disappointing thing that we had going. We had no chance if we couldn’t play together. This team hasn’t been that way. So, I don’t know how that happened, but I’m really glad they got it together. That’s the biggest difference in how we played in the second half offensively. This will be a great film session for us to learn and grow from.”

Q: We don’t normally take this many shots, what was different about this game from your viewpoint?

CJ: “We’re going to take more shots on goal than we have in the past, that’s pretty obvious. I’m okay with that. We’re actually better when we only have two or three passes instead of six or seven. It’s about what’s a good shot for us, what a good shot is for you. I’m going to give you freedom, and I want you to play more confidently because we have that talent.”

“But, we can’t be having heat checks when you haven’t hit a shot yet. That goes for everybody. I love Josh Hubbard to death, but we talked about it because you can’t do that. But, he had five assists and zero turnovers, and he guarded. Last year, we don’t win this game. If we’re behind and he’s 4-for-18, I don’t think we win this game. I don’t think we could put enough points up.”

Q: How did you limit SMU to taking only 47 shots on their end?

CJ: “It’s a product of our offensive rebounding. It was really good. For the most part, better in the first half than the second half. We really took care of the basketball. We’ve been good at that all year long. We kept it in the single digits again, seven turnovers and 20 assists. Guys will share with each other, and we don’t have to manufacture it. They stuck in there and stuck together. That’s two games in a row that we’ve had to come from behind.”

Q: Was it the plan to play one-on-one with Samet Yigitoglu?

CJ: “He’s a really good passer. He’s huge, which we’re not. Some of our trappers weren’t that big so we weren’t getting a lot out of it. A lot of teams are going to gameplan our double teams, and they were already doing it. It was kind of a back-and-forth game within the game. So, we took it off. What we started doing was to take whoever was guarding No. 0 [B.J. Edwards] and boomerang off of him. We actually played two possessions of zone down the stretch, which we haven’t done all year.”

Q: When you play small ball and have Cameron Matthews at the five position, was it the plan for him to be one-on-one with Samet Yigitoglu?

CJ: “It was a set, I’ve got to give [assistant coach] Scott Padgett credit because I gave him the board and let him work. We spread out their shooters and ran a little ghost screen with [Josh] Hubbard because they don’t like to switch with him. Riley [Kugel] cut behind the play and dunked the ball, which went really well. So, kudos to Coach Padgett for thinking on his feet and getting what we needed to win the game.”

Q: Mook [Cameron Matthews] had a career-high eight assists tonight, how did he facilitate and help this team win tonight?

CJ: “It was a Cam Matthews type of stat line. Six points, five rebounds, eight assists and three steals. He has that warrior mentality. He’s a coach in the huddle. I listen to him as much as I’ve listened to anyone in the huddle, probably since I was at Wichita State. He just sees the game differently, and he’s out there. So, he’s got better intel than we do.”

Q: Talk about KeShawn Murphy. Is it safe to say he got his practice into the game for the second straight game.

CJ: “Absolutely, we’re going to be a little bit light with the big guys we’re going against these next few games, and then into the SEC. He’s really unique and has different looks to combat the size we’re going to face. Mike [Michael Nwoko] gave us some strong minutes with four rebounds and no turnovers. We’re going to have to figure out how we’re going to play around the basket.”

Q: What did you see from Riley Kugel and RJ Melendez tonight?

CJ: “Melendez hit a big three when we really needed it. He was defending, rebounding and staying organized. We ran a set for him late. He got to the rim, but that guy just came out of nowhere. Kugel was a little under the weather today so we were worried about that, but he got into the gym for warmup and felt better.”

Q: How does it feel to be 1-0 on the road?

CJ: “We’re going to celebrate this one. We had Dwyane Wade in the locker room. So, we let him address the team, and the guys got pictures with him. I don’t know if the guys were more excited about the win or the chance to hang out with D-Wade. But it was a bonus for sure, and it’ll be a fun ride home.”

Forward Cameron Matthews

Q: How did you guys get it done tonight?

CM: “We just stayed resilient, stayed together and just kept going.”

Q: How did the Utah game prepare you for the size of this SMU team?

CM: “We go into every game like it’s the Super Bowl. We go through the preparation, and everything to make sure we do everything we can to secure the win.”

Q: At halftime, was the emphasis on not taking as many quick shots?

CM: “Yeah, it definitely was a major emphasis.”

Q: After the final timeout, did Coach Jans draw up a play for you to be one-on-one with Samet Yigitoglu?

CM: “Yeah, he just wanted to get me downhill and use my playmaking abilities. (Josh) Hubbard set a great screen, too. He’s just so short you can’t see him.”

Q: You had eight assists tonight, where did you learn to pass like that?

CM: “I’ve always prided myself on being unselfish and a pass-first kind of guy. I’ve been working on being a great teammate and helping my team.”