

2024-25 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes
No. 25 Mississippi State vs. UNLV – November 28, 2024

Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: How did you perform so well on the boards being able to outrebound UNLV, 46-29?

CJ: "It was a big emphasis of ours going into the game. They gave up 21 offensive rebounds in their last outing. So, we wanted our guys to be excited about crashing with authority. We knew that we could get some second-chance opportunities. We've been emphasizing rebounding for longer than just this game. We struggled the first three games, and we've been better ever since. So, it was nice to see that and control the game in that way."

Q: What did you see from the ball movement your team had especially at the beginning of the game?

CJ: "It was awesome. We were moving it because we talked about our shot selection going into the game. We were struggling in the first half by digging ourselves a hole [during the last two games against Utah and at SMU] and taking a shot nowhere close to shot clock time. We talked about the talent we had on the floor and how we had to do it together because we've got plenty of guys. When it's time for a shot-clock shot, we're normally going to get a pretty good look. But it was great to see the ball moving and the players moving, especially in the first half. We didn't shoot the ball very well in the second half. I think we should've scored a lot more points."

Q: Will KeShawn Murphy continue to get better, or has he reached his ceiling?

CJ: "He's working hard. He's after it, and he wants more. He's so awesome to coach right now, not that he wasn't before, but he's healthy mentally and physically. He feels really good about the dividends that he's receiving."

"Our guys are happy for him. They love to root for him because he's just one of those guys. He's got that personality where he's cool with everyone, and everybody sees him working every day. Everyone knows his history with his injuries. So, to see all that hard work pay off on the court is amazing."

Q: What kind of emphasis did you put on your defense tonight?

CJ: "The basic principle is that we're trying to keep it out of the middle of the floor as much as possible. The ball gets on one side or the other, and we try our best to keep it over there. We want to funnel it into what we call a 'strong mid', which is basically help defense. We're really aggressive in our positioning. So, if they drive it in there, we've got two guys on the ball so we can trap it. We've got some issues with our size and our depth under the basket. So, we're trying to protect ourselves." We've trapped more this year than we have in the past and people have been playing middle ball screen. UNLV was doing that, and we struggled in the first half with 11 [Dedan Thomas Jr.] and 1 [Jalen Hill] setting one-on-four ball screens. But, we did a great job of taking care of that in the second half."

Q: You play a very physical team in Butler in less than 24 hours, what do you know about their team?

CJ: "First of all, this couldn't have unfolded any better. In these two-game deals, we unfortunately drew the short stick of playing in the late game. They're in scout mode for two more hours than us, and they'll sell the heck out of that about their legs. But, they also got extended all the way to the end, both

emotionally and physically, which we didn't. We didn't have anybody play more than 22 minutes this game. So as a coach, you couldn't draw it up any better."

"Tomorrow will look a lot different. They're very physical and big. They like to play a lot of iso ball and set a ton of little flat backs to get the matchup they want. We call it the Barkley game, or the backdown game, where they just try to get a matchup and exploit you that way. It'll be a cat-and-mouse game for us trying to decide what we're going to do. My staff is incredible, and I know they've already got a game plan put together. So, I'm going to get up to speed here shortly."