

2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes

Mississippi State vs. Alabama State – December 29, 2025

Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: On the surface, do you feel like that's one of your team's best all-around efforts tonight?

CJ: "It's the first thing I said in the locker room just to the coaches that we hadn't had a stress free win this season that I can recall. It was nice, and it was nice to have one. We didn't have a lot of stress."

"We got off to a great start. They made that running three-point shot there to go into halftime which took away a little bit of our momentum. But, other than that even considering how liberally we subbed in the second half, I thought the guys that were out there continued to play Bulldog basketball. Sometimes, they can get sloppy that way and then the score can go in the wrong direction, but I really thought that they continued to play and compete like every coach asked them to when that happens."

"Obviously, we're about to play a whole different set of competition and players and coaches and teams. So, no disrespect to Alabama State, but we're going to have a lot of opportunities to see if we can play better."

Q: What have you seen from Josh Hubbard as a passer? He had some nice assists to his teammates for dunks tonight.

CJ: "Yeah, he had a clean game. A really clean game. I thought he looked bouncy and fresh and got off to a really good start. Certainly, like most teams, they started doubling him. He made pretty good decisions. I was disappointed a little bit there early when he didn't handle one of the traps."

"But if the old coach didn't sub him out, he could probably have had a big number game. Certainly, he'll have a lot of opportunities the rest of the year to do that, but I thought he looked really good."

Q: How have you seen your front court players as they continue to develop and improve?

CJ: "This team continues to grow and progress. We really tweaked offensively what we're trying to do and have certain individuals kind of accept the roles that we feel like puts them in their best position. That in turn puts our team in best position."

"Some guys are doing it, and our offense has gotten better because of it. They're similar in terms of, in-between forwards that can run the court and that can get their hands on basketballs. Individuals that could defend a little bit and rebound the ball. Anchor [Anchor] is an excellent rebounder, and Sergej [Macura] is starting to become one as well."

"Hopefully, that accepting of what we're asking them to do will still be a positive for them because I know it's helping our team. They're not the only two. We've got a bunch of guys in the same boat. Accepting that and understanding that is going to help them and us will be a big deal for us all season long."

Q: What kind of growth have you seen from King Grace this season?

CJ: "I'm happy for him. I'm happy that he had some success out there. He put the ball in the basket and had a couple nice drives and made a three. He continues to grow. He's learning every day, and is a great young man. Obviously, he's got a great basketball body. He has some pop to him and can knock it down. So, hopefully this will continue to be a part of his journey. Hopefully, it'll give him some confidence going forward."

Q: Has Sergej Macura got more confident or more used to the college game?

CJ: "I would say a mixture of both. They're kind of hand-and-hand. I don't like to speak for him, but the game is slowing down for him a little bit. The athleticism is on the court every day. He wasn't here in June or July, and that stunted his progress for sure. But you can tell when he's out there, he's not in as big rush as maybe he was in the first five or 10 games. Certainly, when you have some success, that's always going to give you more confidence."

"I would imagine it's a bit of both. We need him, and we need him to play his role. What I like about him and getting back to one of the earlier questions, he's to the point where I have confidence in him and trust in what he is going to do now. I'm pretty sure what I am going to get with Sergej when he's on the court. That's why he's playing more minutes, and he'll probably continue to play more minutes because he's so coachable. He's so bought in to us, and what we're doing. He's a team guy. Every day, he's had the same approach. So, it's been good that way for him and for us."

Q: How do you feel about the state of the team as they enter SEC play?

CJ: "They feel pretty good right now [laughter]. It was a happy locker room, and the tone was really good. But they know what's coming. They know who we're about to play and the gauntlet that the SEC schedule is for all of us. It's unrelenting, and there's no breaks. We need to be singularly focused on each and every game. But, at the same time, I've been through it three times, and it's a difficult thing to navigate. We've got a lot of new players who haven't been through it, and we've also got some older guys who need to educate them on how intense and serious-minded these games are going to be. It's that time of the year."

Q: Was getting rebounds and playing in the paint the scouting report coming into the game?

CJ: "Rebounding hasn't been up to snuff, and it's something we talk about every single day. We've got to do it by committee. Quincy [Ballard] had a great night on the glass, and we can't rely on that every single night."

"Rebounding has to be something where we're not going to dominate in the league like that. It's just not reality, but we've got to be able to be in the game that way. We've got to be able to win some, lose some and neutralize some. We can't be getting crushed in the paint or on the backboard. Our big thing is, all five have got to have something to do with it. Whatever it is, there's always something to do to help on the defensive glass. It'll be a big part of us going forward."

Center Quincy Ballard and Guard King Grace

Q: Would you say this has been your team's best overall showing this year?

QB: "Coach said it during practices like coming off the break. Our practices have been way better, offensively and defensively."

Q: King, you finish with a career high in points. What was working for you tonight?

KG: "Really, it was just exciting for me to get out there and get my legs loose. It was a great feeling. I guess my shot was working. I was just getting into transition and letting my teammates get me open. So, it was just easy shots."

Q: What have you seen from Josh Hubbard as a passer earning all those assists?

QB: "He's a great guard. Obviously, he gets more assists than turnovers. He sees the open guy, he's going to either throw a lob, cut or throw the pass to the corner, whoever is open."

Q: King, you played for the first time in a few games tonight, what were the coaches looking from you in practice and in game tonight?

KG: "Just to stay consistent. Stay competitive, keep competing, keep playing hard and just the things usually freshmen don't do. Just stay consistent in practices and keep doing what I'm doing. It's going to flip, and it's going to click."

Q: Quincy, you guys were plus 22 on the boards tonight. Did you know you would have that advantage in the paint tonight?

QB: "Well, I mean, Coach Jans has been saying that throughout the last few games of the season. I mean, obviously, our rebound numbers have to be higher. We have a tall team. Coming to this game, we were all saying that we've got to dominate the rebounds. So, that's what we did."

Q: King, what has it been like adjusting to playing college basketball?

KG: "It's been a big adjustment. The traveling, the film and the daily grind of college itself. It's been a lot, but I think I'm finally adjusted to it. It's almost normal now."

Q: How have you seen this team change over your four-game win streak?

KG: "I think we came together and said as a team, we can't let the little things be the reason we don't win games. Like the first three steps being jogs or not just getting a 50/50 ball. We just decided the little things can't keep us from what we want. So, it's just giving it a little bit more effort from each and every player."

Q: Quincy, what have you seen from Sergej Macura and Achor Achor as they've stepped up in the front court?

QB: "I mean, working with them, they're great players. They can move, and they're really athletic. They're really a big help to our team. They can rebound. They can shoot outside and can do a lot all around."