

## 2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State vs. San Francisco – December 7, 2025

### Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

***Q: Coach, Josh Hubbard goes down early, but you got 13 points off the bench from Ja'Borri McGhee and 29 points total. Is that something you can build off of moving forward that kind of production?***

**CJ:** "Yeah, I hope so. We need all hands-on deck. At this point, we are nine games in. I have a little frustration, or I don't really know what the correct word for it is, I still have guys that I'm not sure who I should put in the game. I hate that. I hate that I feel that way, and I hate that it hasn't had as much separation as we need it to. So, our rotation isn't as solid as maybe we'd like it to be right now."

"We've had years where we've started different people, but we knew who was going to play and roughly how many minutes they were going to play. Nine games in, we're still having some inconsistencies without productivity, which again, they aren't robots. It isn't like they are going to play a certain way every single time, but I've got to figure it out. They've got to figure it out individually for some of the guys. They've got to be 'No, I'm the guy. I'm going to show you that I'm that guy. I can help more, produce more and be consistent more.' We've got to get a couple of guys to do that going forward."

***Q: When Jayden Epps was up here, he talked about how you guys needed to get back to playing Mississippi State basketball. In your words, what is that? What's it going to take to get back to that?***

**CJ:** "Yeah, I mean, since we've arrived. We've talked about defense, toughness, rebounding, playing together and sharing the ball. So, it's still the same things we preach on a daily basis in terms of our staples. I thought we rebounded the ball much better in the first half even though the score wasn't in our favor. I told one of the coaches walking off the court, we're only down eight, I feel like we should be down 20 with the way the game had unfolded."

"That's just how I felt inside about our quality of play and offensive rebounding had something to do with that. Then, in the second half on both ends, we didn't rebound. On the offensive end, we didn't rebound, and we definitely didn't rebound the defensive end. I think that was a big part of the game. We started mixing up our defenses down the stretch. We were going back and forth between man and zone, some in the same possession, but we couldn't get the rebound. We couldn't finish it. We talked a lot this week about finishing defensive possessions with physical checks and five guys having the mindset of 'I'm going to get the rebound. I'm going to get it with two hands. I'm going to be that guy.' We just didn't. Certainly, there's a lot of things to talk about. I've talked about plenty all ready, but I think those are some critical mistakes that we made down the stretch."

***Q: How frustrating is it when it's a leader like Shawn Jones Jr. with two turnovers in a close game like that?***

**CJ:** "Basketball is a funny sport. It takes mysterious bounces sometimes. One guy's zigging, and one guy's zagging, and I actually watched that final inbound play, because I can't really see what exactly happened. I wish I had a better explanation, but you know Jaden [Epps] was open. That's where we were trying to throw the ball to. He had a little bit of pressure. He was trying to get open, and Shawn read it a little bit differently than Jaden read it in terms of where he was going to catch the ball. It just obviously was unfortunate play for us at that critical time in the game."

***Q: Can you give us an update on Josh Hubbard and how he's doing?***

**CJ:** "I wish I could. All I got was a few minutes after he went out from our bench that he was out for today's game. So, that took a little few seconds to process, but I have not talked to the trainer nor Josh since the game."

***Q: How do you approach trying to manage the temperament in the locker room and trying to keep everyone focused going ahead?***

**CJ:** "That's a really good question. I think about it a lot, unfortunately, and about what to say and how to say it and what. Obviously, what can I do? How can I help them more? And in the end, it's my responsibility."

"I didn't say much to them after this game. They were hurting. It was somber, and it was tough. It was very quiet and rightfully so. They've all played basketball long enough now. I've coached the game long enough now is what you learn is you win and lose in a variety of ways. You just never know how the game's going to unfold, and this afternoon is one where we got off to a poor start. Josh goes down, takes some air out of the room and out of the building and out of our team, I don't know. We just fought uphill all night long. I mean, at one point, I didn't know if we were going to get back into striking distance the way the game was unfolding. Fortunately, we did, and we led for a grand total of 17 seconds, at least what the box course says. We had a couple of ties and a couple of lead changes, but it wasn't like one of those types of games. They were in complete control until the winning time, until when it was most important to be in control, which is, you know, when the buzzer goes off. We had a chance to basically steal one, if I'm being honest. It would have been a heck of a win for us considering the circumstances and how the game play out and with Josh going down."

"But unfortunately, we didn't execute down the stretch. We just didn't. There were more things than you guys would even know, to be honest with you about, some lack of execution, if I'm being honest with myself and our team, in which we always are. We had a couple fouls to give on the last possession coming out of the time out. So, we were trying to push up on them and take some time off the clock and follow them once they got into the scoring area. We had two guys that had a chance to do that, and unfortunately, we didn't. So, we fouled them. They got to the rim, and we fouled them. I think he made both free throws if I'm not mistaken, and that was before the last play of the game. So, our staff and I, have got to do more. We hopefully have a lot of close games. We have already. I think we're probably going to have a lot more, and we've got to figure out a way to put them in better positions. Then, the guys on the court and those critical moments have to execute better."

**Guard Jayden Epps and Guard Ja'Borri McGhee**

***Q: Ja'Borri, another close game where your team wasn't able to make the key play to win it. What has to change down the stretch in these close games in order to come out on the winning side?***

**JM:** "I think the will, us listening to what he's (Coach Jans) saying in the huddle and actually going to do it. I also think sometimes when we get in huddles and other teams notice that they make adjustments the same as we make adjustments. So, whenever we get five guys on the court in a critical time like that, those five have to come together and play the game within a game."

***Q: When Josh Hubbard goes out and doesn't come back in, how does that affect you guys emotionally? What do you think it takes to respond in those kinds of moments?***

**JE:** "It helps us want to win more for our brother. We know he wanted to be out there. We wanted him out there. We know how much we need him, but Coach told us next man up mentality. We can't dwell on it. We couldn't put our heads down, and we just had to try to win it for him. We came up short, but we're just going to get back to the drawing board and keep working. I'm pretty sure Josh is going to get rehab, and he'll be back in no time."

***Q: Ja'Borri, what was the message from Coach Jans after this tough loss?***

**JM:** "Taking a tough loss like that probably isn't the best of words, coming from us or from anybody honestly. The locker room was pretty quiet. I mean we can't drown ourselves over it, we're going to have even bigger opportunities coming forward. I think the biggest thing right now is for us to just go back and get back to work."

***Q: Jayden, as you kind of turned on in the second half, what were you seeing that opened things up for you?***

**JE:** "Early on, they were kind of denying me the ball. They let off a little bit in the second half. I was able to get more catches. My teammates were screening harder, and they were finding me. I feel like I just kind of got in the groove of the game, the flow of the game."

***Q: Jayden, it's been a rocky start to the season. What do you think you guys need to improve on and get better at during the week off?***

**JE:** "Playing how we play, there's no big thing or one big area. I feel like when we just listen to Coach. We play how we play, and we need to get back to playing Mississippi State basketball and the culture that has been around here. Once we do that, and we already know how to do that, once we do and just lock in, get everybody on board. We just have to keep working. Every day is not going to be your day; you're not going to win every game. Of course, we feel like we should have won this one, but it happens. We're just going to get back to work and keep grinding."

***Q: Ja'Borri, talk about how you're able to keep the ball and minimize turnovers.***

**JM:** "Early on in the season, turning the ball over we all just were trying to play as fast as we can and practicing that. I think we realized, the more possessions we get the better it is for us and the way we play defense allows that. So, I think the biggest thing now is not to change anything."

"Obviously, we have to watch more film. Our biggest thing right now is time management. We as good players trust ourselves, and we have a lot of confidence. So, we took a lot of early shots tonight, which usually half of those fall. Nobody's mad about that. But, like I said earlier, we have to start playing the game within the game more."