

2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State vs. Auburn – February 18, 2026

State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: Back in the non-conference when Josh had a big game, you chose to focus on him having zero turnovers instead of the points. What stands out from Josh Hubbard's performance tonight?

CJ: "We probably need to talk about the points tonight [laughter]. I don't know pay attention, and I have no idea where the stats are in terms of in the arena. I know you all will look at me and be like you've been here for four years. I don't, I know where the score is and what the fouls are. I've got an army of people behind me and next to me to help me with everything that I need."

"So, when I get into the locker room at halftime and get the stat sheet and see that he's got 35 [points]. That was my reaction. I knew he was obviously having a half, but 35 in a half as clean as it was with the efficiency and the shots he was making. It was a special half. Toward the end, and I'm certainly not going to lie to you, your brain is your brain. At one point, I think if we waste that half and his performance, it's going to be a shame. We didn't."

"Down seven with 3:44 left, it didn't look promising with the air out of the Hump and rightfully so. We had given up a huge lead, but I couldn't have been prouder of a group of young men that stayed together. Our huddles were really good, considering the circumstances, and we had a lot of kids in the last four minutes of the game make huge plays that helped us regain the lead and win the game."

Q: Could you ever tell before the game that he was going to have a performance like this or was it just as the game unfolded?

CJ: "He's been different lately. He's got a buoyancy about him, and he's got a giddy up in his step. I don't know exactly why. Sometimes with him, it's like pitching a perfect game, and I don't want to talk to him. I literally try to stay away from him other than scheme and what we need to talk about. That's how I look at that kind of thing, and I didn't want to talk about it at halftime with any of the coaches either. We just talk about what we normally talk about."

"That kid, obviously, is super special. He keeps showing me ways to continue to talk about him. For instance, late in the game, he says, 'Coach, you've got to use me as a decoy for a couple of plays'. He knows his body. It takes a lot of energy and torque to do some of the things that he does."

"In the last timeout, the 3:44 timeout, he was unbelievable. Certainly, as a coach you're trying to gain some momentum and get some energy and pump some life back into your players after they overtook the lead. Then, all of the sudden, it was seven. It looked pretty dire in that timeout. The coach is going to try to get him back moving in the right direction, but he [Hubbard] was doing the same thing. I thought they were responsive to that. He could've easily gotten into his own little world and say, 'I'm having an unbelievable night. If we lose, we lose', but he's not built like that. It's another example of him finding ways to show everybody what he's all about."

Q: Can you talk about your role players and their contributions tonight especially down the stretch by getting blocks on defense and making clutch free throws?

CJ: "Well, Josh would be the first to tell you without all those plays that you mentioned and more, we don't win the game. We were in a foul situation. We had Jamar [Jamarion Davis-Fleming] with 3 early in the second half. Then, Ja'Borri [McGhee] got 3 and 4 [fouls] fairly early in the second half. King [Grace], obviously, didn't have a great run. Just bad luck and bad timing. He got three fouls in the first half, still finding his way a little bit."

“So, we’re struggling on who we need to play. We just kind of went with the guys that had been playing. We’re trying to figure out a way to get to a situation to play Ja’Borri and play Jamar. Unfortunately, Jamar got his fourth pretty quickly within a couple possessions of going back in the game. It was part of the reason why they overtook us in my opinion and established a pretty good lead for what was left in the game.”

“I thought when we were able to sub Ja’Borri back in, that he had some pop. He had some energy about him even after sitting for so long. That game was like a heavyweight deal. There was a lot out of each player. Neither team played a ton of guys, especially in the 2nd half. There were some tired bodies out there, but I thought about the fact that he came in and had that bounce.”

“Then, when we saw Shawn [Jones Jr.] back in the game, he had some more pop because he was chasing around Keyshawn Hall. Even though Keyshawn Hall is a heck of a player, it wasn’t for lack of effort from our team and specifically Shawn. It wasn’t just on Shawn, it was on our team, but he was assigned to him most of the night. I really felt like the fact that we got a live body in there. Then, we were able to get another one, and that helped us retake the lead.”

Q: What’s the mood like in the huddle after losing that lead, and what are you telling the guys to get everything on track?

CJ: “Yeah, I alluded to it a little bit. There’s a lot of time, and there’s more time than you think. I talked about that we’ve been here before. We were down 13 to a team in the fall when it didn’t look good. We stayed with it, I think there was about 5 minutes left, the New Orleans game. We used that as a reference. We were down big against Utah on the road. We came back and won that game. When you have a team that’s been through those situations, it’s a great time to pump some confidence back in them like, ‘Hey, we can do this. Certainly, at home, if you can get a basket or two, the crowd gets behind you and gives you a little more pop. I thought that’s what happened tonight.”

Q: This season maybe hasn’t gone the way you guys expected or had hoped. What’s been the key to staying together, and keep fighting hard in these games?

CJ: “You guys have heard me talk about in here when the results weren’t what we wanted in the last two games weren’t what we wanted [against Arkansas and Tennessee] that I feel like we’re going to win every game when the ball is tipped. I’m a pretty realistic guy, and I would probably never admit it, I never felt like we weren’t going to win.”

“I’ve talked in here a ton about these kids, and their approach to practice, I’ve been around and been on teams as an assistant to where it can get tough in February to keep them motivated and to practice when you’re not having the season that we’re used to or the expectations that we had. I think it’s a huge credit to the togetherness of this team. They truly like each other.”

“The guys that aren’t playing as much, they probably turn the tide for us more than anybody. Guys like Amier Ali, Dellquan Warren and Brandon Walker. Their energy in practice, their competitiveness in practice and their energy on the bench has been terrific. That’s not easy to do, and that’s difficult to do. They’re not freshmen starting their journey. They’ve been doing this some more longer than others. I think it’s just a testament to the character of this particular team, and certainly the kids we have on it.”

Guards Josh Hubbard and Shawn Jones Jr.

Q: What did you think about Josh's performance?

SJJ: "Insane, legendary performance. We're three years in [together], man, just a legendary performance. I already knew he was great. I tell him every day he's my favorite point guard in the world. He keeps living up to it, he never let me down."

Q: Josh, try to explain how early in the game you realized you were on tonight.

JH: "I was just staying level-headed. Not getting too high, not staying too low or high in the moment. Just taking possession at a time, just let the groove come to me. I couldn't do it by myself. My teammates set me up, ball screens, DHOs and things like that. Without them, I wouldn't have that type of performance."

Q: Shawn, you guys had a big lead, but Auburn came back to lead late. What was Coach Jans telling you all to kind of rally the troops?

SJJ: "Keep playing our game. It's adversity. We've been in that position before. We stick together, and we make the play that we need to make to pull this game out."

Q: Josh in the second half, they start double teaming you. How did you keep yourself prepared to hit that three-pointer final minute there?

JH: "Just letting the game come to me. Not really forcing shots or anything like that. When they sent two at me, they really opened up the floor. We flashed the middle, and we created easy buckets when that happens. So, at the end we ran a good play. I was able to get open, had the confidence to shoot it and was able to knock it down."

Q: Josh, you had that game against Arkansas where you didn't hit a three-pointer, but you've had 30 points every game since then. Has anything changed in your approach?

JH: "Not really, just staying consistent with it each and every day. Coach Jans said the work will show as long as you put it in."

Q: Josh, they were doing everything they could to take you out in the second half. How big in the final minutes were Jayden Epps and Ja'Borri McGhee?

JH: "Man, they were huge, especially this guy right here next to me [Shawn Jones Jr.], knocking down those two free throws to seal the win. Having those types of guys where they let me get hot and then they support me and then they seal the game, it just tells the type of team, the type of people we have. That's just the unselfishness that we love about each other that we carry, and we cherish every day."

Q: Josh you appear to be doing a little bit of trash talking there at the end. What were your emotions during that moment?

JH: "It was definitely emotional, I think everybody knows why. It's part of the game. At the end of the day, it's all love. In between those lines, it's competitive. That's every SEC game. So, just let the emotions get out for sure."

Q: Josh, this is two games in a row where you've set personal history in this uniform. How much more does that add to the feeling of making those accomplishments?

JH: "Definitely, the biggest thing is just getting the win. That's the goal each and every game, every time we prepare and every practice. We put a lot of pain. We put a lot of sweat into preparations two days before the games. That's just the common goal each and every day [is] just to get a win."