

2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes

Mississippi State vs. No. 18 Alabama – January 13, 2026

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: Coach, you guys were up 29-15 midway through the first half. What changed from that point to the end of the first half?

CJ: “They played better, and we played worse. That’s bluntly what happened. We didn’t capitalize on the great start that we had, and the momentum that we built. The crowd, especially the students, were into the game, and we couldn’t draw up a better start. It was eerily similar to our last outing on the road [at Kentucky]. We’d get off to a great start, even a better start to this game, and we couldn’t sustain it. Then before half, we relinquished the lead and started playing from behind.”

Q: What is it about Alabama that makes it a tough matchup and gives your team struggles each time you play?

CJ: “They give a lot of people struggles each game if you’ve been paying attention to their records and their championships. They’ve won a lot of basketball games. Coach Oats and the staff have done a tremendous job, and they play a style that is hard to prepare for. It’s really hard. You don’t see it very often. They are so reliant on the three’s and the rim shots. The pace that they play with and the number of possessions they’re trying to get.”

“Obviously, they’ve got really, really good players. They’ve got really, really good players and a system that they believe in. A system that they’re confident in. Their kids play with great confidence, and they play really hard too. I don’t think they get enough credit for how hard they play. Everybody talks about their offense and their pace and rightfully so, but their kids really compete as well.”

Q: Where did things start to go wrong on defense after Alabama started slow?

CJ: “Well, there’s no way that I thought that would continue. Just knowing their team and watching the film that we do. I didn’t have any delusions that they would continue not making any shots. I couldn’t tell you off the top of my head what went wrong other than they started making some shots. Unfortunately, I think it affects us too much when one end doesn’t go as well as we like. It seems we suffer a little bit on the other end and lose some of our pop, some of our bounce, some of our attention to detail. That’s what we talked about in the locker room. It felt like that’s happened recently too much, and we’ve got to obviously try to change it.”

Q: When teams start to go on big runs, how do you try and prevent that from getting worse?

CJ: “Yeah, well, you want some leadership at that point. You need some guys on the court to help steady the ship a little bit. In years past what I would tell you is, you dig in on the defensive end. Try to get two or three stops in a row. Then, try to maybe turn them over and get one of those plays that changes the momentum. Our team doesn’t turn people over. I mean, tonight, neither team turned each other over. I mean, there was very low turnover game on both sides of the ball. That’s normally where you go is to try to hang your hat on that end, or get a defense-to-offense [play] or get a couple more offensive rebounds to break their back. We got them early, and we just weren’t able to keep that momentum.”

Mississippi State Guard Josh Hubbard and Forward Sergej Macura

Q: What changed from the start of the game when your team was up by 14 points to the end of the first half?

JH: "I think we punched them pretty good at the start the game. Like you said, up 14. they went on a run, and we didn't respond the way after they came back. It was still in our favor being down two at half. Came out [after halftime], was in their favor. They had a good gameplan defensively and offensively. A lot of credit to them."

Q: What was the message at halftime from Coach Jans?

JH: "We were just staying positive because we knew we could with them based on how we started. We leaned on that as confidence to go back out there and compete more."

Q: What is going on in the second half of the games you've lost recently?

SM: "I think we're a new team this season. Many of us, including myself, haven't experienced SEC play, but it's early in the SEC part of the season. We just have to figure ourselves out. Obviously, we've proven in some stints during the games that we're a competitive team. We can take on anyone, anywhere, away or home."

"I think we have to figure out how to keep that rhythm throughout the game. When the other team goes on a run, we need to get ourselves together and get our heads together as a group. We need to stay positive and get back into that rhythm like we started today's game. Like you guys said, up 14. That's how we should play. I think that we're more than capable of doing it. We just need to figure out how to do it."

Q: How does the team bounce back and prepare for the Ole Miss game on Saturday?

SM: "Well, obviously, everybody knows who we're playing Saturday. As you said, it's a very big game. First, tonight, we have to acknowledge what happened and not forget it. That's never a good thing to do."

"We've got to restart our minds tomorrow. We need to get a couple of good practices in, prepare the game plan and adjust with the coaching staff who will have a great plan as always. We've got to acknowledge how hard of a game that Saturday is going to be. Not just against an opponent but ourselves too. We've got to prepare ourselves mentally and be ready to play a very tough, physical game."