

2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State at LSU – January 28, 2026

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: I asked you in the pregame what your message was to the team, and it was to play harder.

What did you like about what you saw from your team tonight?

CJ: "We kept it real simple after the Saturday game. Obviously, that wasn't a great point for us. It was a tough, tough day. Now, you've got to go on the road for two. So, we just kept it pretty simple in terms of what was really important."

"Certainly, we had a game plan. We switched up some ball screen coverages to try to generate some more off our defense, but the biggest thing we talked about for the last 72 hours was just to compete harder. We had two goals today, compete harder and win. I said if we accomplish the first goal, I can't promise you, but I'm pretty confident that we'll accomplish the second goal."

"Like you said, especially going the first half, we came out of the gate and got off to a really, really good start. In the end, obviously, it's not the ending you would want in a game like this. But when you've got that big lead and you're on the road, it is what it is. I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about that with our team, or I may not even watch the last four minutes, how about that [laughter]?"

Q: How much can you play yourself out of bad stretches by just giving the proper effort?

CJ: "For me, it's something that's been ingrained in me as an athlete from just where I was coached, how I was coached in both in high school and college. It's trying to be a big part of the DNA of the places that I've been the head coach at."

"We've had some tough outings where it didn't feel like we were competing hard or hard enough, and that's unacceptable. We've had a lot of serious conversations about that in our team spaces, and it can get you through. It's got to be something that's in your back pocket when the ball isn't going through the hole or you're sloppy and have some turnovers. That's something that you can rely on and count on. We haven't been in tip-top shape that way. I'm not saying physical shape, I'm saying just in shape of being able to compete like that all the time. Hopefully, this is something that can propel them forward."

Q: What was the game plan entering tonight's matchup especially on the defensive end?

CJ: "We were a little more aggressive than we have been, just thinking we could rev our defense up and get us to fly around. I'm not sure that was the smartest thing to do. It worked out well in the first half obviously. Then, in the second half, they started setting them [their screens] a little bit higher and getting us out in too much space. They were short rolling the big and putting us at a disadvantage. So, we started picking the ball up lower so they couldn't do that to us. We even tried going under. But 11 [DJ Thomas] is a guy. He gets going and he's hard to keep out of the paint. I thought we did a decent job of keeping him out of the paint. We definitely switched it up tonight with our coverages. From the first glance, I thought it was pretty good"

Q: Can you talk about what you saw from Quincy Ballard and Sergej Macura tonight?

CJ: "Because of matchups, we ran a couple of sets for him [Ballard] early. He did a good job of finishing them. I know he's not getting a lot of attention right now, he could get lost in the shuffle a little bit that way but just his overall presence. Nine rebounds, three on the offensive end. He handled the ball on the perimeter pretty well and didn't put himself in bad spots."

"Then, Sergej made a couple of trick shots, I'm not sure I've ever seen him shoot those turn around Js. I'm hoping he knows that those were shot clock shots, and they're not going to be a part of his repertoire going forward."

"They were both active, and they were very active on the glass. They were fighting, scratching and clawing. That's the way we've got to play ... That's what we're trying to do. It's what we preach every single day. For whatever reason, tonight it showed up."

Q: What was the difference tonight in terms of your interior play?

CJ: "I don't know, we felt good. We got off to a great start. The bench was really good, and the energy was good at shoot around today. Their focus was good. We kept it really simple with the goals that we had of just competing no matter what it looks like. Just compete harder in every single opportunity that you get. That confidence gets in your bloodstream, and that really helps."

"But like I said and I'll keep saying it, if we can figure out a way to keep doing this, then I think we'll have better results. Obviously, the thing that sticks out the most is the rebounding. We were really good against a big physical team. They're a big physical team, and I think we punched them in the face pretty good. It kind of set the tone that way."

Forward Sergej Macura

Q: How does it feel to have this losing streak behind you?

SM: "Oh, this feels amazing. Honestly, good to hop back on the winning track. Just a great feeling. I know the locker room is about to be very happy and very energetic. So, I'm just happy we're going home with a win."

Q: How much were you guys trying to get in there and make sure that you got an advantage in the rebounding battle?

SM: "That was a huge part as the coaches said before the game, that a big part for us was playing harder like you guys talked about. We just gave it our everything. I know I've been close to having double-doubles in the last couple of games. So, I just kept going with that rhythm. The other guys were all really physical under the basket. That's a big part of our game, and we've been emphasizing that the whole week coming up to this game so that was big for us."

Q: Where do you feel like you've grown in the last couple of weeks?

SM: "I think I figured out how to use my physicality around the rim, and how to take advantage of those rebounds and everything. I found a way to cut to the basket with more efficiency because when we go, when we play fast, when we're running around the court, that's when we're at our best. That's our best type of game for this team. We're very athletic, and we've got chemistry built on that. So, that's where we excel. I think that the last couple of weeks, I've just gotten into that groove of knowing how to get rebounds and how to do everything. I'm just glad we got the win."