

## 2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State at Missouri – January 31, 2026

### Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

***Q: What's the difference when you play a team like Missouri where they're able to drive against your team with their physicality?***

**CJ:** "They were what we thought they were going to be. We handled it okay, but they came out the gates and were just knocking three's down and kind of put us on our heels. It certainly wasn't what we had planned for, but I kept trying to encourage our guys that that's not going to be the whole game. We'll weather the storm, and we'll be able to have chances to get back in the game."

"It was seven [42-35] at the halftime. Like I told them, we didn't play great. We didn't play awful, we just didn't play great. Then, on the road against a really good team and like always, you come out of the gate at halftime. You want to get off to a great start because the tone is set, and we didn't. We just didn't. The lead ballooned. Then, it got to 16 with 14 [minutes] left, and we fought back. We're not into good old college try and all that good stuff, but they did stay together. We did a good enough job to manipulate the game to give ourselves a chance. We had a couple of chances there with the free throws and a couple of shots to make the game very interesting. Unfortunately, they just didn't go down, and we just didn't well enough in certain stretches. The lead was in the end just proved to be too much."

***Q: What was difference defensively when you were getting those stops to be able to get back into the game?***

**CJ:** "We were switching up our defenses depending on who was in the game. They're a team that subs frequently. So, the matchups change, and we knew that would be the case. We had our minds made up that we were going to switch up our defenses according to who was in the game. They have lineups where you couldn't play zone, or we played some triangle and two more possessions than we played all year long, maybe ever since I've been here, and it was good. It was really good, and it was one of the reasons why we got back in the game. Unfortunately, they got a couple of offensive rebounds against it, and that's always your concern when you play any sort of zone or junk defense when you're not accountable for a guy to check out [rebounding wise]."

"Offensively, we were really frustrated early in the game because we ran so well against LSU. It's like they were hesitant taking the ball out of bounds, and they were worried about getting press offense. That's not what we had talked about nor that we had game plan for because that's not what they did and kept encouraging them that we've got to score early. We've got to get the ball out of the net, get down the court and look for paint touches early and open catch-and-shoot three's which we did a really good job of in our last game. When we're best, we're doing some of that. It's not the whole game. We aren't playing at a breakneck speed, but we're trying to take advantage of situations, and I thought that was a difference when we started doing that. Our pace on offense started to pick up. Then, the changing defenses in the end, gave us a shot there with a couple minutes left to make it interesting, but we just didn't get it done."

***Q: What was it defensively that they were doing as Missouri was able to get 21 points off of your team's turnovers today?***

**CJ:** "They're very big and physical. From the one to the five [position], they're big. I mean they got three 6-8 and 6-10 [guys] that aren't that slender. Their guards zero [Anthony] Robinson and five [T.O.] Barrett are physical. They're physical, and we struggled with it a little bit. That's the first thing I told the team. If you look at the game stats, that was the thing that jumps out, right, was the difference in turnovers."

"It was 21-8 their favor, and everything else was within three points. The bench, obviously, we had a big advantage there, but paint, second chance, all that, fast breaks. It's just the turnovers, like you said, that was the first thing that we talked about. We've been really good in the SEC up until the last two games. We only had six turnovers with 10 minutes left against LSU, and we had 10 in the last 10 [minutes of the game]. So, we really talked about it a lot on Friday. Then, we talked about it in pregame today about being tough, valuing the ball and making good decisions. You've got to give Missouri credit for getting after us. It wasn't the press, that wasn't what hurt us. They run this 1-3-1 blob defense that you don't see that often. With the length they have, it caused us a couple of turnovers in the first half, which wasn't what we were trying to do."

***Q: What makes Mark Mitchell so tough to keep out of the paint?***

**CJ:** "He's just relentless. He's got a huge motor, and he can hurt in a lot of different ways. He had 19 [points] on 14 shots, but he got to the line 12 times. We tried different things, doubling and different matchups, and he's just a really good player. He's an all-league level player, and he was a problem. We were talking about him as a staff a lot about we've got to figure out a way to neutralize him some way. We just struggled doing it. They got to the line way more than us and shot a better percentage than us, and it's hard to win on the road when you do that."

***Q: What do you think has been different for Jayden Epps these last few games where his shooting percentages are getting better coming off the bench?***

**CJ:** "I don't know. He was aggressive both in driving the ball and looking for his three's. Last game, it was a little bit different. We had a bunch of guys who were more balanced. In this game, it was Hubb [Josh Hubbard] and [Jayden] Epps taking the lion's share of shots."

"They're being guarded by big dudes. They're circled down on the scouting report. They know that, and we know that. So, we're trying to figure out different ways to get other guys' shots in their wheelhouse within their skill set. I don't know about that starting part, if that helps him or hurts him. He's been great, and we're just trying to find a certain mix with who starts, who comes off the bench and who's playing with each other to give ourselves the best chance."

***Q: What is your and the team's objective for the next six or seven days with the midweek bye before playing Arkansas at home?***

**CJ:** "Our objective going into the game was to win and have two road wins in a row to now have a week off. That's what we talked about, and how that would be an awesome feeling for us to just feel better going into the second half of the SEC schedule. Obviously, we're one game at a time, but I know what's next and the quality of teams that we're going to play are going to be really good. They are every night, but we've got a stretch here coming up where we were hoping to just be feeling really confident and feeling really good and let it run through our program. Obviously, that's not the case. So, we've got to figure out a way to stay confident, stay together, tweak this and tweak that. We want to get everyone as healthy as they've been in a long, long time, knock on wood. We'll mix in different types of practices this week to help prepare us for the second half of the season."