

2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes
Mississippi State at Texas – January 3, 2026

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q: Your team fought through some adversity and overcame a seven-point deficit down the stretch. Were you surprised that Texas continued to play drop coverage on Jayden Epps and Josh Hubbard off the ball screen?

CJ: “I don’t coach their team, and I’m not in the business of worrying about that. They did ‘hot’ a couple of ball screens. Then, they went away from it. We were planning for ‘hot’ once they showed it, and we were shocked when they didn’t.”

“Those two [Josh Hubbard] and [Jayden Epps] had 65 [points]. I don’t know if I’ve ever had two kids have 65 [points] in a basketball game. Josh was just so efficient again like the last game. Well, it felt like he was. He took 31 shots, but he got to the line a bunch. I mean those two kids just showed a lot of heart, but more importantly I thought that everyone else just knew where the ball needed to go. I could count maybe three or four shots out of 76 shots that I was like “Hmm,” and I remember them. I’m not going to tell you who they were. To get a group of guys to be unselfish like that and to buy into roles is really difficult in this era. Hopefully, a big win like this will help support what we’re trying to do because we know how we have to play. We’ve known for weeks now how we have to play, and we got it into the game this afternoon.”

Q: Speaking of some of those other guys you have to count on. Achor Achor, he had 10 points and 13 rebounds. Talk about his play, and what he meant to the team today.

CJ: “He was awesome. I said it to the guys [in the locker room], there are a couple guys that had games like that where we don’t win. We don’t win if Achor [Achor] doesn’t do what he did. The block that he had showed some athleticism that we wish he’d show some more of. His competitive spirit which was off the charts. He’s always been a good rebounder for us. It’s everything else that we’re trying to get him on the same page. With seven offensive rebounds against a Texas team that obviously had a little more size than us. They’re a top 25 offensive rebounding team. That’s the thing I’m probably most proud of other than the resiliency that we showed at the end of the game [in regulation and in overtime]. To go in here and out rebound them 47 to 39, 19 to 12 on the [offensive] glass is not something that I had on the bingo card. I thought we did a heck of a job, because that’s one thing they really pride themselves on.”

“The other guy we talked about in the locker room was Brandon Walker. I mean, wow, he was unbelievable. Not just the tip in by the basket, but he was fighting number eight [Matas Vokietaitis]. It was like Drago and Rocky around the basket with those two guys. Eight [Vokietaitis] is a handful. He leads the country in drawn fouls. We had a mess of foul trouble. It all played out, but we had so many guys in foul trouble. We were able to survive it.”

Q: Brandon Walker had to come in and play the five spot. We mentioned what he did and how important he was tonight. Just talk about the fight he had and the competitiveness he had playing against their big guy [Matas Vokietaitis].

CJ: “Our five men that played the five had 13 fouls between them. To do it cold like that and to do it in the second half where he [Walker] didn’t play the first half and to find a way to get your motor going and fight a guy like that, I’m telling you that’s what we talked about. We singled out those two kids [Walker and Achor Achor] outside of Josh [Hubbard] and Jayden [Epps].”

“We had a lot of performances. Shawn Jones [Jr.], we were sending three back. Then, late in the game, we told them to get on the glass because they weren’t pushing as much and three [Dailyn]

Swain had fouled out. He was really killing us in transition. So, we switched it up. It wasn't my idea. It was one of the other assistants, but I'm smart enough to listen to those guys. It helped us. We got four offensive rebounds, and I don't know how many were down the stretch. I thought that he [Jones Jr.] set the tone for us defensively by really denying and getting in the passing lanes. I thought that was a big confidence booster for us how we started the game."

Q: Was the gameplan to get it into the paint, or did that just happen over the course of the game?

CJ: "A lot of it is because of their ball screen coverage. When they played drop coverage like that, you've got chances to get down deep. I thought Hubb [Josh Hubbard] a couple times made up his mind that he was going to get to the cup. He fought, he scratched and he clawed. They were fouling him. It was a physical basketball game, but they're the number two team in the country at getting to the line. They did that, but fortunately for us tonight, we were able to get it done there at the line as well."