

## **2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes**

### **Mississippi State vs. Kansas State – November 20, 2025**

#### **Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans**

***Q: The second half is where the game got away. Is Kansas State the type of team that can play on momentum to beat you?***

**CJ:** "I don't know. We just weren't the better team tonight. That's the bottom line, they were better than us. We didn't play well enough for long enough spurts. We had our moments. We had our stretches where it looked like what we needed to play like. Unfortunately, it just wasn't long enough. It just wasn't long enough. Certainly, the turnovers in the second half started rearing its ugly head. They started making shots, the crowd got into it and the game changed very quickly."

***Q: I saw your team practice three times this week, and transition defense was an emphasis. What do you do when a team is that good in transition?***

**CJ:** "Right now in the early season, they're the 11th fastest tempo offensively. That means that their possessions are the 11th shortest because they get to the shots they want quickly. Certainly, we knew that. Like you said, we worked tirelessly at it and thought we had a really good plan. It's one thing to try and replicate the other team as best we can, but we certainly had the principles down."

"At halftime, we showed them two or three clips where we just didn't sprint, first of all. If you don't sprint back against a team that pushes the ball, you're going to have a hard time especially when they've got a guy like [P.J.] Haggerty and Nate Johnson that are just bullies, strong fullbacks playing basketball. They can really get downhill, and they get a little momentum. It's hard if you're not in the perfect position as you transition back to defense. We talk about building those walls with the ball and not allowing splits. It sounds good on paper, and it looks good in practice sometimes. Then, in the second half, your confidence gets shook a little bit, and you don't sprint back quite as hard as you need to."

***Q: What did you think about Quincy Ballard's play tonight?***

**CJ:** "He had his moments. He had 10 points, six rebounds and 5-for-7 from the field. I didn't think he protected the rim like he was capable of. He had one block at the end of the first half when everybody in the gym knew that they were going to drive the ball, and he was standing at the charge circle. I was disappointed that he didn't get that one. That was a momentum swinger and kind of pricked our balloon a little bit there. He definitely had some moments where he showed what he was capable of under the basket defensively, offensively. He's just got to build on it. He's got to have more stretches, more plays, where you kind of shows his teeth if you will, a little bit."

***How do you stop a talented player like P.J. Haggerty?***

**CJ:** "He was as good as advertised. He has such a good size, that's the killer. He's a big, big guard that has great experience. He's gotten better every year. We're certainly familiar with him [playing against him at Memphis last year]. He had an All-American type line, 13-for-21, 37 [points], eight [assists] and one turnover. We're just having a hard time generating turnovers defensively. We can't turn defense into offense like we used to. We just don't turn them over very much, and something has to give that way because we've got to be able to do more that way to help our offense out a little bit."

***What did you think about your team's ability to guard the ball?***

**CJ:** "Yeah, it was mixed results at best. Obviously, we had some really good possessions where we practice got into the game. We were revved up in the right spots. I thought we had a pretty good plan, obviously."

"If you're on the outside looking in or watching on TV and you don't know the plan, we give up 98 points. That doesn't look like much of a good plan. It's an area that I believe in wholeheartedly. I don't care what your defensive principles are. If you can't guard the ball or you're not really good at guarding the ball, you're going to have a hard time. No matter what your ball screen coverage is, no matter what your throw the ball in the post coverage is, no matter what your gap coverage is. If you can't guard the ball every single time and keep it squared up if you will, it's going to be a struggle. Right now, it's something that we just don't do it at a high level often enough. We just take our foot off the gas a little bit, or someone's not ready to guard their match, their turn at the ball. Then, you get into rotation, and the offense is ahead of the defense."

***What do your next several hours look like as you prepare to take on New Mexico?***

**CJ:** "I just told the guys, regardless of how bad we feel right now and we all feel bad, it was a pretty somber locker room. I felt really good going in the game. I thought we had made great strides, and I felt really good about how we'd practiced. Our energy was really good in shoot around, in warmups, and in the locker room. You could feel it. We knew it was a good opportunity for us."

"So, my message with them is as bad as you feel right now, you'll feel worse if this happens tomorrow. We have to pick ourselves up off the mat. We've got to, obviously it will be a long night, advantage New Mexico with them playing at 6 p.m. and us playing at 8:30 p.m. ... We're going to have to burn the candle at both ends tonight and get a plan to present to them in the morning. We'll have a modified shoot around. Then, at 6 o'clock we're going to hopefully be motored up and ready to go and ready to complete at a high level."