

2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Radio Interview
Mississippi State vs. New Mexico – November 21, 2025

Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

Q. How did New Mexico's inside game impact this one tonight?

CJ: "They got number 10, [Tomislav] Buljan, really going and he was a matchup issue for us. He just controlled the backboards with his length. We said, if he gets it no matter who your guarding, you're going to have to go down there and double it. To me, he hit the biggest shot of the game when he hit that three in transition. That really changed the game."

Q. Was the pace of the game tonight more like the pace you would like to see moving forward?

CJ: "Yeah, it was fine. I thought maybe they'd play a little more zone tonight, and I felt they did it just a couple times with mixed results. We kept trying to figure out how to guard their side ball screens, and they're pretty simple that way. They run the same thing, a different variation of it over and over and over again. We changed up our [defensive] coverages a couple of different times and just couldn't quite find it. That was what we were talking about in the huddle was that we're scoring enough, we just got to string together enough stops. If you'd told me before the game that we'd had lost the rebounding battle the way that we did, I'd say you're crazy, but it's been a couple of games now where we haven't been strong enough on the backboards."

Q. What did you think of the play from Brandon Walker and Amier Ali?

CJ: "Again, mixed results. Amier could make a shot but couldn't tonight, but that's kind of what he did. I was happy and proud for him especially in the first half. We had 20 rebounds [as a team], and he had seven of them. That's something that you wouldn't have expected before tonight's game, and that was some progress for him individually."

"I thought Brandon obviously he scored the ball and that's kind of what he does. He can score the basketball. Sometimes, he struggles against the bigger teams that have the great size around the rim, but tonight he had some good opportunities. He was guarding pretty good. He was guarding a shooter, and that's a reason why he played more minutes."

Q: Brandon Walker was the leading scorer on the frontline. How do you find scoring from those other 3s, 4s, and 5s on the court?

CJ: Yeah, that's a great question. I'm sure it'll be a long travel home, and be a lot of film watching on the bus and on the planes, back on the bus and tomorrow. As always, we're constantly trying to morph our schemes to better benefit our individual players. We're certainly going to have to try to do that, you know? We've got to find more scoring, but obviously [Jayden] Epps is back to his self and was really good. And, you know Josh [Hubbard] scored a lot of points."

"I'd like him to be a little more efficient, but at the same time, you know, they're carrying a lot of water right now. So, once in a while, they're going to take an iffy shot and it's something you've gotta live with. There at the end of the game I'm just ready to call timeout but I felt like the possession unfolded pretty good for us, and we had the ball in the right player's hands. We had enough space where I'm not sure if we call timeout or run something that doesn't work out that way. So, I'm sure people will be talking about that. But again, our best player had a pretty good look at the basket."

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CJ: Yeah, that's a great question. I'm sure it'll be a long travel home and be a lot of film watching on the bus and on the planes. Then, back on the bus and then tomorrow."

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Q: We only had seven turnovers, but we're not turning people over this year like we did last year. Is it because of the opponents we're playing? Have you changed that philosophy, or are we just not doing it as well this year?

CJ: "We have. We overhauled our defense from a year ago based on the results and who we had. Recruiting was over, and I didn't feel like that was going to be beneficial for us. Certainly, guarding the three-point line last year was a major struggle. So, hopefully, we can guard the three-point line better as the season continues to progress. So far, it's been pretty good."

"We're not going to turn people over as much because it's not as an aggressive style of defense. So, it's tick-for-tack. Right now, certainly everybody can be critical of what we're doing. Trust me, I understand that. It comes with the job. We're going to continue to try to tweak it and get our guys to be better for all of us from the top down to do whatever you got to do to make sure that these results change."

Q. What do you say to the freshmen to stay the course and not allow them to get to olow?

CJ: "I told them we're in the middle of hard right now for our basketball lives. You've got a choice to make individually, and then certainly as a team. You can listen to the noise. You can make that bother you, you can point fingers and say it's not my fault."

"With that, I talked about you've got to have ownership of your performance or your productivity from an individual perspective, including me, and anyone else on our staff that influences what we do and the players. It's the results in a collective ownership. All I told them is that I know what my response is going to be. I'm going to try and work my tail off to try and do whatever I can to help fix the situation to get better results. They've got to do the same individually. Or, if they don't, it'll be bad for us. Then, it'll be bad for them. We're right in the middle of it. Nobody expected these results. Nobody in our program expected these results, but its reality. It's where we're at, and we've got to figure it out."