

## 2025-26 Mississippi State Men's Basketball Postgame Quotes Mississippi State vs. New Orleans – November 24, 2025

### Mississippi State Head Coach Chris Jans

***Q: Take us through that game-winning shot by Amier Ali. I saw you jumping up and down there. Was it drawn up the way you hoped?***

**CJ:** “Actually, it was what I was trying to get them to do. I was jumping up and down to try and get them into the positions that I wanted them. With them just basically doubling Hubb [Josh Hubbard] as he came across halfcourt towards the end of the game. You’re just thinking, one, that it would be difficult to get him the ball back when he didn’t have it in the front court. I didn’t want to risk turning the ball over. Sometimes, that’s hard. Then, the way they were positioned, we have a little term that we use across the court where we use Josh as a decoy and kind of ghost the ball and get Amier [Ali] going to his right hand. So, it was definitely looking hap hazard, but they did what we wanted them to do. I can’t tell you that I told Amier to bank it in [the three-pointer] though.”

***Q: Did you see your players taking more accountability on the court in the type of situations they were in late during the game?***

**CJ:** “Certainly, we went down 13 with five [minutes] and some change left. The building wasn’t jazzed up and deservedly so. It doesn’t look good. But, what I am most proud of is, that we kept fighting. Those kids kept fighting, and we got a little bit of momentum. Then, the huddles obviously picked up, and the crowd picked up. I thought those [fans] that were there really helped us in the last couple minutes of the game, and then even overtime. It felt like it was double the actual people in the arena because of how loud they were.”

“But again, coming off the Kansas City weekend, I didn’t know exactly where we would be because that’s just the way it goes sometimes. I thought at the start of the game, pretty good, but it wasn’t so good for a long stretch of the game after. I mean, if we can hold our hat on anything, is that there was zero quit in them [the players]. There was zero splintering. There was a lot of energy in the huddles, and there was a lot of encouragement with one another. At the end of the day, they just scratched, clawed and just found a way to get themselves back in the game.”

***Q: What did you see from Amier Ali, and how he battled for minutes throughout the season?***

**CJ:** “Yeah, I mean when he’s in the game, it’s pretty evident that he’s going to shoot the ball. That’s what he does, and the guys know it. So, when he’s in the game, his shot attempts per minute are probably really high. It was again tonight. He played 20-plus minutes and had nine shots. He didn’t make his free throws, which isn’t like him.”

“We trusted him down the stretch. He was in there for some pivotal moments, and he came up big for us. I think he really read the defense a couple of times when they were doubling Josh, and he slipped there to the basket and got a couple of dunks that were big plays for us as well.”

***Q: Are you impressed with Jamarion Davis-Fleming’s defensive abilities and starting to trust what he’s shown early on?***

**CJ:** “He keeps earning our trust, that’s the right word. He keeps doing what we ask him to do. He play 30 minutes tonight. His stat line wasn’t gaudy, but we trusted him in the game to rebound, defend, protect the rim, play hard and set good ball screens. His skill development will come with time because he’s a hardworking kid, but he has earned our trust more than I ever imagined at this point in a young career. I’m happy for him, and I’m proud of him.”

***Q: Amier Ali didn't play in the home opener or the Southeastern Louisiana game. What was it that you were looking for in him to be apart of the rotation and get more minutes?***

**CJ:** "He's been awesome in practice since then. Certainly, he was disappointed. Everyone is if they don't play, or they don't play the minutes that they think they deserve. That's just college basketball in general, but he didn't pout. He's as energized as anybody on the bench in the games."

"In practice, he worked on the things that we told him he needed to work on to get himself more minutes and get in the rotation. Now that he's in there, he's trying to take advantage of it. He had seven rebounds against New Mexico, and he had five rebounds tonight. I don't remember him having any major breakdowns defensively from just watching it from where I sat. Certainly, it might be different looking at the film. The guys have a lot of confidence in him to shoot and score the ball. Everybody needs more scoring."

**Mississippi State Guard Ja'Borri McGhee and Forward Amier Ali**

***Q: What did you see in that last play in overtime? What was going through your head when you shot the ball?***

**AA:** "We were trying to get the ball to Hubb [Josh Hubbard] obviously. But, coach told us to do a flat ball screen. I saw the opening at that three-point line off the dribble. I just shot it, and I made it. It felt like when you were a kid and thinking in your brain three, two, one on the playground. It felt like I was in an empty gym. I just shot it, and I made it."

***Q: What has the season been like for you not playing in the season opener or against Southeastern Louisiana and being able to work your way back into a role like you had tonight?***

**AA:** "Coming here, I had to earn everything that I had to get. I'm not going to come in here, and it's just going to be easy. You have all these great players beside me. I knew coming in that it was going to be a challenge, especially defensively, I knew I had to work on that."

"I just trust the process. The coaches were always with me and telling me your time is coming, your time is coming. I wasn't that frustrated because I love my brothers and obviously, I want to see them win. But also, I knew one day that I was going to shine. I really believed it and now it's happening. We've still have a long season [ahead]. There are ups and downs to it, but I kind of saw it coming because I really believed in it."

***Q: In the second half it seemed like New Orleans had an answer every time you guys had a little kick of momentum. What was happening in the last five minutes during the huddles to overcome that?***

**JM:** "We just trusted in the work. Like Coach [Jans] says, it goes back to knowing that we practice harder. We were in the huddle, and I remember telling the guys that they're making tough shots right now. Some of them were second chances and basketball is like that, it happens. We just have got to stay together. This is adversity, if we handle this adversity, then the next one will be on our side. We took it four minutes by four minutes and get three stops at a time. Overtime, they got tired and started missing more. We were able to capitalize down the stretch."

***Q: What was it like for you as a teammate to see Amier Ali come up with a big shot like that?***

**JM:** "Amier knows – I can't say what I want to say, but it was a great feeling just being out there and just seeing him have fun. Amier is one of those guys where you just have to know him to know what kind of player he is. He's a three-level scorer. He can shoot it from deep, obviously you've seen that. He can drive it, and he can rebound, which is really what we need right now."

“To see him come in stay ready and know that he hasn’t been playing. Coaches had just been telling him to stay ready. He’s been going hard with us every day at practice and giving us the look we need. We knew he was going to get in and make plays.”

***Q: Ja’Borri, everybody is going to try and go hard regardless of the situation. How does your mindset change when you know Jayden Epps isn’t going to play tonight?***

**JM:** “We talk about it a lot. You’ve got to always be ready because the way it is right now, I feel like we have three good guards. It’s really hard to tell who’s going to do what every night, it could be either one of us at any given time. We came together, and we told each other no matter how it went like that we all have to be ready at any given time. Trust that Jayden will be back soon and healthy, and he’ll pick it up right where he left off.”

***Q: How big was this second half and overtime in terms of this group understanding each other and getting on the same page?***

**AA:** “To me, it was great because I’ve really seen our togetherness. We’ve always had togetherness, but it was a new level of togetherness. We’re getting better every day and getting acclimated to each other. But, it was great to see, and I love to see that we were all together never too high, never too low. We tried to do that, and it showed. We were down and came back and came out victorious.”

***Q: None of these games have seem to be easy this season. What do you think it is going to take to win a full complete game that you guys are maybe still searching for?***

**JM:** “Honestly, in my opinion, and I do not mean this in a bad way at all when I was this. Just being around a new group of guys like Coach [Jans] said. This is probably the nicest group I’ve been around, but I think we’ve got to hold each other accountable more.”

“Some nights on the court, Coach Jans is coaching us hard. We can kind of get timid and play on our heels. As a senior, I feel like some nights we play not to lose if that makes sense instead of us just going out there with no nervousness like ready to play hard every play no matter what happens. The moment we figure that out, I think we’re going to turn this around and be one of the best teams in the country.”

**New Orleans Head Coach Stacy Hollowell**

***Q: Your players had a heck of a performance, but it went the wrong way in the end, what did you see down the stretch?***

**TP:** “My kids battled, I’m proud of their effort. We didn’t play a perfect game and made mistakes throughout. His kids defended much better, and outrebounded. I haven’t seen the field goal percentages, but I thought the players played hard.”

***Q: How does it feel to have guys like MJ Thomas and Churchill Abass on you team during these tougher games?***

**TP:** “I’m proud of their effort, and I thought they played their hearts out. We will grow from this one. We’ve got a quick turnaround and have to be on the bus tomorrow to be at the airport tomorrow morning for Texas Tech on Wednesday. It’s a long ride home, but we’ve got to try and to keep our guys heads up.”

***Q: How is Coleton Benson’s ankle doing especially with this quick turnaround coming up?***

**TP:** “It is doing fine. You realize that if you need to stop you can, but if he can go great, if not, we will have to make adjustments.”