

# Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

**Utah State Aggies**

**Coach Kayla Ard**

**Shyla Latone**

**Kayline Randhawa**

Postgame Press Conference



Utah State 80, Fresno State 75

KAYLA ARD: Not even sure where to start. First off, I want to thank the Mountain West for putting on this tournament. It's really nice. It's run really well, and we're grateful for that.

For all of our fans that showed up and our cheerleaders, our band, our administration is here, that means a lot to us, to have those people behind us.

And all the glory to God for us to get this win. Obviously we couldn't have done it without him. I'm so proud of our girls. It was all heart. We were struggling all game. Weren't shooting the ball very well.

Just played this team a couple days ago it feels like and we shot it really well then, so this is a different story. It was all heart, and all the credit goes to the girls. They refused to lose and just extremely proud of them.

**Q. For both players, 22 out of 22 from the free throw line. Was that contagious today, and how important was that for your win?**

KAYLIN RANDHAWA: It was huge. I think us having a lot of seniority on the team, we have a lot of seniors, so this is not new to us, conference tournament time.

We all just locked in. I actually went to the post game interview with Aja and he told me we were 22 for 22 and I was like, oh, wow.

It was a huge, huge difference for us to step up to the line and make them, especially the ones at the end.

**Q. For Shyla, what turned around? You guys are 14 and 7. What turned around?**

A. It was our heart and our fight. Coming together as a team. We all knew that we weren't leaving without a win. So just the heart in the competition and the determination helped us get it.

**Q. Kaylin, can you talk about the match up with UNLV?**

KAYLIN RANDHAWA: Yeah. I think we've played them twice now and played them pretty close in the first half, and then second half multiple games in a row now we've had some mental lapses.

It's tournament time and we all know anything can happen, so we are looking forward to this matchup and we'll see what happens tomorrow.

**Q. I would ask that Kaylin first and then Shyla, what happened in the second quarter there? It seemed like we were blistering pace in the very first quarter and then put on the skids in the second quarter there.**

SHYLA LATONE: We were really struggling the second quarter. None of our shots were falling. But coach came in the huddle fourth quarter and she told us we need to fight and have heart, And that's what we did.

KAYLIN RANDHAWA: Yeah. The second quarter specifically I think we just weren't making a lot of our shots. We got good looks but we held them to 8 points, and that was huge.

We kept looking at each other in the huddle and during the game. We just kept playing defense and held them to eight points in the second quarter. That was huge.

**Q. Coach, never a doubt. Right?**

KAYLA ARD: Oh, never a doubt, no. Actually, I felt pretty good when we got down by 10 in the fourth quarter that seems to be where we thrive.



I just looked at this. I did not realize we scored 36 points in the fourth quarter. That's a big number. I don't know about never, but I felt better in the fourth quarter toward the end there.

**Q. You mentioned being down 10, but you were down 14. What specifically did you guys do to kind of I guess tighten up defensively and make sure every possession counted offensively?**

KAYLA ARD: Yeah. We don't press very often, and we work on it quite a bit at practice and then we don't use it very often in the game. And Coach Wilson is our defensive guy, and he's begging me to do that press all the time and we very rarely do it.

It just came in clutch tonight for us. I would assume that Fresno didn't prepare for that because we don't run it very often, and he really wanted to press.

I really trust our coaches. He wanted to do it. I said, let's do it, and it worked out for us. I think it probably turned the game around when we started actually pressing, so I give him the credit. This is his win.

**Q. You got a game against UNLV coming up pretty quickly. Obviously a very good team. What do you have to do against them?**

KAYLA ARD: Well coached team, obviously. Good players. But I think we're a completely different team than we were the first two times that we played them.

This team is peaking at the right time. I still don't think they've played their best basketball, and hopefully we can do that tomorrow.

If this team comes into the tournament and together the way they do, our culture is so strong. We care about each other, we love each other. The players feel that way about each other, and it goes all the way through our coaching staff.

If we come in like that tomorrow anything can happen, and I believe in these girls and they believe in us. We're looking forward to it. It's going to be a challenge. They are a good team.

But right now we're a pretty dang good team, too. So we're looking forward to it.

**Q. Coach, what has the last two games before the Mountain West tournament done for you? Because you had the double overtime win against Nevada. You played Fresno State. Now you get them four days**

**later. In all honesty I think the question is. How many of these games you have to win before you ear the nickname cardiac, because you guys get comfortable doing it?**

KAYLA ARD: Yeah. I'm just grateful it didn't go into overtime today, man. It was very close. We would have had three in a row there overtime.

Yeah. I don't even know. I hope we can figure out a way to maybe get a lead and not be that close, but I think those two games were huge for our girls' confidence.

I've been knowing for a while now how good this team could be, and when we're all clicking all cylinders -- and we weren't tonight. We had a couple players struggle.

AD is normally more effective than she was tonight, she was struggling a little bit, still had 16. But E'Lease was struggling a little bit.

We had some players struggle a little bit that we rely on quite a bit. A lot of stuff Emmie is doing. She's playing so hard, great defender.

I think those two games made those players realize that there's a lot of players on this team that can play, and if we play together and trust each other and play hard we can compete with anybody.

Two very good teams, and trying to beat a team twice like you said four days later is difficult. It's tough. Like I said, Fresno State, all the credit to them. They're a good basketball program.

I think it was huge for our confidence. Now we got three in a row, so I tell the girls right before the game started a team that has nothing to lose and everything to gain is a dangerous team, and I think that's where we're at right now.

MODERATOR: Thank you, and congratulations, coach. We'll see you tomorrow.

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