

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 7, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Colorado State Rams

Ryun Williams

McKenna Hofschild

Upe Atosu

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado State - 51, Wyoming - 38

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Just a really gritty tough win. There's a lot of ways to win a basketball game. Last night you score 84. Tonight you score 51 and hold somebody to 38. This is as tough a defensive performance as we've had this year at obviously the most opportune time.

So Wyoming is a very difficult, tough, competitive basketball team and to hold them to three points in that fourth quarter, tremendous. Very, very proud of my basketball team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. McKenna, how hard is it to go into a fourth quarter confident. I think you and Upe combined for almost as many field goals in the fourth as you had the first three quarters.

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah. I think we both know what we bring to this team and kind of what's expected of us to bring to this team, so it's just keeping that mindset of keep attacking, keep being confident. She picks me up, I pick her up and together I think we make a nice one-two punch. So it's pretty easy when I have a teammate like her to get that confidence.

Q. You held them to one field goal in the fourth quarter. They didn't score for the final 6:30 of the game. Did you guys kind of start the more of that streak went along the better you felt defensively. It

looked like you were even more intense.

UPE ATOSU: I think it comes down to being focused, being, wanting it more, and I feel like our team we wanted it more and we felt like going all out was very important to us and so I think that's what we did in the fourth quarter.

Q. You made a hundred percent of your free throws tonight. Would you say this helped push you guys to your final score?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah. I think when you get free throws it's always important to try and knock down as many as you can. My free throws this year have been a little up and down, so it was nice to see the ball go through the hoop.

And, yeah, in late times like that it's important to get those and I just locked in and luckily went what, 4-4.

Q. You were named newcomer of the year yesterday. How would you describe your mindset going into tonight's game?

UPE ATOSU: I think it's just been focused. I want to win and as a team we want to win. I'm not looking at the award. Yes, it's a good thing having that, but the focus is winning this championship and I think that is the same thing with the coach and the players, so...

Q. You had a lot of success getting to the rim tonight in the first three quarters. You couldn't get anything to fall. You had a look of like relief when you got that first layup and then backed it up again. Was that exactly what you were kind of feeling at that time?

UPE ATOSU: Oh, yeah, I was. Being a scorer and not having to score for the first two quarters is just crazy and I was like trying to like get through my head what is going on, what do I need to do to get it right.

So I think that coming through from third quarter, fourth quarter, it was really, really nice with me and I'm happy that I was able to contribute to the team.



Q. I don't think anybody in their right mind bet the over tonight in this game, but playing arrival three times in 19 days, how hard is that actually?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: It's difficult. They know us really well. We know them really well. The way it went in Laramie we weren't really happy about the ending so I think tonight we just locked in and tried to get a win. And 19 days, three games, that's a lot, but it's really just coming down, execution, and like she said, wanting it more.

Q. What's confidence like right now? Are you guys feeling like you're riding a high because you go into the semi-finals tomorrow against a New Mexico team that plays a completely different style of basketball than does Wyoming?

UPE ATOSU: I think we're focused. We're taking each day at a time. So tomorrow we'll take care of business.

Q. Is this, when you, honestly, I know coach said you never looked ahead in the bracket but you did, didn't you McKenna? And were you looking at what this game could be in the semis?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: New Mexico? I want them. I want them bad. Since I've been here we've been 0-4 against them. Always good games always very exciting fun games, and we just haven't gotten that win yet and tomorrow will be a very good day for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Ladies, you are dismissed and now we'll start addressing our questions to the head coach.

Q. That's the best defensive effort you've had since your first game of the year when you held somebody to 42 points. When you went into the fourth quarter what was your message to them defensively?

RYUN WILLIAMS: The message, honestly, was: We're going to get enough stops. That was really the message all night. We had to find some hoops, though. You have to treat every possession like it's the most important. I think our kids really bought into that. So they had a big fourth quarter in Laramie a couple days ago, that was their best offensive quarter.

We wanted to flip that. So you saw the urgency. I think you saw the detail that our kids played with. They were there on the catch. There was nothing easy for Wyoming. And so it was, they just locked in, and they played with great detail and great execution. So they found a way.

Q. Does any part of you thinking going into the fourth

quarter if we could just get either McKenna or Upe hot in this quarter we'll be fine?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah. I wanted McKenna to be more aggressive. She was getting two feet in the paint. She was getting to the Mountain West. But she was looking to pass. And she got a couple of those to go there. She got the fast break basket and I think that kind of maybe relieved her a little bit.

But I liked her attack mode there in that fourth quarter. We made a slight adjustment with just where we put some personnel so we could maybe get some downhill drives with Upe and obviously she was very aggressive driving those rails, got a couple of those to go, which you get a five-point cushion against Wyoming, man, that just feels like a big lead. So those were much needed baskets and I credit our kids for continuing to get stops.

Q. The team was down going into halftime. What would you say was different the second half?

RYUN WILLIAMS: I think we just found some opportunistic baskets. I think we, I don't know the numbers, but we didn't give up as many offensive rebounds that second half, the second, the loose ball 50/50 balls, it seems like they kicked us in that first half in that category. I just think we were more committed to finishing a possession defensively. I thought that was critical.

And then, again, you don't get a lot of good opportunities against a really good Wyoming defensive team, and when you do get those offensive opportunities you got to score it. So everybody had a little moment, right? Kenna had a little moment. Upe had a little moment. Kinzer had a couple moments there in that first half with a couple three balls. So we were just very opportunistic tonight in our scoring and that's how you beat Wyoming.

Q. How important was Upe's consistency in the fourth quarter?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, very, very important. Upe's kind of a big-game player. She's experienced. She doesn't get rattled. She just found a comfort level and an aggressive comfort level.

So obviously very important and if Upe doesn't play well or McKenna doesn't really have, I mean, we're going to struggle. We don't have a lot of options as far as our perimeter scoring goes, as far as the penetration and the ball handling. So they put it on their shoulders a little bit to play more aggressively and if you're going to go down you better go down fighting and being aggressive and that's what they did. Luckily we came out on top.

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Q. As a coach how easy is it to get your team to flip a switch when you play New Mexico tomorrow who is going to run as much as they can, which is completely contrasted in style from tonight?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I don't think it's easy by any means, but these kids have been good at it all year. I think they have really locked into just the different assignment that's in front of you. Last night was over. We knew this was going to be a totally different game than San Jose.

So I thought we came in with the right kind of that mudder, fighter mindset, right? And tomorrow it's a totally different game. And so to put this one behind you -- we've had some short turnarounds this year, some one-day's off and then play again. Our kids have been really solid there. We know we've got a very tough New Mexico team in front of us. We're going to have to play our best game of the year to get a big win tomorrow.

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