

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Air Force Falcons

Chris Gobrecht

Riley Snyder

Kamri Heath

Postgame Press Conference

UNLV - 61, Air Force - 50

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

CHRIS GOBRECHT: I thought it was a very hard-fought game, obviously. I was very proud of the effort that our players gave tonight. I thought they played their tails off. I thought they played about as hard as they could possibly play. We just needed to get a few more shots to fall or we needed to get a few more free throws that I thought we probably earned.

It's been just an incredible season. I've never seen a team in all of my career maybe quite as choked up as this team was in the locker room after this game. That's how badly they, I believe not only wanted it, but in a lot of ways felt like they tried to go out and make it happen.

So it was a frustrating loss in many ways, but I think we just gave it all we had and just didn't have enough fire power to get the scores and get the points that we needed to win the game.

Q. Riley, can you put into words the frustration? Just, I mean, you had 27 more shots than them. You forced 12 more turnovers and yet you had this result. Can you expand on what that felt like?

RILEY SNYDER: Yeah, I mean, it's just so difficult because we did have such a great season and we just didn't want it to end because we knew that this was our chance and to kind of have that come to a close in a game like that, yeah, it just, it's really hard, especially for a seniors who poured so much into this program for four



years. So, yeah, it's really tough for us.

Q. The foul trouble, taking Cierra off the floor for so long, how does that change the dynamic of the team?

RILEY SNYDER: That's our best defender so it changes it a lot. And she also rebounds for us, scores for us, so it's tough when a game is decided by foul trouble and I didn't think Cierra got a fair shot tonight and she's a hell of a player, so that really hurt us tonight not having her out there.

Q. How do you try to find perspective because obviously what you guys have done has been historic for Air Force. To go out with frustration, how do you kind of try to put that behind you and focus on what you did accomplish as opposed to the way this ended?

RILEY SNYDER: I just feel really blessed. I got to play four incredible years at the Academy with some of my best friends and so it's on to bigger and better things for us seniors and we've left our legacy behind for Kamri and the rest of them. They have got some talented freshmen. So I think they have seen what it takes to get Air Force to a winning season and so we've left that behind for them and I'm excited to see what they can do from then on.

Q. Kamri, when you look at the future now, and the season might not be over. You guys could very well play in an invitational tournament. But as you look at what the underclassmen have done or juniors, sophomores, freshmen, is there a lot of excitement that you can continue this forward?

KAMRI HEATH: Yeah, I mean, obviously we're losing five seniors so that's going to be a spot to fill. Well, we're only playing with four right now. But I think we have a lot of talent, even on the bench right now. We didn't get to play with Kayla Pilson all year long. We still have Dasha MacMillan and we have Madison Smith and Lauren McDonald. You've all seen what all of them can do at different parts of the season and we're definitely going to continue playing up to our ability and be excited about next season.



Q. As you go into the fourth quarter you're down five. You knew Cierra was coming back with fresh legs. What was the mood at that point for the team?

KAMRI HEATH: I think we were just trying to do whatever we could to get back. Cierra did pick up a fourth foul pretty early on into the fourth quarter, so then it's always just draining, you know, because she got to play 17 minutes. She usually plays 30.

But we wanted to play. I told Jo, as soon as she went out in the first half, I said, we got to pick her up. We got to pick her up. We can't let a senior go out like this. So hopefully we can play in a tournament and continue that on.

Q. You talked about the foul trouble. Not to play the blame game but is it safe to say that you were a bit frustrated with the officiating tonight?

RILEY SNYDER: Yeah, I mean, I definitely don't want to make excuses for any of us because we obviously could have been better defensively and we needed to adjust to how they were calling it. But, man, we got the short end of the stick tonight. And I mean, it goes like that sometimes. So I mean, it happens.

But it's tough when you have -- I mean, I picked up my second foul like early. You have starters, you have kids that are playing a lot of minutes sitting on the bench. So, yeah, I mean, it's really tough. I definitely wish we would have had that back and we would have got a few more calls going our way.

And there was some really, they had some and one calls and stuff like that and it just, like Kam said, it's draining. It swings the mood of the game. You're trying to get into a rhythm trying to get back into it and then a foul happens.

So, yeah, that was really tough. I mean, it was definitely on our part. We should have adjusted to how they're calling it, but, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Ladies, thank you. We'll take questions for coach.

Q. I don't know how much you want to expand on it, but I mean, do you address that with the team, I mean, that you do have to change your style once you see the way the game is being called or do you just, do you have to play your game and hope that they, the official, is the one who adjusts?

CHRIS GOBRECHT: Well, it's always something that we have to be mindful of because of the style of defense that we play. I think that I'm always okay as long as anything

that's, anyway the game's being called is the same both ways. That's just always the only thing I ever ask for.

So, I think that, like Riley says, you know, we're not going to dwell on that. The fourth foul on Cierra was particularly controversial and there are a lot of things that probably, may need to be discussed regarding that fourth foul because it wasn't, that wasn't what they called. They tried to say it was Jo in the restricted area.

And that was what was being explained. And so we were debating whether or not to challenge it because we thought Jo was out of the restricted area. And so we were debating whether or not to challenge it and during that time all of a sudden the call got changed to Cierra. And that was her fourth foul. So that was what was, we were kind of like so upset about. So maybe we need an explanation on that because that was -- we were getting ready to challenge it, because we believed she was outside of the restricted area and the call got changed. So, but as I said, it's something we deal with and it's part of the -- we have no choice but to play defense the way we play it. We have to. We have to get possessions. We have to wear people out. We have to do the things that we do because we have no size, we're, we give up pounds and inches almost every time we step on the floor. We don't have a bunch of transfers and international students and fifth years and all the other things, we just have a bunch of really great kids that work really hard and are quality students and quality athletes and we have to find ways to get it done within the parameters that we work with as an institution. And so for us -- sorry, it's March, coaches don't have voices in March. So the, I felt like this, the Air Force Academy is probably a really good match for the way that I like to play the game because you know you can have people play that hard and you know that they will go out there and scrape and claw and fight for every single possession. It would be very interesting to compare shot attempts because we don't let people get shot attempts, they just, you -- if they don't shoot a high percentage, they don't win. And because we don't let them get shot attempts. And that's because of the turnovers that we create and the turnover differential and that's how we make up for how difficult it is for us on the boards and how difficult it is for us to score in conventional ways. You know, to throw the ball inside and have people collapse and then throw the ball outside and have somebody bury a shot. It's hard to score conventionally, we have to be very, very creative and we have to work really hard for everything we get. So I love 'em, I think they're awesome, I think it's incredible, I think anybody that doesn't recognize what they accomplished doesn't understand the Academy, doesn't understand how this institution compares to every other institution in our conference. So we're extremely proud of what these guys have done and the success that they have had.

Q. Are you assuming the season doesn't end today?

CHRIS GOBRECHT: Well I think that there's a reasonable chance we might get a post-season bid. I don't think it's a slam dunk by any means, but I think there's a reasonable chance. I felt like we definitely had to beat Nevada for that to happen, but we did that, and I think certainly if we had beaten UNLV it would have been a sure thing, whether we won the championship or not. So now it's probably a little bit more of a question mark, but I think there's a chance, yeah.

Q. 11-point loss, obviously for anyone that saw the game it was a lot closer than that, it wasn't that big of a blowout by any means. How tough is it knowing that you guys were so much into this game and knowing that the result ended up being what it was tonight?

CHRIS GOBRECHT: Well, it's very tough. I think Riley summed it up and spoke very well on the frustration of working so hard and getting the possessions that you need and just having a hard time getting the points that we needed to get the victory.

So it is, it's frustrating but at the same time -- sometimes when you play that hard, and we had to play that hard, we had no choice, we were up against a very good team that physically was an extremely difficult matchup. So we had to play that hard and we had to bring the defense. And sometimes though when you're working that hard on one end of the floor it can be tough to be, to have things flow on the other end.

I do think there was a little bit of that going on for us, everything was so much of a grind and grit and so then we would go back down on offense -- offense you want to have, feel a little bit freer and a little bit more fun. And we just, we took kind of that same "unnh" to the offensive end. And you noticed so many of our shots were short, so many of them were short. Sat right there on the front of the rim, so close. And I think that might have had something to do with it.

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