

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Colorado State Rams

Ryun Williams

McKenna Hofschild

Karly Murphy

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado State - 82, New Mexico - 71

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

RYUN WILLIAMS: Just very, very proud of the effort that the ladies played with. Defensively I thought we were really locked in. We competed for four quarters. So that was fun to watch.

We have a ton of respect for New Mexico. That is a very, very talented offensive team. So to hold them down, which we haven't all year, I mean, they have destroyed us, to be honest with you, all year. So our kids, this effort tonight is, was a big-time effort defensively, so proud of our team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes, please.

Q. I know your goal tonight was you wanted to defend the perimeter really well, but it seemed like you guys gained more and more confidence the more and more shots they missed. Did it make you more intense defensively?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah. I think it's always a confidence booster when you see the ball go in for us and maybe not necessarily as much for them. So I think we knew that we had to lock in for 40 minutes tonight, otherwise we would not get a win because, like he said, they're just so talented on that offensive end. So I think, yeah, as the game went on we just got more confidence and started playing even better and better.

Q. It was a tight game until you kind of exploded in the



third quarter. What about that matchup seemed to light your eyes up?

KARLY MURPHY: I mean, I've gone against her four times now, so I knew she's a shot blocker and I think just having that confidence to play one-on-one and my teammates giving me a little bit of space there and just trusting that I could score it was awesome. And, yeah, once you see a couple go in it gives you a little bit of momentum, so that was super helpful.

Q. How much confidence did that give you as a team offensively to have Karly have that performance for you at a key time?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: That was huge. I think Karly really kind of took that game over in that third quarter. To see that happen I think we all knew like, all right, it's go time, like it's really time to finish this game.

So to have her kind of lead the way, the leader that she is, it gave us all a huge confidence boost.

Q. It looked like the Lobos really wanted to take you out in that fourth quarter, but instead put you at the free-throw line. What was your mindset in the fourth quarter knowing that you guys had secured this win?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah. You know, I wish I could have made a few more free throws, but I think they were just trying to foul, nothing crazy, but we just had to knock down some free throws. Fortunately we made enough, but, yeah, I need to make a few more.

Q. You scored 20 points tonight. A lot of those were coming from under the paint. Would you say that is your sweet spot under the basket?

KARLY MURPHY: Yeah. Definitely 95 percent of my shots come within probably five feet of the basket, so teams kind of know that, so I just have to kind of know how they're guarding that, whether they're doubling or shot blockers or it depends on the personnel.

Q. I think one of the hidden gems in tonight's win was



they have always beaten you really bad on the boards. Tonight you owned that and you had a big part of it. How much of that was just as much of a goal as defending the perimeter?

KARLY MURPHY: That's a huge goal of ours every game is trying to win those boards. Yeah, it's a tough. It's a battle down there. But tonight I think we did a great job having five girls crash the glass almost every single time. So, yeah, that was awesome.

Q. From your standpoint as a point guard when they have switched zone because they got sick of Karly beating them up, how impressed were you with your team's ability to adjust and still find points?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, that was really nice to see. We adjusted quickly and then to see Sydney Mech in that middle kind of tear it up that was really awesome. To see her aggressive that's huge for us. She's such a weapon, and so she kind of took over that little zone and it was, we were moving it really well, so that was good to see for sure.

Q. You sat here last night and said you really wanted a win over New Mexico. Is there anything else you might want before you leave Las Vegas?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, I might want one more win. No, for real, New Mexico is such a good team. To finally get a win feels really good. But this team played their hearts out tonight and we got a tough one again tomorrow but we're ready for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Ladies, thank you. You are dismissed. Now we'll continue with coach.

Q. You said they really had their way with you earlier this season. What was the difference controlling them offensively? Was it them just not making shots or did you do something differently that caused a different result?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah. We played differently tonight. The first two times we played 'em we didn't guard a couple kids. Absolutely brilliant on my part, right? So we just had a better plan tonight. I thought we did great job on Anderson. She was 15-34, I think, in the two games that we played earlier in the year.

I think tonight we held her scoreless, so, and having Sydney Mech in the lineup where she wasn't earlier in the year I thought was very, very helpful. She can impact a lot of different things an offense might do against us just with her length and her athleticism.

But we made more of an emphasis to run them off the three-point line. I think we competed the screens much, much better. So again, they're so darn talented and I would be lying if I weren't saying -- I mean, we did probably get a little lucky too. Those shots that they missed tonight the first two times they made a lot of those. So very fortunate to get this win against a great New Mexico team and just had a little better plan tonight.

Q. You touched on it a little bit, but was Sydney Mech really the center stone of what you set your defensive plan on tonight?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, she was. She got the start on Anderson and that's where it started for us. She's a dynamic stretch four. She can impact a lot of different spots, her length. She had a big shot block there late or blocked shot and so it starts with Sydney.

Q. Is that kind of what you hoped for though as a coach? If you can play tight perimeter defense, run out on them, make them miss some tough ones, you kind of hope it affects the easy ones that you know they're going to get at some point in time.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah. And I think that was a big difference between the first two times. We did not give them any easy ones. They made a lot of easy threes the first two times we played 'em. Tonight everything was fairly contested. They just felt us. I think our kids kind of believed that what we're doing it might work this time and I think they obviously rode it out the last three quarters.

Q. Being that this is the first win in two years against New Mexico, how does it feel and how do you plan to prepare for tomorrow's championship game?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, well, the win feels great. Again, just to win a semifinal game, to have some fun in this tournament. Our crowd was outstanding. To see all the green and gold and to hear all the green and gold I think really rallied our team tonight.

So it's fun. The kids played with great joy again today. How we prepare for tomorrow? The same way we prepared for today. We're going to go back. We'll reset once we get back to the hotel and we'll shut our minds off tonight. I think our kids have done a great job of just shutting their minds off and then we'll regroup and light our hair on fire tomorrow.

Q. You had four players combine for 73 points. Just how big was your starting five tonight?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah. They play a lot of minutes for us and they all contributed. I think we got some good scoring from a lot of different positions on the floor. So obviously very important. You can't beat these good teams and advance in a tournament if you don't perform. Playing hard is great. Playing with emotion is great. But you still have to perform.

I think our kids did that. You still have to make plays. To outscore them 40-18 in the paint, that was a really nice effort on the interior. So big part of our victory.

Q. I think at one point you were 3-15 from threes and made twos count a whole lot more than missed threes. I don't know if there was a concerted effort to stop shooting the three and go inside but obviously Karly took over. Was that something you said, hey, let's stop shooting threes and let's go where we're strong?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah. And I think most of those threes that we did shoot were way early in the shot clock. So, yeah, we made it a, just that was a huge topic of discussion at halftime was we needed reversal. We needed to play through the interior. We picked on a couple switches. We wanted to drive and get a piece of the paint. That was really critical in that second half.

All the threes that we were going to shoot were going to be inside out. I think the zone was, I think we made a couple against the zone. But that was the plan.

Q. Is it just as impressive to you that you outscored New Mexico in fast-break points, which is their game?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, that is their game. But that's our game too. We pride ourselves in how we play transition basketball. I thought our decisionmaking when we did run was outstanding. We converted some baskets there in that third quarter, and I thought the third quarter was our best quarter as far as running.

But we defended and we rebounded really well. So that was nice to see to outscore them in fast-break points.

Q. You've spent everything you have in terms of your starters to win these last two games. All of them tonight played at least 32 minutes. How do you use the next 20 hours to make sure they have fresh legs tomorrow?

RYUN WILLIAMS: We're going to go back and go throw some Celine on. We're going to relax, okay, kind of calm down. But our kids have been -- I don't know. They're really good at recovery, right? And I think what's in front of 'em and what they have worked so hard for, they're not

going to think about being tired. We're not going to let 'em do that.

So they're going to think about what we've got to do to be victorious tomorrow. They know the challenge that's in front of us, but I don't think you're going to see us play tired, /we're not going to hang our hat on any of that stuff.

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