

# Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 6, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

**UNLV Lady Rebels**

**Coach Lindy La Rocque**

**Essence Booker**

**Justice Ethridge**

Postgame Press Conference



against them last time, and obviously they're our rival so it's always going to be an emotional game, but we knew that if we just came out and played as hard as we can and just forgot about the last game that everything was going to be good.

**Q. Can you touch on the depth on this team, the talent on this team? I mean, a complete domination today by you guys.**

JUSTICE ETHRIDGE: Yeah, I think something special about us is every one player on our team contributes. When you stop one of us, there's always somebody coming next. If we play together, nobody can stop us.

**Q. Justice, just what changed for you guys in that second quarter? You held them to six points, I think. Defensively what were you guys able to do?**

JUSTICE ETHRIDGE: I think just locking in on defense. Just calming our nerves down after the first quarter. Everybody's emotions calmed down.

And just playing our game and just keying in on those players and rebounding.

**Q. Essence, I think this is your first game with four threes this season. I know shooting has been kind of a mixed bag for you this year. How nice is it to start the tournament on such a hot streak?**

ESSENCE BOOKER: I guess we can say I saved them for the tournament. Hopefully I can carry that into tomorrow and continue to shoot well. It's not really about me. I feel like shots are going to fall and things are going to -- I'm going to play how I'm supposed to play regardless, just as long as I continue to do what I'm supposed to do as a leader and lead the team to a victory.

UNLV 84, Nevada 47

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. Coach will make an opening remark and then we'll address questions for the student-athlete. We'll start with Coach La Rocque.

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Obviously, we're excited to get the win. I thought our team played really well. We had a lot of people come in and really contribute and just we're proud to get this one done. Going to be ready for tomorrow.

Credit Reno, obviously we played them six days ago. It's a really tough team. They're physical. They're aggressive. You know, they had a great season.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Essence, I talked to Lindy earlier this year, and she said she can see when you are on the court, you would rather pass in certain moments as opposed to score. It looked like you came in today with the intention to score. What was your mindset coming into today's game?**

ESSENCE BOOKER: Honestly, I just wanted to come and exhaust myself as a leader, and I felt like my points will come naturally. I feel like I took the right shots and shot with confidence, and it went in.

**Q. Justice, kind of talk about the revenge you wanted to get on Reno. You guys beat them on the road earlier last week, but how you guys wanted to come out and perform better today.**

JUSTICE ETHRIDGE: I know we had a tough game

**Q. Justice, UNR had three offensive rebounds in the first four and a half minutes of the game. I don't know if they grabbed another offensive rebound in that first quarter. Considering that you guys just saw them last week, kind of how much easier was it for you guys to adjust to the offensive rebounds considering you just**



**saw it less than a week ago?**

JUSTICE ETHRIDGE: I wouldn't consider it easier, but we knew that they were a really good rebounding team and we all had to crash the board. I think just keying in and making sure we boxed out helped us a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Justice, Essence, thank you for your time. We'll dismiss you at this time.

Okay, we'll go ahead and continue. Do we have questions for the coach?

**Q. Lindy, after Tuesday we talked about just the team's confidence and we talked about -- or one of the things that you said specifically was that we need everybody playing with confidence coming into the tournament. Everybody plays; everybody scores. Kind of what did you see from team play from you your group tonight?**

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Yeah, you could say it's exactly what the doctor ordered a little bit. You know, and we wanted to get everyone in. I think it was great to get some rest for some high-minute players.

You know, I think it's pretty cool. Everyone scored. I don't know if that's happened maybe one other time this year.

But, you know, again, it speaks to your depth. To play three games in three days, it's nice to be able to rest people on day one.

**Q. Just looking at the defensive end, I don't think UNR had their first turnover in the last meeting until the second quarter. Kind of turnovers galore in that first quarter. What was the emphasis on defense heading into this one?**

LINDY LA ROCQUE: We just wanted to be more aggressive, and I think that's offensively and defensively. Just trying to be disruptive defensively, and I thought we did a great job of doing that.

You know, 11, Davis, for them, she's a great point guard, so wanted to try to -- she killed us up there, so, you know, it I challenged our guards to do a better job on her and make someone else kind of handle the ball for them.

I think that puts them out of rhythm, and we were able to turn them over a little bit.

**Q. Desi was just talking about the depth on a day maybe she's a little quiet there. Can you just talk about that? The threes obviously helped, but just the**

**depth of everything where she can be quiet and you still win by that much?**

LINDY LA ROCQUE: She might not have had her typical stat line, but it was her that was still commanding a double down there, why we got open for threes. So if we take her out of the mix then that doesn't happen.

I think because everyone knows how she can just kind of go off, that you still have to double and, you know, be attentive to everyone.

Yeah, obviously, I don't know if this might be one of the first times Desi didn't score in double figures all year, but, you know, it's not about her. It's not about any one player. It's about the team and getting the job done.

I think she's happier than anyone to have the win. You know, I'm excited. I've known all year long that we have really good players. It's no surprise to me.

**Q. Lindy, I recently sat down with A'ja Wilson, and she talks really highly about your team and says she's watching your team closely. Can you just talk about just women's basketball here in Las Vegas, a dominating win today. The Aces are hungry to win another championship. You guys are hungry to win another championship. Can you talk about women's basketball dominating in Las Vegas?**

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Sure. You're saying it, right? I don't have to say much about it other than the facts are the facts.

You know, we had a great season last year. They built upon it and had a phenomenal season over the summer, and we've kind of carried the torch and through this year.

We're not done, and we want to keep going, but their support of us means a lot. Obviously their organization, they're out to our games. Our departments and their organization try to work together to continue to build a fan base together.

We love their support. We support them right back, and it's pretty good to be a women's basketball player in Las Vegas right now.

**Q. Lindy, mentioned nerves in the first quarter. What was the message after that first quarter, and what did you see in that second quarter that changed things?**

LINDY LA ROCQUE: I think when you come to the tournament there's definitely just a different bravado to the game, right?

We kind of are a little maybe over-zealous maybe a little bit, and then kind of that first time out, you know, it's like, all right, are we settled down? Let's go out there and execute and play. Not maybe exactly the start that we wanted, but now that we're kind of got that under our belt, I think we'll be fine.

**Q. You guys have done a really good job winning without Essence needing to score a lot this year. How nice was it to see her get back to what she looked like at this time last year?**

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Yeah, she's a tournament player, so it doesn't really matter to me what she's done all year. I know she's going to show up in the biggest moments for us and lead our team.

You know, again, her, Desi, Justice, really all of them, they kind of got the look in their eye of we're going to do whatever it takes. I was proud of her for being aggressive to shoot. That's a little bit of what people have been giving her lately.

She's more than capable. She just kind of second-guesses herself, so I'm glad she got over that.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Thanks, guys. See you tomorrow.

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