

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 6, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Colorado State Rams Coach Ryun Williams McKenna Hofschild Kendyll Kinzer

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado State 59, Boise State 52

THE MODERATOR: For Colorado State joining Coach Ryun Williams will be Kendyll Kinzer and McKenna Hofschild.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Just a really gritty, gutty type of victory. You play a team three times, and twice in a matter of, what, five or six days, it was going to be a grinder. We knew that.

I'm just proud of the toughness that we showed. Boise is a really good basketball team, and to beat them three times in a year, I'm really proud of our team for doing that.

So this was a good, gutty tournament win. It's March. They're going to be close. You've got to find a way to win them. Kids did a great job.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Kendyll, was this good timing to have one of your better defensive performances in the year?

KENDYLL KINZER: Yes, I would say it's very good timing. My goal is to play my best basketball in March, so I think I started tonight down that path, and I hope it just gets better for tomorrow and hopefully the day after that.

Q. McKenna, at some point in time did you feel like you had to pick your spots to get things going point-wise?

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, I think I was just trying to find my gaps and find my opportunities while also getting my teammates involved.



Boise had a good scout on the defensive end, so just trying to pick and choose when to attack and then when to facilitate.

Q. You guys held them, I think it was 3 for 15 shooting in the fourth quarter; I think it was six turnovers. Obviously your offense probably never got clicking exactly how you wanted, but was kind of the thought and message going into that fourth of winning on defense basically?

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah. I think every game we go into defense is such a priority for us, and we look to get stops because I think that's when we can turn and play our best offense. When we get out, run, push in transition, that's when we get the best.

I think defense is always our top priority, and tonight just kind of proved that.

Q. In the first quarter was there any nerves to get rid of? Because it seemed like you were getting some good looks but the shots just weren't falling.

KENDYLL KINZER: Yeah, I think there's always nerves the first game in the tournament. The biggest thing that I notice is your shots are always long when you are a little jittery, so, yeah, I think just getting all those out.

And, you know, we have quite a few players that haven't played in this tournament before, so I think just getting settled down was a big emphasis, but after we did, I think we did really well.

Q. Then you mentioned how important it is to be good on defense. How does that set up your offense to do better in the second quarter and on?

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: It helps us run, and that's when we're at our best. So we just know that that's -- our number one offense is when we get out, when we have space in transition, I don't think there's a team in the conference that can really stop us.



So defense turns into offense for us every single time.

Q. McKenna, when Kendyll got hot with the threes, you started out 0 for 7. What kind of spark was that for your team, and how often did you need those throughout the game?

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Huge. Those were big-time shots. I think that just gave not only her confidence, but the whole team confidence to knock down their shots. That second quarter when she started getting hot we all were kind of noticing it, and it was a big-time, big-time quarter for sure.

Q. This obviously sets up another border war with Wyoming in the semis. Just kind of what are your quick takes on facing them and sort of another rivalry game of this magnitude?

KENDYLL KINZER: I think personally I've got to be better defensively. I mean, go and watch the film and watch how I can use my feet to my advantage, and then just getting good looks for the whole entire team.

I think our offense can be better, and then, like you said, defensive stops, we're going to get out and run. Hopefully we can get more stops than we did last game.

Q. For McKenna or Kendyll, obviously Fertig played really well in the fourth quarter of the last meeting with them; the first game you guys kind of kept her quiet. What's the key to defending her?

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah. We've switched up our game plan a little bit. I think we're going to double her a little bit quicker than we did in Laramie.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Don't give that away.

KENDYLL KINZER: Jeez.

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Don't tell anybody that.

RYUN WILLIAMS: I'm just kidding. Yeah.

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: I didn't know what to say.

THE MODERATOR: You can scratch stuff from the record.

RYUN WILLIAMS: If she wants to be a coach, I mean, number one thing in coaching, don't give the game plan away the night before the game.

Q. Last year you lost to them in the regular season

finale and then played them immediately and beat them. Does this kind of feel similar to that? You just lost to them recently.

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, we've got a little chip on our shoulder. We think we're coming into this game and we have something to prove. I feel very confident that we'll prove it.

Q. I'm just kind of curious why McKenna answered that question on how to defend Fertig as opposed to Kendyll.

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: I'm sorry, I took that one.

KENDYLL KINZER: Lots to say about the post defense. It's okay.

McKENNA HOFSCCHILD: You got that. Go get them.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you for your time. We'll go ahead and continue with Coach.

Any questions?

Q. Coach, you did talk earlier today about the fact, it's pretty easy to game-plan a team that you just played six days ago, but what kind of alterations did you make tonight defensively that were successful?

RYUN WILLIAMS: I don't know if we made a lot of alterations, to be honest. You know, we just -- we competed the ball screen I think a little more consistently.

They didn't get into their pullup game as much as they did the previous two games, and that's just a credit to our guard play.

I thought Destiny Thurman, we put a little more pressure on her to be a little more active and to take away some of those middle third drives, and I thought she was all over the floor in the second half. Destiny really impacted a lot of possessions.

So those were probably the biggest things.

And, you know, again, they're difficult to defend. They've got good size. Their guard play is smart. They all shoot the three.

So to hold them to 52 -- and I think that's the most they've scored on us this year -- I mean, that's incredible defensive basketball in my mind. I'm proud of my team for how they fought on that end of the floor. And rebounded at a pretty decent clip.



They're pretty hard to handle on the glass. That was a good -- a big part of their offense, I think, was shoot it and go get it. Again, we secured enough boards to get a good win.

Q. Sometimes you'll see teams struggling offensively can let that affect their defense. It seemed like your team almost did the opposite of, well, we're not shooting, but let's really grind in defensively.

RYUN WILLIAMS: And that's where we've grown, Kevin. I think earlier in the year we relied so much on our offense to just drive our motor. If we were not scoring it, we probably would get a little discouraged on the defensive end.

These kids have really adopted the mentality of, you know, this possession, this defensive possession is the most important defensive possession of the game. You know, they don't dwell on a mistake or turnover.

I thought they played with great maturity that way. It's going to be frustrating this time of year. It just is. You watch any game on TV, it's going to be -- there's going to be some frustrating possessions offensively, because, you know, you're 30 games in. There's a lot of good coaches. There's a lot of good scouting going on. So it's going to be challenging.

And if you let that affect how you guard you're not going to win, and that's where our team has really grown up and really proud of them for that.

Q. To that end, neither Thurman nor Crocker had their normal offensive game, but it didn't seem to spill over on defense because they both had key takeaways down the stretch when you needed them. How impressed are you with their maturity to kind of take a bad offensive night and still play as well as they did offensively?

RYUN WILLIAMS: There's all kinds of ways to win a basketball game. I know everybody looks at the scoreboard and are you scoring points and is the ball going in the basket and are you shooting good percentages, that sort of thing.

Some nights it's not like that. Some nights you just need to get enough stops, and, again, Crocker and Thurman, you're right. Maybe not the most rhythmic offensive game. It was hard to find positive plays on that end of the floor.

For them to keep grinding on the defensive end, that's just, you know, their old soul kind of. They've got that. They know the importance of that end of the floor, and that's why

we won.

Q. So without giving up any strategy for tomorrow, these third round of the border war, I mean, what do you expect to see out there tomorrow night?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's a border war but, hey, more importantly than that, it's the semifinals, right? That's the number one thing. We're here to win the tournament. Not win a border war.

This just happens to be the next opponent. And, obviously, a ton of respect for Wyoming. They got us really good in the fourth quarter in Laramie, and so we're going to have to play with a greater toughness and a greater concentration.

We had a lot of breakdowns defensively in Laramie, but, you know, two teams very familiar with each other. So I think it's going to be a grinder. It just always is. They're well-coached. Fertig is having a tremendous year. Weidemann and Tommi, they're very, very good leaders. They're kind of rocks for them.

So we know it's going to be just a war. And if you want to put border in front of it, that's fine, but it's just going to be an absolute tournament war.

Q. On nights like tonight when you get production out of everybody, you know, on both ends of the floor, specifically the defensive end of the floor, is that what this team is at their best?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's a great observation on your part. It was an everybody contribute. And, again, most people think they're going to look at the offensive stat line, and it was the defensive, and everybody made winning plays.

And that's how you have to keep moving on. You know, you just can't rely on a couple of kids having good performances on either end of the floor. It just doesn't work that way. Again, I'm proud of our kids that there's all kinds of ways to impact a game.

Even if you don't get in the game, you can still impact it by energy. And our bench, we had an energetic, lively bench that I thought got us over the hump. We were kind of grinding. We were kind of in quicksand a little bit. We could have probably hung our head a little bit, but the energy our bench provided, the kids that didn't even get in the game, too bad there's not a stat line for that because they were critical tonight.

Q. To have to play McKenna 39 minutes, 14 seconds tonight, given the format of this three games in three



days if you were to go, what kind of impact is that going to have especially given her importance?

RYUN WILLIAMS: I took her out?

Q. Right at the end of the second quarter, I believe.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Well, I better get on my assistants for that. You know, she's just wired to play. Yet, she got a little tired there.

I mean, they were quite physical with her, but she'll get an ice bath tonight and she'll be ready to go tomorrow. We don't even think about that.

I mean, we've seen this young lady compete for 40 minutes a night for three years now. We know what we're going to get. That's a tough cookie right there.

Q. Have you seen it in back-to-back games?

RYUN WILLIAMS: We had four games last year. Were you here last year? Pretty good. Go back and watch them films, okay?

Yes, she's done that before. And we played in a couple of tournaments earlier in the year where we had back-to-back. You try to say this is like a tournament format. This is going to be the Mountain West Conference Tournament so, you play a Mercer at, whatever, 7:00, and then you turn around and play Auburn at 3:00.

Yeah, you're tired and you're beat up, but you still got to go, and you still got to find a way to win. McKenna, that's what she's all about, so she'll be ready to go.

Thank you, everybody.

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