

# Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

## Wyoming Cowgirls

### Coach Heather Ezell

### Allyson Fertig

### Emily Mellema

#### Postgame Press Conference

Wyoming 65, Colorado State 56

THE MODERATOR: For Wyoming we have Coach Heather Ezell along with Allyson Fertig and Emily Mellema.

HEATHER EZELL: First, I have to say how proud I am of this team. They've come in each day that we've been here with a mindset to fib a business trip, and that's what we've talked about since we got here that this is a business trip. We took care of business again tonight.

Just proud of the way that all 13 of the kids were engaged. They worked as a kid. They all moved as one. We were able to take care of business and get to play one more night.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Allyson, how does it feel to be 40 minutes away from your goal, and how key was dominating the paint tonight against them?**

ALLYSON FERTIG: Yeah, it feels amazing to be able to play in the championship game, especially when our season ended a little too shortly last year.

And, yeah, they have a size disadvantage, so I thought we did pretty good at just attacking them at their weakness in the paint.

So, yeah, I thought we did very good just getting those paint touches.

**Q. Allyson, last time you faced this team in this building you guys had a lead going into the fourth quarter. Then, things didn't go so well. Did that cross**



**your mind at all tonight or was that any kind of motivation coming into this one?**

ALLYSON FERTIG: It was a little motivation. Just revenge, you know, because I remember that game because I didn't play very well, but I felt a lot more confident going into this game because we -- when we played them at home we made a strong win.

So I felt more confident going into this game, but, yeah, it was a little revenge from last year.

**Q. Emily, 17 minutes tonight, and obviously 10 points. What was it like for you to get that big game experience in a conference tournament like this?**

EMILY MELLEMA: Yeah, it's fun. Definitely helping me out going into the next game, but having all my teammates helping me too. I think, like Coach said, all 13 of us, we wouldn't win these games without each person. Every game we have a new person stepping up, so it's really exciting to see what happens next game and that we get an opportunity to play tomorrow.

**Q. This could be for any of you three. I mean, what was the plan against McKenna Hofschild tonight, and what went right against her tonight?**

HEATHER EZELL: Once again, I've been saying this since the beginning of the year: We've got a kid named Quinn Weidemann that we can put against any player on the other team, and there's a reason she's been on the all-defense team for three years. She has the ability. She takes pride in it.

She lives and dies on that defensive end and she takes it personal, so being able to put her on the Player of the Year and she can be able to do what she does and make it really tough for her.

**Q. Tommi didn't play a lot tonight, but that half court shot she hit was -- it started a big run for you guys. What was your vantage point of that, and how much did that give you guys a lift early on?**



ALLYSON FERTIG: I was so surprised. I sprinted back on defense and I look up and it goes in. I was, like, oh, my. Yeah, they're not winning this game (laughing).

EMILY MELLEMA: That was super fun. They hit a crazy one at home, so it was fun to create a crazy one on them. Usually we have four taking the ball out. There's not much time left.

I tucked it into Tommi and it went in. That was so crazy. That gave us a lot of momentum going into the rest of the game.

**Q. Heather, year one. You've been through a lot this year personally with the birth of your baby. Year one and you're already in the championship game. What does this mean to you, this run?**

HEATHER EZELL: Just so proud of these players. My staff, I wouldn't be here without all 13 of these kids and the staff that I have.

Then everybody that's gone before me. There's a reason that this program has been successful. People like Joe Legerski and Gerald Mattinson. I have to tip my cap to people like that that have built this program to what it is.

Then just being able to have the staff that I have and the players that I have that were able to take care of business when I wasn't here.

**Q. Allyson, it's kind of been a while since you played UNLV last. You had a 14-point loss and a six-point loss against them earlier this season. How much are you looking forward to the challenge of playing the championship game against the number No. 21 team in the country?**

ALLYSON FERTIG: I'm excited because when we played them last we weren't the same team we are now, and I feel like we've improved way more and we know what we're doing.

I'm excited to get another chance at them and to show them that we are right up there with them, so...

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, we'll dismiss you, but continue with Coach for additional questions.

Questions for Coach?

**Q. Heather, I know Quinn did a great job on Hofschild, but it seemed like also she had trouble when she separated from Quinn with your bigs. How big of an advantage was the size tonight?**

HEATHER EZELL: Yeah, we talked about this the last two games playing CSU. It's a team defense when Hofschild has the ball. We've all got to be ready because she's got that ability to just get downhill and create things.

So using our size. We told Allyson, hey, you stay until she picks it up. We're going to have help for you, and we made some really nice rotations out. Just being able to get her that ability to go help when she needed to.

**Q. I guess two questions. The same one I had for them. Last year you guys played CSU here in this building and things didn't go well in the fourth. Also, what are your early impressions and thoughts on UNLV tomorrow?**

HEATHER EZELL: Yeah, we came into the game tonight knowing exactly what happened last year. I think that they had that chip on their shoulder going, hey, this is the team that knocked us out. We didn't want to get in that position.

You've got to give our kids credit. They made plays when they really needed to. Grace Ellis hit a huge three that gave us that little bit of a lead that extended it. And just making plays that they're going, we don't want to get in that position like we were last year. I think it was in the back of a lot of our players' heads.

Turning the page now.

With UNLV, like you guys had mentioned, it's been a while since we've played them. I know they've beat us twice, but what Allyson said is totally on point: We're not the same team that we played them the last game.

We've continued to grow. We've continued to get better, and now we've got the opportunity to play for a championship against the No. 21 team in the nation and leave it all out on the court, because that's what we've been doing. We've been Wyoming tough each game that we've been coming here.

**Q. At the end of the San Jose State game, I mean, it was garbage time. It looked like Emily was getting hacked and full court press. Looked frustrated. How big is this for have a game like this in this setting knowing she's taking over the point next year?**

HEATHER EZELL: I told her probably too many times, she's probably tired of me, how much I believe in that kid. She has the ability to be really, really good. She's got to believe it just as much.

That's what I told her at the end of that San Jose game. I

know they might be fouling you, whatever. I just believe in you and being able to take care of the ball and push through.

I texted with her again last night. Then this morning, it's her birthday, and I said, hey, it's your birthday. Let's go have one. I give her credit because she came into this game confident, and right from the start that she got in.

She was in attack mode and just really proud of that growth that you have seen for her to go from the game that she finished with last night to this one tonight.

**Q. So speaking of growth, started the second half with three straight turnovers. What kind of maturity did you see out of your group just to kind of overcome that and then be able to settle in there down the stretch?**

HEATHER EZELL: Yeah. I mean, we've kind of battled with a couple of turnover-prone quarters throughout the year we look at those two super seniors between Tommi and Quinn, and they are always able to settle us down.

I have to tell you, Allyson has turned into one of the best leaders that we have on our court. Our players look to her, and so it's going, okay, things aren't going well. Let's get to Allyson on the block and let her take care of business and let her get us back rolling, and that's what we were able for do.

THE MODERATOR: That will do it, Coach. Thank you.

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