

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

UNLV Lady Rebels

Coach Lindy La Rocque

Essence Booker

Desi-Rae Young

Alyssa Durazo-Frescas

Postgame Press Conference

UNLV 71, Wyoming 60

THE MODERATOR: We'll conclude tonight's press conference with the back-to-back championship Lady Rebels, and the student-athletes joining Coach Lindy La Rocque will be Alyssa Durazo-Frescas, tournament MVP Desi-Rae Young, and Essence Booker.

Coach, go ahead.

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Well, first off, I would just like to congratulate Wyoming on a great season. You know, I really, really respect their coaching staff, their players. You know, Heather, she had a baby as well this year.

What an awesome game to have two female head coaches, new mothers, role models for both of our teams. They play the game the right way. Pretty similar to us of going inside and having shooters and playing team basketball.

So while it's always tough playing them, we enjoy it, and excited for them to make a deep run into the NIT because they're deserving. I wouldn't be shocked if they were to win it or do something crazy and everyone will realize how good our conference is.

But, other than that, I'm just so incredibly proud of our team for doing whatever it takes. They had the look in their eye this morning, and I knew we were going to come away with this one. With these three, you know, Justice, Alyssa, Kiara, all of them from top to bottom, they wanted this more than anything, and they went out there and did it.



THE MODERATOR: Take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Desi, you talk about the team being aggressive at all times, but today being aggressive put Allyson in foul trouble. Kind of how did that open it up for you guys?

DESI-RAE YOUNG: I mean, to be honest, that's what I was thinking the whole time, is if we get her in foul trouble we can attack the basket. No one can stop me and E when we do the pick and roll, that two-man game. I mean, I think we did a phenomenal job just going at her the whole game.

Q. Essence, after the last home game against Utah State we talked about Alyssa Durazo-Frescas, and you said, I believe the quote was, when Alyssa has it going, this team is unguardable and this team hits another level. She hit four big threes tonight. All came at a pivotal moment. Kind of what does that say about her ability to kind of lift this group up when it needs it the most?

ESSENCE BOOKER: I feel like Coach Lindy has been preaching about it. When her jersey is called, she shows up, and she did that tonight. She hit some big shots, shots that we needed, shots that gave us momentum, and we carried that throughout all four quarters.

Q. Essence, two titles in two years here with Lindy. Is this what you imaged when she first reached out to you while you were in the transfer portal?

ESSENCE BOOKER: Pretty much, yeah. Her first initial conversation with me was about winning a championship. We did that last year. We put that in the past, and we wanted the same thing this year.

I'm just glad I got to be a part of it.

Q. Alyssa, kind of a rough night for you the other night, but how nice was it to kind of find that early shooting touch?



ALYSSA DURAZO-FRESCAS: I mean, it's amazing. I got great people beside me. I got a great family. Sorry (laughing).

You know, they believe in me as much as I believe in myself, and I give all credit to them.

Q. Desi, you're holding Lindy's baby as the confetti is falling down, and, you know, you're cutting down the net. You know, you're tournament MVP. It's International Women's Day. How proud are you to be a part of this team and have women like Lindy La Rocque to look up to?

DESI-RAE YOUNG: I mean, I'm always proud. Lindy is a young coach, and with her just having a baby, she came back stronger than ever. I feel like Baby Ellie gave her some momentum just letting her know that we're her family too, you know. She treats us just like she treats little Baby Ellie, and we respect her as a mother, as a coach, as a mentor. I couldn't ask for a better coach.

Q. Desi, looking forward a little bit to the NCAA tournament, what do you feel like you guys learned from that experience going last year playing a tight game, and what are you hoping to bring to this year's tournament?

DESI-RAE YOUNG: I mean, I think we did a great job last year. I think we were super duper aggressive. We just fell a little short. I think this year we're going to come out ten times longer.

Coach Lindy said it. People should be mad that they're playing us. People should be fearful of us, because we're coming in with an aggression that we didn't have that much last year, and we want it this year.

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

Q. Lindy, I guess coming into the season knowing kind of the experience you had last year, what kind of -- what were the expectations that you had for this group? I mean, did you see undefeated, I mean, 22-game winning streak? Did you sense this was possible at any point?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: I mean, you know, I'm not one of the types where it's, like, you know, you set some goal or some, like -- something to attain and then limit yourself to that.

I think it's kind of our approach where we just came in with a mentality to work hard every day, focus on the next

game, and see where that can take us. It took us pretty well and led us pretty well last year, so I knew if we came out with that same mentality from the get-go, who knows what could happen?

You know, while you're going through it you try not to think about it, but this team was special. You know, again, people said kind of midway, like, oh, you know, you could afford a loss to really get them back on track or get their mind right. No, we didn't need to. We didn't need to.

They just have a different bravado about them that they went out there and performed and played and figured out how to win a lot of games. A lot.

Q. Lindy, I want to ask you about just the confidence you're seeing from your players right now heading into the tournament. They have that NCAA tournament already underneath their belt. You know, what confidence are you seeing with this year's squad?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Well, I think we draw upon our experience last year. You know, none of them had ever done it except for me; now they have. You know, so you know a little bit of the cadence of the scheduling, and, you know, the travel that's probably going to be crazy or just the selection show.

So you're not quite so, like, caught off guard by every turn.

And then when it comes to the basketball you're ready, and you're ready for that moment. I think we are really confident in just who we are. I think we know who we are. We know how we want to play. We're excited. We have a lot of great talent.

So, you know, I'm excited to see kind of what Sunday brings.

Q. First half pretty close ball game, right? Three-point game at halftime. What can you pinpoint what went down in the second half from an offensive standpoint that you and the ladies were able to do so you were able to basically pull away there in the fourth quarter?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Yeah. You know, we kind of knew if we could keep scoring, I think that would have been hard for them to keep up with.

You know, we did a pretty good job, and then they got hot there in the third quarter. My gosh. I think that was their best punch and we weathered that storm really well. We got a big lead. They came back swinging, which great teams do. It's a game of runs.

We knew kind of going last ten minutes of the fourth quarter of, like, all right, now it's winning time and we've got to go on a run. We've got to really lock in defensively and rebound. We sure did rebound.

Q. Allyson Fertig has been held to single-digit scoring in conference play five times this season. Three times against your group. What is it about your team's preparation that allows it to be ready for such a big test like Allyson?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Well, they face each other every day in practice. You know, Keyana Wilfried didn't play a minute tonight, but she is the Allyson Fertig to Desi every single practice, and frankly I think is just as good. Keyana could be a starting post on any team in the league. That's a little bit of iron sharpens iron.

I think we're able to do a good job on Fertig on both ends, because we make her guard in the post too, which only a hand of the of teams do in our league. So she's a great young player. She's going to continue to get better, unfortunately, but, you know, when you have to challenge someone defensively and then be able to challenge them offensively, it takes a lot of energy.

I thought obviously three games in three days, maybe she got a little tired. You know, it's brutal down there in the post. That physical play, you know, Desi playing 37 minutes and to be as productive, she is in great shape. Great shape.

Q. 13 seed last year. This group has pedigree, right? You return a lot of the production. You have the 22-game winning streak. Any feeling where you should be -- where you feel like you should be seeded this year?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Nope.

Q. Coach, you being from Las Vegas, you have a local influence on this team as far as you and your players. What does that mean that you have had success here in the last two years and having a number of players and yourself that are from Las Vegas?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: I think it's huge. It creates just such a special story. You know, Essence, Justice, Desi, myself, Mia Bell, our assistant, you know, our managers are local. You don't even know them.

But it creates a certain pride that is different, you know. And obviously just being able to represent our community on this stage, it's just such a privilege. You know, we want to perform well for them.

I think that adds to the excitement and the support that we've gotten back is also because of that because, you know, we've got young women out there that people know, you know, and they've known for a long time. Not just since they've been here at UNLV.

So, you know, it's really, really special.

Q. You obviously have the selection show coming up, but what do the next couple of days look like for your team until then?

LINDY LA ROCQUE: We're going to take a couple of days off. Yep. They have midterms. You know, Alyssa Brown took a midterm, Spanish, 8:30 a.m. this morning, so she's probably excited to not have that tomorrow.

So, you know, we'll take Thursday and Friday off. They've got to go to class. We'll get back together on Saturday. Hopefully they're throwing us a big party on Sunday. I think we've already heard that's in the works. We've got to kind of get organized for that.

We're not just, like, going to sit back and chill. We'll get back. Three games in three days is really tough. Our players were really sore coming into today. Obviously we had a really tough battle yesterday and we knew it was going to be the same today, so they're going to be really sore tomorrow. A couple of days off. Some treatment. And then get back after it.

THE MODERATOR: Any further questions? Thank you, Coach.

LINDY LA ROCQUE: Thank you. See you wherever we go.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

