

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 11, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Colorado State Rams

Coach Ryun Williams

McKenna Hofschild

Hannah Ronsiek

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado State 65, Nevada 54

THE MODERATOR: We'll begin with CSU. We have student-athletes McKenna Hofschild, Hannah Ronsiek, Coach Ryun Williams. We'll get some thoughts on tonight's game, Coach.

RYUN WILLIAMS: A really good second half of basketball, both offensively and defensively. We knew it was going to be a game where there was going to be some struggles in it. Nevada is a really good basketball team. We just played them a week and a half ago and barely beat them.

We knew it was going to be highly contested. I liked how our kids made a lot of winning plays in that second half, so this is a great win because we respect the heck out of Nevada.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. After cutting down the ten-point deficit to three at halftime, what sparked the third quarter run, and what would you describe it as?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: I think honestly just what we said at halftime. We were just telling everyone to maintain confidence, especially her. Just keep shooting the ball. So when we came out in the second half, we were confident in the game plan, we were confident in each other.

We played well in the first half. Just didn't quite -- things didn't quite go our way. So just coming out and trying to start with some energy, start off hot, and that's what happened in that third quarter.

Q. Hannah, how do you come out of the locker room



after struggling a little bit with your shot in the first half and still come out with the same confidence that you normally have in the third quarter?

HANNAH RONSIEK: I think it's just kind of seeing the ball go in just one time. When I was able to hit that two, I think the hoop got a little bit bigger for me, and also just my teammates and coaches giving me a lot of confidence, and they were always saying, You got the next shot.

I think, yeah, just seeing the ball go in really helps me with my confidence.

Q. McKenna, can you discuss what the lift is for the team when you get that third scoring option? When she gets hot, it seemed like the mood changed with the team offensively?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: I think it makes us so much harder to guard. You can kind of game plan for one or two, but when there's a couple more adding in and sticking to what they do, we're a hard team to defend.

Having Hannah come out in that second half, I mean, she just opened that game up for us, and we kind of followed her lead in that way.

Q. Hannah, they went on that run late in the fourth. What was kind of the key for you guys to dial it down and finish it off?

HANNAH RONSIEK: We talked a lot about just getting rebounds, getting stops and then taking our time on offense. I think we executed that pretty well. We didn't take any rushed shots. And I think, yeah, we got rebounds, and we didn't get many turnovers in the fourth quarter. So I think that was kind of what sealed the deal.

Q. Hannah, didn't you go in the locker room kind of confident as a team anyway because the way you were playing defensively, you were forcing turnovers? The only thing that wasn't happening was shots just weren't going in. So was there a lot of confidence still going into halftime despite a small deficit?



HANNAH RONSIEK: I mean, personally for me I wasn't super confident on offense. On defense I was like, if I'm not making my shots, I feel like I have to be contributing to the team in some way. So defensively I just really wanted to turn my defense into offense. So I think that helped my confidence as well going into the second half.

Q. UNLV has been the big roadblock for everybody here, but you guys have played them tight both times this season. Why do you think that is, and does that give you a little extra confidence going into tomorrow?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: I think we match up really well with them. I think they have a lot of offensive weapons. So do we. I think they can do some things on the defensive end that gives teams fits, and I think we can too.

We match up well. It's always a fun game. It's always a very exciting and energetic game. So tomorrow is going to be a good day. We're excited and looking forward to it.

Q. For you, McKenna, with everything you've done at CSU, do you feel like you're lacking kind of that signature victory and tomorrow could be --

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yes, totally. I look back on my career, and I want there to be one game where in 20 years people can remember that game. Not just for me, but this team. We can leave our legacy on CSU in that way.

Tomorrow is a great opportunity for that.

Q. You guys played a really great game today. Just kind of going off of what was said, what are you guys looking to do specifically for this UNLV game?

RYUN WILLIAMS: They don't know yet.

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: We're getting the game plan later. No, I think we're just going to go out and play our hardest. We're going to really enjoy 40 more minutes together, and I think with such an experienced, old team, that's kind of where we really can thrive.

So we know there's not many games left in our careers, so we're going to go out there and give it all that we've got, enjoy each other, play for each other, and hope for a great outcome.

Q. When you think about a lot of teams when they see a bracket, they want to avoid the No. 1 seed as long as possible. Do you like the fact that you get them in the semifinals earlier on? You have just gotten warmed up and you are ready to go?

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, we're ready.

THE MODERATOR: We'll dismiss the student-athletes at this time. Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

Q. Your message to the team was to basically go all-in. Did you feel like they did that even though the only thing that wasn't going all-in was your shots?

RYUN WILLIAMS: That was kind of the message at halftime, was we were really happy with the compete. We were really happy with the conviction at which they were playing offense. We did shoot the ball with confidence. We did play aggressively. We just needed it to go in a little more.

You've got to credit Nevada for that too. They've always been quite disruptive, but I thought we just stayed with what we had to do. We stayed the course. We didn't really stray from it. We thought there were some things that we could get to, and we did.

I know Hannah said that maybe she was struggling with her confidence, but it sure didn't look like that. I'm so proud of how she continued to just keep shooting the basketball.

If you go 0-for-5, that can maybe wear on your confidence a little bit. But I did tell her at halftime, You're probably going to go 5-for-5. What did she go? Something like that.

Q. So, Nostradamus.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Nostradamus.

Q. Were you confident going into the locker room at halftime considering the way you were playing defense? You had forced ten turnovers at that time and blocked four shots. You were holding your own on the boards.

RYUN WILLIAMS: I thought we really battled in the areas where we needed to -- where they probably had the advantage a little bit. They kind of beat us up on the glass a few times this year. I like the fact that we did cause the turnover ball there in the first half.

Roden was really good. She was really playing well and getting downhill and getting into her pull-up. And I thought we did a nice job on her in the second half.

We were just there a week and a half ago or two weeks ago. We were down five at halftime, and there were some things that we could clean up, we can change this, and now we can put ourselves in a position to win.



I thought we did that. Again, I'm proud of how they just continued to stay with it. You know, you see a couple go in, like Ronsiek made a few, and then it kind of becomes contagious, right? Everybody wants to be a part of that.

I thought we kind of rode that offensive wave there, especially in the third quarter. Then the kids relaxed and started having some fun. That's really neat to see your kids have fun in a big tournament game.

Q. In one or two words, what would you describe that third quarter as, given what Hannah did and given the fact that you limited Nevada to five points?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Hannah Ronsiek. That's two words, right? Shot-making, defending.

Q. How good has this trio of McKenna, Hannah, and Marta been for you in the last stretch of the season, and what excites you about them moving on in the tournament?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Well, yeah, they've been a nice little guard trio. We're getting some nice offense. We're getting some nice defense. You win with guard. Guard play is really big in a tournament setting.

I thought all three of those kids were really, really good tonight. They've been good for a while now. The thing that they've been doing really well through the last seven, eight games, scoring has been fairly consistent, but we've been guarding better.

We're going to talk about the Ronsiek shooting and McKenna scored it well, but we held them to 54 points. They scored 51 in Moby Arena, and I think we gave up 150 in Reno.

I like the fact that we really figured out how to guard and really competed on that end.

Q. So you mentioned that Roden played really well tonight, and you guys are playing against UNLV, where they also have really good star players. What are you looking to specifically combat those --

RYUN WILLIAMS: Man, you're going right to UNLV. I told our kids we'll get to that at the dinner tonight. But really good question.

We've had two really good battles with UNLV. They're obviously the top of our league, and they have been for the last couple of years. They just have a lot of weapons.

I think the big thing you've got to do with UNLV -- and I didn't watch that game before. I did see the score. They scored at an unbelievable clip. In order to compete with them, you have to score it with them. You really do.

You've got to have a really aggressive mindset. You can't create opportunities for them by being loose with the basketball. You've got to really compete on the glass and not give them opportunities that way.

There's not many holes in that basketball team. There's just not. We're going to have to play our best game of the season to beat them tomorrow. But we have that in us. I really believe in my basketball team.

No better time than right now to play your best game of the season.

Q. With the 18 forced turnovers and the blocks that your team had defensively, what do you think stood out the most with your team's defensive efforts today?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Well, I think, first of all, the effort. We really played hard. And then I thought we really played connected. There were not a lot of holes in just how we needed to guard them.

They run a really good ball screen game. Their bigs shoot the three from the top of the key quite well. I thought we really took a lot of that away and caused the turnovers. Then the rebounding piece. I don't know what it was on the glass, but we really battled and competed. Sometimes they can get some momentum by getting some offensive put-backs, that sort of thing, but we kind of kept that at bay most of the night.

Q. Like I asked McKenna, getting UNLV in the semis, you kind of prefer that over having to get them in the Finals on their home floor?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Do we have to get them at all?

Q. Well, right now the way the bracket is set up, yeah, probably.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Oh, okay, we do? It really doesn't matter. We've been on that side of it as well. Whoever is in front of you, you better be ready to play your best game.

Whether they're in the semis, whether they're in the quarters, whether they're in the championship, you better be ready to ball out. It just happens to be tomorrow night.

So we'll have our group ready to go.

Q. The third quarter gets all the attention, but really the game flipped at that time-out after the 11-0 run. Was there anything in that time that you adjusted anything, or was it just a matter of --

RYUN WILLIAMS: That's top secret, but that was -- yeah, it was a time-out to maybe just kind of settle down. You know, I really thought we played some unsettled minutes there.

We threw the ball to them and gave them some break-away layups. It was just let's calm down and just let's play the game.

But we had some key shot-making. McKenna was really big in that quarter. She has kind of done that a lot for us this year. Kind of keeps us within striking distance in moments when the game can maybe go sideways. I thought she was really big in that stretch.

Q. One more UNLV question. Why do you think you have matched up better than most teams in the conference against them?

RYUN WILLIAMS: I don't know. We've got a very competitive bunch. I think that has something to do with it. We do have seven seniors that have played them a number of times. So game plan-wise, scheme-wise we seem to be pretty connected on that.

But I think our kids just like playing the best, you know, and they are the best. So who doesn't want to do that? To win a championship, you have got to beat the best team, and we're going to give them a really good shot tomorrow hopefully.

Q. Coach, this is the 17th time in program history that you have reached 20 wins. Eight of those have come in your tenure. What do you take the most pride in the program that you have built at CSU?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Probably we've just been very consistent. I think we played really good basketball for a long stretch now. I think most coaches probably pride themselves in that, and that's probably what I really like about this group.

You mentioned the 20 wins, but we had a stretch maybe about maybe a month ago where our season probably gone sideways. The challenge was to just keep showing up. Just keep showing up and start playing with a little joy, let's have some fun.

I think really our last eight games -- and we haven't won them all, but we've really competed, and as a coach that's

what you want your kids to do. Over our tenure here, we've had teams that have really competed and played good winning basketball. That's all you can ask for.

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