

# Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

**Colorado State Rams**

**Coach Ryun Williams**

**McKenna Hofschild**

**Marta Leimane**

Postgame Press Conference



UNLV 62, Colorado State 52

THE MODERATOR: We have student-athletes McKenna Hofschild, Marta Leimane. We'll start with you, Coach Williams, for thoughts on tonight's game.

RYUN WILLIAMS: I really liked how our kids battled when it was such a struggle offensively. It would have been easy to just kind of maybe fold a little bit, play a little more frustrated. But we kept trying to find a way and got ourselves to that one-possession game with under five minutes, I believe.

Our team showed incredible fight. I'm proud of that. But UNLV played a heck of a game. They guarded us really well, and they can win a lot of different ways. They proved that tonight.

They're a very potent offensive team, and tonight they really, really guarded. So credit to UNLV.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. McKenna, if you were told before tonight's game you were going to hold UNLV to 62 points, you would have probably liked your chances; correct?**

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah.

**Q. What did you do so well defensively, and then how frustrating I guess did the offensive struggles get during that game?**

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, I thought we stuck to the game plan really well on the defensive end and stuck to what we were told by the coaches. I think we did a great

job on that end. Some nights you're just not going to have it both ways, and our offense kind of struggled. They did a good job defending it. We have to live with that one.

**Q. What was that feeling like for you or the emotions like for you with six seconds left in the game, leaving the floor, nothing but hugs?**

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Yeah, it was hard. Very hard.

**Q. From an energy standpoint when they start out 8-0 and go on a 9-0 run to start the third quarter, what does that do to a team when you are constantly playing catchup because of those early runs?**

MARTA LEIMANE: We just got to keep fighting no matter what. Always someone will get on a run. You can't just stop playing. You have to make the right play, try to get a stop and then try to score.

**Q. McKenna, do you leave here assuming this is it, or are you assuming there's still more basketball, at least this season, if not, then beyond?**

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: I hope there's more basketball this year, but we'll see what happens. Yeah, that's it.

**Q. McKenna, you said you might have a little bit left in you, but what kind of legacy do you want to leave at CSU?**

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Good questions. I just want to be a winner. I can't give you much right now.

**Q. Marta, what's it been like to learn to watch McKenna play the last couple of years, and what do you take away from playing with somebody like her?**

MARTA LEIMANE: I'm incredibly proud of her and everyone I've met. I really appreciate what basketball has given me here at CSU. I'm happy to learn from someone that good. I'm really happy to be here, and hopefully we all that are going to not leave, stay in CSU, I hope we take something from that and get them next year.



**Q. Defensively, do you feel like you could have played much better of a game in terms of how you held down Desi? You didn't give up much on the three-point line. Was that just about as well as you could have imagined you guys playing tonight?**

MARTA LEIMANE: I think we could have played better defense at the beginning when they got those runs in the first and third quarter. But they're tough. We should have been more tougher, I guess.

RYUN WILLIAMS: Just real quick. I know this young lady didn't want to speak to her legacy, but I sure the hell will. What this young lady has done for the Mountain West basketball and for Colorado State basketball, it's probably going to go unmatched.

Her career is nothing short of remarkable, and she's a warrior. She's a stalwart Ram. She's been loyal to our program, as all of our kids have, but she's brought incredible fight. She might be 5'2", but that heart sure the hell isn't 5'2".

She has a lot to be proud of, and what an amazing career.

MCKENNA HOFSCCHILD: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

**Q. It seems like the one advantage UNLV does have as opposed to other teams you play is they have both Kiara and Amarachi who can defend McKenna. Is that what makes them different to face, is because of that depth at guard?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, two very competitive young ladies on the basketball, and obviously McKenna has the ball in her hands quite a bit for us. So their initial pressure on our initial attack, tonight it was really good. In previous games we've been a little more fluid and found some higher quality shots.

Tonight they were really good, and those two kids I thought were very critical to how they defended us. The Jackson kid, she's really long. She separates and keeps it in front. 33, she's a competitive young lady as well. She probably plays with a little more physicality.

McKenna has a tough fight, and she had it all night. That's the beautiful thing about McKenna, though, is she just still tries to find a way. Everybody plays her differently, and they run different kids at her with length, with strength, sometimes with their 5. She still finds a way. I thought we kind of found some rhythm in that second half in large part

due to McKenna figuring it out.

**Q. Did you learn anything different about your team tonight? They obviously went on a couple of runs that could have put you away, but you then twice got it down to a one-possession game. Is that the team you've seen?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, we've been saying that for a while now that this group, they found a different competitiveness. I think really over the last past month we've really battled. It's not always going to be easy. It's not always going to be smooth and fluid, and shots aren't always going to go in. But you still got to find a way to hang in there and maybe give yourself a chance to win.

That's what I really -- I mean, that's our team. Like I said earlier, we had some struggles shooting the ball. I think we started 2 for 11, maybe, or 2 for 7 I think it was. It would have been easy to get overly discouraged and kind of be done early. But, no, they found a way.

Just a stop late and maybe a big basket that would have tied it, it's a different story. But UNLV was too tough tonight.

**Q. What does it mean when you are saying that your team has this fight? What does it mean for this upcoming season as well next year?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Well, you can learn a lot. Even kids that didn't play those minutes tonight that are coming back, I think you should learn that it's hard. There's going to be resistance, and you still have to try to find a way.

That's the team that you want every single night, and that's what we became. We were maybe a little inconsistent early in the year on our competitive level. Not that it was bad, but you want it to be at that championship level. They learned that's something you can bring every single night. Those are high-character, high -- they're classy young ladies. That's what Colorado State is. That's what we are about.

I mean, we are stalwart Rams. We're very loyal. We're mudders. That's what we said at halftime. This is our game, right? We got them right where we were them. We're mudders. It's not going to be pretty.

It just never got pretty enough, in large part due to UNLV.

**Q. In a way does that make it a little tougher that you kind of have the fight that you want, but three times against these guys, just this close?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, we just could never crack that code. We've really scored it quite well against them every single meeting. Like Mike pointed out, we really guarded. Our kids really, really defended. They executed that side of the court. But you've got compete on the other end, and we did compete, but we just didn't find enough good offense tonight.

**Q. Was there kind of a concerted effort at halftime to, I guess, get off the three-point line and get inside a bit?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, just to be more aggressive. I thought in the first half we probably settled. We got late in the shot clock a little bit and had to probably take some tougher shots late in the clock.

But I thought early on we just weren't putting enough pressure on the rim and our drives. You saw in the second half when we did do that, we got to our spots. We got some kick-out stuff and converted at the rim. We just probably got settled into that too late. That was obviously what we talked about at halftime.

Our spacing wasn't very good early. It just wasn't. The way we were cutting wasn't as good as it needed to be. We played into their switching a little bit and allowed them to kind of establish a force field. We just were a little too impatient in that first half.

**Q. At the end of every loss coaches are always going to go what if this, what if that. Do you look at the moment when Crocker went down early in the fourth quarter? Because she had given you a spark. Do you kind of wonder what might have happened had she not had to pretty much miss the rest?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: She took a hard fall. Crocker had a great game. Nine points in a little over eight minutes. She's playing with that senior urgency.

Crock has been a big shotmaker for us her two years here. I feel bad for Crock. I really do. But she competed her tail off tonight.

She, too, had an amazing career. The seven seniors, we've talked a lot about them, but we love them. They've been really good for our program, and they've won a lot of basketball games. I know they wanted to get this big one, but I really appreciate their efforts and what they brought to our program.

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