

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Colorado State Rams

Coach Ryun Williams

Emma Ronsiek

Marta Leimane

Postgame Press Conference



They played really good. We should have started better. One team got a win, one loses. We've got to give credit to Fresno.

Q. Is the most frustrating fact that you guys did lock down defensively after that opening start in the first half. You just never found that range which seems out of character for this team as good as you are offensively?

MARTA LEIMANE: Yeah, I mean, we shot pretty bad the first half, as I said. And we just couldn't find that rhythm, I'd say. I don't know, gotta watch film and study what happened. We just didn't make those shots, I'd say.

Q. I know when you're coming back, you probably don't want to pay attention to the scoreboard but how much of a tendency is there to look and see where things stand and get frustrated when you get close and then fall back by double digits?

EMMA RONSIEK: Yeah, we won a game where we were down 20 at half earlier this year. It's kind of one of those things where basketball is so up and down. I've been around college basketball for a while now. And there's been countless times where we've, me and my old school have come back down 10, up 10. We've lost games when we've been up 10. There's just no telling what can happen.

It can be a little frustrating but we just shot horrible. I know some girls on our team are going to be kicking themselves for a little bit, especially me. That's just the way basketball goes.

Q. Bad shooting night, obviously. And there were times when I could just see the frustration in your faces on the court. Was that because of anything they were doing defensively, or was it just the frustration just not seeing the ball go through the net?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Probably a little bit of both. That was always the message in the timeout and at halftime: We cannot play frustrated. You just have to play the possession and play right. And that includes the right

Fresno State - 54, Colorado State - 52

RYUN WILLIAMS: Obviously very, very tough to lose this game. You don't want to be an early out, but just probably a little out of whack that first quarter. It was an 18 point quarter for them, and after that we really locked in defensively.

Didn't score it great tonight, obviously. We missed way too many shots (indiscernible) game. And although we kept guarding we couldn't put any game pressure on them when I thought we needed to. Maybe a little bit late.

But give Fresno credit, they really came out and played well early and we couldn't rebound from that first quarter.

But our kids battled. They've done that all year. They've always battled and found a way to give themselves a chance. And tonight was no different. I think that speaks to the character of them.

Just needed to execute and play a little better offensively.

Q. Emma and Marta, it was a 9-0 start -- they hit their first three 3-pointers. Normally on most nights you guys could come back from that. Does it feel like it was just bad timing to have one of your worst offensive games as a team?

EMMA RONSIEK: Yeah --

MARTA LEIMANE: I'd say it's pretty hard if we can't respond so early and we shoot that bad as we did the first half like we did today. It's really hard to come back from that start.



mindset.

And I think if we would have got really frustrated we wouldn't have guarded as well as we did. Sometimes when you play as poorly as we did offensively, that can carry over to the other end. And it didn't. We kept clawing there.

But it is frustrating when you miss that much. It's human nature. I mean, I imagine you've missed that much. That's how it goes.

But the message is always put a good stroke on it and believe it's going in. If it doesn't, get your butt back and guard and get on to the next play. But like Emma said, basketball can be cruel that way sometimes.

And we've had some moments this year where we've been a little inconsistent shooting the ball. But I think in a lot of games we've just found enough. Tonight we didn't find enough.

Q. Emma would you be willing to reflect for a moment on just the difficulty of being a transfer student? It's happening a lot right now, obviously, in college basketball. And especially it seems like a lot of students are doing it after they maybe get their undergraduate degree and then go get a one-year graduate degree and come over as a grad-student transfer. What's that experience like? How hard is it? Of course you had a sister on the team. Not everyone has that when they transfer. But what was the transfer experience like for you?

EMMA RONSIEK: For me, I thought it was really easy. I was super blessed at my old school with having a great coaching staff and great teammates. And then being able to come here and play with Hannah, that was my goal. That's what I wanted to finish my career on.

It was real easy. I love the girls. I love the staff. It was a lot of similarities from my time at Creighton.

So, yeah, it feels weird to be able to say that you've been blessed with two great universities and two great teams because I think that's why a lot of people transfer is because they weren't blessed.

But I was blessed twice and I'm super thankful for my four years at Creighton and then one here.

Playing with Hannah meant a lot to me. I think it meant a lot to her as well.

Q. Marta, you're going to be coming back next year,

hopefully. I'm wondering what you think the prospects are looking forward. I know it's hard to do that right now. But a lot of good players coming back, including Emma's sister. How do you feel about the team coming back next year? And, Coach, if you might address that as well?

MARTA LEIMANE: I think we have some really, really good players. The freshmen we got -- Brooke, Kloe and some redshirts that redshirted this year -- we have something we can really build off of and I'm really excited to see how we work towards the season and how we build off of those people.

And I'm really excited to be on this team. I really, really love everyone. I love the connection we have, and I believe that we can build something bigger and build off of this and learn from the failures. That's like one of the biggest things in my life that I value. And I think this is going to teach us a lot.

I mean, like nobody -- I'd say from us -- expected us to lose the first round but I know it's going to get us better and we've just got to build off of that.

Q. Emma, the reason you transferred was to play with Hannah. One game aside, was this season everything that you guys felt it was going to be?

EMMA RONSIEK: Yeah, I mean, I would never say this to her face. She's just my best friend. We have an absolute blast together. A lot of the reason was the basketball, just being able to share the floor with her again because COVID cut that short my senior year of high school. It felt like forever ago.

But just living with her and just being able to meet new people. She's the social butterfly. I'm a little more reserved, shockingly, for those that know her. But it was everything to me and I think she'll be a little coy, too, but I think it was also everything to her.

Q. One of the things you wanted to key on defensively was not losing track of the 3-point shooters early. They go 7-of-14 in the first half. Is that where this game really came down to?

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah. And to us it should have been easier. They started smaller and so the switching should have been a lot more in sync than it was.

We were just a little -- that's very uncharacteristic of us. We had two on the ball a lot and they sprayed it to Jacobs. We lose two early on. And just breakdowns. They made us pay.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

But that's one thing we've been really good at here as of late is just being connected and especially in the switching stuff.

Man, we missed them all. I mean, I don't know if we even got one switch right in that first quarter, to be honest with you. So just way out of sync, way out of sync.

You let Jacobs see it go in a few times. You let 2 see it go in a few times. They got really aggressive. They played with a different level of intensity and belief. And we created that for them by our mistakes.

But give them credit. They knocked that down. They went on that 3-point barrage early and we couldn't recover from it. But that to me we pride ourselves in how we execute and game plan defensively. And to come out of the gate and to make those mistakes, yeah, that's rather frustrating.

Q. You guys did a really good job defensively on Mia the first game. Did she feel like a little determined tonight to maybe a little payback? And, of course, she had two big shots where they were baskets that ended up as and-ones where she didn't collect the ball; she just touched the pass up into the basket?

RYUN WILLIAMS: We knew she was going to be a more determined scorer and really look to get herself involved. So that was not a surprise to us. And she's very good. She's very good. She's very strong. She's very skilled. But she's going to get some. But I think we created the easy ones for her that we didn't do in Fort Collins. She didn't get those easy looks.

And so I think, again, she saw it go in. It doesn't take much to get some feels going on in this game and this tournament. And you play with a different energy. And we could never get that going. We kind of were climbing that mountain made of sand, it seemed like, really for four quarters.

But Mia is really good. She's really good. And I thought their team played really aggressive early. They came out on attack and maybe we were on our heels a little bit. Got into some foul trouble. Hannah got in foul trouble. I think that really impacted us a little bit.

Q. There was a lot of finality in the way they were talking. Are you open to a postseason bid, or is this certainly it for the season?

RYUN WILLIAMS: I mean, obviously we're not going to make the NCAA Tournament. The WBIT, I think we'd be on the outside looking in for something like that. I know

we've had a good year. We've had some big wins. But we'll just see how that plays out.

We would surely be open to that. So we haven't addressed that with them. These kids had visions of the big tournament. And rightly so. They're a very competitive group. And we knew it was going to be challenging. There's a lot of good teams in this tournament. But these kids have a belief. So we'll just see what happens next week. If this was it, this was it. It's no fun to go out this way.

Q. Would you be willing to answer that question I asked of the players about looking forward to next year, who you've got coming back? I know it's early to be already thinking about that but you have good pieces coming back?

RYUN WILLIAMS: They are. Marty is coming back I know you asked that.

Q. You never know these days.

RYUN WILLIAMS: I know that one. And you're right, there's just so much uncertainty in the game and the transfer stuff, all that. But that's the big message to the team. You want to stay together. We've got some really good young pieces that had really good years, really good years. And in big moments really came through for us.

And also had some struggles, and that's part of being a young basketball player. To give credit to Emma and I think Simental and Marty and Hannah, those kids that have a fair amount of games under their belt. I think they allowed those young kids to make some mistakes and we still won games.

It's always a little roller coastery when you're young and playing that many minutes. But our basketball really didn't fall off that much because of, I think, the leadership and the performance of our older kids. So I think that speaks to their character and their competitiveness.

But our hope is to keep as many together as possible because that's how you build a really good foundation. So we anticipate everybody that you saw out there competing, those young kids being back.

Q. When you're looking ahead who might be available in the transfer portal this coming year and who you may be recruiting, I guess you probably already have your freshman class for next year, but to the extent you have flexibility on who you can bring in, what will be your priority as far as the pieces you need to add?



RYUN WILLIAMS: Well, a shooting coach for one. Are they in the transfer portal? (Laughter).

That's a fair question. We'll need some interior strength and some stuff around the basket. Kids that can play in that cage and be productive and score it there but also guard.

We like big kids that can guard different positions and be able to guard perimeter players, a lot like an Emma Ronsiek or Sanna Strom. We missed her so much this year, we really did. That's a kid that I think probably gets overlooked a bit.

She was so valuable for us. And when we lost her that was an interior defender that was really, really good at it. I thought our kids did a great job of just letting us move around each game.

But we need some size. We need some size. I think we need some -- the wing play, somebody like a power forward or -- we call it the Sydney Mech type that can guard maybe a bigger forward but also guard perimeter players, we believe in the versatility more on the defensive end than we do the offensive end. We'll surely look for that.

Q. Just to reflect a little bit about the conference. I've been watching all the games. I don't know if you've been able to watch all of the games. They've all been really close. They've all been really competitive. I know you guys thought you might have a chance to make a run tonight in the tournament. I thought you guys were going to make a run in this tournament. But doesn't it just speak to the quality of the conference that every game is going to be a battle like this? And if UNLV ends up holding serve and winning this tournament, it looks like it's going to be a one-bid conference. How crazy is that?

RYUN WILLIAMS: It's always been a one-bid conference since I've been in it, to be honest with you, for 13 years. But you're right, the conference has really improved. I think our net last year, at the end of last season, as a conference, was 13.

I think this year it was seven, last time I looked. So that speaks volumes to the quality of players. It keeps improving. I think you've got really good coaches in this league. And so, yeah, it's hard to win games. That's the big message to our group in the locker room. Yeah, we lost tonight, but it doesn't -- you can't take away from the fact that they won 22 basketball games.

They lost one game on the road in conference, one game

on the road in conference. Nobody in the league did that except for us. So it just speaks to how they can rebound after some tough home losses, or what have you. Speaks to their character, their togetherness. They stuck together. And I'm proud of them for that. But proud of the league. The league's good. It's good and it's only going to continue to get better.

So I know we're only in it one more year, but we'll put a good team out there next year and try to make another run at this thing.

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