

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Colorado State vs Michigan State

Friday, March 20, 2026

Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Lloyd Noble Center

## Colorado State Rams Coach Ryun Williams Brooke Carlson Hannah Ronsiek

Media Conference

Michigan State 65, Colorado State 62

**RYUN WILLIAMS:** Just a March Madness basketball game. Two teams really battling out there. Congrats to Michigan State; I thought they played a tough fourth quarter.

But I couldn't be more proud of my squad. Holy cow, did we battle. They did everything that we asked them to do tonight. Just a few plays here or there, and we're probably having a different conversation.

These ladies will forever be champions, and they played like it tonight, no doubt about it. I love my basketball team.

**Q. Brooke, for you, I'm sure it's difficult to put into words at this moment, but can you kind of describe the moments that you are proud of, of the way you guys played tonight?**

**BROOKE CARLSON:** Honestly, the whole game I'm really proud of us. We fought together. Even when they started going on runs, I don't think we ever disconnected. We stayed connected, stayed huddling, and I couldn't be more proud of this team, not just to night but the whole entire season.

Since summer, this has been a competitive group. We've wanted it, and we got the championship, but we just fell short tonight, so...

**Q. Hannah, you kind of started off on a really good run tonight. Can you kind of describe your emotions in the**



**first quarter, first couple of minutes?**

**HANNAH RONSIEK:** Yeah, I mean, it's obviously March, and I'm a senior, and I know that each game is not promised, or the next game isn't promised. So I just want to go out and do everything I can for my basketball team, whether that's getting stops, hitting open shots. Yeah, I saw an opportunity on the offensive end, and I took it.

**Q. Brooke, 26 points, career high. 13 of those in the fourth quarter. What was going through your mind as you were kind of answering there? It seemed like you were really just on another level, especially there late.**

**BROOKE CARLSON:** I feel like I just wanted -- we wanted to win. We wanted to get that dub. But I just kind of was just playing, giving what the defense was giving me. My teammates were finding me in those positions. So it was just kind of taking what I got in that moment.

**Q. For both of you, there's no such thing as a moral victory, but for the program to win the Mountain West, to come here, show that you belong in the tournament, and you're both in two different places, so Hannah, it's your last game, Brooke, you've got a ways to go, but how does it feel with how you represented the program tonight and the school?**

**HANNAH RONSIEK:** Yeah, I mean, I know all of the Rams here and back home believed in us, but we were definitely an underdog. I think we went out and we showed that we can compete with these teams on any given night. Yeah, I'm just super proud of our basketball team the way we played tonight and throughout the season. Yeah.

**BROOKE CARLSON:** Yeah, I'd have to agree with Hannah. Just being able to play with these girls, our seniors did a lot for us this year, so I'm really proud of them. They stepped up in ways that wasn't seen on the court. They were leaders off the court, brought everybody together. We're just going to have to keep building on that for next year and just taking what we saw from them and then keep it going.

**Q. In the week leading up to this game, you guys**



**talked a lot about how getting defense on lock was going to help you guys win this game. Can you talk about how your defense led into your offense when you were playing tonight?**

BROOKE CARLSON: I think our defense was amazing tonight. We were really connected. We were staying together. They didn't really get that much that -- we were taking away a lot. That kind of just feeds into the offensive end, getting stops, getting rebounds, being able to push it. That's when we like to play is in transition and all of that.

**Q. It was a close game the entire time; no team led by more than five. What do you feel was maybe the final swing in that fourth quarter that led them to get over the top?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: I mean, thanks for being here, by the way. They made some plays. VanSlooten; 23 nails the corner; 35, that young lady plays with a lot of force. I think those plays combined with -- we had some empty possessions, a few turnovers late.

But we put ourselves in a position to win. I mean, our team was amazing tonight. They were amazing.

They just made a few more plays at the end of the day. I thought our ladies did everything that we asked them to do, everything. And they did it with all their might. As a coach, that's really all you can ask. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, but at the end of the day, those kids really, really competed, and they left it all on that March Madness floor.

They're a good team. They're a good team. I mean, they just made a few more plays.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about Lexi Deden's impact, especially in that first half, with Madi Bragg getting two fouls in that first quarter, can you talk about her impact on the defensive end?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, Deden has been great all year for us. Whatever we've asked her to do, she's done. VanSlooten is a very difficult interior player to guard. She's got exceptional footwork. She gets separation. She's incredible. She got us in foul trouble, and our kids really -- it was going to be one of those where we were going to have to play physical with her. We wanted to make sure she felt us, and Madi picked up two early. One was kind of silly, the over-the-backer, but then Deden was ready to go.

That's the thing about Deden is she is always ready to go. She comes in and she plays with incredible energy. She

really guards well. She gave us good rebounding.

That's what this group has been, right, and it's different each night. That was a good half for Deden. Marty stepped up, right, for Bargesser being out.

It's kind of what this game needs for us to be successful, and maybe it's five minutes, maybe it's 10 minutes, maybe it's 40 minutes. But these kids always get themselves ready to go.

Deden has been in these games before. You saw just a mature young woman out there today. Whatever was asked, she was going to go do, and that's the sign of a senior, an oldie, and I couldn't be more proud of her.

**Q. Michigan State used so many of their players. When you have four or five players playing 35 plus minutes, do you see that impact out on the floor?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's a good question. Thanks for being here, too, by the way.

There were a few possessions we maybe were a little tired, and you could see it in the pursuit. There was that possession, I think they got three O-boards in a row, you could see we just got a little too spectatory, and I think fatigue obviously had to do something with that. But they were trying to find offense. We guarded the heck out of them. I'm sorry, we guarded.

So that's kind of been our rotation late. We haven't played a lot of kids here lately, and these kids are -- we ain't going to use that tired thing. They just made a few more plays.

**Q. Ryan, kind of on the same thing that I asked the girls about, with just what this does for the program and for the university, the headline is Spartans avoid upset, which then everybody wants to look at that because who almost upset them. Again, no moral victories, but a big showing.**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, it was a really good basketball game. We put a plan together, and our kids prepared to win this game. To win the game, not to keep it close, not to let's show out well on a national stage. That wasn't the plan, and it's never the plan with this group.

It's to go win the game, and that's what they went to do.

I think the country saw what a CSU Ram is all about. There's not one CSU Ram around the country, wherever they were watching, that isn't bursting with pride. Nobody is bursting with more pride than me.

We've got a locker room that's hurting, and they hurt because they care and because they expect to win. They don't look at a 12-5. They don't look at it that way, and we've trained them not to look at it that way. There's always a way to put yourself in a position to win, and that's why I'm so proud of them, because they do it, and they did it all year long.

Colorado State basketball, it's a big deal. This group all year long, last year -- I mean, we play good basketball there, really good basketball. It was nice to be on this stage. It's hard to play these games on a neutral floor. You don't get those opportunities very often. Nobody will schedule -- you can go to the Bahamas for Thanksgiving and get these games, but with this type of -- when it's on the line, you saw what being a CSU Ram is all about.

**Q. Brooke specifically there, especially in the fourth quarter with those 13 points, just what impresses you about her mentality and the way that she elevates in those big moments?**

RYUN WILLIAMS: Yeah, Brooke is a bulldog. That young lady, she's a rock star. We really challenged Brooke, from really probably the second half of the season on to just get to a different gear, get to a different level, and she has really done that.

It had to go to a different level when Bargesser went down. So in the Mountain West tournament you saw Brooke mainly in the semis and the championship game, she knew much more was going to be required from her, and she delivered. She captured the moment, and she delivered.

We talked today in shootaround, she's -- get out of your lane. There's a different gear for you. You have to take risks tonight. You have to. Because she was the only ball handler we had, people. Let's be real. Those other kids did an amazing job, as well, but we had one young lady that could really help us play a little bit poised, and that was Brooke.

For her to handle the pressure of their pressure and then to score 26, I mean, I'm glad the basketball world got to see Brooke because she's just getting started. Trust me, that young lady is just getting started.

It's all hers now. I mean, the keys are totally hers right now. But it was fun to see her get to a different level tonight.

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