

Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 13, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Nevada Wolf Pack

Coach Steve Alford

Vaughn Weems

Corey Camper Jr.

Postgame Press Conference



Utah State 79, Nevada 66

THE MODERATOR: For Nevada we have Corey Camper Jr., Vaughn Weems, Coach Steve Alford.

Coach, let's start with you, thoughts on tonight's game.

STEVE ALFORD: Yeah, just super proud of our guys. They've battled all year long. I told them that in the locker room. Very appreciative of the effort they've given all year long. It's been very consistent. Never lost more than two games in a row. Always responded when adversity hit.

We've grown a lot over the course of the year, and obviously played a really good basketball team tonight. I thought they played really well.

When all the dust settles, we had the same amount of field goals, same amount of offensive rebounds. We just had too many turnovers. Any time our assists and turnovers are kind of the same number, it's usually been in our defeats.

I think that hurt us, because they were able to get out in transition where they're really, really good. They had two transition points I think in our last game at home, and that enabled us to hang around in that game and sneak out a win. Tonight I think they had over 20 points in transition. A lot of that came from tough shots because of their defense and our turnovers because of their defense.

Foul line, we get 13 points; they get 27. That's really the margin of victory.

All in all, just super pleased with these guys. They've been a joy to coach.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. What are you guys feeling right now? Obviously a tough one out there.

VAUGHN WEEMS: Feeling a little bit of hurt. I wish we could have walked out of here with the W and been able to play tomorrow for a Mountain West Championship. But the cards didn't play in our favor tonight, so just hard.

COREY CAMPER JR.: Yeah, like he said, feeling hurt. Just really trying not to hang our heads. Just trying to keep our heads high and just know that we didn't stop battling. No matter what the score was, we kept fighting.

Q. Corey, Coach Calhoun just spoke very highly of you. He said you were at the top of the scouting report. What were you seeing out there that made it difficult on you?

COREY CAMPER JR.: They were just being physical. They was being more physical than we was. Like Coach said, we got the same amount of shots. Just turnovers hurt us and them getting to the line more.

Q. Vaughn, it felt like there was a lot of different moments where they could have started steamrolling you guys, and you put a little run together to kind of stay in striking distance. What does it say about you guys that you did play to that final horn and kind of kept it somewhat interesting for a while there?

VAUGHN WEEMS: It just shows how much pride that we have as a team. We could have, like you said, laid down and gave up multiple times throughout the game, but during time-outs we got all our coaches and players saying, we've been in this situation before, we can come back, keep going, just don't stop.

Q. Corey, obviously a lot to ask to try to win four in four days. How did you guys feel fatigue-wise out there? For a while it just looked like they had one less game under their belt at certain points?

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

COREY CAMPER JR.: It felt a little fatigue, but that just come with it. We knew what it was, and we knew we had four games in four days. So I think we was prepared for it mentally. We just tried to come out there and just do our best.

Q. Corey, 9 points on 3 of 12 shooting. It looked like Utah State tried to get in your grill and head, especially on the screens. What did you feel kind of on those screens where they came up and really were aggressive on you?

COREY CAMPER JR.: Yeah, I felt really just the pressure of them coming off screens. They switched at times. They would start with the big on me and then switch with the guard coming out the screen. So as the game went on, I seen that I had to make the extra play, make the extra pass to the big man or just get off of it.

Q. Vaughn, you really came on towards the end of this Mountain West season. Can you just speak on your adjustment at this D1 level and maybe some of the confidence you gained here, especially down here?

VAUGHN WEEMS: My confidence came from my coaches and my teammates. Coach is telling me to stay aggressive. You know, just go out there and be who you are, and I feel like that's what I was doing these last couple of games. It allowed me to come in here with a lot of momentum and give my team a boost that we needed.

Q. For both of you guys, it sounds like the school has submitted a bid to potentially host an NIT game. Can you speak on your interest to keep this going with this group?

COREY CAMPER JR.: I definitely want to keep it going. You know, get a chance to hang a banner up, put our team up there in the rafters. It will be very special for us.

VAUGHN WEEMS: I feel like it would be a great experience for our team to go out hanging up something if we couldn't hang up this Mountain West banner. So something is better than nothing.

THE MODERATOR: We'll dismiss the student-athletes.

VAUGHN WEEMS: I want to say one more thing. It's been an honor and a blessing to play with this man right here. I've learned a lot from him throughout the season, and I wouldn't have had no other options to play with anyone else this year. It's been a blessing, brother.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. Steve, I guess that moment kind of just shows what your group is all about. Those two I assume will be life-long friends, so what do you kind of --

STEVE ALFORD: Yeah, we've said it all year. With ten newcomers, it's not easy. It's kind of the way of college basketball now. Used to, you got freshmen, and you developed them, and they had juniors and seniors to show them how to do things. Kids were staying at the same place for three, four years.

Now we got ten newcomers that you have for eight months. Obviously we hope we retain some of these guys, but with ten newcomers, we just really wanted to dive in in June, and we spent a lot of time this summer together. Went to the Bahamas on a foreign trip, which was huge.

But, again, you can do all those things and set all those things up, but you got to have high-character kids that are going to really believe in team over self. They have been selfless all year.

It's like Miles playing tonight. Tay and Tiara were cheering him on like crazy. That's just the way this team has been, and I appreciate that more than anything.

It's gone by very fast. I've said that all along, and I've been doing this long enough that I know when it's an average year, a fast year, or a really slow year, and this has been really a fast year. The calendar has flipped very, very quickly because we've had so much fun with this group. They've been fun to coach. They listen. They work. They're quality young men. They love one another. They've done a job in the community, the classroom. Just on and on and on.

They check all the boxes of not just being successful in this season, winning 22 games, but they're going to be -- the seniors are going to be successful when they leave here. They are really high-character guys.

Q. Utah State is obviously very stout, and you had an extra game in the last two days. Do you feel like the stamina factor maybe played a role?

STEVE ALFORD: It's hard to say. Like Joe asked that question yesterday, and I've always felt like we've done this a long time and have been able to compete and win championships in tournaments. I've always thought if you're playing in that first day, the next game you play is an advantage. Just because you've been out there, you've tasted the crowd, you've been in the lights. Even though everybody played in this arena or most of our teams in our league played in this arena, it's still different. It's a different

floor. It's a neutral setting. But then when it goes to Game 3, that obviously favors somebody that's already played one game, not two.

I thought our guys played hard. I never really saw fatigue as much as maybe mentally of getting the right shot, making the extra pass. They just got out in transition and really beat us in transition, and that I thought was the difference.

Q. What were you seeing, I guess, in terms of what they were doing to try to limit Corey, and Coach Calhoun also mentioned Elijah being toward the top of that scouting report?

STEVE ALFORD: These guys have learned that. Elijah has had it a little bit I think at Fresno. At least when we played them three times last year, he was a focal point. It's one of the reasons why when he got in the portal, we were excited to recruit him because of how much respect we had for him.

Corey at UTEP, I don't know, he might have been the No. 1 option, maybe 2 option, 3 option, but he was really good defensively. When he got here, he was asked to be that scoring guard, and he's done it at a really high level, high level, to where he's First-Team All-League. Like you said, I think Vaughn has had a huge second half, but Corey has learned to deal with that.

But this is the top of the food chain. They're the No. 1 seed for a reason. They're old. They're experienced. They're mature. It's hard to get runs on them. I think that was the concern with us if they made a huge run, we had to stop it as soon as we could. They just had about two or three of them that we just couldn't get. We couldn't get it stopped to where they built a big enough lead.

Because I think they're such a mature team that if they get you down, it's hard to get back. I give our guys credit. They kept fighting. But a very physical team, very good defensive team.

Q. What are your thoughts on playing another game this season?

STEVE ALFORD: NIT?

Q. Moving on wherever it may be.

STEVE ALFORD: If I have to give our case, I think it should be a no-brainer that we're an NIT team. Year one before COVID hit we were that, and this team has had a better season. We've done a lot of good things in this year and beaten a lot of really good teams.

I would hope and pray we get a bid to the NIT, and we would be very excited to play in it.

Q. With that said, as the book closes on your Mountain West season and the league looks a lot different next year, I guess can you give us a taste of what priorities in the offseason look like and how you guys could see yourself as a contender as early as --

STEVE ALFORD: That's hard to tell you now. Recruiting now, it will begin. Our season is not over, I hope, so I hope there's more games to be played with this group of young men, because they're a lot of fun to coach. You can tell how much they care about each other, so I know they want to be able to play more games.

Once our season is officially over, then obviously we got retention. The first leg of recruiting now is retention, and then the portal happens. So high school recruiting is already over, and we've made those signees. So that's I guess the first leg, but the next leg is retention, and then it's the portal.

That will all come to a little bit more clear vision once our season is officially over.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports