

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 10, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Air Force Falcons

Coach Stacy McIntyre

Madison Smith

Jo Huntimer

Postgame Press Conference



Wyoming - 77, Air Force - 64

STACY MCINTYRE: I've seen a lot of great shooting nights from a Wyoming team, but that was one of the best, especially in that second half. They shot 90 and 100 percent in the third quarter and finished it off in that fourth quarter.

We had a great first half. I think just our game plan worked extremely well. And games like this, whether it's a tournament or -- it's a game of runs. And down the stretch, against teams like this, you know, you want to get stops.

We know we have to give up something against a team like that, especially with Allyson Fertig. And unfortunately they continued to rain those 3s and they got on that run. So it was tough to come back from that.

Q. Do you feel like you could have done anything differently? Or was it just a matter of Wyoming getting hot at the right time?

MADISON SMITH: I think we could definitely have done things differently. We had a dry spell in the third quarter, and that's what led to their momentum, I think. I think if we would have been able to keep up the pressure at halftime maybe less of their shots would have fell. But we definitely worked until the buzzer rang. We're proud of that.

Q. Jo, did you feel defensively things didn't change much, or were they able to capitalize on some things?

JO HUNTIMER: I mean, Jayda and M were working their butts off down there. With Allyson Fertig in there you definitely have to have help. But hindsight is 2020. We can sit here all day and ask what we could have done

differently.

Q. I don't know if this is the end, I don't know what the postseason outlook could be. But if it is, as you kind of look back on what you've accomplished here, what kind of pride do you take with what you've done?

MADISON SMITH: We're very proud of the program and where it's come the last four years. We definitely came in at the right time of Air Force women's basketball. Our senior class our freshman year took us all the way to the NIT. Hopefully we can do the same for our underclassmen.

But the program has come a long way in the time we've been here. And we're really excited to see where it's going in the future.

JO HUNTIMER: Yeah, the program has been a blessing to both me and Madi. And the friendships we've built here, that's my family back in that locker room.

Q. So both of you have been part of an incredible revival of basketball at the academy. And although as your careers are winding down, hopefully there will be one more game from somebody who will invite you to a postseason tournament, but as you look at what is left behind -- and you've got an amazing sophomore class that will be juniors next year and a pretty darned good junior class that's going to be seniors next year -- what do you think the future holds for Air Force basketball?

MADISON SMITH: We also have a freshman class that you guys haven't quite seen yet. But they're just as good as the next three. We had upperclassmen this year that filled the playing time. But our freshman class is just as exciting as the rest of them.

JO HUNTIMER: To go off Madi, I think a lot of people talk about what me and Madi did for the program, but all the records that we set, I think the classes under us will beat them. We're super proud to leave a program like that.



Q. What about the idea of the postseason tournament, do you guys think you have deserved the right to play at least one more game?

MADISON SMITH: Yes.

JO HUNTIMER: Yes.

Q. Really, you say you've never seen a Wyoming team shoot like that, have you ever seen any team collectively shoot like that? I asked them, do you sometimes just have to tip your cap and say that team got hot at the right time?

STACY MCINTYRE: I think that would be accurate. I mean, every time the shot went up I think everybody in the gym assumed that they weren't going to hit one more. And they just continued to knock those shots down.

I mean, anytime there's a game like that and then there's run after run, it's very easy to get distracted from what we need to be doing offensively on the other end of the floor.

Everything, the foundation of this program has been what we've done defensively. Throughout the entire season I have encouraged this team to make sure that their defense is about their defense and not their offense. And we've grown in that area.

But clearly it's tough. Anytime the team comes down and they knock down 26 right out of the locker room. And you have to come out and answer the bell. And we definitely didn't do that tonight.

Q. As we obviously talked about, is it your expectation that more basketball is coming in the next few weeks?

STACY MCINTYRE: We certainly hope we've done enough. Clearly you want to get to 20 wins, but at the end of the day you don't like to see your seniors -- their last thoughts of the season are of the third and fourth quarter. And also -- not just our seniors, but so that the juniors and sophomores realize that we expect to win and that we expect to go to the postseason. We so certainly hope we do have that opportunity.

Q. One more thing on the state of the program. The fact that Sydney Roundtree barely played and Alexis Cortez coming off the bench, what's that say about the talent you've accrued at the Air Force? In the past they would have been key players right out of the chute?

STACY MCINTYRE: I do remember the day -- I always say it's a good thing when you don't have to play your

freshmen. I can remember a time early in my tenure at the Air Force Academy where we were starting multiple freshmen.

While the freshmen don't enjoy not being out there, I kindly remind them of all the work that the Madi Smiths and Jo Hunters and these juniors have put in to get to that point.

So hopefully they see those upperclassmen just setting the example, not just from what we do game to game, but what we do day to day.

Q. The question I asked your players earlier, looking at who you've got coming back next year, what are your expectations for next year?

STACY MCINTYRE: For us to step back into the season with the leadership, especially from Milahnie Perry, having a junior like that. And Jayda McNabb coming up and Emily Adams, certainly that sophomore class and their growth. Not just their leadership on the floor but their leadership off the court as well.

I always say when we recruit kids, whether they're freshmen, if freshmen could step into a role and be significant and be productive, we welcome that.

But until that time we continue to grow those freshmen, grow those sophomores. But certainly thankful for not just the foundation that we've put down, but the kids that are coming back and knowing how experienced they are having played the minutes they have.

Q. You mentioned Milahnie a moment ago. I wanted to ask you, what would you like to see from her in the offseason, what do you want to see her work on this summer to come back in the fall an even stronger, better player?

STACY MCINTYRE: Anytime you're a great player like Milahnie, there's always work to do. That pull-up jump shot is phenomenal. I'd love to see her be more accurate from 3. I think that will make her more versatile and more difficult to defend.

But just stay in the gym, like you want all great players to do. And not to be just okay and settle where she's at in this point in her career but continue to get better.

Q. We're living in a convulsive period for intercollegiate athletics, especially at the Division I level with the high-profile sports like football and basketball. But the Air Force Academy stands alone. It's a unique place. You can't do NIL deals. You probably can't work the transfer portal in any regular systematic way like all your colleagues get to do. How



has this affected your ability to recruit and maintain good talent there? Or are you immune to it just because you're such a unique program to begin with?

STACY MCINTYRE: I think after having been at the academy for the time that I've been, specifically in the role of recruiting coordinator, I mean, prior to the NIL or the transfer portal, the mindset is the same. You go out and get the best cadet-athletes that you possibly can so that you can compete on this level.

We know we're going to face teams that have kids that have NIL deals and kids that come in on the transfer portal. But that's just what we do.

And we come in and we recruit hard. We get the best players that we possibly can. And we don't talk about it. We understand that the match-ups are the match-ups, with the expectation we will win regardless of who is on the other side.

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