

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 10, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Fresno State Bulldogs

Coach Jaime White

Maria Konstantinidou

Mia Jacobs

Postgame Press Conference

Fresno State - 54, Colorado State - 52

JAIME WHITE: I just thought our start was perfect. I don't think we could have written it up better. We knew that Colorado State always had good starts in the first quarter. Really our goal was to outscore them and do well in that first quarter. So that led to the next one to the next one.

I thought our kids really played tough. I thought we had a really good game plan. But without our kids really buying in and communicating and doing everything they did tonight, the game plan isn't worth it.

But I thought we really just refused to lose and were tough, really tough at times. These guys rebounded really, really great. Just helped us so much down the stretch, especially. Knocked down some key free throws.

I thought Mariah did a great job, too, sparked us early with multiple baskets early. And just really proud of our team.

Q. How crucial was that start from 3 and sustaining it for the entirety of the first half?

MIA JACOBS: I think just having that momentum and kind of dulling them down a bit. They didn't play yesterday and we had the momentum from coming in the day before. Just kind of keep that rolling, keeping it in our favor.

Q. Were the shots just falling or was there something you were trying to do that worked?

MARIA KONSTANTINIDOU: I don't know what happened. We did a great job. We trusted in Coach White's plan and those 3s were falling.



Q. Mia, what was working for you on the boards, especially on the offensive boards late in the game?

MIA JACOBS: I think just keeping moving, just not being in one spot. It's easy to box out someone if they're standing still. Cutting without the ball when the shot goes up. We got a lot of late shot clocks -- 5, 4, 3. I know the ball is going to be shot. So, trying to crash and get my team another rebound.

Q. What was the key to defend Emma Ronsiek and keep her in check?

MARIA KONSTANTINIDOU: It was planning on having someone on her and being ready to help. She's a great shooter, but, like I said, the game plan. We went through it. We doubled her and she missed some crucial shots. And we just had a great offense after.

Q. As they're making that late push what's the messaging in the huddles?

MIA JACOBS: Staying consistent, just knowing our game plan, staying together. I think we did a really good job even when they went on their little run in that fourth quarter just being, okay, next play, we've got to get a stop and then we've got to get a score. And then just boxing out, getting a rebound on those plays.

Q. Your guys' shooting started to drop late in the game, too. What was key for you to get points, get buckets wherever you could?

MARIA KONSTANTINIDOU: To be honest, we talk about in practice focus on the next possession, the next 60 seconds. And that's what we did. We focused on defense. And even though the shots weren't falling we focused on the next thing which was defense. If we had a great defensive stop, focus on offense, just keep going.

Q. You guys played this team earlier this season. I think you only played them once. It was at their place. They did win by 20, though. What was different about facing them this time that allowed you to come out on



top?

MIA JACOBS: I think we wanted it more. I think our effort was there. And we really just -- we had nothing to lose. It's today or we go home. So just being able to push through, push together and stick together through those times. I think we did a really good job of that and just working our butts off.

Q. One thing that's been interesting these last two days is that every team that played yesterday that played again today was ahead in the first half. Maybe was just more warmed up from having played a game the day before. And the other teams that hadn't played came out cold. That certainly happened in the first half. The difference was in the second half you guys held on and the other teams that played yesterday that led at half did not. You knew that this Colorado State team was going to make a push in the second half. What was your mentality coming into the second half thinking, knowing that you were going to have to withstand that push?

MARIA KONSTANTINIDOU: We talked about it in the locker room. We just did a great job and wanted to ride the wave basically. And we just wanted it so bad. It's like a revenge game, basically.

And so just coming back in and it's 0-0. We have to work all over again, get up again and lead again. So that was just the push, knowing we want to win real bad because a year ago today we lost and it was a tough loss. So just wanting it more.

Q. So tomorrow you're going to face No. 2 seeded Wyoming. How do you keep yourselves from feeling too satisfied about this win tonight and coming out hungry tomorrow?

MIA JACOBS: I think just knowing that today was great but we need to focus on tomorrow and continue to grow and work on our new things and just focus on the next game. We can't get too high or too low.

Yesterday's game was great. We were able to refocus and lock in today. Now this is done, going on to the next game, so just being able to refocus for the next game.

Q. Those lob plays, I think you scored on two of those tonight. One of them, I believe Maria was the passer on it. Tell me about the plays how do you work on them. Is it eye contact, was it improvised? Take me through the plays?

MIA JACOBS: I've never done this in a game. It was a

Mountain West special.

Q. You did it twice. Did you practice ever?

MARIA KONSTANTINIDOU: No.

MIA JACOBS: The shots were coming and it was that perfect height. Maria's was the perfect spot and I just put it in. They're more likely to foul when you do that because they're not expecting it. The first one from Saga was just a perfect pass as well.

Q. You've never done that in a game. Have you done it in practice?

MARIA KONSTANTINIDOU: No.

MIA JACOBS: No.

JAIME WHITE: We're going to start.

MIA JACOBS: We're going to start doing it. I think we need (indiscernible). It was really fun. It was fun to play out there.

Q. How significant is this win for you given that you haven't been to this stage, the semis, in four years?

JAIME WHITE: You always want to do better than you did last year. I thought our seed was really good. We worked really hard to get the seed we had.

We obviously wanted a bye. But I told Ryun before the game, you really don't love the bye until you're in the championship game and you know it's your third game versus your fourth, because it does get -- like yesterday, we could have lost.

And it kind of got some of the wrinkles out and got our kids comfortable. Our shoot-around today felt good. Coming back out for the game felt good. I think all the nerves were gone.

So really proud of them. And I do think many times we are the -- this year we're the smallest and a lot of times the youngest. There's a lot of fifth-year seniors. There's a lot of older kids in our league.

I thought our kids have just really ignored some of that and just stepped up and played together. And obviously as a coach you love to see that.

Q. Like Maria said, a year ago today you lost in this tournament. It felt like a revenge game. Did it feel that way for you?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

JAIME WHITE: I was at Northern Colorado a long time. So me and Ryun go back with the Rams. And I was at Wyoming and I was at Utah. I've known Colorado State for a while. It's always a good rivalry.

Ryun does such a good job. And my goodness, the kids that hit the 3s late in the game, those were nothing but the bottom of the net. Those were nice.

I know he's going to do a good job. They are very hard to guard and very talented. So, again, I just thought our kids really, really did the game plan perfectly. And I can't say that every game, but they were ready.

Q. For most of the game, say for the last couple of minutes you did guard them well. What did you do to limit them defensively hold them to ultimately 29 percent?

JAIME WHITE: We did feel like their screening was going to bother us if we tried to stay with it so we switched everything. And we just made sure we had a hand in everybody's face as much as we could.

I thought Maria was key because she was playing off of No. 1. Then she was getting all the rebounds. No. 1 is their rebounder. But yet Maria was so much bigger and she was able to pull a lot of those rebounds.

So there was a bunch of different things that worked out.

Q. You talked to us yesterday about how unique of a challenge CSU is to play against. Wyoming probably the same thing. What are your thoughts on that?

JAIME WHITE: Fertig is as player of the year as anyone. I've been so impressed with her. I love her demeanor. She draws two and three defenders every night. She gets hung on and banged up and she just keeps going. I really think she's done a good job.

I think what we'll do is we'll go back, watch film and we'll do the thing that worked the best. And, again, we're not obviously we're not as big but we do have some size on the bench.

And I think it's time for some of that to step up. And it's great because every night brings a different combination. And I think our kids are hungry and ready. So we'll be ready.

Q. You know what a good scorer Emma Ronsiek is, and you've just got to force her into tough shots. Mia had the assignment a lot tonight. But Emma, a lot of

those shots she took was kind of fading away from the basket. Just what was the game plan there? And how well -- you mentioned executing the game plan well -- how well do you think your team did tonight really forcing her tonight?

JAIME WHITE: She has a good fall-away. If it was a little past the logo, it was going to be tougher. That was our whole goal, was to get her to shoot away. If she got deep, we had to double. And she's as good a 3-point shooter as anybody.

In fact, this may have been their worst 3-point shooting night for some time. But I thought just having a hand in every shooter's face was really important.

Q. Taija moved into the starting lineup tonight. What difference does it make for your team when she's available and when you have a true point guard out there?

JAIME WHITE: We have a team that's mostly inexperienced. I was thinking about it. Taija and Kylee and Mia have logged the most minutes. That's two sophomores and a junior.

Having Taija back because I think she was playing 35 minutes a game last year, just the experience, the calmness under some of those situations. Her execution -- I mean, she literally will execute even if it's the most wrong call I've ever made. She is going to execute.

So it's just so nice to have that as a coach but then also her teammates know that she is 110 percent behind them and going to do what the team needs to win.

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