



2020 AIR FORCE RESERVE MW MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTERFINALS GAME #3 (March 5, 2020)

GAME NOTES

Final Score: No. 2 Seed Utah State 75, No. 7 Seed New Mexico 70

- With the win, Utah State advances to its third-straight Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship semifinal and will take on the winner of No. 3 seed Nevada/No.11 seed Wyoming on Friday at 8:30 p.m. PT. Utah State won the lone meeting vs. Nevada and swept the season series against Wyoming.
- Overall, the No. 2 seed is now 40-10 all-time in the Mountain West tournament, the highest win percentage of any seed in the tournament. Utah State will try to become the sixth No. 2 seed in the last seven years to make the championship game.
- The Aggies were led by senior guard **Sam Merrill**, the 2019 Air Force Reserve Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship MVP, who had 29 points on 10-of-15 shooting. Merrill scored 18 of his 29 points in the second half and was a perfect 5-of-5 from the field over the final 20 minutes.
- For his career, Merrill is averaging 19.3 points per game across nine Mountain West tournament contests and has eclipsed the 20-point mark in five of those nine games. His 29 points tonight tie a personal best in the Mountain West tournament.
- Alongside Merrill, Utah State's sophomore forward **Justin Bean** helped lead the way with 10 points and 15 rebounds, his 16th double-double of the year. Bean now ranks eighth in school history for rebounds in a season with 334. The 15 rebounds were one shy of his career high.
- For New Mexico, senior guard **JaQuan Lyle** scored 20 points, registering his eighth 20-point game of the season.
- New Mexico shot just 35.5 percent from the field compared to Utah State's 50.9 percent, but caused havoc forcing Utah State into 17 turnovers compared to just seven for New Mexico. The Lobos converted that into a 17-8 advantage in points off turnovers. Junior guard **Vance Jackson** tied his season high with three steals.
- In the game, both teams had double-digit leads. Utah State jumped out of the gates on fire, building up a 22-9 lead with 10:44 left in the first half. The Lobos clawed back and took their first lead of the game on the heels of a 13-1 run in the second half. New Mexico eventually held an 11-point lead, 57-46, with 9:38 left in the game, before Utah State came back to win the game.