

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Wyoming Cowgirls

Coach Heather Ezell

McKinley Dickerson

Malene Pedersen

Postgame Press Conference



Q. Girls, there were so many moments in that game that you could look back at and say, oh, I wish we would have had that. I'm curious which one in particular maybe you look back at and point to as a defining moment.

McKINLEY DICKERSON: I wouldn't say there was one. I mean, we battled until the end and we traded baskets. We did what we were supposed to do defensively, offensively. I don't think there was a particular time when we were, like, yeah, we're going to lose this. It just didn't swing our way in the end.

MALENE PEDERSEN: I agree. I didn't say anything because I don't think so either. We fought until the end, and there is no particular shot or person -- it's not their fault. It's just unfortunate.

Q. This is the third time you've played San Diego State, and you had been 2-0 against them in previous battles. What do you think maybe they brought to the game in this game that was better than had you guys a little bit more off balance on offense?

MALENE PEDERSEN: I mean, I would say they hold Allyson really well. They were there whenever we wanted to look into her. So we really needed some time to figure out how to get Allyson open in there and found her in her spots.

But, I mean, in general I feel like we were battling. It was back and forth the whole game. We were just fighting until the end, and nothing really specifically I think held them from us.

It was both teams just battling until the end.

Q. McKinley, you've had a long, decorated career here. Left for a minute there; came back, I assume for moments just like this. I'm wondering what your emotions are like right now and what it's been like this ride with all these seniors and all these girls that you guys have become sisters with?

San Diego State 72, Wyoming 68 (OT)

THE MODERATOR: For Wyoming we have student-athletes Malene Pedersen and McKinley Dickerson, head Coach Heather Ezell.

HEATHER EZELL: First and foremost, congratulations to San Diego State. What a game. What a game for women's basketball, triple overtime.

What I told my team is wasn't short of toughness. Just came a play or two short.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes first.

Q. Despite the loss, can you speak to just the level of play you guys have had all season and going into tournament play? Despite the loss, what can you say about the performances you all gave tonight?

MALENE PEDERSEN: I think we've grown so much as a team, especially from last year. I think we could tell that we were much tougher this season throughout and definitely finishing really strong.

Unfortunately, just could not get it today.

Q. When you are playing 50 minutes, 47 minutes of play, I mean, how much of a toll does that take on your body and in terms of rhythm playing the game?

McKINLEY DICKERSON: Definitely towards the end it takes a toll mentally. I think we were a lot tougher than we were last year. We're definitely a team that can win those overtimes, and we will.



McKINLEY DICKERSON: Well, they're just that, they're my sisters, right? They're my second family. It's been an incredible ride, and I'm extremely grateful for it. We're leaving a legacy we're building under Heather. Heather is going to build one. I'm just proud to be a part of it.

Q. How much do you think the turnovers kind of hurt you guys offensively kind of getting into a rhythm?

MALENE PEDERSEN: I think there was a lot of nerves today, of course, so it was about getting a rhythm at the beginning, and it was back and forth the whole game. It's just mentally trying to stay together as a team.

We got some runs, and then they got some runs. It was just about who made their shots at the end basically, yeah.

Q. McKinley, what do you think went wrong in the fourth quarter for your offense? I think you had two points the first seven minutes or so. When you had a chance to really pull away.

McKINLEY DICKERSON: We just had a few go in and out. That happens in basketball. We ran our offense just like we've always run it. We were getting to the block, getting Al inside. We just had a few that didn't go in; didn't go our way.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

Q. Heather, what a ride and what a ride with this group that's been with you the whole time you've been here. Can you talk about what your emotions are like right now seeing these girls -- I know you probably have some basketball left to play, but the ultimate goal now not in reach. What are your thoughts?

HEATHER EZELL: Yeah, I hurt for them. You know, to see the faces in the locker room, to know how bad they're hurting, I wish I could take it away from them.

Like I told them, they gave me everything they had. There's no doubt, if something rolls a little bit different, we might be still out there. But I just wish -- I know how much they wanted this. This was a goal for them. If I could do anything to take that away from them.

But they'll stay strong. That's what I told them, is they have another chance to do this, to put the uniform on to represent the university, to represent the Cowgirls and to represent each other and to have a chance to come back and compete again and get the sour taste out of your mouth.

Q. Allyson Fertig has been a dominant presence all season. What do you see where about SDSU was able to contain her most of the game and not find a rhythm?

HEATHER EZELL: Yeah, that they were changing up their defensive trying to get her pushed off. Brought a couple doubles at different times where she was just unsure to get in the rhythm.

We were I think at first not giving her great passes to get to her spot. Once we started to clean that up, I thought she got going a little bit more. But it really was on everybody of getting to their spots and getting our action around her, and then being able to make a play.

Q. To that point, you lived and died with the post entry tonight. Take me through your thought process on the offensive game plan there and what you were seeing from San Diego State by late second half and their defense and how you wanted to attack that.

HEATHER EZELL: There's a reason that we were the 2 seed. There's a reason we were playing in the championship game. No. 45 for us, Allyson Fertig. Not on the biggest stage was I going to try and go away from her.

I believe in her and her ability, and the rest of the team does too. We were still going to see if we could find her in the right spots, but at the same time try and get some other guards or other players to the open block, what we talk about, of trying to score down there.

Once the game got later and later and obviously into the overtimes, I knew legs were going to be an issue. You try to make an easy shot inside instead of settling for a three.

I thought Tess had two really, really good looks in those overtimes that I look at and go, man, if she was maybe just -- if those happened in the third quarter, it might have been different.

So when we had those opportunities, yeah, I still wanted to take them, but I knew legs at some point were going to become an issue, and we wanted to try and still go inside and take advantage where we thought we could.

Q. I wonder if you could just speak to Allyson at the free-throw line. In the second overtime I think it was she had two to make to force a third overtime, and you have talked a few times about, oh, I wish you could have been better at the line. I mean, just to step up and be money in that moment, what did that say about her?

HEATHER EZELL: That's a kid that didn't want to finish out and wanted to keep playing and to step up, calm, cool, collected, knock down both of them with no -- I don't think they even hit rim. Swish.

Just credit to her and her focus at that free-throw line at that moment and being able to step up for her teammates.

Q. A lot of these players are wrapping up their career. Can you talk a little bit about the future of Cowgirl basketball and what it looks like because it's going to look a lot different next year.

HEATHER EZELL: It will look a lot different next year, but what I'm excited about is we still have some opportunity to play with this group. That's what I'm looking forward to right now.

We're worried about next year when the time comes. I want to finish out with these seniors and this group on a high note.

Q. I guess just looking at the numbers, Malene, Tess, Allyson, Emily, they all played over 50 minutes tonight. What does that say about their toughness and how far they've obviously matured over your time coaching them?

HEATHER EZELL: Yeah. I think each of those overtimes I looked at them and said, are you guys good? You're not going to take anybody off the court at that moment. I was going back and forth between Kinny and Kati. It was one of those offense/defense kind of things, being able to use those at different times.

I knew I wanted to keep that core on the court. I don't think even if I would have tried to take one off, they wouldn't have let me.

But they've earned that. That's something they've earned with what they've done here and put that time in.

Q. I asked this about the players, but I wonder if there's any moment that you look back at and wish you could have back?

HEATHER EZELL: I wish we had five more minutes.

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