

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Fresno State Bulldogs

Coach Ryan McCarthy

Danae Powell

Emilia Long

Postgame Press Conference

Fresno State 74, Nevada 57

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with Fresno State. We have student-athletes Danae Powell and Emilia Long, Coach Ryan McCarthy. Coach, we'll start with you.

RYAN McCARTHY: I was really proud of our ladies' effort. We jumped out on them and credit to Nevada. They made a really good run there in the third quarter and put some pressure on us to make us get on our heels a little bit.

That changed some momentum, but I thought our ladies did a really good job of just staying the course and getting some critical stops. We talked about in the fourth quarter going into the fourth quarter we were up 11, and that if we held them to ten points we would win the game without scoring, and we held them to ten points in the fourth quarter.

So really proud of our effort defensively and just showing some grit down the homestretch there.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Emilia, you seem to be a consistent 15, 4, and 5 player. As a point guard, how big is that to be able to do that night in, night out? You're not the biggest person, but you're still grabbing five rebounds a night, four assists. How much do you credit to your hard work and effort?

EMILIA LONG: Yeah, I would say it's really important, especially as a point guard, to be consistent. I've had days where I don't play very well, you know, but I think it's really important to be consistent. A lot of that is thanks to the coaching as well. They push us to be our best.



I think if I didn't always have someone pushing me to be better, I wouldn't be where I'm at. So I would put a lot of credit towards my coaches for that.

Q. Did the hot start you got off to help calm you down? This is the first conference tournament you've played at Fresno State. Did the hot start settle you down? How were you feeling going into this?

EMILIA LONG: I was definitely a little nervous going into this. I wouldn't say I was overly nervous, but I was definitely nervous. Seeing the shot, my shots, go in definitely calmed me down a little bit and hopefully calmed the team down as well. I think we started off pretty good.

So, yeah, I would say so.

Q. Danae, same question to you. Did it calm you down too?

DANAE POWELL: Yeah, definitely just remembering if we do what we do, we'll be more than fine.

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

Q. Based on your previous two match-ups with UNLV, what do you think the biggest threats you're going to try to prepare for in the next few hours are?

RYAN McCARTHY: Well, you know, UNLV is really talented. You know, they have a top-3 player, if not the best player in our league, and they're very well-coached. I respect that program a lot.

They've dominated this conference over the past seven, eight years. Coach La Rocque has done a really good job with her team.

But, you know, I think both times that we've played them, they didn't get our best shot. We pride ourselves on being tough. This is a team of -- I think there's four girls that had Division I scholarship offers out of high school and



out-toughing the other team and be grimy and gritty and that kind of stuff. That did not show up against UNLV either time.

Our deal is we just want to take the other team into the deep end and see how long they can survive there and how long we can survive there. I think tomorrow that's all I want. I want to get this game played in the deep end of the pool, and I think a lot of the times upsets can happen that way. You see it all the time, you know, in March.

Like coaches, I think everyone can talk about what they have or what they don't have, but they're always tough. That's one thing that after anyone watches us play, I want them to say those things.

Q. We talked before like in previous press conferences about the third quarter has really been a struggle for you guys. You mentioned down the stretch of the season you guys played with only eight or nine ladies. Is it fatigue that's a common factor with the third quarter struggles? Is there anything you can kind of pinpoint to it?

RYAN McCARTHY: I think we look at the scoreboard too much. You know, the last three games we've been down at the half. Our third quarter we've won because we're down, and then all of a sudden we need to turn it on again. We're up 22 or whatever it was, 18 headed into the second half, and I think we start scoreboard-watching a little bit and deciding we can take plays off.

At this level that's not going to be okay, and especially in March when everybody is playing for their life. For us that will be hopefully something that we reiterate to them when we're able to watch some game film and find ways to keep them motivated. Maybe I need to pretend to be angry at halftime. I don't know (laughing). That's definitely going to be really important against a team like UNLV.

Q. It just seemed like threes were falling early in the game. Was that kind of the game plan, ride the hot hand?

RYAN McCARTHY: You know, we've talked a lot about just catching ready to shoot and playing in space and just conceptual basketball, like playing in advantage. Sometimes that nets you shots by the rim. Sometimes that nets you shots behind the three, but I think our ladies are comfortable now with what we're trying to do and just understanding the game of basketball.

At the beginning of the year we had zero understanding of it, and at this point I think that our ladies are really starting to show that they understand what a good shot is and what

a good shot isn't.

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