

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Thomas & Mack Center

Grand Canyon Antelopes

Coach Winston Gandy

Chloe Mann

Julianna LaMendola

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado State 61, Grand Canyon 59

THE MODERATOR: For Grand Canyon with student athletes Chloe Mann, Julianna LaMendola, and Coach Winston Gandy. Some thoughts on tonight's game, Coach?

WINSTON GANDY: I thought we competed. I thought our competitive spirit, will was fantastic. Short-handed. Down multiple starters. I thought we competed. I mean, you look at the rebounds, you look at the three-point shooting, the turnovers, that was not the same team that played them the first two times.

Unfortunately, like a lot of our season, it came down to a play here, a play there at the end. We just didn't get it done. But couldn't be more proud of the group in there facing what they faced coming down the stretch.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Coach, what did you think you did so much better than the first two meetings with them? What was the game plan as far as changing, because you had different personnel this game too than those games?

WINSTON GANDY: Yeah, I just think our will. If you told me coming down the stretch we would be starting three freshmen, I would have said, No way.

I think the will of everybody, you know, shocked them. We had gotten off to poor starts, and I thought we got off to a great start defensively. Great half. Got a little loose into the third. Started the fourth. I probably didn't do enough disrupting their rhythm.

So like I told them, everybody wants a play or two back, including myself. Look, at the end of the day this time of the year you've got to be able to get a stop at the end of games, and I mean, we're two or three stops away from being on the other side of the bracket with a different outlook.

That's something obviously that's going to stick with us as we move on to the offseason.

Q. Because of what you mentioned with three freshmen starting and underclassmen everywhere, what did they draw from an experience like this this first run through the tournament and having games like this so many times this season?

WINSTON GANDY: I think they realized, you know, a lot of the stuff that we talked about in preseason, we talked about down the stretch. They realized how small the margin is. Why games at Air Force, why games at Wyoming matter. Sometimes you don't realize it until you're in those moments.

The margin in our league, when you look at where some of the teams are, it's really, really small. I think they also saw when you bring the right level of spirit and will, you can be in the game with anybody.

Q. Chloe and Jules, what was your mindset coming into this game about what you would need to be competitive after the first two games and what do you think you did to build that lead?

JULIANNA LAMENDOLA: Well, I think it just came down to we had nothing to lose and everything to gain. We played them twice; got blown out. I mean, I know for me there was nothing. I was just out there playing for my seniors and just the toughest team wins.

We were tough for 30 minutes of that game and had a couple of defensive breakdowns and some bad-timed mistakes. It costs us the game. Yeah, I think it was just we had nothing to lose that game and everything to gain be.



Kloe MANN: This whole year has been about putting four quarters together, and we came really close, but in the fourth quarter we lost it I feel like. A lot of times just sticking with what you're doing is going to get you the win, and we didn't do that.

But, I mean, we still played hard, as hard as we played all season, so...

Q. For both of you, they're No. 1 in the nation for least turnovers, and you disrupted them defensively. What did you feel like you guys did to make them uncomfortable with your pressure?

JULIANNA LAMENDOLA: Again, we just played hard, communicated. He's been on our butts about communicating. I don't even know if I can say that. I don't know. Sorry (laughing). He's been on us for communicating, and we did that.

Again, we knew what we had to do to come out on top, and we did those things for, again, 30 minutes and gave it up in the last 10 minutes. Yeah.

Kloe MANN: She said it all. That's really it.

Q. What did it mean to you to see the support you guys had today in the stands? I saw, Jules, you went over and recognized them to have that kind of turned around for them to come up today and show up like that?

JULIANNA LAMENDOLA: I've been fortunate enough to play in some of the toughest arenas around the country, and just to see that with their dedication with band and cheer and dance and the Havocs. I mean, I'd be scared as an opposing team going into our arena to play there. You can't ask for a better community, better admin, better coaching staff.

We've been blessed with a lot as student-athletes and to have that support all the time is something I would never take for granted.

They're amazing. GC is amazing. I'm very grateful to have that type of support. I know I can speak for our entire team when I say that. It means a lot.

THE MODERATOR: We'll dismiss the student-athletes at this time. Questions for Coach.

Q. What do you feel like your younger players draw from this and going small? What have you learned about some of the people like the freshmen in this

situation, and where you think the program is moving forward from this season?

WINSTON GANDY: I think the freshmen probably draw from this why a lot of the stuff that they don't understand why maybe we are a little bit more particular on than others matters.

I also think they had no expectations, and I think from my previous experiences, when you have no expectations, you typically don't have any pressure, and you're just playing. I think it was really cool to just watch them just play.

But when it comes to winning, which they realize, like, whether the score was 79-81, you know, or in this case 59-61, you got to do what it takes to win. So I hope, if nothing else, like I told them in there, feel this, use this experience as perspective, and you're going to be able to help the next group of people that come in here. We harp on some of the same things, and now you can maybe give them peer-to-peer or player-to-player as to why that's important.

So, look, credit to Colorado State. Good team, but we let one get away. Unfortunately, that's kind of been the story of our season.

Q. When we're looking at the rebounding battle over the course of the night, we know that the game is won and lost in the paint there. You know, defensively it was just about even, but y'all claim nine offensive rebounds to CSU's one. How would you describe how the rebounding game affected the outcome of tonight's match?

WINSTON GANDY: Well, I think the rebounding -- I mean, look, Norah did a heck of a job. You know, you look at Jules was great, Chloe great, Sifa I think gave us five off the bench. I think that set the tone.

We talked about setting the tone the first couple of minutes of the game as both teams are trying to judge. Is this going to be easy tonight? Is this going to be hard tonight? Am I going to have to work for this? Am I going to have to work for that?

I thought our group set the tone. I think that's why the score was the way it was. I think a lot of their players missing some shots they probably normally make. That's the power when you kind of capture that momentum and set the tone you force the opponent to adjust.

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