

Mountain West Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday March 8, 2016



Yvonne Sanchez Khadijah Shumpert Cherise Beynon New Mexico

New Mexico - 65 San Jose State - 51

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if we can start with you, some thoughts on today's game.

HEAD COACH YVONNE SANCHEZ: First I want to congratulate Jamie Craighead and San Jose State. She's a class act and she does a terrific job. It was a great game. Her team was prepared. They were ready. They do a terrific job and I want to congratulate her on a terrific season.

Tough game because it was night and day from home and away. So we had to control the tempo a little bit, which I think we did a nice job of. We limited their transition baskets. We limited their 3's, although they hit six. Usually with a team like that they score in bunches. We were able to hit shots at the right time and able to get rebounds at the right time.

Really proud of this team. And it's survive and advance again.

Q. Last year, your last game in this tournament you hit 3 of 5 from the floor, 11 of 11 from the free throw line, 17 points and you guys lose the championship. How much is this game today, opening round, been circled in your mind to get back here, because you went off tonight?

KHADIJAH SHUMPERT: I know that the tournament is a time where it's do or die. And I was in the place -- it's not like I'm going to get a second chance. It's come out and play with all the heart, all the effort and all the energy to make it happen and that was my mentality today.

Q. How much different is it now that you are a senior? A year ago obviously you're playing with the same kind of desire in your mind that you want to keep winning, survive and advance. How different is it now that you didn't even realize then that it would be now because the career is close to being over?

KHADIJAH SHUMPERT: It's a whole new ballgame. It's not even describable. Because all the seniors every year that I've been here, have said the same thing over and over, This is my last. And I never really understood until I was here in this spot, because this really is the end. There is no do-overs.

Q. Second quarter you had moments throughout the game, obviously, it was a great game. But second quarter you checked back in at a minute 33, you steal the ball, the coast-to-coast layup, get back on defense, even though they're running and they get back pretty quick. Take a charge. You rebound the next possession. You ended the first half of the second quarter in particular with a flurry. Do you even remember that sequence?

KHADIJAH SHUMPERT: I remember it now that you said it. It happened pretty fast, yeah. It's just a matter of knowing that we've all been blessed with a talent. And at this point everyone that's here has been blessed with talent. And being able to say who is going to fight the hardest, who has the most heart. Because every team we go against they have the capability. So who wants it more?

Q. We talked about this last year, just maybe touch upon coming out tonight, opening game and knowing that that big Lobos crowd, you guys have such a great traveling squad, but for you personally, being the local and knowing how much of a fan base you have here, getting those early jitters out and feeling that home crowd love?

CHERISE BEYNON: It's exciting to come home because my family doesn't get to see me as much. At the same time I was a little nervous because I don't get to. But our Lobos fans is what prepared me, it's exciting to play here than it is in the Pit. It's home away from home. I'm happy that I get to come home.

The beginning of the game I was a little amped up, I had to calm myself down because I am home and I want to perform good for the people back home. But other than that it's a home away from home situation because our fans are so great.

Q. Leading team, leading scoring team in the league is San Jose at 73 points a game. You guys hold them to 58 in the regular season, you hold

them to even fewer today. Just real generically, what's the defensive plan that works so well against what was the high scoring team in the league?

CHERISE BEYNON: We have a defensive mindset as a team, we get a stop then we get a score. We've got to stop them. Our goal today was to stop them in transition. Ultimately our goal first is defense and offense second because defense is what is part of our game. It's our identity that we had last year and that we're trying to pursue this year. We're I believe one of the top three in the conference defensive scoring. So that is just our mentality as a team is just to get defensive stop and hold them to a certain amount of points every game.

KHADIJAH SHUMPERT: I think it comes down to our assistant coaches and their scouts. They told us what they were going to do and they prepared us and it was a matter of going out there and listening to our coaches and getting it done.

HEAD COACH YVONNE SANCHEZ: Absolutely.

Q. Is there, in comparison to last year, is anything you personally learned or take from experience to do differently to prepare for this tournament this season?

HEAD COACH YVONNE SANCHEZ: I don't know if you take it differently, because they're different teams. Last year's team is different than this year's team. I agree with Khadijah, I have a phenomenal staff and they do a terrific job of preparing and breaking film down and letting them know who does what, when. I think the conference you have different teams.

You remember the sting from losing games and you remember the sting from that, but we're still a ways from that. We've got Colorado State tomorrow. That's the best team in the league. If you want to be the best you've got to go through them. And it's a difficult, heartbreaking game for us the first time around. You only play them once. So it will be a little bit interesting.

But I just think it's a team thing. Our team has bought into defense. Our staff is really, really good at preparing them for that. So I just think that our defense is what's going to win basketball games.