

# Major League Soccer Media Conference

Wednesday, December 9, 2020  
Orlando, Florida, USA

## Lucas Zelarayan Press Conference

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: I'm happy to be on the call with everybody and excited to play in the final, and we hope everything goes according to plan at the game.

**Q. When you arrived here, what did you think were realistic expectations for this team and for yourself in your first year in the League?**

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: When I arrived to the club, I was surprised by the high level of play we had here. They are great people, great individuals at the club at every level, and now we're lucky enough to be in the contest for a championship.

**Q. Caleb talked last week about the defensive effort of the team in the last few games and the willingness ever the attacking players to defend. I'm curious your experience with having to defend as an attacking player and what you had to learn to fit into this team's defensive system to be successful.**

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: In my last clubs, I also had to defend on some occasions and in some games I even had to play in more defensive positions. So to an extent, I already had it slightly incorporated into my game.

Nowadays, attackers need to be also slightly defensive and help out everywhere on the pitch, so I'm helping -- I'm comfortable helping out Columbus in that area, as well.

**Q. With Seattle, the story line was three of the attackers being in the MLS best 11. How much are -- what's the game plan for you guys in terms of counterattacking and getting at them on the attack and not just focusing on defense?**

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: We know that they have great players and great attackers in midfield, as well, but so do we. We've shown we can play against anyone. That's what's brought us up to this point to the final, being able to play our game independent of the opponent, and at the end of the day we are two teams that know how to play



and we're going to attack and we hope to offer everyone a great show and a great game.

**Q. Well, the question for you is this season has been a lot different because of the COVID-19, no fans who have been supporting the team from home, but what is the main message for them before playing this important match?**

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: More than anything, I just want to thank the fans. Thank them for supporting the team, even though they may not be able to be in the stadium in person. They always make themselves seen and felt via social media and when they are hanging flags at the training facility, things like that. The fans are always present and always supporting, so we hope we can return the favor and give these fans a title.

**Q. Can you reflect on this season for you personally, first year in the League, obviously everything with the shut down, the MLS is Back Tournament, and then starting up again and now reaching the championship in your first year, just what has this year been like for you as an individual?**

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: I'm very happy with the year I've had on a personal level. It's been a difficult year for everyone, both in terms of soccer and in terms of health. Being named Newcomer of the Year, being conference champions, making MLS Cup means it's been a very positive year overall. And the club has also shown that they are very happy with me, which is very important.

**Q. I was kind of wondering, from your perspective, having spent this first season in Columbus but obviously with the pandemic, you know, how connected do you feel to this Columbus community and kind of knowing that you came in with this team and now have a chance to win a championship when it was very possible a few years ago that this team was potentially on the verge of relocation?**

LUCAS ZELARAYAN: Since the first moment I arrived here, I felt comfortable and the club gave me a great welcome. There's a great team here, a great coaching staff, great people overall, and I really like the city. My family and I are extremely happy in Columbus.



Looking back on the year that I've had, I think I made a great decision to come here, and I'm just trying to enjoy it as much as possible and hopefully win MLS Cup in my first year.

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