

# Major League Soccer Media Conference

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Orlando, Florida, USA



## Jonathan Mensah

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for joining us, Jonathan. Just some opening remarks and then we'll take some questions.

JONATHAN MENSAH: I'm Jonathan Mensah. Thanks for joining the press conference (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and jump into questions.

**Q. What would it mean to this franchise to essentially close out MAPFRE Stadium with a championship and then walk that MLS Cup downtown next summer to open Crew Stadium?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: It's going to mean everything for this club, for this city, the fan base. What they've done off the field for this organization is incredible. This is the payback we can also give them in return for their massive and incredible job they've done for us to be able to stay in this city.

**Q. You were a part of the 2017 playoff run. I'm sure you could feel in the stadium how much that run meant to fans. Even to this day two years later, is the recent drama of that period still a motivating factor for you guys in this championship run?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think it's also been part of the motivating factors. Obviously whenever we step on the field, we know we fighting for the fans, our families, for this organization. That being said, we always know there's that great motivation to always do better and do something great for this club and this community and the fan base for the massive job they also did off the field for us.

There's always that kind of, like, motive and motivation to be able to do something incredible for them.

**Q. At the beginning the year we saw you and Vito partner together at center back. He gets hurt, and Josh was the one who stepped in. From playing with**

**Josh before, but seeing him this year, seems he stepped his game up to another level. What have you seen from him as a partner this year maybe different from in the past?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think he's been in the league for many years. If we see this type of growth and improvement from him, I think it's a testimony to his hard work and understanding the game, knowing the league better than many of the players in the league and even in the club.

He's done a great job. We've all done a great job. We always happy to see one of our own kind of improve and step up and do great things for the team. Happy with everything he's done. We got one big one to go. We going to finish it up on Saturday.

**Q. What do you think your team has to do in order to be the champions of the MLS Cup?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think we need to stick to our game plan. We need to be strong mentally, physically. We need to be aggressive. We need to play the moment because if there's a moment to stop a goal, you stop it. If there's a moment to score a goal, you do it.

We just need to keep it clean for 90 plus minutes, then I think we going to be fine. Sticking to the game plan, knowing what we need to do individually and collectively. I think we need to be strong throughout the game and we will make history.

**Q. From the perspective of being the captain of the team, taking that leadership role, what do you think are your biggest strengths as a captain and what things do you want to potentially work on to get better at following this season?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think it would be my team. I always have the armband, but I think we all captains on the team. My teammates and my staff, my coach, they've made it so easy for me to lead this team.

Obviously have the armband, but personally I always get ready come do my job. I know the guys will always emulate what I'm doing. That's what we've done a great job of from the start of the season. The even thought the



coach chose me, I think we all know need to be better at what we do. We always roll our sleeves and fight for the guy next to you.

I would say the team. The team has done incredible job, and you don't even recognize when one guy is out with an injury or something like that. I will say the team.

**Q. Regarding Darlington, what has he brought to the team that took you to another level? What is it like to have a player like that playing in front of you, how it makes your job easier?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think he's such an incredible guy, one of the best midfielders the league has ever season. Darlington being part of the team is such an incredible addition. We all see his productivity on the field. When he's in the midfield, everything changes. It was a great addition for us. Grateful for that.

**Q. We've talked a lot about new additions to this team that have helped you get this far. Most of the starters are guys that were here before Caleb and new ownership. How much do you think those guys, including yourself, have grown in the past two years? How much do you credit that growth to the current staff?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think the current staff actually builds on the stuff we've already been doing, obviously implementing the new stuff. There's always room for improvement. I think this bunch of people coming together to form a team, we've done a great job, whether it's the new guys coming on, whether it's us, the old guys that were already here. We've kind of blended very well. We've bought into the idea and the philosophy of the new coach and the new staff. I think we've done a great job.

I think moving forward we going to even be better. We have a trophy to win on Saturday. That's what the focus is on now.

**Q. Regarding Darlington, what do you think makes him so good on the ball, efficient at not losing the ball? When you are facing a press, does it make your job a bit easier to know if you can find Darlington, you'll keep the ball?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think that is one quality of his. I don't know how he does it, but that is something I don't think he learnt that. It's naturally. He's naturally gifted. He's strong. He knows where to play one touch, where to play two, where to hold it, win fouls, all that.

Every player got their qualities. We know one of the

qualities of Darlington is holding onto possession and making a difference. Having such player on our team, we kind of like value his qualities. He's been such an incredible addition to our team.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jonathan.

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