

# Major League Soccer Media Conference

Sunday, December 13, 2020

## Jonathan Mensah

### Press Conference



Columbus Crew 3, Seattle Sounders 0

**Q. You got to hoist the trophy there in the poem ceremony and we saw you were very emotional.**

JONATHAN MENSAH: Yeah, I was. It's been an incredible journey for the club, for the city and for the people of Columbus. We are so grateful for their sacrifices off the field, and what we could do to kind of like pay them back was to win this trophy for them. Thankful that we have this amazing fan base behind us and we did this for them.

**Q. Caleb just shared with us the moment you two had on the field. He said you were crying on the field there; Darlington was someone you were thinking of. Take us through all the emotions you were experiencing.**

JONATHAN MENSAH: It was just, you know, me thinking about what the fans and the community, and everyone behind the Save the Crew movement, for this to be possible today. It is by their efforts and their fight off the field, their determination, their resiliency kind of like got us to where we are now to be able to accomplish this mission.

So it was so emotional for me, because I was a part of the group about the move, but thankful for the fans for the massive job they did. Yeah, I needed to pour it all out for them.

**Q. There's only been two guys who have lifted this trophy as captains, you and Frankie Hejduk for this club. What does it mean to you, we talked about being a captain, but to be able to lift that trophy as captain, what does that mean for you?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: For me, I don't think it means anything. I know it means everything for our fans. This team has rallied behind me, you know, when the coach gave me the armband. I told the whole team, you know, I have the armband, but we are all captains on the field, and these guys has been incredible. Alongside with me, you know, we've kind of like driven this team to where it

belongs, but I'm so grateful for the team.

**Q. When you guys got the bad news about Darlington and Pedro, obviously some teams, it could have broken a team but it seemed like you guys came together and it seemed like Caleb really did a great job of rallying you guys. How important was how Caleb handled that situation and how important was to get you in the right mind-set? And a follow-up on Aidan Morris, youngest ever person to start in a MLS Cup final, how did you think of how he stepped up in that moment?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: I think the talk of how Coach prepared us and also how we prepared ourselves individually and collectively, it shows a great deal of our mentality, because this team, we've been through so much. We're so thankful for the next guy that steps in. We are going to do the same job. We are going to stick to the same game plan, and I give all the credit to the coaching staff, the head coach, Caleb Porter, and my teammates. When a couple of our teammates went down with COVID, other guys stepped in and did the job.

And talk of Aidan Morris, such an incredible young man. We all know what he brings to this team, and the whole U.S. saw it today. It's going to keep getting better from here.

**Q. Obviously Darlington and Pedro were out, and that put more of the onus on Lucas to get things going in the attack. He delivered, and then some. How would you describe his performance tonight?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: Oh, you know, he's an incredible player. We've all seen it. We've all witnessed it throughout the season and even today. You know, two of our guys went down and we needed to do extra for them because we know what they mean to this team, and we had to do this for them and for our fans.

I cannot stop thanking our fans because we are here because of them. So we are so grateful, that whoever steps on the field knows what to do, and we got the job done.

**Q. Tonight you guys really limited Lodeiro, Morris and Diaz. I remember towards the end of the regular**

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**season, you were honest and saying you were a little fatigued, a little tired. The last couple games, I feel like you've gotten back to where you were toward the beginning of the year. What worked so well in defending those guys?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: We know they are very good players, and we needed to be on our legs for 90-plus minutes. We had a lot of talk about how to deal with those guys and I think we did a fantastic job. Because you know, we knew that if we can minimize the services to die as and Jordan Morris and the other guys up front, I think we're going to be fine.

I think Aidan and Artur minimized the services from Lodeiro, and I think it's been a collective effort since day one. You know, we actually spoke about winning this thing in preseason, and for us to be able to accomplish it, it speaks volume about this team.

**Q. Obviously this year has been very much about overcoming adversity, not just for you guys but for pretty much everyone in the world this year. Just looking at this MLS season, going back to preseason and the season getting shut down in Orlando and to where you guys are now, how will you kind of remember it all and how do you kind of interpret this journey that led you guys to tonight ultimately?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: Oh, I think even we were -- even if we were in a normal world, it was going to be remembered and for 2020, for whatever circumstances that is happening in 2020, we overcame all those obstacles and to be able to win this trophy is such an incredible achievement for us.

And you know, we are so grateful to our fans because it got to a point where, you know, we couldn't have them in the stadium, and it was tough for us playing in an empty stadium. We had them tonight and we did this for them.

So grateful for that.

**Q. What were the celebrations like in the locker room and what did it mean to celebrate with this group of guys in particular?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: It means everything. You know, these guys, they are teammates, but I believe they have become family now because we do almost everything together. We knew as the playoff was going on, as the job isn't done, we kind of celebrate a playoff game against Red Bull, and we can't. We won against Red Bull; we kept it calm, and then we rolled our sleeves. We kept going, New England. We had no celebrations because we knew what our vision was and what the mission was.

For us to be able to accomplish it, I think we have all the right to be able to celebrate it right now, especially with our fans.

**Q. Caleb said the other day that you haven't gotten to see your wife in a very long time, almost a year. I was wondering if you'll get to get in touch with her and other members of your family any time soon in it seems to have made that year achievement that much greater having to deal with that adversity?**

JONATHAN MENSAH: She is actually texting me right now (reaching for phone).

I have an incredible wife, and we spoke about this before I left for preseason, and she was like, "Hey go do your thing, I'll be here praying, supporting you." We did it now.

It's been a long journey and lots of sacrifices, so now that we've won the ultimate trophy, I will prepare and then leave and go see my wife and then get some rest. Because man, it's been crazy for me. I never missed a minute this season, you know, because I knew I had to sacrifice for this team.

And so grateful for the medical staff, as well, the performance staff. They really helped me. When regular season was ongoing, we were playing games every three days, every four days, and they helped me throughout the season. Very grateful.

And I just want to say, I love you so much, Ms. Kafui Mensah, and I'll see you soon.

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