

Major League Soccer Media Conference

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Ronny Deila

Press Conference



Q. Thank you. Hey, Ronny, congratulations again on the victory last night. Only three teams have repeated as MLS Cup champions over the years -- D.C. United, Houston Dynamo -- and I was wondering, what have you learned about Major League Soccer that you feel your team can repeat this year?

RONNY DEILA: That's the goal, of course, to win again. But the MLS now is really, really competitive. Maybe it's always been like that, but I feel that, when I talk to people who has been in this league for many, many years, that the level is much more higher and there's so many teams that is good. So to repeat now is much more harder than it was many years ago.

But, again, the only thing we can do for ourselves is we need to improve, we need to work with the same intensity, the same concentration, and what we have in positive ways that we have a lot of consistency and stuff. Consistency in the players and style of play, everything. So we just have to work up from where we stopped last year, and we only have one long break. I think that's positive as well because they come back really, really fit.

So I just feel that we have started where we left, and then we'll see how good the others are. That's how it is. We can't do anything about the others, just to see how good we can be, and then have to compare with the others. Last year we were the best team, and we want to be that this year as well, but we need to improve from what we did last season.

Q. Thank you. Congratulations again on the championship last year. Speaking of others, if I could interject a question about the Sounders. I wanted to know if it's your style at all to know about other rosters out there. And if so, if you have an opinion about the Sounders roster because it is being talked about as a good one and somebody that maybe you all could meet in the finals.

RONNY DEILA: I don't know anything about that. Of course I see the news and things like that, but I have never met Seattle, and maybe we do in the Champions League,

maybe in the MLS Cup in the end. But they've always been a good team in general. They're one of the teams that you could say have a culture of top performance because they always every year are there and fighting for the trophy.

So if they have improved their roster, that would be even better than they were last year and the year before. So that's going to be a tough opponent.

Q. Coach, thank you for doing this. Last night was a dominant win. I was actually counting a lot of times you went well over 20 passes -- actually, on Chantot's goal, it was 17. Was it part of your plan to keep the ball for yourselves as far as maintaining possession or to not allow them to get it while players in the open field were connecting a lot of the kill passes, final passes particularly early, where finding them hard.

RONNY DEILA: We wanted to improve on our passing from the first game against Santos because I think we were playing too far away from the midfield. We kept possession there as well, but we didn't keep it in the midfield. We kept it in defense. I don't like to have possession just for possession. Possession, I want to create something.

But we give the opponent some trouble, get the central defenders and kept the goalkeepers in play. I felt like we were much better on how to get closer to their midfield and play through them and attack space and get more balls inside the box.

When you get in the last part of the pitch, you have to get the ball back in quick. I think also it was good reactions from the team. In the end, we had to get our goals. I think it was a very professional performance. It was improvement from last game. We need to improve even more now to get in the weekend against the Galaxy.

Q. You and your team have many competitions on the table this year -- MLS, Champions League, Campeones Cup, and so on. Will you choose or give priority to any of those competitions this year, or will you go for everything you have in hand?

RONNY DEILA: We want to be in every game. Nothing is more important than others. We want to win more

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trophies. I think our whole club, including myself, just gets more hungry to win when you achieve what you did last year. It's just a fantastic feeling to achieve something together with so many good people. And the fans, how much it meant for them.

So now I'm just proud that we are in so many competitions, and we have a stronger roster and we will use it wisely. But there's no player in that roster, whether Campeones, MLS, or Champions League. We will go to every game with the best team we can, and I'm sure we're going to use the roster very well.

Q. Ronny, just a two-part question. Number one, you've already played two games. So do you feel like that while you want to see the team improve in some areas, at least you've got a couple of games under your belt so you don't have to go out and play a team on the West Coast? Like you are a tough team. At least you've got a little rhythm. Secondly, have you had conversations with the team about just the way to approach the season being defending champions? Every team is going to have you as the game to win, just having a target on your back. Have you had discussions with the team about that at all?

RONNY DEILA: We talk about culture all the time. I think that's one of the reasons we won last year is we are focusing on tasks and results. When you do that, you win football games in the end, if you are good enough. We had some really good performances last year, at the end of last year. We were able to take away expectations and enjoy games and go in and do everything we can with what we can do something with.

And that's the same now. We're a champion. It's always hard to replicate that. At the same time, we were 20 points behind New England last year. So there's a lot to improve. It's the chase, the level they had during the season for us I think is important.

I see every day if people are 100 percent. I see every day if people are improving. If they're not improving, we have a problem. Then I think everybody knows the demands in this club and how it's going to be. If people are improving and we're doing good performance, they have to be humble and say that others are better than us. But if we don't improve and we don't play well, then we have to look at ourselves in the mirror and see what's wrong.

But so far, I'm really, really impressed about the culture. The boys are coming back fit. They're hungry. They train really well every day. We haven't lost a single game in the preseason, and we won two games now in the Champions League. We just have to build on that, build on our

performances. Then we'll see how good the others are.

Q. Hi, Coach. Congratulations on your win yesterday. It was a solid performance. I wanted to ask you in terms of what changes for you as a coach this season knowing that you manage a championship team? How do you keep your players motivated? And as a manager, what are you looking forward to improve this season? As a manager. Thank you.

RONNY DEILA: I think I answered a lot of that question with the last one, but at the same time, you have to have -- you can't drag people up if they don't want to go up. You need to have players that want to get better and have the career in front of them and want to do something for the club and for the supporters, everybody.

If you don't have that, they're not going to be in this club. That's so easy like that. I think we have shown that through the years I've been here that people that standing still don't continue being in the club. So the demands is there.

I think their accountability inside the group is very, very strong. So people is not doing what they're told to do and give everything every day, then they will be told. So I just don't see any danger in that.

We have a young squad. Many have big ambitions individually and also as a club. We add players into -- we don't play with the same roster as last year. We brought new players in that will do something with the team, and people has to improve. So that's the motivation. As I said, this has to come from inside, and I think we have fun every day. We enjoy every day together. Then it's easy also to give everything for the team.

There's a lot of things to improve, of course, but I think we can be better in our offensive play. I think defensively last year we were very solid. Keep on developing that. But I think our passing could be better. We can create even more chances than we have done. So it's about relations. It's about positioning. It's about knowing what's happening before the ball is coming.

These things have developed now in two years normally. The other teams are going to be even better in fourth and fifth year. So it's about repetition. It's about doing your role as good as possible together with others. If we can do that, I think we can be very good. Of course it's important we have consistency here. And of course we have a lot of consistency in the squad and also in the staff.

Q. One final question about your opening opponent for the weekend, the L.A. Galaxy. Can you talk about

what you've seen in this team and how you're preparing for the start of the season?

RONNY DEILA: The L.A. Galaxy. I don't like to look ahead of myself when we have a Champions League game, so that was the most important. Now L.A. Galaxy is the most important, and I saw a lot this night.

We're going to meet a very good football team. They look much tougher than they did last year, in my opinion. They have good individual players. They have a style of play that causes problems if you don't defend well. So we have to be at the top if we're going to have a positive result in L.A.

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