

2022 MLS Cup: LAFC vs Philadelphia

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Los Angeles, California, USA

Banc of California Stadium

Philadelphia Union

Andre Blake

Pregame Press Conference



Q. Do you have a sense of how closely the game is going to be watched in Jamaica, and will they be showing it at your bar and restaurant?

ANDRE BLAKE: Yeah. I have a lot of friends back in Jamaica, so I'm pretty sure they're all excited. They're looking forward to the game. Whatever it's going to take, I have to make sure that game is shown live in my sports bar.

Q. Andre, what's the biggest threat that LAFC has offensively? Obviously you've played against them several times, a lot of thrilling results between you guys. Just wanted to see what you've seen from them in film.

ANDRE BLAKE: They have a great team. Great players, Arango, Carlos Vela. Those guys are big-time players, and they've been performing very well.

We know they have a very good offense, and yeah.

Q. All the players are motivated to win for themselves, obviously. Can you talk about how much there's a feeling in the room to win for Jim Curtin, the second longest tenured coach in the league? He's always been mild mannered and a gentleman with us; is there a side to him that maybe we don't see that maybe only the players do?

ANDRE BLAKE: No. I mean, Jim is probably one of the nicest guys I've ever met. Jim doesn't yell at you. If he yells, then you know it's really bad. He's easygoing. He's just super cool, super chill. He's a great coach, and he's just a great person. You can talk to him about anything. He's a guy that makes you want to play for him. If he believes in you, then it's a really good thing for you because when he believes, he believes.

Q. LAFC are the second highest goal-scoring team in all the league with 66 goals scored, right behind your team with 72 goals scored. How do you plan on stopping such a dominant offensive force given the star-studded attack that LAFC have with Vela and Arango? Both have been in incredible form.

ANDRE BLAKE: Yeah, as I said earlier, they have a very good offensive unit. We have a pretty good defensive unit, as well. And yeah, it's going to be in their home. It's going to be a tough game.

But we're going to go there, we're going to have some fun. We're going to enjoy the moment. We're going to give it our best shot, and we'll see what happens.

Q. I moved here in 2014 so I got to see you just a tiny bit. I'm wondering what it's been like watching your team evolve over the years and grow so much. Can you describe it a little bit?

ANDRE BLAKE: Yeah, growing with the club since I've been there 2014, the club has really come a long way. I think the biggest thing is the culture has changed, and we are really more of a club that's never satisfied. We always want to win. We're not just okay with being in the league. We want to be one of those clubs that every time you talk about the MLS or our name pops up.

I think the owners and the technical directors, the point directors have done a really good job bringing in players who want to win. We're competitors that's going to fight every week and try to get better every year.

I'm just happy to be a part of this club and watch it grow from 2014 to where we are right now. I'm really proud of this group. We're still going to try to get even better. We're still not where we want to be yet, and we want to be really consistent, and that's our aim.

Q. Just wondering what this playoff push has been like for you guys in what has also been kind of a jam-packed time in the Philly sports calendar. What's the support been like, and have you found you guys kind of fighting for attention a little bit?

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ANDRE BLAKE: Yeah, the support has been unreal. We have the best fans in the world. It's really going well in Philadelphia right now. The Phillies are doing really well, and the Eagles are doing really well, and then you have the Union.

There's also pressure, but we have to deal with that. It's a great time to be part of Philly sport, and yeah, we're in a good spot. Hopefully we can really bring it over the line.

Q. Talk about the pandemic period and how you guys came out of that. You won a Supporters' Shield during that period, and then you came out the other side, and now you're in position to win an MLS Cup. What were the lessons you took out of that period, and how did you as a group handle that?

ANDRE BLAKE: Yeah, it was a very tough moment, not just for our club, but for the entire world. I feel like during that time it's really brought us together, and we really had a chance to really take things into perspective and to realize that you can't take anything for granted.

I feel like the way our team is built, that moment really brought us closer together. We had some locker room talks, and I remember right before going into the lockdown we played here in LA in a really entertaining 3-3 game, and then we had the lockdown, we came right back out, and the guys were just hungry.

We want to win. We have a group of guys that just show up every day and fight. To be where we are today, the club being in the first ever MLS Cup, it's a big deal. It's a great moment. We really need to enjoy the moment because there's a bunch of other clubs that wish they were here today, so we have to enjoy the moment, but we also have to realize that it's good to be here, but it's also really good if you can take the last step.

Q. With being on the MLS Best XI and three other of your teammates, how are you guys celebrating the news, and how are you feeling going into the match knowing that?

ANDRE BLAKE: Yeah, it's great news. You're always happy when you can get these individual accolades, but we're going to enjoy the moment a little bit, but also we have to look at the bigger picture and to know that it would be an even better feeling to be celebrating these individual accolades with an MLS Cup.

We're going to enjoy the moment, but we have to really stay focused and remember that the biggest trophy that you play for in the league is still on the line.

We kind of have to keep that in the back of our heads, enjoy the moment a little bit, but we also have to remain focused.

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