

2022 MLS Cup: LAFC vs Philadelphia

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Los Angeles, California, USA

Banc of California Stadium

Philadelphia Union

Alejandro Bedoya

Pregame Press Conference



ALEJANDRO BEDOYA: Yeah, no, Jack McGlynn is somebody who I believe in a lot with his talent. I think we can all agree that he's got one of the best young left foots in the game.

He's got great vision. The game has slowed down a bit for him now, as well, so even last game you saw when he was able to have time and space and lift his head up and pick a pass out, that leads to a goal-scoring chance.

I think his talent, he has a bright future. That's all I can say, I think, since he's come into the team. A lot of the young guys, they already have good head on their shoulders. They're doing a great job at over at YSC and with the academy. And Jack is somebody who, the moment he stepped on the field with us, you already knew that he was something special.

Yeah, you know, he continues to work hard, get better and better every day. I think what he may lack defensively perhaps, the tactical part of the game, I think he makes up for it being able to pick passes like he did last game. He's playing with no fear, and you've got to love that.

Q. How different -- when scouting this LAFC team, how different is it from the one that you faced in May with all the additions that they've had now?

ALEJANDRO BEDOYA: Well, one of them barely plays, but he's a big guy, right? That's a headline. But no, it's a team that has incredible talent. We all know that. That's no disrespect to him. He's a fantastic player. I'll never forget the goal he scored when he was out of bounds, like five yards out of bounds and he just sprinted past and was able to score a goal. He's incredible.

And Chiellini, I mean, for me, following his career, is like a guy you want in your locker room because he's such a personality, he seems like such a fun guy to be around and just a great teammate on top of being a great player.

You know, this is a team that has a lot of great players, Chicho Arango, a Colombian -- hi, what's up? I'm Colombian, too. He's a pest, man, and this team is great.

Q. How is your leg? Are you able to play on Saturday? Obviously as a leader of this team, what does this moment represent for the Philadelphia Union and the journey you guys have gone on since your arrival and a few of your teammates a few years prior?

ALEJANDRO BEDOYA: My leg, I'm still in recovery. I'm training on the side still, but I'm going to be doing everything I can to get out on the field. So still a work in progress.

But I remain optimistic that I'll be able to play a part in the game.

Just for me, this means a lot. Obviously it's a culmination of all the hard work we've put in since I've been here. I was sold on the project, the ambitions of the club. They wanted to go in a different direction, wanted to get more respect, and I think we've earned that since I've been here.

We've got a bitter taste in our mouths from last year, the way it ended. We felt we were just so close to accomplishing our goals then. And we came back this season with a vengeance, I would say. So now we finally got over that hump, the Eastern Conference final, and I think it's two teams that deserve to be here, the best two teams in the regular season this season.

We're all looking forward to the matchup. We know we've had some good performances against LAFC in the past, and we're hoping to be on the victorious end of this one this weekend.

Q. Not necessarily about MLS Cup, but you've been around for a few years. You've seen teenagers come and go, Jack McGlynn, 19-year-old, how has he developed in the short time he has been with the team, and what sort of potential do you think he has?

I just saw Steve Cherundolo just now. I played with him on the national team. And he was crucial to me during my time with the national team because I played in front of him for some games, and just I know how he sees the game and just learning from a guy like him. I'm happy for him in his first season as a head coach here. He's in the MLS Cup final.

It's just when you're scouting them, you see that they're a very talented team. But like I said, I think we've given them some tough games and I think some of the more exciting games in the MLS, when you think about that 3-3 game and then the 2-2 game we had earlier this year that we tied them at home 2-1-1. They've always been pretty exciting.

We play our game, they have their game. It's pretty much different styles, although I will say LAFC plays a little more direct this year than they have in the past, when they kept more ball possession.

But as long as we play our game and our style and give them hell, be hard to play against, I think we can get the job done. But there's no question, LAFC is one of the more talented teams in this league.

Q. Andre talked about the presence that the group showed during the pandemic, and the wherewithal to get to where you are right now really showed through during that time. I'm wondering if you can talk about the change in culture that he also spoke about. We see the stats, you and LAFC have tied since 2018, like 1 and 1-A in this league. That five-year period, where did that come from? Was that a progression, you've seen that rising through your time with the club, or did something shift in 2018?

ALEJANDRO BEDOYA: Yeah, look, I came here in August 2016, and the why reason, I was sold on the ambitions of the club, the new direction they wanted to go in. When I came here they hadn't even won a playoff game and had only made the playoffs once, I think.

I think the respect wasn't there yet for a club like Philadelphia Union, but the work was being put in place, and we've just come a long way in terms of the type of players we're able to bring here and the academy developing the young players, the mentality in general of the players that are in the locker room.

I mean, I'm not going to say I changed the locker room culture, but I think I'd always get so pissed after a game when we'd lose and guys would go straight on their cell phones. It was like they didn't really care as much. I'd lose my -- I'm not going to curse, but you get the point. I'd lose it.

And just I think now, since 2018, I think everybody has bought into what we're all about and the way we want to pride ourselves on representing the club and Union and Philly.

Like you said, over the course of the last four or five years, we've shown a level of consistency that perhaps Philly doesn't really get that recognition, so to speak, like a lot of folks maybe don't think that. When you look at total points amassed over those years, we're at the top.

So that's a credit to the whole club, the training staff, the players buying in. We might not have those marquee names like a club like LAFC does, but I think one thing we do have, whether that's 11 starting guys or the 20 guys on the game day roster, they understand their roles. They come in and really fight for each other, for one another, and instill the philosophy that we have, that we can compete with anybody, and we've continued to do that.

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