

2022 MLS Cup: LAFC vs Philadelphia

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Los Angeles, California, USA

Banc of California Stadium

Los Angeles FC

Steve Cherundolo

Postgame Press Conference



LAFC 3, Philadelphia Union 3

3-0 Penalties

Q. First off, want to get an update on Crepeau, we heard he had a broken leg?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: I don't have any new information for you.

Q. So you don't know if it's broken or not?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: I really do not know. I haven't -- you see what's going on. I haven't had a chance to sit down with the doctors yet.

Q. Can you talk about John McCarthy, bringing him on, a guy who played one MLS game all year, but he also had faced penalty kicks against America. Can you talk about what he did today?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Yeah, couldn't happen to a better guy. John is one of the heartbeats of this team emotionally. And I think I mentioned yesterday at the press conference there was a moment in preseason where we found ourselves as a group, and John was right in the middle of that, being a vocal leader for this team, and working very hard all season long and being an amazing number two in disguise.

And we know what he can do in penalties. We've seen it. We've trained for these moments, and John came up big.

Like I said, couldn't happen to a better guy, and extremely happy for him and everybody at LAFC.

Q. Gareth's goal, I think it's safe to say that's why you signed him. What did you see? And take us into just the, frankly, global magnitude of that moment?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Gareth being Gareth. He's a guy with big qualities and a guy who makes big plays. Let's hope he doesn't in the first game of the World Cup for all the Americans in the room.

But it's Gareth being Gareth. He does it in training. He's done it this season. When he's feeling well and healthy, he makes a difference in games. That's why we bring him in in those moments. I wish he was 24.

Q. Did you consider bringing in John, anyway, for kicks, and what does this entire thing and this title mean to you?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Yeah, we talk about every possible change, every possible scenario. I write it down, I document it all, and this is a scenario that we have talked about.

Whether or not we would have done it, I don't know. It's a purely hypothetical. It happened, so we had to.

What it means to me, I'm not sure yet. I think I need a few days to process. For me, the goal is always to maximize the potential of this group, and anything short of a Supporters' Shield or MLS Cup for this group with this mentality wouldn't have been enough.

I think a job I can say for myself and the rest of the coaching staff, a job well done. We've done our job. We've done what we were here to do by maximizing the potential of this group.

It was a lot of hard work, but that makes me proud, not the title, per se, but to have a group of individuals to make a team and to create a mentality to come back and go through everything up through today, the emotional roller coaster, that they found a way to come together and win, that's probably what I'm most proud of.

Q. Could you just describe the emotional ups and downs, taking the lead late, giving up the lead, falling behind and then the overtime?



STEVE CHERUNDOLO: It's classic Philly. They never give up. They work hard. They are scrappy, and they can score goals in any phase of the game.

I thought we had a pretty good first half. We had a lot under control, deserved to be in the lead. Let them get back in and got a little away from what we were doing.

Probably has more to do with Philly. They played very well in the second half.

Yeah, it's a roller coaster. We made a few changes, went for it, put on player No. 10, three forwards, took away a midfielder, not rolling the dice but trying to change the dynamic of the game.

And we did, and we were able to create a few more attacks and make Philly defend a little bit more and relieve the pressure a little bit.

Then just kind of continues. And when you take the lead, it's always tricky in the game, there's emotions, plays, set pieces.

But it's a classic final. A lot of finals throughout many competitions around the world are decided by set plays and those moments where mistakes are made, not so much on the run of play. So I think we saw more of that tonight.

Q. When you were compiling the roster, what impressed you about John McCarthy that you put him on the roster? And second, how do you approach a game when you are down ten men in the final few minutes of the second extra time period and you need a goal?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Yeah, John is an excellent goalkeeper. Could be a number one elsewhere. Could be a number one for us. It's very tight between him and Max, but both are great teammates and push each other to get better.

And my personal opinion, the best number two in the league, and that's how we choose our goalkeepers.

To answer your second question, there isn't a whole lot of thinking going on there. You're down ten. You take your moments. You need a goal. The guys know what to do. We train for that all the time.

These 9-1-1 moments that I'll call them in games are part of our game plan. We go through it. We had to take Mahala out for tactical reasons because we needed a goalkeeper, and we tried to keep our larger stature players

on the field for set pieces and crosses, and it worked.

Q. Was the plan always when you got the extra time to bring Gareth in, and was there a time just during this past week where you felt like he was ready to go?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Yeah, same goes for last week. He was healthy and ready to go last week if need be, and it's always a plan to put him on exactly for the reason he scored his goal.

He has the quality to do that. He has the physical stature to do that.

(Taking FaceTime from Max).

Get well, Buddy. I'll call you in a bit.

I'm sorry, would you mind repeating that question? I lost track.

Q. Was the plan just for him to come in in extra time, or did you think about bringing him in?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Sure, if need be earlier, as well, but the way the game shaped up, you go ahead in the 83rd minute, I believe, and you get the equalizer.

And then you have to think about things a little bit, what can you do. There's 30 more minutes to play. It's not just five or ten or eight minutes. There's 30 more additional minutes. So then you have to think about it tactically.

And yeah, it was -- it's a piece that we have on our roster that I have that maybe Philly didn't have. I think that's just the difference tonight.

Q. Not a bad first season for you in the job. Wonder if you can reflect on stepping into the role after what Bob Bradley had done coaching this club, and then also wondering, what do you do for an encore after this?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Well, I don't know the answer to the second part of your question right now.

So I think I've gone about coaching in different ways, and I've coached developmental, which is a different way to coach players. There's a different goal.

So you have to coach them different. Your methodology is different and your tactics are different, as well.

But for this particular job, during the interview process, I can share what is working, you shouldn't change, because that takes a lot of energy and effort and resources. What's

working, hold onto, and what's not working, change.

And that was my approach in the interview process. And I was able to convince the right people to give me a shot, and I think they are happy with their decision now.

Q. I want to take you back three years ago. You were in Germany, trying to break in, trying to find a job. It's tougher than you probably thought.

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Sure.

Q. How frustrating was that and how crazy is it that so much has happened in just three years? Does it not even seem like three years from that point to here you are lifting a trophy?

STEVE CHERUNDOLO: Yeah, it's pretty wild. I think I mentioned this the other day in the press conference. This business as a coach or as a player is not plannable. Things happen. You need to be ready for them. The worst thing you can do as a coach is jump into a situation you're not prepared for.

So during those times when you are looking for the right job or looking for a job, it's about preparing yourself when it does come.

I felt very well prepared for this job, and I think maybe two titles speaks for itself.

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