

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Chris Armas

Media Conference



Cruz Azul 3, Toronto FC 1

CONCACAF Champions League

Quarter-final Leg 1 of 2

**Q. Clearly you were up against an elite team tonight but do you think that your team contributed to its own demise problems with set pieces again and a goal off a turnover?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Yes, it's frustrating, right, because you know, there's oftentimes it's X's and O's and things that you can prepare for in a strategic way. But within this game, it was -- it was clear, right. We knew they were not going to change what they -- who they are and what they do. You know, we know they play roughly 90 long balls per game. Like it was going to be very, very clear that it was going to be a day about field position, about second balls, about, you know, where -- you go turning over the ball in bad spots and playing the game in certain areas, and yeah, with that, there's set pieces.

And of course it's a good team but we let ourselves down defending our box again. You know, there's not a magic solution for that, man-to-man or to the zone. It's about urgency and alertness and reactions. That's clearly -- you know, we have work to do there. We have work to do there. And it cost us tonight and you can talk about the other games, too, where we left ourselves down and it will be hard to win soccer games when that stuff is not right. So I will figure that out. We're at halftime right now, and we're going against Cruz Azul and make it a game.

**Q. Next Tuesday, not to give away any secrets or anything, but looking at it from this vantage point, do you figure you have to make drastic changes or just straighten some things out and maybe hopefully get a couple of healthy players back? What are your thoughts heading into that second game even though the first game just ended?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Look, when you are talking about drastic changes, are you asking about personnel? Is it tactics? We have a core group here. We have our guys and we

understood clearly what the game would look like. So the interesting thing is when you can put yourselves in position to win second balls, when you can secure the first pass, you can catch Cruz Azul the other way. And we did that, at times we did that, and that's, you know, strategy and gaping stuff, but it still has to come down to more urgency, more competing, anticipating, reactions. Again, all over the field so that you can create more transition moments by just, you know, sniffing out enough plays, and then again, we'll just have to be much more tight on set pieces.

I've been part of stretches like this when some of that, it's not quite right. We'll put players in position to succeed. We're going to get that right. But I already can tell you what the game is going to look like from Cruz Azul's standpoint. Again there's no secrets tonight. They are a good team and can play and if you some of you don't realize, you can go back and look at how good that team is. They have not lost much this last year. We knew it would be tough. Not a lot of room for error.

We'll make some changes, probably some structural changes to put ourselves in spots and we'll take the next days to think about that.

**Q. You know the math, 11 goals in five games conceded and it's not all on the goalkeeper but at what point do you maybe take a look at giving Quentin a look and sitting Alex on the bench?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Been solid. So we ask ourselves tough questions every day about players and are we getting certain things right. That's an every day thing. I think Alex has done a solid job. We have to help him more. We have to help him more and have more urgency and more commitment to defend and take care of our jobs around him. You know, guys got to do their jobs, you know, and he's doing his.

**Q. Just wondering what positives you took from tonight? Is there anything that gives you hope, gives you confidence that you can build upon going into the second leg next week?**

CHRIS ARMAS: I still would say that, look, we stick



together. Our team doesn't give in. We don't give up. We push. We make our lives difficult. But no one is going to help us with that. We have to help ourselves to have 90 minutes of a performance that's full of concentration and execution. But I like that our team sticks together and we fight to the end. We fought to get the second goal, didn't get it, but we certainly give ourselves a chance going against Cruz Azul.

Listen, I'm not -- I like our team. I love our team. I'm not -- I'm just not -- right now, it's not looking full of positives.

**Q. Did you see more goals out there for you guys tonight?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Yeah, there's a few big chances, and there would have been more if we can deal with some transition moments the right way. You know, when you play against teams like this that play very direct and when you can win a lot of the aerial duels with Omar and Eric, and you can win some second balls like we did even on the first goal, right, we pin the ball and give it right back. That's frustrating, it is.

So there were some big moments. Cruz Azul defends their box pretty well, right, with urgency. They didn't give up a lot of spaces but we had a few chances in transition and a couple of set pieces.

But we showed that we can score on them. They have won six or seven out of the last ten, 1-0. But we can score and week create chances and we are going to push to do that at their place.

**Q. What is the key tonight to Cruz Azul's victory?**

CHRIS ARMAS: They took their chances. They took their chances. They were go on set pieces, and I would say it's the same key because there was no surprises. There was none. It's exactly what we thought. So I give them credit that they stuck to what they do. They play very direct. They play with a clear playing style and they have good attackers but they overload our end and they anticipate second balls and they create real transition moments. So it's a good team. That's the credit they get. They stuck to who they are. Good team.

**Q. You have a new designated player, Soteldo, can you tell us your thoughts about acquiring him and do you have any idea when you might be able to deploy him?**

CHRIS ARMAS: We are excited for Yeferson to join us. He's a dynamic attacker. He's going to really help us on the attacking end and he brings a lot of quality, and for a

fairly young guys, he's got some big experiences and he's very dynamic. He plays with a lot of passion and we think he's a winner.

So that's going to be a nice injection into our team. Still working through when he can participate. There's a chance it's Cruz Azul and that can give us a nice lift, but we are not sure with the logistical hurdles that we have to get through before we can have him join us. But we're excited for sure and so is he. We'll welcome him as soon as we can.

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