

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Chris Armas

Media Conference



Cruz Azul 1, Toronto FC 0

CONCACAF Champions League

Quarterfinal - Leg 2 of 2

Aggregate: 4 - 1

**Q. Your team seemed to start brightly tonight, but another wonder goal seemed to take the steam out of the team, the air out of the team a little bit. How did you see the game?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Look, the first thing I'm going to say before I talk about the game is, you know, this team, this Toronto FC team, who I've now met now, I don't know, four months ago, this is an impressive group, and we have talked about the no excuses, and there's a lot of factors that have affected this group which would have made it easy to quit in some of these games, to just start blaming and start, you know, again, making excuses.

And you know, I'm going to say a few things that these guys have been dealt a difficult hand: You know, no home field, away from their families, a tough stretch back in Canada, our dps are not healthy at the moment. So many little things; a really difficult draw in the Champion's League. Hot days for games mid-day, short rest. And these guys, not once did they make one excuse.

But it's important to be said that this team stands together. They came here tonight with full belief. They put Cruz Azul, who is a good team and difficult game in the first half, and yeah, that's what I'll say about the game; that we showed up tonight with a belief and a plan and for folks at home, I mean, 115 long balls they play, very effective in what they do. It's really challenging. The last thing I would say is that I'm proud of the team, they don't quit, they stick together and that they went for it tonight.

**Q. Chris Mavinga, first appearance today in the six games. How did you think he looked and was that the plan just to let him go the 45 minutes and then take him off?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Listen, two things. Chris Mavinga, he's a presence back there. You can see it, what he means to this team when he's in, when he's not in. I thought he had he had may really good first half, made big plays, covers lots of ground. Gives us something really -- obviously just a comfort back there to deal with transition and the whole bit.

The plan coming in, I laughed -- play 90, that's what he says. We thought that he'd play into the second half. That was the plan. But you know, it's a big demand at the altitude and it's his first minutes, right. So we got I think a lot out of him and it's a good first step for him getting back into the team, and there's a good chance we can have him ready for Saturday.

**Q. It's not the best performance tonight, the result is not what you expected, but you had a great performance through the competition. So what do you get from this, learning for the next season for the MLS tournament, and congratulations for the tournament, that you get to the next stage?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Yeah, thank you. Look, Cruz Azul is a good team. I don't have to tell the Mexican community that it's -- I think 18 games, they have not lost. You know, we knew it was a difficult match up, and we thought that tonight in the first half; that we created some good chances, some really good chances that maybe if we score the first goal, we can make it a really interesting game.

So listen, we are proud of our team; that we went to Leon and we tied 1-1 and we came home and beat Leon and we really threw everything we had at Cruz Azul. But this is a good team. Congratulations to Cruz Azul, Juan Reynoso, a very good coach, and we wish them well.

But we are proud of our team for showing up here in Mexico City. This is not an easy place to play. From the beginning of the game, we attacked and we left everything, we left everything on the field.

**Q. Excellent game, good effort. Big picture-wise in terms of the tournament itself, do you think it's a big disadvantage for MLS teams, not just your team, but**



**entering a tournament like this after only playing a few games compared to the Mexican team playing for several weeks?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Yeah, I think there's an advantage to those teams at the end of their season, and some like us, we're in the beginning of our season. But this is what it is. You know, certainly, in this really interesting time of the pandemic and COVID, it makes an extra challenge, but Cruz Azul is a good team and I think even if all things are equal, even if we can play a home match, this is a difficult series. It's a difficult match-up.

But we would love to play these games. MLS teams, we would all love to play these games middle of our season, end of our season because we think it could be even a better match-up, better game, better for the supporters and for the competition, just for the competition. I'm sure they would love to see our best like they want to see our best.

But then listen, it's a good team, and they move on.

**Q. Can you pinpoint where this series got a way from you guys, and perhaps with tonight's goal from Angulo, is that the kind of goal you tip your cap to or is that a tough one to give up?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Listen, the set pieces, we can look at that. We're home, we know we can play against this team. We can give them some trouble. We can pick up some second balls and play in transition. But I think we let ourselves down with some set pieces in leg one.

Tonight, it's different, it is. We give up a really special goal. Again, they played 115 long balls. We cannot win them all. So the times that you win those, it's moments to maybe score and when you lose those moments, good players can make plays.

This is a very, very good goal for them and yeah, I mean, they had a few other chances, but so did we. Even at the end, we had chances to score. It's a good goal for them, really. We congratulate the scorer, not blame TFC here.

**Q. Given the injuries, given you've got players that will be coming into the team very shortly with Jefferson, how incomplete does the group feel at this time? Do you not feel that you have gotten a true reflection of what your team is all about at this point?**

CHRIS ARMAS: Look, when we finally get healthy, when we finally add the pieces, yeah, it will feel different and it will look different. And then we can play both sides of the ball. This team can defend with organization and we can attack with good ideas and quality players.

But I know the team. I'm seeing the team. It's not like Alejandro Pozuelo is not with us back in Orlando. We are together every day and we are coming together. And these types of tournaments and a little bit of adversity, this brings groups together. It can separate groups but it's bringing us together and I can see that, and I can see tonight that they are together.

When I see the faces of the players suffering together, the only thing missing, I want to be with them out there. But yeah, we're coming together. We're close. We're getting closer. We're getting healthier, and when we do, yeah, I think we're going to be a team that can win consistently in the League.

**Q. Can you tell us why Jozy was unavailable tonight and when did you find out that he was not going to be able to play?**

CHRIS ARMAS: He just hasn't been feeling good for a few days. It's almost par for the course these days where you just -- Jozy has been in a really good way. You know, working up his fitness, his sharpness, the whole bit. We all know when he's -- what he means to this team moving forward and in the past, like this is a big player.

So he just wasn't feeling great. So this is -- it's a shame for Jozy and for us, but yeah, he'll be back and doing his thing. So he's had a really, really good few months before he took a step back with the slight injury, but you know, we'll be relying on him in a big way and get him back to feeling good.

**Q. What was your evaluation of Ayo tonight, his first start playing leading the line?**

CHRIS ARMAS: It was inspiring. I thought he was excellent. You know, Ayo, he's a good striker and he's got good tendencies to run behind and run the line and his timing, and he put himself in a few really good spots and I thought he was a handful for their back line tonight.

Really good starting point for him, good action. That's where we can expect to see him on the pitch and I think it was one of the -- you know, we had a bunch of guys that showed up tonight in a big way and I think he did, we pushed his minutes, the fitness is coming and yeah, he's an exciting young player with a really good attitude. Yeah, I thought he did really well tonight.

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