

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Yeferson Soteldo

Media Conference



Q. What drew you to come to Toronto FC?

YEFERSON SOLTEDO: First of all, the training today -- I was really excited and anxious to be on the field and train with my teammates. So I was looking forward to that moment. My decision to come here was mainly because I saw the whole history of the club, the MLS. I was watching the history of the teams. I saw when the team was MLS Cup champion with Jozy, Michael and Sebastian. So I was always kind of looking forward to most of the MLS teams. I spoke with my parents, my agent and I also mentioned that I was looking for a movement into MLS, the growth that this league has had over the past few years and I want to be a part of that history and making the growth because it could be one of the top leagues in the world.

Q. When you look at the way Toronto FC plays, they have kind of an aggressive, pressing system that requires a lot of running. Maybe different from what you played at Santos. What gives you confidence that you will be able to succeed in this pressing system?

YEFERSON SOLTEDO: I trusted myself. I think I have the personality and the -- to just be there on the field and I had a chance to talk with Coach Chris Armas and he sewed me a little bit of his tactic and the ideas that he has for me and he wants to see me on the field. I think we have a good group of players with a lot of talent, so the most important thing for me is just to be able to connect with them and play as long as I have players that have a good mentality and skills. For now I think it's more having a good personality and trusting myself.

Q. What led to you choosing Toronto, not only as a player, but for your family for the next few years?

YEFERSON SOLTEDO: I want to say thank you to Bill and Lee and the coach for the trust because that was the main reason I decided to come to Canada. I felt like they trust me and want me on the team and I had the same feeling as first moment that I spoke with them. And obviously I wanted to give an opportunity to my family, my kids to have a good opportunity to grow here. So the decision was very easy for me, the city, the team, club how it works and treat me because they treat me great since

the day that we start talking. So that was really easy for me to make the decision to move here.

Q. Did you get a chance to talk to your compatriots Garrison about playing in Toronto and if so, what did he tell you?

YEFERSON SOLTEDO: We spoke every day since we know that there was a possibility of me coming. He explained everything to me. I think he was great in saying how the whole city welcomes you in a positive way, like everyone -- like people are really kind in Canada and Toronto, and he always told me great things about the city, about the club, how people in the club treat you, how they are always available to help and support you in any matter. So that was really important for me to know because I wanted to have my family a good opportunity, and it made all the decisions easier just to move here.

Q. When you first went to Santos, you asked the club president if the No. 10 jersey was available, which is a pretty big deal because that's where Pele played. What gave you the confidence to sort of take on the responsibility and how did you not shrink from that heavy burden of what wearing the number 10 means, wearing that number at Santos?

YEFERSON SOLTEDO: I remember clearly when the moment happened, I went to the president and I asked as a joke if you could give me No. 10 and it was really funny because he looked at me in a way that, is this a joke, but -- and I wasn't -- I never got a chance to just with the intention of asking for No. 10 but then he said it was a difficult decision because he didn't want to burden me with the responsibility but No. 10 was available.

I said that it wasn't going to be a lot of pressure for me because I know the responsibility that it takes but I try to take it as a way that -- as a kid, I always wanted to wear No. 10, so I think for me it was more like kind of living my dream and I think my personality helped just to enjoy having that number and not having pressure to burn me in that moment. But it was a really funny moment when I asked the president about the No. 10.



Q. I wanted to ask about that designated player tag. Obviously there's only three players who can be a designated player on a team. Do you feel any sort of pressure coming in as a designated player here?

YEFERSON SOTELDO: For me, I'm really happy for that but I don't see it as a pressure for me. I just come to Toronto to play, to enjoy. As I mention to my agent who is like my dad, I just wanted to come to Toronto to make history with a team and that's something I saw in my teammate, Joseph Martinez from Atlanta, he's like my brother, I saw him competing with success here and that's what I wanted to make in Toronto, just make history.

Q. You'll be wearing No. 30. What's the significance of that number for you?

YEFERSON SOTELDO: It's very special because that number is the one when I started to make my career in soccer when Sebastian told me the number was available, I was like, wow, this is amazing. That's like the same way when I started my career in Venezuela, it's like starting a new dream with number 30, so it was really something that I was looking for and for me it's more like I'm going to be representing on the field with the jersey but for me it's not too much about numbers. It's about how I can play on the field.

Q. My understanding is the Brazilian season ended in late February. When was your last game and whether you feel you're ready to go or it's going to take some time to get into top shape?

YEFERSON SOTELDO: I can't remember the exact date when I had the last game but it was against Barcelona. After that game, I had to stay quiet and stay put like in quarantine, so I didn't really do much. But I'm ready and when the coach needs me, I'll be available and I think I'm just ready to start making this dream come true.

Q. When you were at Santos, you played under Jorge. What was it like to play under him as a coach and what kind of influence did he have on you in your career?

YEFERSON SOTELDO: With Jorge, I spent one year which was really special because he helped me a lot. We have a good relationship and we still exchange messages and I think he's a great coach. He's one of the top in South America and he taught me a lot but not so much on the field but also as a person off the field.

Q. What impact if any, has Joseph Martinez's success in MLS had on your decision to come to the League given that you came here just a couple years younger than what he was when he arrived?

YEFERSON SOTELDO: His influence was a lot for me. We know each other since we were kids but I remember seeing him playing in Caracas and it was about just passing the balls to him. For me he means a lot and I think we were able to get together with him through our agent, Sebastian, so it was really important for me to see him. I think everything he has done is wonderful for himself and also for the Venezuelan soccer. He has opened the door for a lot of Venezuelans to come to MLS. For me, my role right now is to keep working hard, try to do the same things and make history with Toronto FC.