

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Javier Pérez

Media Conference



Toronto 1, Orlando City 1

**Q. Nice to be back watching you in person.**

JAVIER PÉREZ: Thank you.

**Q. What did you think of the performance tonight and what was it like being down on the sidelines in front of the fans?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: I think it was a very special moment for the whole team, for me, the for players, for everybody involved at the club to have the fans. That's the strength that they give us; I think every player felt it tonight.

We are happy with the performance. I think the result, obviously, we wanted the three points. But the performance is good. We have going to build the team from here. We are going to be stronger and stronger.

**Q. With regards to Jozy, was that the plan, to bring him in after about 60 minutes or so, and how do you think he took his chance on the goal?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: Yeah, that was the plan. Yes, I think Jozy was motivated. I think he showed that on the field. Not only by the score, but the goal that he scored, and also the willingness to please the teammates and to please the coaching staff doing what we ask him to do. Actually, it's a little bit afraid for him to come back, the first game back home, he scores that goal, I wish we had that goal leading us into the three points. But I think for him, it's a good resulting point to take his time with the team.

**Q. Two-part question on Yeferson. What did you like about his performance tonight and would you walk through the decision to sub him out? Looked like you had a lengthy chat with him after the game?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: Yeah, excellent, like the rest of the team. Just to clarify, I think sometimes we play -- we got three points away from home in the last game against the first on the able in the east, but tonight we were playing against the second of table of the east. So we were playing really, really good teams. We knew it was going to be a very

close game, and we scored. I think we were playing better than them. We scored a lot of goals. We should hold that result, right.

But I think the performance, answering your question, the performance from Yeferson, I think he was excellent. And the reason why I sub him out at the end of the game at the end of the 90th minute, it becomes a bit of a gamble game. We believe in having the team organized, a structure, and we felt like if we just grabbed that point, we can build from that -- from that moment. If we concede a late goal in the game, I think it takes us back to square one and it's very difficult to rebuild from there.

So 90th minute, Yeferson did his job. He played a really good game, and we bring Patrick Mullins to help keep that result. We build up from that.

**Q. Mavinga was back in the lineup. Wanted to get your view on his performance and how you thought he solidified the back line.**

JAVIER PÉREZ: Yeah, I think Chris made a big difference at the back. As you can see in the game, he had I think three or four situations of 1v1 that he saw really well. He knows how to do that, winning the position to the striker and protecting the ball. And he makes a big difference. He gave us a lot of stability at the back. So that helped us, as well, to have more freedom at front, and you can see in the game that we took the game a little bit more into attacking hard, and everything starts from the back four.

**Q. It looked like Soteldo was very disappointed to come out of the game. What was your message to him when you spoke to him when he came to the bench?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: Soteldo is -- Yeferson is a competitor. He wants to play every minute, like most players on the team, if not all, right. But he wants to play every minute. He wants to win. Nobody on the team likes not to win. I'm not going to say even to lose, but nobody on the team goes on the field thinking that we are going to tie or we are going to take one point.

Regardless where we are playing, if it's home or it's away,

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we are always fighting and thinking that we are going to take the three points, right, and that's his mindset. If he has 30 more seconds to play, he will stay 30 more seconds to get that goal.

But on the other side, me as a coach, I need to make decisions, if to take what we have in this hand, or just open the hand and maybe that part, it goes away. And today I decided that it was better not to gamble and to lock the game and get the point.

**Q. I know one of the focuses these past few days has been really solidifying the defensive end of the game, and you weren't able to keep a clean sheet, but did you like what you saw from the defensive aspect of the team?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: I did. I saw very committed players to what we presented today, and they secured it almost perfectly. There are some parts of the game that you cannot control, right. If one minute right after you score a goal, it's a little moment that maybe we lack attention or maybe there is a play that happened, moments in the game that cost us points like we saw tonight.

But at the same time the performance overall, it was excellent.

**Q. What was your view of the play that led to the penalty, the collision with the Orlando player, how did you see that?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: I cannot have an opinion because from a distance, I see the play, but I can't -- I cannot see if it is contact or how is the play. I am going to see it after to see what is the situation with the play. I couldn't tell from my position if it was a penalty, or if it wasn't a penalty, I see a collision with Alex Bono. I see there is something there but I cannot make a decision right now because I don't have a good view from my position.

**Q. Coaching a match here at BMO Field in front of fans, what was that like?**

JAVIER PÉREZ: It's an amazing feeling. Like I said earlier in the press conference, I think we play for the fans. We feel very happy after all these moments that we didn't have the fans, the support from them. We feel that they are there and we are looking forward for the next games that we have more people at the stadium. It's an amazing feeling.

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