

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Alex Bono

Media Conference



Toronto FC 2, Chicago Fire 1

Q. Alex, a loaded question but how would you rate that game compared to some of the other games you've played, all the games you've played in the past? No. 1?

ALEX BONO: No. Not top five. You know, we've had some real success here, so come to Chicago and getting rode points is never easy.

But yeah, that's really all that matters. We came in and grinded it out as a team and more than anything we learned to suffer together today and grind out a result. So top five, not sure, I don't think, so but just happy to come out here and get a win and head back to Toronto.

Q. It was a makeshift defense with injuries and people away and things like that. Was it a work-in-progress throughout the whole game?

ALEX BONO: Definitely from pregame where Justin had it pull out unfortunately because he was feeling something, but that obviously changes things when you go from playing an out and out left back to playing a center back at left back, a kid who in Luke has had some really good performances for us. But it's still learning and growing into the league and into the team and to play him at a position outside of his normal position, I don't care what anyone says is not easy when you came into it in warmups.

We were bending a lot, bending, bending, and we really didn't break and I think we can take some positives. Some of the goals we've given up in the last little while have been pretty soft. I think you'd look at them and say all those could be avoided one way or the other. To put in a really solid defensive shift and guys are struggling, willing us over the end line, the final whistle today was real exciting for us and a gratifying feeling at the end of it.

Q. 14 shots on target, last time you made that many saves?

ALEX BONO: No, I don't -- do you know or are you asking me? Maybe a couple weeks ago in training, we were

playing a small side or something but other than that, it definitely it was a busy night but a lot of it was pretty straightforward for us. The guys in front of me, we were all struggling together, so I was happy to be able to help them out just as much as they helped me out today and we'll take the three points to go home.

I would have taken one save and three points today just as much as I would take, however many saves and three points today. All that matters for me is we get to go homes and a group, go see our families after a really, really tough week, tough stretch of three games that I think we showed a lot of real progress as a group.

So that's the most exciting thing for me. That's all I really care about and we move on to the next one.

Q. 8 points out of a possible 12 after the coaching change. How much is that down to Javier's influence?

ALEX BONO: He's been great. It's never an ideal situation to for an assistant coach to be thrust into a role. And to his credit, we went back to basics and we started with defending and started with not giving away bad chances and bad goals.

And we worked up from there. Defending from the front, defending from there as a group, staying compact, not as hectic and then with the ball we seemed to have more of a game plan. Obviously it helps that we got some guys healthy.

Yeah, it helps we have guys healthy. We have a bit more direction and organization when we have the ball as you've seen, it's been a lot easier for us to keep the ball and we've been able to break down teams in possession and passes and that new guy we signed is a problem -- that guy can dribble through traffic on the 401.

It's pretty impressive what he's brought to us. Just as a group, there was a certain confidence running through us right now that we didn't quite have before and call it momentum, call it Orlando, whatever, we don't want to make excuses but we have a bit of a swagger to us right now that it's nice, it's a nice feeling.

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Q. We haven't seen DeLeon, how big was that goal?

ALEX BONO: I love that guy so much, what a guy. Listen, he's been through the ringer the last couple weeks having to go back in quarantine and he comes back into a difficult situation. Guys that came on it was tough for them to grow into the game, it was extremely humid and a tough game to come in. Credit Nick DeLeon. He came on, fought, scrapped and everyone knows how dynamic he is.

You've seen him for a few years, and know he can pull something out of the hat and he made a great run down the right side and kind of blasted one in. I've seen that goal so many times in training on me, as soon as I made that run he's going to cross this and he's going to bang this in. What a guy, what a player, and what an influence he had on the game tonight.

Q. How much is the team looking forward to having a week before the next one after this grueling schedule?

ALEX BONO: Yeah, it's going to be nice. You know, we'll see what kind of downtime we get but I know everyone is excited about how the last week went. Obviously wish we could have taken 9 out of 9, but at the end of the day, if you told us a few weeks ago we were going to take 8 out of 12 over the next four games, I think everyone would have signed the dotted line on that one.

It's been a crazy week. Some ways, incredible. Some ways a struggle. Some ways, still a little bit disappointing. So we still have things to work on. At the end of the day, we're showing real signs of life. We're showing real signs of improvement and that's going to be exciting.

I know it's exciting for me and the guys behind me in this locker room and dancing around and playing music. I hope it's exciting for all of you, because when that pressure mounts, it's tough and to be able to knock some of that done, it shows that you shouldn't be messing with us.

We're trying to send a real message to everyone, including all our fans in Toronto: Stick with us, we're going to take you places. Stick with us and we'll take you where you want to go.

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