

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Javier Perez

Media Conference



Toronto FC 1, Nashville SC 1

**Q. You got a point against a very difficult, tough team tonight. Are we at a point now where you need more than points, single points?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's right, we are -- we need urgency to get more points because further we go, we need to get closer to the teams close to the playoff positions.

But we have to remember that we are not even halfway through or we are just halfway through the reason, right. I think we have another -- like I said to the players at halftime, we were 1-1. We have 45 more minutes to play. We are in the same position as in the beginning of the game.

Here it's a little bit the same. We still have half the games in front of us. What is more important is that you cannot rush into the games. You need to focus on the process and the different things we need to fix and the different things we need to improve to get those points.

Tonight I think it was a step forward towards that direction, not just for the point. We always strive to get the three points at this club as I said before. But as well, because I think the team show our face that we didn't see until this point, and I think we are in a good place now to build upon what -- everything we have been working previously. And get better performances in order to get the points.

**Q. I think it's the second game in a row where you started Ralph and Michael in central midfield. What's your evaluation of that partnership thus far?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think I said to Ralph and I said to everybody else that as long as the players do good performances, I will give continuity to the group. I think as well, Jonathan is unquestionable his quality when he came on the field, he made a big difference.

I think they are two different type of players, but both of them, they did a very good job, and Ralph -- Ralph has been partnering really well with Michael, with Marc. I think

these three in the middle, they understand well each other. Proof of that, I think we don't concede too many chances through the middle. We have pretty much a good control of the midfield, and I think he has been doing really well, especially for such a young player.

**Q. Omar told us his goal was straight off the training ground, something you guys had been working on. It seemed like it was a big one for him. What did you see on that play and how did it work out and what did you think of Omar's celebration?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think it's really a very important goal for several things. One, because, yeah, we work on that in training, and that had a reward tonight. We work as well on the throwings, on the other end. We knew that they had long throwings. We work on that consistently, and even like that we consider -- we consider the goals. So sometimes we work on things and they work on the game, and sometimes they don't, like we can see in the throwing.

But I think overall, it's a very important goal for Omar for the confidence of the team. We knew that set pieces, it was a part of the game that was weaker for them. They conceded five goals in the last ten games on set pieces. It's half of the goals that they conceded. And that was -- that was a part that we were looking for and we capitalized. I'm very happy for Omar and for rest of the team.

**Q. Another game with Richie Laryea going down in the box, do you think that was a penalty, and do you know if it was reviewed or not?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Again, these are plays that they are very close. I am too far from the play. I can't -- I cannot make an evaluation. I have to see it afterwards. But I see consistently players plaining about it and I trust that probably it could be a penalty. It's not my decision. I think it's the referee doing that job. I trust the good faith of the referee and I trust the good faith of the VAR.

**Q. Just to follow up on Richie, he played well over a hundred minutes against México on Thursday night and tonight you had him in for the full 90. What were your thoughts on the way he performed tonight?**

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JAVIER PEREZ: He was excellent. I mean, he's a very, very important part of this team. I think tonight we could see what difference he makes when he's on the field. We were ready in case he couldn't go for the full 90 but he went all the way through, and you could see in the final minutes of the game, he was really close to score or to provide an assist.

He's a crucial player for this team.

**Q. We spoke before the match how with the defense solidified you've had a bit of time to focus more on the attack. I was wondering if you could sort of rate the chance creation versus the execution in the final third tonight because I thought they had a lot of great ideas and execution was just a little bit off.**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think I agree. I think we made big improvements in how we move the ball, how we find the ball into the spaces. But we couldn't find the numbers inside the box or the capitalization of the opportunities.

So that's definitely something we have to improve, but we have to take one thing at a time, right. As I mentioned before, the No. 1 most urgent task for us, it was minimized, the goal scoring opportunities.

Again, another night that we don't concede any goals on an open play comes from throwing on a set piece, set play. And I think we improve a little bit with the ball, finding the right spaces. And now we need to find more chances inside the penalty box and capitalize off chances.

**Q. I was just wondering about Pozuelo, can you update us on his status? Is it just something that a couple of days might sort out or is he going to need tests?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, we need to go on a daily basis. The last test he did, it was yesterday. It came positive. That means that at one point in the next few days, he's going to go back with the group and he'll be back, if it's not the next game, it will be maybe the game after.

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