

Toronto FC Media Conference

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Javier Perez

Media Conference



Atlanta 1, Toronto FC 1

Q. You know, another, I guess -- performance like we have seen recently but again the team comes up short. So what can you say about how the team just can't seem to get over the finish line like a full three points?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think today is a bit of a different story to the other days. I think we were solid. I'm happy with the performance of the team, the performance of the players. They came out, they executed the plan that we have, which it was just stay compact, working together defensively and then we will have the ball, start moving, get the ball.

We knew they had 90 minutes on their legs from the previous game and we knew our team was fresher, so we wanted to take advantage of that. Unfortunately we concede that goal kind of early in the first half deflection, and then you go against the score.

After that, I think the team had the opportunities and the difference tonight was capitalizing on the scoring opportunities. I think we had our chances but just didn't -- all in all I'm happy with the team because they gave everything they had. I think we played well.

Again, another solid performance like you mentioned and this is unusual, and all that we can do at this point is to put together solid performances and the points are going to come. It's a difficult one because we know that we don't have time that we need to get the points right now, but it's easier to think about the points if you don't play well and you don't do the right things. All we can do is just to gather everything, everything together and get ready for the next game, which is Miami.

Q. It was a different-looking lineup you had out there tonight. What was the rationale behind that and was it always the game plan to make those changes?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think it's consistent to what I said. The idea behind to have consistency with the group until the end of the season, it was just to give more chances for the team to compete for the team to be fresher, to make

the rotations that were necessary.

Myself and the coaching staff felt that that was the right thing to do to make the rotations and I think the performance of the team reflected that it was needed. The rotation of the players, I think their performance was solid and then we brought more firepower up front and we have more opportunities. We just didn't capitalize, that's all.

Q. In the second half, there was a moment where Soteldo played a ball to Pozuelo and he had an open look at goal. The angle might not have been the best but he opted to pass back to Patrick and let him take the shot. Is that maybe -- there a crisis of confidence with your team right now considering that the the results aren't coming and the goals aren't coming and doesn't seem to be going your way right now. Is there a bit of a confidence problem with the team?

JAVIER PEREZ: I'm not sure if it's a confidence problem, but I mentioned that before the other day, when you are at the top like in the New England, game, I think it's a clear example that when you play a very solid game, you could have the three points at home and you end up empty-handed. When you are on the top, everything goes on your way. When you're on the bottom it looks like nothing goes your way or if it's 50/50 it goes on one side of the scale, right.

I don't think it's a confidence problem but obviously the fact that we are not getting results is taking a toll on the team. But I think all we can do at this point is to hold onto solid performances because that is ultimately what is going to lead us into -- into getting the points that we need.

Q. You mentioned a couple games that at this point in the season -- but unfortunately you're now winless in your last five. So is there still hope now that your team has a shot at making the playoffs?

JAVIER PEREZ: Is that a question?

Q. Yeah, is there still hope that you guys can make the playoffs?



JAVIER PEREZ: Absolutely. We have 42 points in play still remaining, and I am convinced that this team has enough firepower and this team has enough in the tank to make a final push and run for that.

But as I mentioned before, we just have to focus on performances. We can't just not look at the table. It has to be one game after the next. Today even if it's a step backwards in the table, it's a step forward towards the direction we have together as a team. It's not solutions, it's not an automatic potion just to get the issues solved, right. We carried this from the beginning of the season and I think now we are doing collectively, we are doing everything in our hand just to fix it and I think we are in the right direction.

Q. A rare appearance from Noble Okello. What did you see from the young man?

JAVIER PEREZ: I think everybody sees it, right. I think he had an outstanding performance and this are the possibilities of when you have players injured or when you have players that they need some time to rest, and you play someone that maybe doesn't enjoy so many minutes during the season, and steps up and has a performance like he had tonight.

So I think with Ralph being out of the team, Noble steps up and this young man has now earned the respect of the group and my respect going forward.

Q. Jacob not often that he starts but he seemed to being very lively down the left flank on that first half before he got subbed out. I'm just wondering what you thought of his performance. How would you value him on the night?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I like Jacob. I think he's another player from the younger -- from the attack of the younger players on the team, and I think he was good like you mentioned. He has tools different from other players on the team. He has speed and he can run into the space and back. He can cross the ball, and I think he delivered the work that he was asked to do, and he provided good crosses for the teammates, so I'm happy with his performance tonight.

Q. What's the status of Jozy and Priso?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, at the moment, I don't -- I don't have any updates specifically. The only thing I can say is that in both cases, unfortunately, and after the medical evaluations we have working in the background about that, but it looks a little bit more severe than what we initially thought.

So we don't have a timeline for them to come back with the team but it looks like going to be both out for a period of time.

Q. Just on at Atlanta's goal tonight -- is that one where the defense needs to do better or did the offense just make a play?

JAVIER PEREZ: This is a difficult one. It's a situation where the defender gets isolated against the striker. He makes a shot, the defenders blocks it and then the deflection ends up at the back of the net. If I have to put that into a category, I wouldn't say it was a mistake of the defender. I would say it just an unfortunate action.

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