

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Javier Perez

Media Conference



Toronto 3, Cincinnati 2

**Q. It looked in the first half, maybe I'm wrong, but it looked like you were urging your players to move the ball faster. They seemed to do that the second half. Did that make the difference?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yes, absolutely. I think we have players that they have quality, they can move the ball fast, and first and foremost I ask for the team at halftime when, when we were 1-0 down, ski them to stay calm, to stay in the game mentally, because we were the better side and because the goals were going to come. So just stay calm, move a little faster, the ball, and our players have been a little bit closer to the back line. So we have more opportunities to play the through balls.

So I think by staying calm and moving the ball fast, we just get rewarded in the second half.

**Q. Further about the question of the speed of play, how influential was Jacob Shaffelburg in that regard?**

JAVIER PEREZ: He's a very, very important player for us. He's the one who can run behind. He can make crosses. He delivers good services. He's in a great moment, and Jacob now obviously earn the respect of the whole team and the coaching staff, so it's in a good moment that we have to keep it that way.

**Q. Kemar Lawrence is someone who earlier in the season when we asked him if he could play center back, he said it's not really his position but he would sort of give it a try. Obviously he played there tonight because of injuries. What did you think of him, and how much -- could he be more sort of a sent are back option going forward?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, Kemar has some good qualities. He's fast and he's good with the ball. In that regard, he's a player that he can deal with the fast plays up front. This league is particular; it has that characteristic. Many teams, they have the speed up front and obviously he's fast. He can deal with that. And at the same time, he -- he proved to work well with different pairs of center backs. It's not the

first team that he plays in that position with us, and he's doing a great job.

So I think that he's a diversified player and it's paying off for us because at the moment as you know, we are thin in that position, and he's playing really well as a center back. We are happy that we can count on him. We know that he's going to -- we know that we can rely on him.

**Q. We've talked about stabilizing the team and getting the defense working and then getting the offense going and all those sort of things, but I think tonight was the first time the team has won a game after conceding the first goal. What does that say about the progress this group is making?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think I mentioned already previously that -- in other press conferences, it's very difficult when you are down there to get out. It looks like nothing goes on your way. I think I mentioned already in the past, as well, that the team is finally clicking and probably today it wasn't as pretty because we conceded a goal even if we had more chances. We just need to capitalize at the beginning because that's part of the nature in football. When you don't capitalize, you get panelized. That was our story of the first half today.

But I think as I mentioned last week, this group of individuals start to look like a team, and that was the second half, the story of the second half of this team; that we didn't give up; that we knew we were conscious that we were the better side on the field, and then we wanted to make sure that we were going to turn around the game and we were 3-1, we scored three goals, so I think -- I think the team is now getting more confidence even after this game, and I think we are in a good place towards the end of the season.

**Q. Further to James's question, you were behind and took the lead but they came back and scored the goal. How much resiliency, how much are you seeing that sort of taking shape with this team whereas maybe a week or a month ago you might have conceded another one and given up two points?**

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JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, but you see the second goal -- the first goal, I can give it. I can give it to you because the first goal is we get put out and we lose our structure. The first goal is okay.

But the second goal is a very clear off-side, so I cannot give that to anybody. I think they have to start to make the right calls. I think now it's enough. Enough is enough. It's just I don't like -- as I said before, I don't like to be critical of the refereeing but the second goal is clear off-side and it shouldn't go to the scoreboard. It should be 3-1.

**Q. From our vantage point in the press box, and you're much closer; so you tell me, but the pitch appears to be in a little bit of rough shape. From your perspective, have the players complained? How does the pitch played? Has it been affected by the Argos playing on the same pitch?**

JAVIER PEREZ: That is part of the group. They are part of the group and they play as well here. We have to share the field. The players don't complain, just play. But the field is normal when there is another team, whether if it's the Argos or a different team playing here. You can see that the quality of the field is -- is not always the same.

So it's not something that is disruptive for our -- our games, but at the same time, we know that when there are more teams playing here, it's going to affect the field.

But it is not something that is different to other -- other clubs or institutions. You have plenty of organizations that they share fields, and just have to deal with that. I think I'm pretty happy with the stadium we have and all the resources that we have. So I can't -- I cannot complain about it.

**Q. Do you always have a stopwatch out during extra time?**

JAVIER PEREZ: I do, yes. Because today we could see that they were going extra 45 seconds, and the reason Fabrizioo, the first official, that they were going a little bit longer is because we made a stop in the extra time. We brought Patryk but he told me it was going to be 30 seconds and we were 40, 45 seconds, and the game was still on.

So it's obviously -- just to have your own watch, because five seconds, it can make a difference. It can be the difference between winning a game or having a tie.

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