

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Head Coach Javier Perez

Media Conference



Toronto 0, Inter Miami 3

Q. Javier, despite the early goal, your team seemed to have some positive moments in the first half and then that late goal kind of killed things off and you didn't seem to recover. What was your take on the performance tonight? I know you were missing quite a few players.

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah. I think it wasn't the 3-0 game tonight. I don't think the scoreboard reflects what happened on the field tonight. I think it's a game with two mistakes and two corners. Two mistakes by Alex in this case. One, thankfully, was called offside. The second one we were not so fortunate. And that was Juancito. And then two corners.

So I think that's the read at the end that we have to make in the game I think. For good sequences of the game, we were the best team on the field. But at the end, it doesn't matter. Right? At the end, we end up losing. It doesn't matter you lose 1-0 or 3-0. It would matter if you lose 5-0. But I think at this point, you lose 1-0, you lose 3-0, it's a loss. A loss is a loss.

But I think, as I mentioned before, the summary is a pretty even game with a mistake or two mistakes and two corners. That's it.

Q. A first career MLS start for Jahkeele Marshall-Rutty tonight. He played 80 minutes. My perspective, he looked pretty good. He seemed pretty lively in the attack. I'm curious to know what your evaluation was?

JAVIER PEREZ: Jahkeele was terrific. I think it's no surprise for me at least. As I mentioned before, I think, it was just the right time for him. He's so young, and he's so talented. I saw his talent. But at the same time, I think I mentioned this in the last press conference, this is helping to mature a lot as for many other younger players. And you can see an example today that some of them, they came on the field and they contribute.

But Jahkeele tonight he was really good. Obviously, towards the end, he was tired. We have to give him a little

bit of rest. But I think the other day, he played for a long time. Today he started and he left details of his quality. So I'm really happy with that experience that he has right now. And he got to contribute to the team.

Q. You guys did have some -- obviously had some scoring chances tonight. What do you credit the lack of finish -- like just perhaps your lineup being different all the time? Or what would you say was the story there?

JAVIER PEREZ: That's a good question. Right? I mean, the lineup is different every time because the needs. And the needs are sometimes players are injured, sometimes players they need some rest because they are with the national team and they come back. And obviously you cannot play consecutively the players.

In this case, we have as well -- if we think about the last game, we have Omar who was injured. He have Escotta who was injured. We have Mark with a card. So you come with already three players that you have to take off the latest game.

And then you know that you have a game against Montreal that everybody wants to play that game because it's -- and everybody wants to be at that game. So you have to split the minutes as well to make sure that in the next few games, everybody can be sharp and can play, you know.

But I think it's part of the game. I'm not complaining. It's part of the game. Everybody has to deal with this kind of situations. I think from the coaching point of view, it's more evident for us. But why the ball doesn't go in? We have, very, very, clear chances. We have the ball with Pat right at the beginning of the game. I think it's like you compare with the last game, similar to the one we had last week that hits the crossbar. We have the one with the Akiel that he hits with his left foot and it goes very close to the post.

I mean, we have chances. Right? We have a lot of chances. We just don't capitalize on -- the answer is difficult. It's difficult to give an answer why the ball doesn't go in. Sometimes -- sometimes in a way that it doesn't go your way, it doesn't go your way.



And I think tonight it was an even game. And I repeat again, I think it was just a mistake at the back and two corners. That was the summary of the game tonight.

Q. With all the attention now sort of on the cup semifinal you guys have coming up, I'm wondering what kind of utility do you hope to take out of 90 minutes like tonight? What do you get? Is it just a matter of getting Pozuelo a start and getting Josie a good run out and getting people minutes? Or what are you looking to take from a match like this?

JAVIER PEREZ: As I mentioned in the past press conference, it's not -- because they were asking me if we are going to play just younger players or now what is the objective from now to the end of the season? And we don't know -- for one game for the semifinal or the final or whatever game you have to win. And I think we all have to be sharp.

As you point out very well, it's as well to bring Alejandro and to bring Josie at the best shape, the best performers possible that they can be. But not only them, I think as well to bring someone like Jahkeele that I think he can make a difference. And someone like Noble that needed today 90 minutes and did a good job. So all these different factors that you have to take into account in order to have enough players to put together a good team and a stronger performance.

Q. Is there any early word on what prompted Soteldo to leave the game?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah. I exchanged just like a couple words with him when he was coming out. And I think it's the hamstring, if I'm correct. But we don't know the extent of the injury. It looks like he's -- I'm not going to make an evaluation because we don't have information but he couldn't continue. So it cannot be light or good news for us.

Q. You kind of mentioned him there previously about Noble Okello. But I was just hoping to get more insight from you as to what you saw from him tonight? How would you rate his performance against Miami tonight?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah. I think he's along the lines of Jahkeele. I think Noble has matured a lot. I think he -- he was really good. I think he played next to Michael. He was working really well. They worked well together. And I think he covered a lot of ground, anticipating balls, winning balls. And then covering defensively when the team needed to have the strong player in the back.

So I'm really happy with his performance. He went all the way 90 minutes. He started -- he's a young player with a lot of energy. But in the end, he -- he doesn't play very often 90 minutes. And I think tonight he made a great effort. And I think he did a really good job.

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