

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Javier Perez

Media Conference



Toronto 1, Montreal 1

JAVIER PEREZ:

**Q. Your team really came on strong in the second half. Do you feel this is a game where you finally -- your team finally got what it deserved?**

JAVIER PEREZ: I think we deserved more. I think the numbers say that we deserve more, and it's a little bit unbelievable that we were ten seconds away from going empty-handed. We crossed the ball 19 times against five from them. We got more possessions. We got the expected goal higher than them. Everything was on our side except one thing, which is the scoreboard. So I think in the end, we are happy with that point. I think the team looks like a team, and I think -- I don't want to sound like a broken record, but I'm every day with the players and I'm every day with the guys and I know how hard they are working, how they are trying to get out of this situation, and it's very difficult, but I think tonight, that extra effort that it was needed, they put it -- they put them -- they put it on the field, the energy, and in the end, we got a point, I think well deserved.

**Q. I think it was earlier this week, you were asked about the team's lack of finishing in front of goal and you didn't really have any sort of definitive answers. I wonder if today, was it just a matter of just on Pantemis was playing really well and you ran into a hard goalkeeper before Jozy scored with a free kick late in the game?**

JAVIER PEREZ: No, I think -- I still struggle to find answers because we have the opportunities. Again, the statistics, they showed up, goal expected is 2.7, visitors 1.8. I think we have enough opportunities to be ahead in the scoreboard, but we were not.

Obviously it's no question, right. When I say is no -- I don't have answers; I do have answers. We are not a team that is really built to capitalize or have players that they score a lot of goals, and when we look at the goals that we scored this season, it's very well spread out with our players. I mention already that in our previous press conference with

maybe also the top scorer, but we have a lot of players with three goals. That means with we don't have really goal scorers. We have a team that collectively we enjoy playing and we have the possession, we are a possession-based team but we don't have players that they can capitalize a lot of goals. That's the answer, really, to the question.

But I think -- I think we have the ability to move the ball quick. We have the ability to have the control of the game. And I think this is an appealing part of the game, too. I would like to have more players, they can find double-digits scoring goals. That would be helpful for the team. But that's not in the thoughts for the decision.

I think the way we have to go is finding that collective effort to score goals -- goal-scoring opportunities, and again, I think to know we have the chances. We just struggled to capitalize.

**Q. Just listening to you, it sounds like you're disappointed by this point. Would that be fair to say that you're a little bit disappointed by this result and that you're not coming way with more here?**

JAVIER PEREZ: No, I'm not disappointed. I think it would be being ungrateful to be disappointed, because we didn't have any points all the way up till the 90-minute plus, almost four, right. I think we have to be very grateful that we got a point out of this game. We were very close to be empty-handed. So the only thing I'm saying is that we did all the right things to -- and we were the better team statistically to get away with three points.

Somehow we didn't capitalize, we don't score the goals. But I think it would be unfair to be unhappy or to be -- I think it would be being ungrateful for that point that I think tonight, it was well-deserved because the players, they gave everything and they played really well.

**Q. We haven't seen Michael Bradley play at center back a whole lot. I asked you a question earlier this week about the back three last match, it's very much the same here with Michael. Was this a necessity they played at center back or was that something you**

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## wanted to try out?

JAVIER PEREZ: It was both things. It was a necessity and it was something that I had in mind. I think that proves that when Michael needs to step up for the team, does it, and tonight he showed up again. He came up big doing a great job as a certainty back.

I think that's an example right there for the rest of the team and for everybody else. He inspires us in a way that he played tonight, and he embraced the role.

**Q. In the past you've talked about how hard Jozy has worked in training to get back. Tonight we got the pay off and we got to see Jozy the way we used to see him, causing havoc, creating scoring chances and then delivering the final blow. Can you just talk a little bit about his performance and his fight really to get back on the pitch given everything that's happened to him this year?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yes, I think I mentioned already that every time I was even coming here to the stadium, seeing him in the training facility, working by himself, it's difficult for me because I know how emotional and how much he wants to succeed and to help the club.

But at the same time, when I come here to the games and I see that he's working really hard, and tonight, I think it was paying off for him. I think it was really a relief. It was a great relief to see that finally he can come, help the team, being part of the group. I think it paid off all the effort that he made.

Now we have to keep building up on that. I think his quality is undeniable. His quality is right there, and I think he can be the player that he was before. Again, I think it's been a really difficult year for him, being out with a lot of rhythm that has been cut out of his training or his games. When I first was in charge, I thought he was going to come back. Then he got the injury, and he's been out for a long time.

So hopefully now, the team that it starts to look like a team, we can fight together for this last stretch of the season, and we can get a title and we can add up some points in the table.

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