

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Jozy Altidore

Media Conference



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Q. It's been a long, difficult season for both you and the team. I'm just wondering, how good did that goal feel tonight?

JOZY ALTIDORE: It felt great to score again. Especially against Montréal, who is always an added bonus with the rivalry. So it was great to see the people that came out tonight behind the goal, to see them out there even with the season we had, knowing obviously it's an important game, that was special. To have that moment with them and just talk with them a bit, and manage to come out with a result tonight, not many positives, but it was a positive.

Q. Can you just sort of break down the goal a little bit? Pantemis came up with some pretty big saves on you. Was he cheating off his line? How did you bend it over the free kick? Can you give us some insight?

JOZY ALTIDORE: No, I just tried to hit the target. It was a good distance to go around the wall or up and over the wall. I just figured I'd try to go around that. Haven't tried that in a while, so said, let me try to go around with a little bit of power and caught him by surprise. I'm happy it worked out, and like I said, I'm happy we were able to get a result, a somewhat positive result.

Q. Obviously you're happy to get the goal. How happy does it make you to maybe put a serious dent in their playoff aspirations?

JOZY ALTIDORE: Oh, that was obviously a plus. You know, we don't have much to play for with the season winding down aside from the Canadian championship, so obviously we are aware that they are pushing for a playoff spot. You want to be respectful to everybody else who are competing and trying to make the playoffs. Obviously whether it was Montréal, doesn't matter who it was, we were going to try to give our best, especially at home but obviously it feels a bit sweeter when you slow Montréal down a bit. That never gets old.

Q. I know you're a big supporter of a lot of the young guys on this team, and what have your thoughts been

on seeing guys like Jahkeele and Noble and Jayden all getting chances?

JOZY ALTIDORE: Yeah, I'm very happy. It's something to be said because, you know, Jahkeele, when I came here, I used to see him at some of the camps. He was a little guy, and to see him now getting meaningful minutes, to see him locked in improving every day, it brings me so much joy because a lot of these guys were is he very young when I arrived, and to see them making a difference and playing important minutes, it's just as rewarding as winning a trophy.

To see Noble today in a different role in a tough game, I thought he was fantastic. Never looked phased. Was in control throughout the 90 minutes and then Jacob, we all know he's been great throughout this season, and Jahkeele now emerging. We have some very, very good young players that have to continue working, but the talent is there. To see Jayden Nelson come on and be full of energy, pushing the game, trying to help us get that goal, like I tell you, it means so much because we spent a lot of time with these guys over the years, and to see them now playing and getting important minutes, it means the world. Hopefully it's something to build on and they can keep improving as the season goes on and into next season.

Q. You guys launched wave after wave of attack the last few minutes. Was there any sense at all that the goal might come as long as you kept playing hard?

JOZY ALTIDORE: Yeah, I mean, myself, I think I got robbed the first one. I didn't -- I was surprised as how open I was and he made a good point-blank save, and I just wasn't -- I don't have that game sharpness, normally a couple of chances, even the second one I should just pass in the goal.

I think it's kind of the story of the season. We've never quite lifted off fully as a group. You know, certain guys in, certain guys out. It's been the story of our year.

But the quality is there, and I think you saw that, and to be able to repeat attacks like you said. Look, we have to take the positives away, and we put a team, a good team that's

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fighting for the playoffs on the road.

Q. It's been a hectic schedule recently and the club has been cautious with you and the other players in terms of minutes, bringing you on off the bench. You talked about game sharpness just now. How do you feel in terms of your game and your fitness at this stage?

JOZY ALTIDORE: To be honest, I feel the best I've felt in a long time. You know, I kind of paid the price playing with some injuries, with some broken bones here and there. Eventually, they catch up to you, but to be able to have the surgery and my foot is starting to feel much much better, just to be able to run and not feel pain is a huge boon. So I'm excited about that and I'm taking it day-by-day, but I feel so much better now finally, and I just want to play.

I just want to play. I missed the game. I'm just disappointed about how this year has gone, and you know, I'll be the first guy to tell you it's disappointing. But nobody is running away from anything. We take all the criticism on the chin and rightly so, but you know, there's more here. I'm a firm believer in that. People will come up with their pitchforks but that's part of the business. I just feel better, man. Like I told you, to run and move around without pain, it just feels amazing, because it's been awhile. I'm just very, very happy and I just thank God for that.

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