

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Javier Perez

Media Conference



Canadian Championship

Toronto 2, Pacific 1

Q. What's it mean to you to extend the season and get a chance at some hardware?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, it means everything. I think that's what this club is all about. I think it's a club that is used to fight for titles and in a very challenging season like this one, the fact to have the opportunity to play a final, and have the opportunity to fight for silverware is all you can ask for. We are very happy and we are very delighted with the position in the final and we are looking forward to play that final against Montréal.

Q. You started well and got the early lead, but was this a game that you think you maybe should have put away? It kind of got interesting at the end?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, 100 percent. I think you can't make all the time the same points, the same comments. We knew that we had to come strong at the beginning, from the beginning because we knew that it was a difficult team.

It was a resilient team and they were not going to give up. That was the plan, just to put the game away and I think the first half we did the job and then the second half, we had the opportunities to put the -- which I think completely determined the fate of the game, and we did and got a little more relaxed and a little more comfortable and with that goal, we know what happened at the end. We are kind of gambling, and I think that the team knew that that's a little bit the sensation we have that we should put away this game much earlier. But in the end, we get the job done and we are in the final, which is all that counts.

Q. Jacob, obviously quite involved in the game tonight but beyond that, how would you evaluate his overall performance tonight?

JAVIER PEREZ: Excellent. He's the one who runs in behind and I think without him, the team would look completely different. His performance, he was really good.

But not only his performance, many other players as well. I think his game help us tremendously in order to get quicker into the other half, and get closer, and that help us to create goal-scoring opportunities. I value very high the performance tonight.

Q. You mentioned Jacob, but I thought he made up part of a nice Canadian triangle you had with Richie and John. What did you see there and what makes each of them complementary of the others?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think it's something we have been trying to work in the past three months, try to which players feel more comfortable with each other, and I think they know very well each other and they like to play with each other, and that pays off the in end on the field.

I'm very happy how it turned out. I think it's important that there's a good connection not only the whole team but as well to have these little units like we mentioned, Jonathan and Jacob and Richie and I think it pays off. It gave us, especially in the first half, we weren't really left-sided and we create a lot of danger from that side. It's obviously the consequence of having these three players combining with each other.

Q. You called the Pacific an interesting side pre-match. What are your thoughts having seen them live?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think they are relentless. That's the adjective I have for them. They are relentless. They don't give up. I think any other side probably would go down mentally in the second half but they didn't. We knew coming that in the game that they weren't going to give up and they would play to the last minute. That was in the script.

I'm glad that we didn't shut down mentally and we were able to get a result and get the job done. I like the fact that it's a team that they like to play football. They like to pressure high, and they have a well-balanced squad; that if one player goes out, the next one comes up with the energy. It's a big compliment for this team that they made it to the semifinals. They came over here and they



completed a good game against us.

We know that the Cup is always an interesting competition. We saw that with Vancouver. They knocked out Vancouver in the other semifinal. Of course they were very close to knock out Montréal. And the Cup is always an interesting competition. So I think that tonight, it was sort of like what it is, what this competition is about.

Q. Just quick question on the opponent, and really the league that you were playing against tonight, I know that there were a couple of players on the opposite team that you were probably familiar with through your time at Chauncey (ph) but wonder if you could speak to sort of how far this league has progressed and how far a team like Pacific has progressed since they came into existence in 2019?

JAVIER PEREZ: Yes, you mention about -- I think for them obviously it was a special game and you could tell every time that they were touching the ball, they were on. I'm very happy that this league, every year, is stronger and stronger. It's a very young league. But it's a league that gives kind of like a second opportunity to these players that probably cannot make it right away into MLS. We know that there are only three teams here in Canada, and it was necessary. It was necessary to have another league that gives opportunities and chances to keep developing players, and it can only help to bring more players, developing players, and players that can contribute to the national team as well.

So I am very impressed, very happy the way they are developing and obviously now I will be watching more closely the competition because it's interesting the teams and the players that they compete there.

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