

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Javier Perez

Media Conference



Montreal 1, Toronto 0

**Q. You lose Jozy Altidore to flu-like symptoms; you lose Pozuelo early in the match, and you're on the back foot most of the match and yet you have a chance in the 90th minute to tie up which doesn't work. Do you think this game is kind of a microcosm of the whole season?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think it reflects the whole suspect, right. I mean, you are in a game, basically, with no DPs because we lose Alejandro in the 15th minute or 16th minute I think, and then you play without the piece, and you play with -- remember we start the game with three academy players, and I think we prepared really well this game. We are disappointed because we wanted to win this championship. I think it was something very important for us.

But I'm happy. I'm proud of the players. I'm proud of the players and I'm proud of the way they fought today. I am proud how they execute the plan and I think we deny a lot of chances from Montréal, and I think we have a good game. We just lost focus in one play, and we pay the price of the championship.

But we have, as well, our chances. We knew that we would have our chances and then you need a little bit of luck, too. You need that ball that hits the goal post in the 90th minute just to go in, and get a little bit of things on your side, which we didn't. I think like you mentioned, absolutely right, this reflects a little bit what has been our season this year.

**Q. I appreciate how you say you think you are pleased with your team, or you thought they put in a good performance, but how do you rectify that with the fact that Montréal dominated possession and out-shot you 23-4 and you didn't have a single shot on goal? How can that be a good team performance?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, I think I repeat again, you have to read the contest. You play without the piece, right. You play minimized, and you play away from home. As you know, when you play away from home, it's different than

when you play at home. We tried to absolve and get matched tactically, the game, as well thinking about where we come from in terms of results, in terms of conceding goals.

I think even if they had more chances, then the dynamic, you can look at the goal they score, you can look at the statistics after that moment, we were the most dangerous team on the field.

So a final is a final. You cannot read too much into the statistics. You play to win the final. We came here with that mentality and in the end we concede one goal and we are forced to come out to get the goal that give us the opportunity to come back in the game.

So in the end, it's just the tactical approach to the game.

**Q. How much did losing Pozuelo early and Jozy not being available impact the game plan that you guys had been working ongoing into this one?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, it changed everything, right. It changed everything from the moment that Jozy is not here with us, and he's the most effective player I think against Montréal, so that gives you an edge.

Another one that has been historically very effective against Montreal has been dangerous on the field, which is Dom. But then you lose Alejandro, and the way we were preparing, he was our catalyzer. He was passing all the balls through him in order to generate our offensive game, that's the way we prepare the game, and obviously the 15th minute when he comes off the field, you have to change completely the tactics and the shape. So the game obviously looks different.

To answer your question, you're absolutely right, losing these two players, it makes a huge impact in our ability and performance.

**Q. You mentioned a couple times about the designated players and how the narrative has been that you have not had your designated players available to you this season. How frustrating is that to**

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**you as a coach? And all three of those guys, they are under contract next season. Do you think that's still an area the team has to address with how important designated players are in the League?**

JAVIER PEREZ: Yeah, in the end, the ones playing are the players, and you depend as well on your quality.

I don't feel frustrated as a coach because in the end my job is to make the most of the team that is available. And I'm happy with the way the team has been working. And when one player is not there, another one comes off bench, or even in training, and they do the best they can, right.

So I cannot be frustrated when I see the players that are available and they give everything. Like in the case today, we have -- I mention we have three academy players on the field. I mean, Julian is amazing. It is only his second game in the season and he has the opportunity to play the final. Then Noble, the same way with I think an amazing future. And Jacob, you can say academy or development player, he receives that award to the best young player of the tournament, right.

But in the end, when you lose the quality players, there's only so much that you can do, which is fight, be in an organized structure tactically which I think we were, and then you depend on the quality.

So if you are missing players that they are DPs, Yeferson, for instance, he came off the bench, but he was injured. The minutes that he played today, he was minimized. And I think it's been a little bit the story of our season. With our top players not being able to contribute, and in the end, we pay the price for that because in this league, in MLS or even in the Canadian Championship, you cannot count on your three DPs. You are minimized and it's difficult to compete.

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