

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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## Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto 2, D.C. United 1

**Q. Your team was rewarded for its efforts today with a milestone goal from Osorio. Can you tell us what did you think of the performance?**

BOB BRADLEY: Hard fought. You know, in a game like this, this time of the year, it's a lot about mentality, and within the group, we always work on football ideas but we talked a lot lately about also how you take the training that you put in and turn it into the game, and that includes getting to loose balls that. Includes winning headers. That includes just the mentality.

So on that end, you go down, get back on a goal, well-organized goal off the corner and then in the second half excellent goal by Oso and a really strong mentality to finish the game out.

In those ways, from a team standpoint, those are all big pluses.

**Q. Just wanted to get your thoughts on Luca's performance, collected the assist in Osorio's and had a hand in Pozuelo's goal.**

BOB BRADLEY: I think Luca is showing that he's got really good qualities. We've talked a lot about his ability moving forward with the ball. You saw a little of that today.

But today, the biggest part you want to give credit to was just the mentality in that kind of tough game in terms of keeping his concentration defensively, some of his defensive reactions, so the package of his abilities when obviously the other team has the ball and then of course he gives us some really good things moving forward and some of his delivery, the ball he put across for Oso was fantastic.

**Q. Your first win as Toronto FC. Head coach what does that mean to get that under your belt, especially in front of the home crowd?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, mostly about winning here at home. I spoke how we were excited for the Red Bull

game, and really was disappointed that we let the fans down. We had moments where I thought the football was good, but I said immediately that you can't talk about good football when you're down 4-1 at half and you lose an important home opener. I thought today the mentality was such that, look, we are going to earn the respect back game by game.

You know, early in the season, in MLS, and this is probably even more true when you're in a cold weather city, between training fields and then you're playing games in not always easy conditions, the fields aren't always great. So early in the season, the team has to develop a mentality of knowing how to go on the field, still try to play football but try to win games in different ways. For me, that's the No. 1 important part of today.

**Q. You guys had the lead last week in Columbus, I'm just wondering how important it is for the morale of the group and the mentality of the group to see out a lead this week.**

BOB BRADLEY: Very important. Again, having a lead on a day where, again, it's not easy having control of the game, so even the way D.C. plays, you're dealing with a lot of -- there's all sorts of duels, there's loose balls and then in certain moments being able to put together a good play like we did on a second goal.

Down the stretch of the game, I thought the concentration across the board was really quite good, and you know, look, that is -- when we talk as a group of the things that you need to become a really good team, a complete team, the part of dealing with a game, the part of having a lead, finding ways to make sure that you can hold onto it, trying to get the insurance goal but if it doesn't come, making sure that the one goal deficit that you, you know, the one goal, being ahead by one goal but that's enough, so I think those are really important parts, especially, again, for a team that has young players, for a team that's still -- we're still evolving.

You know, so I think in all those ways today, I'm really proud of the commitment of the group throughout the game.



**Q. Pozuelo is a guy you've tasked with taking on more positional and defensive responsibilities. What did you see from him in that respect today and how important is it that he still finds ways to get involved in the other end of the pitch as well?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, look, the work, the discussions, they continue. As much as, yes, I did talk a lot about some positional play things, I think if you've seen -- if you've looked closely at all the games, there's still a lot of freedom that's given to them because as I get to know them, I'm not sure he's a player but you still have to accept that there are certain parts of him that move around the field in different ways. You try to get him to understand a little bit of when -- how he can trust his teammates in some moments but how we can still get him in good spots.

You know, today early in the game, the way they were stepping up and pressing, I felt that Ale was out on the right too much. We changed a little tactically in the first half where I tried to get Oso a little bit higher and Ale inside a little bit higher so they could be a little closer to Jesus. There are different things we are trying to think about.

Look, it still comes down to how do you utilize everybody's talents in the best way. So it's still part of the discussions that go on I think within the group and certainly between Ale and myself every week.

**Q. Curious to the rational behind the three-man back line. Can you talk about your decision-making?**

BOB BRADLEY: D.C. is a unique team. They play with three in the back. Even though at times in the buildup, Najjar goes very far right and then Gressel can then move up and inside, so it's got very different looks to it.

Then in their front three, we were not exactly sure how they would lineup today but when we saw Roberto was in, you end up with Roberto and Kamara and Flores is sort of a little bit free but sort of hanging in there half-left.

And just to make it a little bit easier for our defenders, especially young guys that have to deal with wingbacks, then I think it's important that your wing backs can get out to their wingbacks.

I don't want it to be, again, a guy like Ale Pozuelo is forced to go out and defend wide in all these spots. So we tried to have ways that we can go after their back three and get after their two sixes, and I just think that we can engage a team like D.C. a little bit better than when we have three because it allows our wing backs at times to be more aggressive to get out and close down their wing backs and

that way we are not defending deep all the time.

**Q. Osorio's body of work is plain to see and what he brings to the game obviously in key moments, but do you think some ways he's a bit of an unsung hero; that he doesn't get the due he deserves?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, again, I don't know what quarters he doesn't get respect, because I think people who know football and who know the league have tremendous respect for him. People in Canada who also see what he brings to the national team I believe have a lot of respect for him.

He's a smart player. He has real ability to get up and get into the box. So four games, two times now, he's arrived in the box in really important ways and scored two goals with excellent finishes. In other moments in the game, you know, he still realizes that if Michael has got to move and cover things laterally left and right, then sometimes he's got to be defensively very ready to come back and position himself deeper.

So he understands the game. He's still on the ball. With people around him, comfortable, sometimes able to get out of tight space and make a very, very good pass.

But the combination of all those qualities and what they mean to teams and the fact that you can in different moments challenge him with different responsibilities and he's smart enough to be able to take those things on, I think that speaks to everything that he's about as a player.

**Q. What was your message to Nelson when he came off the field?**

BOB BRADLEY: Honestly I felt when he broke in on one side without an angle, I said we need to look at it but I thought he had opportunities with maybe Ale and Jesus in the middle that I thought maybe that wasn't the right time to shoot. Look, that's part of working with young players. I want Jayden to score goals but I also want him to make good decisions.

You know, we talk a lot about his dribbling. I want him to understand how to utilize his dribbling better. You know, again, I'm also very happy with Jay den, and look, I would also like to mention Jahkeele because he came off last week, I'm not exactly sure the play. It perhaps was 30 seconds into the game when he jumped for a header and landed a little bit awkwardly. But he felt something, and he gets scared. The MRI didn't show much and now as he got back into training during the week, there's a question with a young player about when you feel something and now you have to come out of a game early, how long before the

confidence to be back on the field, how long does that take?

And you know, the way the game was going, I spoke to Jahkeele yesterday, and then at halftime as we were thinking about possible moves in the second half, I spoke to him again and said, tell me in, your warm up and everything else, how are you feeling?"

And he ended up saying, "Look, I can do it." That's a really important step for a young player that in a situation like that, he's got the confidence to say, yeah, if you need me, I'm ready. And so I was also really happy with that part of it.

**Q. Is there an update on Chung? You've spoken in the past about the confidence for the team to get rewards for the hard work they are putting in. Do you see that already in the guys after today's win?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, for the first time. I think we felt that we still had a chance to take three points in Dallas. I've talked too many times already about the disappointment of the home opener last week. Still in many ways a good first half but just not the right response when Columbus pushed us in the second half, and you know, I didn't like the goals that we gave up last week. And so today, to come-from-behind, and now know how to finish the game, for me that's really important, and that is what I said during the week, it's a great group, you're working hard, I say it every week to the media, and I say it every day to them; that we are going to become a good team, but now you've got to get some rewards for yourself, so that was really, really important.

Sorry what was the first part of the question again?

**Q. Just on if there's an update on Chung.**

BOB BRADLEY: We need to check. Would I have concern that he felt something in the hamstring.

**Q. What was your feeling when the final whistle blew, and is that any different over your career?**

BOB BRADLEY: No, every group, you want to see the group begin to develop a mentality. You want to see the group get something to show for themselves. My thoughts are always about the work that's been put in, some of the things now that we've had to face that haven't come easily. So I'm proud then when I see a group of guys come together and take an important three points.

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