

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Coach Bob Bradley

Media Conference



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Q. Wonder if I could get your thoughts on Jonathan Osorio. As you know he comes back from a hectic schedule with Canada, and he was just flying out there today, I thought. Such a beautiful pass on the opening goal. Your thoughts on his play?

COACH BRADLEY: I think Oso has had a great start to the season. Obviously a really important player for us in terms of leadership, in terms of just what he brings to our midfield. The goal, the first goal was really well done.

I think it went from Kosi to Ali, and Ali slipped a good ball to Oso. And the timing of the final pass to Jesús was very good and then a great finish.

But for sure Oso's presence in our team, his ability to take some pressure off Michael, so that as teams try to squeeze him with the ball, Oso is available for an outlet. You see the understanding that those two have.

Early on in the game we tried to get Oso a little higher; the second game in a row, so we had a little more presence stepping up towards Parks and Alfredo Morales. So he's smart tactically. When you give him changes even on the field, he's quick to understand what you're doing. So, really important. And, yeah, for us a key guy.

Q. It's three goals in five appearances now for Jesús Jiménez, a great start to his MLS career. What have you seen from him? Why has he been such an effective player this year? What does he do well that defenders struggle to deal with?

COACH BRADLEY: He's just a smart, skillful attacker. Obviously he can move away from defenders and receive balls and help us in terms of our buildup play. And then in the right moments, his timing and his reading of spaces going forward.

We've really pushed him to continue to make sure that he's a real threat getting into the box. And I think there's more to come from him. Physically, he can even push himself and give us more. But he's an attacker that has just a

really good set of skills. And he's smart and he's easy to play with.

And so when we get football going, and he can find the balance between dropping off defenders a little bit, receiving balls, making passes and still being on the move and getting balls going into the box, I think that's the balance we need.

Q. Can you comment on your back line? They looked like this was a game where it looked like things were sort of coming together for them as a unit. What do you think?

COACH BRADLEY: Yeah, I think that early in the game, the way NYCFC moves, they do a lot in between the lines. You had early in the game Rodriguez and Maxi Morales and Talles Magno all sort of moving into those spots. And as they do that their outside backs are still pushing high.

And so it requires just good communication, not only amongst those three, but then especially with Michael in front of them, so that they're not stuck following somebody in the wrong situation.

It took us, I think, about 15 minutes to sort of make a couple little changes. But from that point on in terms of handling different situations, I thought all three did very well. The understanding and then the ability for all of them to read plays, step in at the right time, that part, it's a good group.

Q. What did you think of Kosi Thompson in his first MLS start (indiscernible)?

COACH BRADLEY: Kosi did really well. I said at some point in an interview that from the beginning of the year he made a positive impression. Young guy, but smart. Picks up things very quickly. Comes in every day with a really good mentality. Trains well.

He's earned the respect of everybody. And in his first start today I think you saw all of that. Athletically, his ability to deal with some talented attackers. NYC, a guy like Talles Magno is a really good player, a young talented player.



And Kosi's ability to deal with different situations -- early on, I keep talking about some changes tactically, early on I think he was a little slow to release.

And so it left too much where between Ale at times trying to be inside to deal with Morales and Parks and then outside to deal with Gloster. And when Kosi started to step up faster towards Gloster, it allowed Ale to be more closer to the 6s. Oso stepped a little higher at that point.

So I think Kosi's understanding of how important it was for him to get up a little bit earlier toward Gloster was an important adjustment. But in all ways, for a first game, he showed confidence and he played really well.

Q. On that second goal, do you give credit to Lukas Macnaughton for getting in there and making that run and putting the pressure on? Or is it just a fantastic ball from Pozuelo that leads to -- I'm pretty much it's going to go down as an own-goal?

COACH BRADLEY: It's a little of both. At the start of it, between Luca Petrasso and Ale, a little fake in terms of who was going to take it, which sometimes can freeze their line or their line drops a little bit. And then it's important to get enough guys moving at the right time. The ball was really, really hit well, the right pace, in the right spot.

And then in those moments, as you're running hard into those areas, it can be really difficult defensively. So it's a combination of all those things.

Q. I understand Jahkeele had the procedure yesterday. Could you give us an update on what was found? Is there a timeline as to his return?

COACH BRADLEY: Yeah, there was a small fragment that had come loose that they were able to take out. Everything else looked quite good. And so the prognosis for everything is very positive. My guess is that we're probably somewhere in the 8- to 10-week range.

Q. Both wins back to back here at home, does it feel like you're (indiscernible) international (indiscernible) in terms of your team adopting the game (indiscernible) of things that you want to see out of your club?

COACH BRADLEY: I think little by little we're improving. The vision that I think we all have for this team is to be a team that's good with the ball, has moments of smart possessions, still finding different ways to go forward. Finding moments to press, and then moments to make sure that we're very compact.

So there's a lot of details there. I still think at times there are moments where the timing of a play between one player and the next or the confidence to give the ball at the right time, the quality of some of the passes, I still think those are things that are going to get better and better.

The month of March was not kind to us in terms of just ability to continue training in a good way, between weather and training fields and in the bubble and out of the bubble and all this kind of stuff.

So, I really look forward to, at some point here, just feeling like the training part can get back into a consistent routine because I think we can take the things that we're trying to do and just be that much sharper in all areas.

But I see the confidence of the team. I see good performances by key players. I see young guys improving. So those are all things that are very positive.

Q. Alex made a pretty big save tonight, denying Keaton Parks from the top of the box. What are you getting from him that's working well for you right now?

COACH BRADLEY: That was a key save. One of the things I've spoken to Alex about, spoken to Jon about, is his ability to set his feet and get down and get that hand out to make a low save.

And so that was an excellent example of getting down, making an important save at a key moment. So for me, when they're closer -- and obviously Alex is a big body, his ability to stand up and make saves, I believe has always been there. But the area that I've challenged both Jon and Alex with is just the pure ability of sizing up certain shots from just around the box, just outside the box, in the D, getting the feet settled a little faster and getting down with that bottom hand and being able to make some of those saves. And so I was really pleased with that save.

And then disappointed that we just couldn't see it out for a shutout. But if we continue developing, I think we'll see some shutouts as we move forward.

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