

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bob Bradley

Media Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Thank you everyone for joining our post-game press conference from Utah this evening. We're joined by Coach Bob Bradley here.

Q. Bob, I was saying that Utah's a tough place to pick up points. You got two beautiful goals from two of your youngsters, but you gave up a couple of goals that I'm guessing you wish you could get back. What was your take on tonight's performance?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it's a very good point, this is a very difficult place to play. It's a game -- when you play here, it's really hard to get control of the game, for the game to have a real rhythm. So on that side of things it's a challenge.

I thought we improved in the second half. Overall I thought our football in the first half wasn't very good. Yes, we made some mistakes and we go down early, very good response, and then really bad to give up the goal right before half.

One change at half and also we switched and played with four in the back, thought that we could maybe get a little more going forward. The big plus on the night is the guys that come on the field -- Deandre comes on, I think plays quite well, and then Jayden comes on and really does a great job to win the ball and catch the keeper for the second goal.

When I mentioned the response to the first goal, great run by Jacob and a great ball. Then fantastic finish by Kosi.

Q. I guess from an emotional point of view, just your club's down twice against a tough opponent in a place that's very tough for particular teams from the Eastern Conference to play, and both goals are scored by young teenagers. How does that feel emotionally to you?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I think we feel good that there's a lot of -- that the young guys are making progress. As I mentioned, they stepped up and made a difference in

tonight's game.

The work to build the team, the mix of the more experienced guys, the young guys, the way they push each other, the need for the older guys to be good leaders and good examples, these are things that, yeah, we speak about all the time. I'm proud to see how some of those things are developing.

Q. You mentioned it briefly in the first answer to Neil's question regarding the switches at halftime. I'm just wondering if you could expand on that a little bit. What was the rationale behind them, and how did that sort of change the game a little bit in TFC's balance?

BOB BRADLEY: The way the wingers were playing and the way they doubled the flanks between the wingers and the outside backs, I didn't think we were doing a good enough job releasing -- shifting one of the three center backs out faster, and I thought we were quite in between a lot in the first half. I thought they were having success, especially down the left flank. And I just didn't think that we were also doing a good enough job in terms of the way we built from the back, finding the right passes.

So in all those ways, I thought we needed to change tactics.

Q. Jayden Nelson, he's had a bit of a rough go, I'd say, in the final third. He hasn't been able to put it together and get that final piece. And for him to come up today and have the audacity, I guess, to take that strike on, what does that say about him? And how did you feel about his goal tonight?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it's a fantastic goal. The confidence, just the recognition of the moment where the keeper's out and now you can take advantage of it.

I would agree that Jayden has had some moments where he's gotten into the box and you think he's on the verge of either making the right pass or finishing a chance. That part has to continue to improve. But maybe a goal like tonight makes a big difference in those ways.



He continues to show that he's got quickness, he's got speed, he's got individual ability on the balls where he can get away from someone. We just have to keep working to put the whole package together.

Q. We talk a lot about mile stones, whether it's a first start, first goal, 50th goal, 300th appearance, whatever it is. What do you do internally? How do you talk to the guys after they have a big moment like they did tonight?

BOB BRADLEY: Are you talking more like a big moment individually, like Kosi? Or are you talking about the team?

Q. Like Kosi and Jayden, for young players to get their first goals, how do you speak to them after that?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I smile and hug them and tell them that I'm proud to see the way they're coming along. I'm happy for them. There are times when you're pushing them and challenging them and saying, come on, it's got to be better.

But I think we always want to make sure that they know the work we're doing is to help them, that we see the talent and we believe in them. When they do something good, it's a great feeling to just let them know that the work has paid off and just to let them know that everybody's really excited for them and very proud of them.

Q. Luca Petrasso has played the full 90 in each of his first five appearances for the club now. Is that just a testament to how impressed you've been with him both in training and on match days?

BOB BRADLEY: Yes, Luca's doing very well. He's shown versatility. When Jacob came out, he played as a left back again. We've seen what he can do when he's higher up the field. On the ball, going forward, he does some really good things.

And as I sort of say with everybody, now we're trying to continue to develop the package of everything. I think there's times where he can use his skill in even better ways. When you play a lot on the flank as either a left back or even wide left, then there are times when you'll get the ball inside and your ability to receive across your body so that you're not just facing the way the ball came and going right back where it came.

There's little things like that that we have to keep trying to help him with, but he's another young guy that I think has made progress.

Jordan Perruzza got a few minutes tonight. He continues

in training to show improvements. So that part has been very, very good to see these guys all going in the right direction.

Q. Bob, I guess all teams are a work in progress at this early stage of the season, but especially yours given the turnover since last year. I wonder, a player like Jacob Shaffelburg, who's learning a new position, the first goal obviously he gave up the ball, but he immediately responded with a terrific run down the left flank to set up a goal. I just wonder what it says about his mentality, the way he rebounded?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, Jacob is a great kid. You guys have all seen him develop. You think about his background and where he comes from, and now he gets into the first team at TFC. There still are moments where he can be a little bit naive, but you see that part changing. You see him picking up little things and getting a little bit more savvy. His willingness to just give you everything, his ability in certain moments to run down a ball or push a ball by a defender and absolutely use his speed, those are great things to see.

Now it's just how can the rest come together. But that is sort of typical of Jacob, that he doesn't let anything get him down, and the willingness to keep trying to make plays that can help his team, he's accepted really well the challenges of playing in a new position, and I think he's done really well.

It's just another example of the work that goes in every day, but how we're excited to see the progress.

Q. I was just wondering if you could evaluate Carlos' performance tonight? How concerned, if at all, are you that it's now two red cards in five appearances?

BOB BRADLEY: Look, Carlos is a big personality. I think you guys know that he was here for a few years. So sometimes you come back here and there's a lot going on. So I don't think in terms now -- and the game also is a challenge. As I mentioned earlier, the way the ball flies around in some of the different situations.

Carlos, his strength is making plays, and we're constantly working to make sure that he's in -- that his decisions are in line with everybody else and that he's a guy that not only is making plays that help the team but also helping organize the people around him. So those are things that still need time.

Tonight I don't think was his best night, and yes, I want him to be a player that defensively not only makes great plays, has personality, but organizes, and in big games obviously,

doesn't put himself in those kind of positions where we end up down a man.

Q. In your experience, how crucially important is it for a player like Nelson who's had quite a bit of chances in his, I guess, 19 games with TFC before tonight but was unable to score to finally get one like this?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, very important. Look, I only speak about what I have seen from working with Jayden this year, and I mentioned throughout preseason that he seems to be excited about the little things that get worked on every day. We've seen him in a more dynamic ways, making more plays on the field in terms of getting away from guys, more moments where his skill, his speed, his quickness catch your eye.

Now the final part is turning that into greater production, and so when a player like that makes a really big play coming on as a sub and scores a great goal, it's something that everybody -- every player, every coach was so excited for him in the locker room after the game.

Q. I'd be remiss if we didn't specifically talk about Kosi's goal. We've talked at length during the week just about him and how he's impressed you, but did you know he had that in his locker? And I guess how big was that response for you guys?

BOB BRADLEY: It was a great goal, as we discussed. Jacob's run, the ball, and Kosi's finish was fantastic. Look, Kosi shows good qualities. He's versatile as a player. He had been more of an attacker for T2, but he's been able to use all his qualities to help us as either a wingback or even an outside back. He's played in the midfield in training. So we see good things from him every day. So really excited for him to get his first goal.

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