

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Alex Bono

Media Conference



Toronto FC 2, Philadelphia 1

Q. It's early in the season but you just took down the league's leading team. How big a win was it, and what's the mood in the dressing room right now?

ALEX BONO: Yeah, it's huge. Philly have a certain style, certain way about them that always makes them tough to play against. On top of that, they are on a pretty good run of form to start the season. Them coming in here we knew was going to be a battle from start to finish. We knew some guys were going to have to get down and do the dirty work today and we did that. Proud of the guys. We really grinded out another victory today. It's early in the season, we are just trying to accumulate points, put good performances today and let the results take care of themselves. But today, today was a big win for us for sure.

Q. Before the game, Jonathan was talking about how you were trying to build that big-game mentality. What does that mean to you?

ALEX BONO: Yeah, we talk about before games, we have to have a lot of guys showing up and putting good performances together individually and as a group.

You know, there have been some times, there's just not enough guys that have put forth good enough performances to really get us over the line.

Especially when it comes to big games, when it comes to teams that are close to the top of the table, it really is a mentality thing. From the first whistle, you have to know that things are going to kick off and you have to be ready to go. You have to be ready to make a play in the first 30 seconds that might make a difference in the entire game. You might have to fight through that fatigue and in the 90th.

The more games we can bring that to, the more success we are going to have and it's good to get a result like this and see what it feels like to go out and grind out a victory. Now we know what it takes and we're just going to keep putting performances together like that.

Q. You talked about how the team is able to grind things out, especially during the tail end of the game. Is the next thing the team winning comfortably and trying to see things out a little bit easier?

ALEX BONO: That will come. Again against a team like Philly where it's not going to be the prettiest game of football, it doesn't matter what it looks like, especially at this point in the season. Fact of the matter is, we came in today, we battled toward and at the end of the day we had more goals than the other team and that's what the objective of the game is. You ask Diego if he cares what the game looks like; as long as he gets three points, advances.

You know, sometimes that has to be the mentality, that it's not always going to look pretty. We know we can play a really attractive style of football. We know that we can pick teams apart with our passing when the time is right. But at the end of the day the most important thing is getting over the line after 90 minutes and getting three points, so that's what we did today. The performances will come but right now to be able to grind out performances early in the season like this and really see out a game against a really direct team that's got a lot of weapons, that's tough to play against, I'm not really worried about how it looks at this point. I'm worried about getting victories.

Q. You've got quite a few new faces playing in front of you in defense. How has it been developing chemistry?

ALEX BONO: It's been good. We are still working through some stuff obviously. You see some miscues, some just little mishaps that happen naturally when you're trying to get camaraderie with some new players and that sort of thing.

But everyone that's new to the team has come in with an incredible work ethic and incredible hunger to help us as Toronto FC and I think that speaks volumes to the front office to the guys they went out and got this year. They went out and got guys they scouted and know have ability and that could come in and help us put together wins. You saw that today. Shane was awesome, he's a warrior and



Caden another great shift and it was not having Chris back. It was vintage Chris Mavinga; he was awesome today.

Yeah, some new faces coming in, there's always going to be hiccups, learning curves and little things that happen but at the end of the day, we've got some warriors on this team and so the guys that came in; the few faces as you like to say, they are starting to feel less and less new as time goes on. We've been together long enough where we are starting to get a real understanding for everyone's tendencies and you can see, it starts with results and performances are going to come.

Q. Three straight wins at BMO Field after the last couple years ago away. Can you speak about what a lit you've been able to get from playing in front of the home crowd?

ALEX BONO: Yeah, you were here, you heard it tonight. It was awesome. I heard the Viking clap as the clock hit 8:00 and I got to hyped and was like, yeah, we're going to see this out, it's no problem.

The support is always great at BMO Field. They are tough at times and they deserve to be. They come out in numbers and waves in every single game and they are supporting us until the end and that's all we can ask for. To be able to be back here, three straight wins at BMO Field, we are on our way, and we need to make this place a fortress again and make teams not want to come here and play us.

You saw today, like I said, we had warriors, guys that were ready for battle and the fans really fed off that. They love guys going in on tackles, flying in on crosses and laying their body on the line. That gets them hyped up and that gets me hyped up and that goes a long way towards helping us get over the line in a tough game where we are up against it towards the end of it.

Q. I guess you lead the league in shots on target against shots faced but you also lead the league or close to lead the league in saves. Just wondering how you are finding it this year and where you are at personally?

ALEX BONO: Yeah, I'm just trying to go out there and do my job and help the team win. Don't really care about saves. I don't really care about shots on goal. All I care about is three points and another tally in the win column.

Q. Can you walk us through what you saw on that disallowed Philly goal? Did you have a sense it would go into review?

ALEX BONO: I didn't really see much to be fair. There were a lot of bodies in front and all of a sudden the ball was past me and I didn't really know what happened. I saw some bodies moving out of the way that were in my sight lines.

So in a situation like that, I don't know that there's a Philly guy off sides. I don't know that he's affecting the play. I mean, these are the rules of the game. If you're in an offsides position and you're messing with the viewpoint of the goalkeeper, then by law it's ruled offsides. And it worked in our favor today. And there are times all around the world where you see it and it either doesn't get called or you see that goals get disallowed for that reason.

I couldn't see much honestly but before I knew it, I was trying to react to a ball that was already halfway past me. But obviously the system worked for us today. The VAR worked for us and they made the right call.

Q. Jesus has come in and made a bit of a name; what makes him so dangerous --

ALEX BONO: Clinical. That was a great finish today and also to play the 1-2 and get the ball to him, both of those guys have been on a tear. So it's great to see that little tight spaces, Oso playing in tight spaces, Jesus. His movement puts him in a really, really good position to score goals and you've seen him kind of grow into his own as he's come here, I'm sure it's always been there, but now that he's learning the tendencies of guys, he's made an impact for us.

And that was some sort of classy finish today, it really was, for him to back off like that and have Oso find him and one touch, just leaning back and put him in the far corner. He's a joy to watch and he's a joy to train with and he's working his ass off all the time. So to see that, to see him come in and continue to put goals on the board for us is huge.

Q. Just to circle back, you're talking about being hyped-up during the clap and it sounded like the emotions were high, the blood was pumping. You've had big nights in this park. How important is a grind-it-out game like tonight when it comes to building a winning mentality, a championship culture with the young guys that you've got in this squad?

ALEX BONO: Yeah, it's huge. I've been saying this for a long time. There's so much talent in this city and so many talent coming through our academy that we are signing to first team deals or have first team futures. That's all well and good, and not many academies can say they have the amount of talent that we have coming through which it special.

But at the same time you have to mole these guys to understand that it's not always going to be perfect and it's not always going to be hey, we are going to go play around everyone. Sometimes you're going to have to face some adversity and be up against it yeah we have some young guys and a lot of talent. But for them to be in a game like that and understand that, listen, it's not easy. It's not easy when a team is bombing it forward with two really athletic tall guys and playing for second balls that we are not going to be able to play our style for 90 minutes.

So a mentality switch just to say, yeah, we are going to have to bunker down or make recovery runs that we don't want to make or that we are not used to making. The more guys that can understand that that's a part of what we stand for here, a part of battling and getting 2-1, 1-0, holding teams down late and not letting them get opportunities, that's what this club has been built off of. That's what our success has been built off.

For them to understand that that's a part of being on the first team; that it's not always going to be pretty and not always going to be ticky-tacka, win 4-0, that's not the league, right.

So the more guys that can understand and you see guys that have put in shifts and laid their body on the line and from start to finish have given us that grind and that performance.

As we go on, as we face more adversity as you do in a long season, the more guys that boy into it and lay it all online and after 90 minutes come into the locker room and say, I have nothing left, the more successful this team is going to be.

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