

Toronto FC Media Conference

Sunday, April 24, 2022

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bob Bradley

Media Conference



New York City 5, Toronto FC 4

Q. It's not typical that a team scores four goals and loses but what would you say sort of the main problem was for your team today?

BOB BRADLEY: The game had different parts. I thought that we were smart the way we started the game. We knew that when we got the lead that they were going to be very aggressive sending numbers forward, and they have good ideas with their attackers in terms of the way they -- when they get the chance, different guys running through.

And so for me, we at times, we were on our heels, we struggled then in certain situations to get pressure on the ball, and then it made us hesitant defensively in terms of decisions. And they exploited the wide areas on both sides. You know, when we played three in the back and we have wing backs, part of what we're trying to do is to control those situations.

But they did a good job of using their outside back, their eight and their winger to create over loads on both sides, and still pin us a little bit in the middle. So our confidence to deal with those situations, I think we got beat one-on-one on the flanks a few too many times, and all that led to just so many crosses coming through the box, and ultimately that's where for that period of time, late in the first half, and then for the blitz in the second half, that's what it felt like.

Q. Just wondering, do you take any solace from the fact that the team did sort of come back late and really sort of press New York with those final ten minutes and nearly eked out a result in New York?

BOB BRADLEY: I want the guys to feel good about that. I appreciate the fact that there was a period in there where things got away from us. But then on the field you saw guys pick themselves up, keep going. We started to have the confidence to get into their end again.

When I talk about different parts of the game, you know, when we got up the field today we did some very good things. But obviously when they played through us and got

into the final part of the field, that's where we had such a tough time. So I see the good things that we were able to do when we got forward. I saw the push late in the game. Now I need to look harder at the different situations that arose and our ability to handle some of those moments better.

Q. That six goals in eight games from Jiménez, do you still expect more from him?

BOB BRADLEY: I do. I think Jesús is a very good player. His movement is very good. He's a very smart player and when we continue to grow as a team, I think his all-around contribution is going to get bigger and bigger.

Q. Deandre Kerr had a rough start to the season but he looks like he's improving on a game by game basis. Do you feel the same way?

BOB BRADLEY: For sure. He did have a tough start. There was a period there where he was not 100 percent physically and where I think he lost some confidence. But then you could see some weeks back that things were starting to -- there was an uptick and that of course led to gym getting opportunities of late. You can see now more confidence. You see some of the qualities that he has that were apparent in preseason, and again,.

I think it's pretty normal for young pros, they are excited to start the season but then at a certain point, also it's a challenge, and it's hard. It's the part that they are not always ready for. But I'm really pleased with the way he has sort of pulled things together and I think that he's going to continue to move along because of late, you can see the confidence and you can see the sharpness in some of his moves and some of his plays, and those are things that are going in a very good direction.

Q. Another debut for a homegrown, Themis Antonoglou. Curious, what have you seen from him?

BOB BRADLEY: I think he's done well in training, and we needed help late in the game on the left side. He's a young player who is getting experience with the second team. He's trained a lot with the first team. Another young

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

player that picks up ideas, works hard, so I'm excited to see it continue to move forward.

Q. Michael did well to score his first goal this season, this year, tonight. Aside from it, how would you evaluate his performance in midfield today?

BOB BRADLEY: There was a lot to do. I still think he picked up a lot of loose balls. I think there were times where there was stuff going on around him and his ability to put out some of those fires when they were going forward.

But there were situations there that weren't easy. You know, the one -- well, the one ball that he lost, Ale gave him a tough ball. Michael dropped deep and cut out a cross and then as we quickly tried to break, Ale gave him a ball in a tight spot and he lost it and obviously that turned into 3-2. I know he'll be kicking himself for that. In a tight, hard game like that, he still found some good passes forward. Still had a lot to do moving from side-to-side to deal with their eights that play high.

So I there were good things, and whenever I watch him, I see things that we can look at together where it can get better.

Q. Ideally when things started to turn against you, what would you like the team to do to stem that tide?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I mean, ideally you get a little bit more control of game with the ball. You play a little bit more in their end. But they obviously were putting so much into it that in reality, maybe we just needed to tighten things up defensively and fight through some minutes until we could start to get our feet on the ground again.

You know, it's not always a matter of exactly what you want, what you would want even when we spoke at halftime is that now, you know, our whole idea before this game was still that we didn't want to just get pushed deep; that we had to find ways to move up the field and we had to find ways that even if they had the ball to defend them in their half, that means the type of collective intensity that makes it hard for them to build up and play forward.

So those are the things that when we got into that rough stretch, I think I mentioned earlier, I just felt like we were, you know, I'm saying it about Michael but I could say it about everybody; there was hesitancy. There's moments where if they have got a guy running through and there's a guy right in front of you, now you're not sure, should I step to the ball or do I have to deal with the runner? And so they were able to put us on our heels in that stretch, and I would have liked us to find a way to regain that collective

intensity and push them back a little bit.

Q. I believe it's 17 goals against through the start of the season. I think that's tide for the most in the Eastern Conference there. I know it's not all on the back line there, but is that a position perhaps the team would like to improve, and is that something you see the team improving perhaps in the summer?

BOB BRADLEY: You know, the defending is interesting, because obviously now you have two games where nine of those goals were scored. And so it's a collective thing. We work hard at it. You know, I've seen progress from all the players. We've had days where we have played both three in the back and four in the back and feel like that those are areas -- those are ways that we can still be flexible.

We'll see what happens in the summer but I believe that the numbers are a little bit skewed just by those two games but we understand that to be a complete team, we also need to have more games where we give less away.

DraftScripts by ASAP Sports