

Toronto FC Media Conference

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Cincinnati 2, Toronto FC 0

Q. An unfortunate start for sure tonight. You have a young team, a work-in-progress. You had a depleted roster tonight but there were some defensive issues. That first goal seemed to be will be repeated several times. What are you seeing in your team's defending?

BOB BRADLEY: The first goal comes where they just play a long ball and it's in front of Lukas, and he goes kite and as the ball gets laid out wide and Vazquez runs, Kadin has to close down a little bit faster and Lukas has to be ready in that moment that as soon as Vazquez releases the ball and realizes that his next most is going to be to sprint to get behind.

So we were just a little too slow dealing with a ball, a play that starts just off of a long ball on that side of the field.

Q. Are you concerned by what's happening with the defending?

BOB BRADLEY: I look at each situation and I saw a lot of good defending tonight as well. To play down a man for almost 90 minutes, there was a lot of moments of closing things down, winning balls in decent spots. So I give the group -- I thought the mentality of the group tonight was strong and if we can continue to build on that, that's going to help us.

Q. Unfortunate incident with Ralph, especially his first game back. Have you seen a replay of the tackle and did you think it was worthy of a red, and what, if anything, have you said to him, because again, it was his first game in a while and he gets that off pretty quickly.

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, Ralph came in right away and apologized. Look, he's a good guy. Of course, after being out, the opportunity to start tonight, we knew he couldn't play a full match but we felt it made sense to get him a good warmup and get him on the field.

You know, I did see a replay. I don't think there's a lot of force in the tackle but it's high. We've talked to Ralph

about improving his footwork and his timing, not being so quick to go to the ground in the middle of the field. You know, thinking faster, seeing situations faster means that you don't react late.

And so that's true in terms of trying to help Ralph develop so that when we have the ball, he finds good positions and he sees things quicker and the same ideas work in terms of defensive reactions.

Q. In the last stretch of games in particular, ball season long, does feel like every piss take is proving to be particularly costly for you guys, and so what do you do with that knowledge?

BOB BRADLEY: I think we got ourselves on a little bit of a good run and now we went to NYC FC, we of course took the lead, and yet on the day against a good attacking team in too many moments in terms of seeing situations a little quicker, understanding against good teams, against good players, that you can't be second best. You have to see things faster. You have to react faster. So you know, that game, we really hoped that we could look at that game to understand when you play better teams and better players, we're making progress but now the bar goes higher. And then we've had this tough two-game stretch with Cincinnati, you know, the goals the other day in terms of a corner and a throw-in, which primarily we've done pretty well defending set pieces. And to start well today and go down early and go down a man.

So you can go through stretches, I think you said it, that things go against you. So the only thing that I feel so strongly about tonight is if we can take the kind of mentality and keep going the way we did after we were down a man, after we were down a goal, I think that's going to pay off.

Q. How tough is it for a coach when you have three games in a week and you're already down a bunch of key players, and your hands are tied, sort of?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it's not ideal but it's opportunities for different guys. There's still this part that we are trying to become a good team and that means everybody needs to be called on in different moments and know that the work

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that gets done in training every day is going to be important. We are still trying to develop the confident where we are more consistent, where we can play football, where in parts of games where maybe we're under pressure; that we've got a better way to defend ourselves until we can get control again.

So yes, I would say that so far, there's a lot of lessons and there was a period where we made some progress and now it's against us, but we've got to be strong. You don't become a good team when a few things go against you and everybody starts looking in all the wrong directing your attentions. You have to keep going with the most important details every day.

Q. On sort of that similar note with I believe maybe seven matches between now and the summer, is there any sort of level of concern with the depth of the squad right now?

BOB BRADLEY: When you're down the number of guys that we are right now, of course, we're thin. Hopefully get some guys back. We've been hit with a bunch of different things at the same time, so that makes the challenges a little bit bigger.

Q. Can you give us an update on Osorio?

BOB BRADLEY: He came off as we started training yesterday. Scheduled to get an MRI. Still trying to get to the bottom of exactly what he feels. It's not a big -- it's been a little bit of a hard one to figure out. At first, I think he felt a little bit more on the outside. Lately, a little more in the middle. I don't think that it's very bad but it's still lingering, and so that's a concern. So when he came off in training, there was just a sense that, no, he wasn't ready to go today.

Q. This is a leg injury, we're talking lower body?

BOB BRADLEY: Yes.

Q. And I know these things hard to say, but do you have any sense of whether saw Salcedo and Achara will be out of the health and safety protocols for the weekend?

BOB BRADLEY: I don't know if they will be out. You're correct. Those are hard things to understand.

Q. Though I'm sure you'd rather not be using it quite so much, what have you made of this short-term contract initiative? How valuable is it to get these TFC 2 players experience and what do you see from Steffen and Kobe this evening?

BOB BRADLEY: It's valuable. It the way the league operates. We want to make sure that the connection between the first team, second team and academy, that those connections are strong. And so these are guys that we get know in training and it a good part of the process then in different situations; that those are the players that get opportunities when you run into some injuries or suspensions or protocols or whatever. So that part's positive.

You know, Kobe, we're down a man, I don't want to go into great details. I think both -- I think all these young guys have some starting points, and so we're excited to keep trying to push them forward.

Q. Next you have Vancouver, who have just one win in eight games. Is has the significance of that game increased following today's result?

BOB BRADLEY: Sure. You guys love to ask questions like that. Every time you lose, the next game has more significance I think.

You know, look, you go through a season. You prepare every game. When you go through a little bit of a bad stretch, you try to make sure everybody's strong. You can't get caught up with things. You can turn it into a really good effort.

We came here today with confidence, and obviously we went down early and as we discussed this whole press conference, we then went down a man. I thought for good parts of the first half, we still found a way to play to get forward to get into the box to create some chances, so much so that the only change at halftime was Jayden. We were still a little bit worried about the yellow card and the fact that we needed to use him in a different role once Ralph went down.

So look, these are the details. But yeah, we put a lot of pressure on ourselves and we had a little stretch going, as I said, we felt we were making some progress and now we've had this three-game slide and we have to find a way to keep pushing through it and get things back -- let me change it, not to say get it back on a good stretch; to keep getting better and to keep turning in better performances and better concentration and better efforts into points.

Q. Of the ten games here, Toronto has conceded the first goal in seven which isn't ideal. What are you seeing there? Are there any common things that just leads to Toronto FC to concede the first goal or is it say variety of things? How do you explain it?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it's an odd thing in football. Even at times with other teams, you can take the initiatives in that game and it doesn't mean that you'll always score first. We'd have to almost go through game by game whether we started well, how we conceded.

I mean, tonight's a bad one because like I said, we came here with some confidence and now you're just trying to get into the game. It's a goal kick for them where they start to play out and it's just a long ball, and then it's a quick -- it's a loose ball some, 50/50, some slow reactions but there's been a couple of those.

Again if I go back to Red Bull, goals come, like some of these teams early in games or some of them in their styles, they are looking to hit long balls and play off of second balls and try to just create some advantages that way, and so there have been moments early in games where just from nothing, a ball gets hit up and maybe there's a duel and when it comes loose, they play a quick ball behind and we are not ready to deal with the next moment. We work on that because that's a part of football where it's not that the other team is playing through you so much. It's that just by virtue of direct ball and winning a duel or being a little bit quicker to react to a second ball, it's an advantage. It's one of the areas that we have to improve. That's probably my best answer.

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