

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto FC 3, Chicago Fire FC 2

Q. How would you assess the performance?

BOB BRADLEY: I liked the resilience. It's not a night where I can speak about the football because that part is still between guys, between injuries and guys that go in and out and whatnot, no, right now as a team, we're trying to develop things and in the moment we're relying on the mentality of the game and the determination and the ability to fight through, whatever.

You know, Chicago has so many big guys and in moments when they push us deep or when they give up a set piece, then the second balls and balls back in. Those are just battles for each play. Even on the first part of set pieces generally we do okay but on a night like tonight with the number of bodies and the balls coming in, cross, cross, cross, yeah, that's a fight. That's a battle on every one, but yeah, it's still important that the group understands that and at a moment where not every part of the football is what it should be; that there's still ways to compete and what means to play at home and in front of your fans. Those are the big deals of today.

Q. Is it a lot to do with the fact that so many guys and been in and out of the line up and guys came back and are not used to playing together and connecting together?

BOB BRADLEY: All the factors, yes. All the factors.

Q. Been a long stretch between victories, what does a win like this do before the national break?

BOB BRADLEY: Like I said, this is a big project to keep trying to bring this group along, to develop all parts, to make the football better, to attack better, to defend better, but in the process, a mentality that when things don't go your way, everybody is still going in a strong way, helping each other, trying to push in games where you're struggling to get control; that there's still just, like I said, a resilience. So yeah, that's the part, and then if you go through a stretch and you let some games get away from you, then you need any kind of positive result.

We talked about a late goal in D.C. We talked about a good Cup win in Halifax. Tonight becomes the third on the list and just efforts where so many guys are just trying to do whatever they can to help the team through -- through this period until we can breathe and feel like we are a little bit better in all categories.

Q. Alejandro showed flashes are how dangerous he can be tonight and he's had a bumpy journey this season with injuries. Are we get to go see the real Alejandro now?

BOB BRADLEY: Well, there's no way you can see the real Alejandro when he's trained like once in the last couple weeks. So what we saw is still when he has the ball at his feet at times he can still make a great pass. Tonight scored a great goal. But when you ask me all these questions about our football and everything else, for the football to get to a higher level, Alejandro -- and he and I talk about it all the time. It's not only the special plays but it's more involved all the time.

So look, when you -- and I'm giving him like the most amount of credit tonight because when you have been out for a stretch, and like I said, you've barely had a full training session, he gave us, what was it, 80 minutes, right.

Now, again, at the end, he's tired. There are moments when, you know, the way we end up defending is okay, if Alejandro stays up then Jayden, you drop in here. So there's so much rearranging that's going on in the course of every game because in the moment, to be really consistent in every phase of the game, no, we're not there.

So look, I want Alejandro to get all the credit tonight because again when he steps on the field having not played, and he produces a couple big moments including the winning goal, yeah, absolutely.

Q. Do you have any sense of status of Oso?

BOB BRADLEY: No, this is some -- there's been some thing that's been sort of lingering that they have not put their finger on specifically. And we'll see what it means



now in this next period. Obviously it's an international break but yeah, we have to get to the bottom of what it is because he'll feel okay but then a little something doesn't seem right, and so it's just, we've got to get to the bottom. Somebody asked me right away, what was it. I don't know. We'll see.

BOB BRADLEY: I'm not talking about his contract. Cutting you off right now. I'm not talking about his contract.

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Q. Is it going to impact his national team duties?

BOB BRADLEY: Understand this: That when a player gets called in by the national team, it's no longer our call. Like we can't say, no, he's not going. And to be fair, we wouldn't do that, anyway, because the World Cup is not that far away.

Now, will he be able to say? We'll send a medical report and Oso will speak to the people there and then they will have to assess what that means. But for both reasons that I gave, we wouldn't stop them from going.

Q. O'Neill?

BOB BRADLEY: Some concern about dizziness or concussion protocol, I'm not sure. Some concern about that that he was feeling a little bit off at halftime.

Q. The last little bit, seals like -- I don't know if mature is the right word. What's been your impression of him? Did you challenge him specifically?

BOB BRADLEY: Challenge all these guys every day. No, he's getting use to the games. He's getting more confidence. He know what is it means to push himself more.

Sometimes you say to a young player -- everybody starts the game with a full tank and you don't get any points at the end of the game if you have three quarters of your tank left. So there's this idea of what does it mean to empty your tank on the field. If you don't have a big tank, maybe you empty it after 20 minutes and you come off.

Actually, that's better, you try to convince some players along the way, I would rather that you give us 20 minutes and empty your tank and then next week maybe we can get to 30 and then 40, but like this part of that's what playing at a higher level is all about. This is a discussion that goes on what lot of these guys, and yes, Deandre has grown in these ways, he's gotten more confident. You can tell, when he starts to think he's a little bit tired, he finds something to keep going a little bit more. So when you see that in a young player, that's very positive.

Q. Alejandro is a very important player to the squad, going to be out of contract at the end of the year --

