

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Forge FC 1, Toronto FC 1

**Q. Can you start with just a sense of what it means for you to win this trophy again?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it's important. There are guys that were here in 2020 and obviously they are responsible for getting the team to a final. Then you've got a new team right now, has a chance all of a sudden early in the season to play in a final. Coming here against Forge is always going to be hard. They are a good team. They are experienced. The games that they had in CONCACAF Nations League and CONCACAF Champions League, they are tested in these kind of games and the experience for the group is really important.

And look, for the club, for the supporters, the history of TFC in this last stretch in the Canadian championship and then being able to add to it today, those are all great things.

**Q. You said in Halifax that it was a proper Cup-type game. This seemed like it was very competitive.**

BOB BRADLEY: Absolutely. Good team. Well organized. With good football ideas. As has been the case for us throughout the year, there's moments where our football is okay. There are other moments where we lose control.

We are still trying to become a more consistent team that can sustain some of the good football longer, but while we're working on that, we have to have a mentality to stick together and find ways. I thought we started the second half really well. Scored a really good goal. Hate to see us then so quickly give up the next goal. We just don't do well sorting things out between Lucas and Kosi, and now Tristan is able to slip in there. And obviously if you let him take a ball down in that spot, he's a good finisher; he has got a great left foot.

But then we hang in, and look, the history of TFC and penalties is not a positive one but we spent some time yesterday just going through an approach, had them pick teams. Had them walk from far out to go and put it down and rehearse the way that you would do it in a match, and

just try to create a new mindset that if by chance we cut the penalties that everybody was going to be positive and we would go for it. In that end, I thought guys stepped up and did a good job.

**Q. Could you speak to the substitution in the second half and why you did that and the effect you thought that had?**

BOB BRADLEY: Which one out, Jayden out and Jacob in? I thought Jacob's pace could cause trouble on that side of the field. We rearranged the way we played a little bit in the middle of the first half. We brought Ollie a little deeper. Early in the game Sissoko (ph) was just following Michael and we were having trouble to build up, and so when Pozuelo comes a little bit deeper, then also at times Jesús starts to come off.

So it was important that we had the threat of Ayo staying up there, Deandre, and then Jacob to be able to use their speed to try to make some deep runs. We thought that was a way that we could tilt the game a little in our favor.

**Q. What will you tell the lads in order to keep this momentum up and hopefully move up in the Eastern Conference table and hopefully make the playoffs?**

BOB BRADLEY: Everyone understands the work required to become a good team. We have had some stretches this year where some very positive results. We had a really good four-game stretch and then quickly after that we had a really poor five-game stretch.

And you know, in every case, there's moments in games where you see things going in a good direction but the consistency, our ability to sustain our football over 90 minutes, keep a little bit more control, those are things that are just going to be need more work.

And so I think in the midst -- in the period where we are still not football-wise where we want to be, we have young guys, guys are learning, I think the mentality of the group is key. I think there's still a strong mentality that you see in every game. We still have games where late, we were behind, we knew how to push a game.

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And so, look, the lessons I think are adding up in a good way and hopefully we can take advantage of that you will and become the team that we believe we can be as we push through the second half of the season.

**Q. What do you think was the biggest positives for you between the two matches that made sure --**

BOB BRADLEY: I'm sorry, you're referring to Halifax and this match? What was positive that in games away from home, in the Cup where you are going to be challenged, when it didn't come easily, the group kind of kept going in the game. Kept pushing, kept trying to play football. And found ways to come out on top.

So that mentality, that feeling of fighting through a stretch in the game where maybe it doesn't go as well, I think in both the Halifax game and today, I thought we started -- we didn't start well. Take I didn't think the first half of either game was good enough but then at halftime we were able to tweak a few things, make sure the guys understood there's 45 more minutes to keep pushing it and I thought we came out and started both second halves in a much better way. Those are things we have to try to use for confidence and in a good way to move forward.

**Q. How do you guys celebrate this one?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, we want the guys -- inside, on the field with the fans, and then inside there's still a feeling when that trophy is there, and everyone knows they were part of it. Look, we had a little -- it wasn't that we spent a lot of time on it but we certainly spoke yesterday, and the idea is pretty simple; that at the end of your career, you'll remember teams that played in finals. You'll remember can you please you won, and there's nobody that's at the end of a career going to look back and say, yeah, that 2020 Cup final that was played in 2022, like that doesn't mean anything, right.

It still was a night where at the end there's a trophy and want to make sure everybody believes, it can be us, one way or the other, whether our football is good, not good, whether it goes to penalties, doesn't go to penalties. And so I think everybody felt that and that's important. It's important that as a group they experience the feeling of winning something and hopefully that's good motivation for the rest of the year.

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