

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Michael Bradley

Media Conference



Forge FC 1, Toronto FC 1

Q. You've won this trophy a few times with this club but what does it mean to get back-to-back trophies?

MICHAEL BRADLEY: Yeah, it was an important night for us. Obviously with a new team, a lot of young players, and just for the way the last few years have gone for a lot of different reasons.

Yeah, the experience for this group to play in a Cup final, to play on a big night, yeah, that was something we were all really excited about and again, this group needed that. So yeah, we're really excited and proud and it's a good step for us.

Q. Probably wouldn't have wanted it to get that far but is there any redemption in winning in a penalty shootout?

MICHAEL BRADLEY: Yeah, for sure. Obviously our history in penalty shootouts in finals is not great. So to be able to win like that is also important. Look, if you want to play in finals and you want to win trophies, you have to be able to win in different ways. So we've been on the wrong end of a few, and so I think it was important to be able to -- the way the game went tonight, and to be able to win this way was also important.

Q. Could you speak to, I guess, both the goal that you scored as well as the circumstances surrounding the quick recovery by Forge.

MICHAEL BRADLEY: Just in general, I thought it was a great final. I thought both teams went for it and really tried to go after the other and really tried to win the game, as opposed to some finals, you have two teams that step on the field that don't want to make mistakes and play not to lose. I think for anyone here today in the stadium, for anyone watching, it was a really good game, and I think the two goals were good examples of that.

Q. A lot of the young guys -- where did the confidence come from?

MICHAEL BRADLEY: We worked on it, we worked on it in a real way yesterday, as opposed to just -- as opposed to just letting guys hit a few after training in a mechanical way. We set things up in a real way so that everyone took one. We rehearsed the whole thing, and obviously there's no recreating the tension or the pressure or the drama of the moment, but to be able to practice them, to be able to have a routine, to be able to work on that is important.

And yeah, look, we are just trying to encourage all of our players, especially your young ones, to play and play with personality and to go for it, to not be afraid. So I think tonight was a big at the point for a lot of them. They are making good progress.

Q. So of course if you're back here next month, it will be -- what do you take from this moving forward in the Canadian championship but in terms of the mindset this sets for the rest of the season?

MICHAEL BRADLEY: Yeah, look, I've been here eight, nine years, and I've played in a lot of these games in stadiums and cities all across the country. I know how special the tournament is. I know how serious teams take it. I know how much it means to the fans.

And so you know, regardless of -- regardless of anything, you know, whether you're playing Vancouver or Montréal, or whether you're playing a CPL team now or whether you're playing home or whether you're playing away, you know that nothing is going to be given to you. You have to step on the field ready to compete and ready to be at your best.

Again, it's a special tournament. It's a unique tournament when you think about the history of it, the Voyageurs Cup, the way the fans were able to keep the tournament alive.

These are special nights, and so we use this one in a good way as we continue.

Q. Four times in the championship -- what has been the most difficult aspect of the CPL teams, not knowing them as well or playing them as often, what have you found more difficult in these matches?

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MICHAEL BRADLEY: Obviously they are -- the league continues to improve in big ways, so that part is great for football in North America but more specifically for Canada. Just the fact that there's more real clubs. There's more quality across the country. More opportunities for players and coaches. More opportunities for fans to see the game up close at a high level, so in all ways, it's been great for the game in this country.

Each club now with a little bit of time has started to develop its own identity. We were in Halifax a few weeks ago and you see the small, intimate stadium that they have there, the atmosphere, the connection they have with their fans and that community, it's pretty cool. It's special.

Obviously Forge have in a lot of ways set the bar for the league and in terms of their ability to not only play, but to compete and win and to be the team in the first few years in the League that has clearly had the most success. Also think about their ability to navigate the CONCACAF League and earn their way into the Champions League, these are great things. We've never stepped on the field one time in any of these games thinking it was going to be easy. You come to play, especially away, you know how much the game means to them and you know how much the game means to their fans. Again, you have to be at your best.

Q. What made you most proud today and what impressed you most tonight in being able to get this win?

MICHAEL BRADLEY: Yeah, look, our group has a strong mentality. It's not been an easy first part of the season in any way. It's a new team. It's a young team. We have had challenges thrown our way in a lot of moments, but we've kept at it. We've not felt sorry for ourselves. We, even in difficult moments, have stuck together and found ways to keep going. That's going to serve us well.

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