

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto FC 4, Charlotte 0

Q. Your thoughts overall on the performance?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, really good start. Everybody was excited. And you could see in a short amount of time there's still a good way that makes connect on the field. The more guys that connect, the more ideas that are going fast, the better the football get.

So we had moments where, yeah, the football that I talk about all the time where I say, I see it in bits and pieces, yeah, when all of a sudden you have those guys on the field and then others start to play off of them. The midfield three, already you can see the understanding that exists between Mark and Oso and Michael and how that three are in sync with the others. Yeah,

That's fun. That's the start of real football where you can do that more and more and more. So hopefully we can just keep building on that. You know, we'd hardly pretend that after a couple of days with these guys that there we are. You know, even at halftime, we're reminding them that there's still some moments where we're a little careless with the ball, and that means we have to deal with transition.

I see it all, but still, there was a lot of positives. You know, Lorenzo is so sharp. He's a smart guy. You're managing his minutes, but he knows how to manage himself when he's still coming back from injury and haven't trained that much. That is still what you see when you are around him up close, just how quick he sizes up the performance.

Federico has quality, also works. Great to see. The midfield three -- I think those guys know each other away from the pass but it comes together quickly and that gives our team confidence.

Q. Is there any word on Kaye?

BOB BRADLEY: TBD. It's always a question of whether it's a little bit of a cramp or a little bit more. We'll see.

The challenge on a night like tonight is just managing subs.

It's very hard.

Q. Was the plan always to play Lorenzo for 45 minutes?

BOB BRADLEY: The question was depending upon the game went and tempo and everything, would they even play that much. I hear all the recommendations but it doesn't make sense to lock in, because you try to remind everybody that until you see what the game looks like, how can you decide on the number of minutes? I felt that watching both carefully, that they were in control, Freddie is on our side, there's moments where he's tired.

At one point, he said, "I'm feeling better now." He was tired early, which happens, but at halftime, given where we are, these guys are like a week into preseason. You would never a week into preseason be putting guys on the field for more than 45 minutes.

Q. You've seen a lot of games. What did you think of the atmosphere tonight? There was a lot of love out there.

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, that was great. Boy, just right from the beginning, loud, into it, appreciated the moments of good football. And again, getting those guys on the field was exciting from the team but we also absolutely recognize how exciting it was for the fans and for the city.

Look, it's been talked about for a long time, and you know, it doesn't happen too often in many sports where you know that you have a -- again, we didn't know about Federico but you know that Lorenzo is coming but not until the summer and then you have to wait and see when he arrives exactly where he is with everything.

So for the fans, that was really important, and you could tell from the beginning they were there, they were excited, they were loud. So that was fantastic.

Q. This has been talked about for so long. How important was it to the group to come out and beat that team 4-0 tonight?



BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it was important night to win. It was an important night to have moments of good football. And then to do it with a really good first half, with some exciting goals, finish with a shutout, yeah, those things are all important.

Q. Do you think Michael --

BOB BRADLEY: Michael's been really good this year. Put Michael in the middle of more good players, he's not a player who does things on his own. He's a player who knows how to play with people. He's a player who knows how to bring good players into the game in the right way.

You know, I remember in 2017 after the season, some of the quotes by Victor Vazquez what it was like to play with Michael. Good players know when you play with a guy who is smart and easy to play with and gives you the ball in the right times

So you know, Michael was very excited about tonight and was excited about the football and training when all of a sudden you get a few more of these guys on the field. He was excited when the first day with Mark Anthony, he knows Mark from when he's younger. But then he watched Mark every game at LAFC and saw how Mark had grown as a player and he knew that when Mark came that that would be good. Michael loves playing with Oso.

So now there's a few more of those kind of special guys. I think he knows that that's the role that he has. He's not the one who is going to make the kind of plays that Lorenzo would make but he's the one who knows how in the right moments to find Lorenzo, find Federico, find Mark, find Oso, keep the game moving.

Yeah, I think he was just excited to know that the football tonight, that that was potential and we could really get something going. That's what we do, you know, on the days when I come in here and even if we had lost, if there's a little bit of good football, I tell you.

If there's none -- it hasn't been that often that there's none but there have been a few games that are just struggles and we keep saying come on. I said after one game we're not -- we're still not, but the more that you get the football going, the more that guys start to be on the same page, it starts to go faster, that's how you make a team. There's no shortcuts.

Q. Michael scored some pretty spectacular goals over the course of his career but might be hard to top the one against México a few years ago. Where does tonight rank in favorites?

BOB BRADLEY: Oh, I don't know -- slow convene I can't was pretty good.

Q. Did you know he had that in him --

BOB BRADLEY: Sure.

Q. What would you say about O'Neill tonight?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, solid presence. Experienced. Excited to get on the field. Strong presence. I'm excited to work with him. I'm excited to work on some little things that I think, again, in different places he's been, I don't know what anybody else has told him, I've watched him a lot. So there's little things we can still help him with. Solid presence, experienced, not phased by anything. Good guy.

Q. You mentioned the team is playing a couple --

BOB BRADLEY: By the time we looked at everything, was right there, and could be done quickly, and wouldn't in any way interfere with the possibility of some other things planned. So there was no reason to delay. It was never, like, making one and then that's it. We're still in different discussions looking for ways to make the team.

You know, I know the days that we defended pretty well and left something at the end. I also know that tonight there's a few moments in the second half, late in the first half, we would get careless and you could be punished. That never goes away. I can see the little things in the game that maybe one day don't matter but will matter the next day and the next day. So you just keep trying to improve.

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