

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto FC 2, New England 2

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, overall I think we're closer to becoming a good team. But a good team on a night like tonight scores more than two goals, especially when you consider that one is a penalty and one is just a wonder strike. And we don't give up two goals, given the way the game went.

You see the way we're still playing in a general way, but the timing of the goal before half and then the killer goal right at the start of the second half, they play on a low block, and then we were from that moment on in the second half -- we created more in the first half, I think, and then in the second half when they're deep like that, just the sharpness to create the openings and get more.

And then at 2-2 there's real momentum to just finish the game, get a third, and we weren't able to do that, so disappointed on that.

Q. Did you believe there was a bounced ball on the first goal?

BOB BRADLEY: I haven't seen a replay, so I can't say. I don't know.

Q. I'm not sure (indiscernible)?

BOB BRADLEY: Look, he strikes a great ball technically. Balls that come to his left passing, striking, he's got real quality, anything on the left side. That ability to hit a ball and shoot from distance or play a long ball, hit crosses, we see that all the time.

Q. What was the mood in the dressing room like?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, what I just said, that there's a feeling that we are close to becoming a good team, and given that, it's a game where we should take three points, and everybody knows that.

Q. What did you make of Ayo in his first start?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, look, we're trying to find ways to

get Jesús going, so sometimes when you're pressing and things aren't going exactly the way you want, the possibility of coming in the game as a reserve is a plus, changes the role, changes the dynamic, and then it's an opportunity for Ayo. So there's moments where some of his power, obviously the play that leads to the penalty, so that's positive.

I think this last stretch in training gets better. There's little technical things -- I liked the play early in the second half where he got into the box and was aggressive and turned the corner on the guy. I like to see him doing more of that because I think he can be a real threat. I still think there's other times where balls come to him and he's not aggressive enough, sometimes get a ball on the edge of the box where he could really drive and force the defender to have to defend him in a real way, and he'll turn away and play back and keep possession, which sometimes is fair, but I'd like to see him be more aggressive with the timing of his runs, with that part of it. I think there were some good moments tonight.

Q. What do you think could be cleaned up going into the game against Miami?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I mean, look, we weren't sharp tonight around the box, so when you say what can get cleaned up, Lorenzo doesn't have a sharp night, so when it comes to the plays that he can make in tight spaces and some of the balls he can give and some of his moments, he knows, we know, but he can do more than that.

Fede creates some big moments because obviously what he does get a little bit of room, his ability to smack a shot is also strong. But the timing of some plays, the ability to then when you do get into -- Oso has a good chance, loses his concentration in the final touch.

Look, this idea that we can be sharper, that we can -- when we're around the box even when they've got a lot of numbers there, that we can find ways to get through, that we can move defenders, that we can open up little spaces and take advantage of that, those are things that I think we're capable of as a team.

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Q. Did you notice any significant differences as to how New England approached the game, given you played just a couple weeks ago?

BOB BRADLEY: New England were not at full strength tonight, so they came in to play with a lot of people behind the ball, five defenders in the back, low block, take advantage of some counters and some set pieces. That was their plan for tonight.

Q. Are you finding it more difficult that teams are playing the low block or adjusting to it?

BOB BRADLEY: All around the world when teams are in a low block your ability to break them down is challenged. That's the mark of a top team, to be able to do that. I think that we're going in a good direction. Is it all there? No. As I've said throughout this press conference, some of the key moments tonight I don't think we were as sharp as we needed to be.

"Sharp" is a word in football where you get a little advantage and the timing of the next play, the timing of the ball, the way you receive a ball, the way you -- when you get into the box, the kind of runs that can open up space, those little details, we didn't do enough to make more chances. For the number of times we were right around their box, I think we needed to do better.

Q. What did you make of Jayden's play tonight?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I mean, lively. Shows good moments. I think understanding a little bit more and more how when you're part of a midfield three, how you find space, how you stay connected, I think those things are improving, and then, look, Jayden is also a player, given the fact that he gets the player with certain advantages sometimes, his ability to play the right kind of ball in or his ability sometimes to finish, yeah, those are things we have to keep working.

Q. Do you feel that Akinola's performance tonight has earned him a (indiscernible)?

BOB BRADLEY: Oh, let's see, I don't know. I still think -- look, I think Ayo, as I mentioned earlier, did some good things tonight. We're still trying to find ways to encourage and revitalize Jesús. So yeah, the turnaround is fast, so we'll see as we get closer physically how both are feeling.

Q. Do you feel it's the main issue bringing Jesús Jiménez to start for the next game and maybe taking away Nelson sooner?

BOB BRADLEY: I thought Jayden had a pretty good

game, so there was no reason to take him out sooner. You know, and again, if you look at the bench tonight, the player who went in for Jayden is Deandre. There's a young player still making progress, but I didn't see a reason to take Jayden out faster than that, and I thought the double substitution came at a time when we needed two fresh guys to try to push the game.

Q. Is it fair to say that Jayden's game has really progressed from the start of the season until now?

BOB BRADLEY: Yes. He's made a lot of progress. Yeah, for sure.

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