

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Quentin Westberg

Media Conference



Philadelphia Union 4, Toronto FC 0

Q. I thought you deserved a better fate today than what you got. We just talked to Bob, and he called it one of the more challenging seasons he's had as a coach. And I know you've faced challenges in other seasons off the field. I wonder, even though it's just ended, if you can give a sense of what this season has been like for you and the team.

QUENTIN WESTBERG: Very challenging. I think at one time we had two, three times in the season, we had a little bit going but they were overturned by bad losing streaks. That made it a roller coaster year in terms of result.

With a very young group to start with, and every time it was shaping up, it got difficult to build on negative results. Then there was a boost in the summer obviously. That took a low ending, and then a rough one towards these last few games, and yeah, very challenging because as athletes, we want to win. As athletes we want to play well and we want to build and there's a lot of things that come into consideration and then facing all the challenges and stepping up and showing up every day when everything is not going your way. It takes a toll on people. But you know, I think for the young guys, they are going to need the adversity because nothing comes easy and for us more experienced players, it's another good lesson. It's sort of a slap in the face but a proper humility check.

Q. A little bit of a strange one but I know you always roll with it so I'll go ahead. Philadelphia is going into the playoffs as the top seed in the east and you guys are missing out on the postseason. For you having just played them, what are the differences between those two teams? What are the margins?

QUENTIN WESTBERG: They have an extremely strong idea of what type of team they are, how they play and how they are built. It was obvious from the first second. I think Philadelphia has been the most consistent team since I joined the league four years ago. I think every single time playing their diamond, they have two strikers that run a lot. They always have a creative No. 10 that still runs a lot and works very, very hard also and they are a very, very

hard-working team that had very clear tactical principles, and yes, as soon as someone gets into that group, it feels like there's a place for him and yeah, I think you need to give him credit. They have been doing really well in terms of consistency, not as much in the playoffs, because it's more uncertain, one game, you're in or you're out. A couple of games is a different mentality, a different approach, but I feel they have great, also -- I think they have what it takes to go quite far, and compared to us, they have been building on foundation and on a very solid foundation now for four years.

We have had a bit of changes, more changes to face, and we are also a different market where there are different expectations, different playing style but has been changing a little bit more than them, so they have been able to build a more consistent basis, I would say.

Q. What's it like in that room right now? Where is everybody's heads at and what do the next few weeks look like for the team?

QUENTIN WESTBERG: It was showing up already today, a challenge, playing a top-seeded team in your conference in their stadium. Even though they had a wad game in the previous one, this is a team that is very confident and they were playing for a title and they were playing for the conference.

Obviously they are getting ready to play for playoffs that have a lot of certainty in what they are doing and they are trying to build momentum. We knew they would come flying and for us, we are a little bit on the other side of the spectrum. In terms of confidence, it's obviously a little harder, I'm not going to lie but everybody showed up and had great intentions throughout the week and coming into this game.

But you know, there's a lot of small details in that game where you can tell it's a team that's confident and a team that's on top of the -- high up in the standings and a team that's not doing as well. There's a lot of small details but this is what we love about this game, right. You pay the bill, at the end of the day, okay, it's deserved, but it's also, like I said, showing up and never letting go because it's

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always very close, and showing up, it's a good lesson for a lot of the younger guys and for the veterans it hurts like crazy.

But it's about showing up. It's about not giving up, it's about not giving up five, six. It's not comfortable to be out there on the field on a day like today and especially when things don't turn out your way but it's a point to not give up. Your career, the season, everything falls back into place and it's about not letting go. Obviously the atmosphere is not great but we know we played a very strong team today.

Q. You talked about the identity of Philadelphia growing over last few years. Your team went through a lot of coaching changes and roster changes, but do you see the beginning of a new identity here?

QUENTIN WESTBERG: It's very important that we give this club this identity that we all look for. There's no question about it. You need to trust and follow what is responsible for that, and my job is not to set it. My job is to try to understand and help as much as possible. Philly has, if really we are going to compare, Toronto has been doing extremely well and now there is all change. There is always change that occurs and it's really rolling with the purges when you are in our situation. Philly has been looking for momentum like they have been getting for the past series and they are at different stages.

So comparing is -- makes sense because today we played them but also, it's a little unfair because as a club, we are at different stages. Yes, it's trusting the process, and as I said from a player standpoint, it's showing up and making sure you understand the responsibility you have, and when you know how nice it is to play for this club, whatever the identity, whatever the playing style, it's about adapting and bringing our own personality.

So I think it's the trusting part. You know when you walk into this club, you understand that, you know, pleasing the fans and bringing wins and bringing great nights for our fans is really important and I think it's what this club is all about. Then it becomes very tricky because in football, it's small detail, the communication, everything. And it's also super thrilling because it's -- yeah, it's not always sunny. It's not always super bliss. But, you know, hanging in there and rolling with the punches, it brings a lot of pride at the end of the day when you start winning again.

Q. I wanted to ask about the hand ball that led to the penalty. Did you have a clear view or was it clear and obvious to you?

QUENTIN WESTBERG: No view at all. I was trying to -- I was more focused on what was going to take it -- taking a

PK and -- I was already in a PK. No, I think you guys probably know better now but to me, it wasn't super obvious.

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