

# Toronto FC Media Conference

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## Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto 1, Columbus 1

### Q. Seemed like there was plenty to like in that game until that goal. What did you think?

BOB BRADLEY: After 15 minutes in the first half I thought we started connecting things quickly, got a goal. By and large, most of the first half felt like we had good ideas with the ball and I thought we were doing some pretty good things defensively in terms of being fluid in terms of stopping certain situations from them. So I felt good about that.

First 15 minutes of the second half was a bit choppy, there's no real flow but I still think it's okay. And then somewhere in there, you know, I think we let down a little bit. I don't think we did a good enough job of getting control of the game, getting up the field. And moments where we did get up the field and balls turned over we weren't able to quickly stop transitions or run hard enough to run guys back to deal with certain situations.

So I would say that from somewhere -- and then the goal comes sort of out of nothing but by and large, I didn't think the second half was good enough.

### Q. What did you make of the call? Pretty lengthy review.

BOB BRADLEY: I haven't seen it yet so I can't comment. Like I said, prior to that, I don't think that the -- I said a second ago, the first 15 minutes was choppy and you didn't feel like it was giving anything away. And then somewhere in there around that goal, and then after, I didn't think we were consistent with passes, consistent with the distances between players and consistent with decisions. We let too much get away from us. The game opened up and they were able to scoop up balls in the midfield, switch the ball and get at us different ways.

At the end of the game, we were trying to regain control but we never really found a good way. A couple moments getting forward but not enough.

### Q. Lorenzo wasn't ready to play. Was that a

### game-time decision?

BOB BRADLEY: You guys know he's trained during the week, and we've tried to be very aware of how he felt every day. And yesterday, there were still some moments where he felt a little something in the groin. We just didn't want to take any chances. So it's a minor groin strain but there's still some plays yesterday where you can tell he's feeling it still a little bit and that was still the case today. So that's how the decision was made.

### Q. His first appearance of the season --

BOB BRADLEY: Yes, great to get a goal. You know, physically at this point in the year, we told him, give us as much as you can. Whether that's 45 or whether that's 55 or whatever, like don't hold back.

Yeah, for a first start and for the first appearance of the year, goal and some other good things, we would be pleased.

### Q. Why did he work for you in that decision --

BOB BRADLEY: Look, I think Deandre has shown when healthy, when he's in training, that he has got good qualities. He can move with the ball. He's a good finisher. He's got a good way of coming -- of timing runs and being a threat in behind. I wouldn't say any of that against Hugo and Jordan, they are different guys. Hugo is still -- obviously we think of enough of him that right now he was the choice to come on later in the game. A couple moments for Hugo, still maybe not quite in the final part of a play as composed or as sure as what he wants to do as Deandre.

Jordan works hard every day, and he's a good guy, and they are all pretty close and they are all competing. But right now, we felt Deandre still has shown in the appearances that he had last year and even in training lately his way of getting in and around the goal, his composure in the box, are good qualities.

### Q. Do you see him potentially being No. 9?



BOB BRADLEY: I think he can play anywhere along the front three.

**Q. What do you think about Federico's performance today?**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I don't think as a team we did a good enough job of getting him the ball in enough good places. He has a few little half-chance type situations. But we weren't able to sustain enough attacks and find him in the best -- in the best situation, so that was a product of a lot of things.

**Q. Left the game -- what happened there --**

BOB BRADLEY: I need to know for sure. Felt a little bit of tightness.

You have to kind of understand each guy when we think about stuff. Theo is still, as we work him back, feeling different things. So he's sort of a special case.

You know, Ayo is a unique athlete, and we are trying to get Ayo to where physically he can meet the demands of training in games, and training in games, sometimes he still gets some tightness. It's not anything that's -- not like a major hamstring but it's enough that we have to be concerned about how we move him along. I'm not sure about Raoul. Lorenzo is a different one. That's a groin. He reaches for a ball and he feels a little something in the groin. All different. We've got a bunch of other guys that I think are going in a real good way but it is frustrating when you have some of these different soft tissue injuries.

**Q. How did you find the pitch?**

BOB BRADLEY: This time of year, good, fast. Way better than last year. So credit to the ground crew. This year was great.

**Q. Retrieved the ball --**

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I don't know. Afterwards, it's quick. I have to go in and check on everybody. That was a weird play.

That's not a good one -- obviously the announcement about snowballs on the field. We have great fans and we love playing here but obviously making sure that those kind of things are kept in check. That's important.

**Q. Was the fan trying to get the ball back in play?**

BOB BRADLEY: Maybe. I don't know. But a back-in play -- look, the game is funny. Even the way stuff works, you

have fans running around the field. If a ball bounces into the stands, the fans are supposed to put the ball back so the ball person can put it on the ball stand. You know, the fan, if the player is right there thinks, I'm just going to give it to the player and that's actually not what they want. So there's little things like that, if a ball goes outside the field, yeah, you get it back on the field but you can't just throw it on the field. You know, look, fans come to games; they are excited. We love the fact that here they are close to the field. That's important. And then there's just some of this little stuff that has to be managed.

**Q. Inaudible.**

BOB BRADLEY: Hugo has talent. Hugo is still young in all this. Hasn't yet gotten to the point where it all adds up in a consistent way. But we at least still think he's got some good qualities. He held a couple balls under pressure. That's positive. He got the ball out on the left and cut into the box. The final part of it didn't work so good but he has moments where he can do good things, and I thought Kobe came on and handled things pretty well. Made some good plays and stepped up in time to win a ball, so those are positive.

**Q. Seemed like the team was playing with fluidity.**

BOB BRADLEY: When I look at the three games, the game that is the outlier is Atlanta. You go there and on the day, we miss some easy passes. We didn't do enough to really make it hard on them, and they pushed us deep. And you know, if at times we're able to make that first pass out of pressure a little bit better or better decision, then I think probably the possession part of the game is much closer to 50/50. I thought in the sequences when we did move the ball quickly, find the next guy, I thought we had some really good sequences against Atlanta. But overall, you know, if you talk about possession, if you talk about playing in their end, we didn't -- we let them push us deep and we never found good enough ways to get up.

But D.C., I thought especially in the first half, that part was pretty good. D.C. when we played them, every ball -- when we stepped up, they were going to play towards Benteke. So we had to be smart about how much we pushed up. We got behind in a moment where we lost the ball and thought we could press and let them out of the sideline, right, and then, you know, it's still a long shot. But I thought we had some really good chances in the first half to get back to 1-1. Lorenzo had a great chance from the ball from Fede, and Ayo had a good chance or two. Hit the crossbar and one time was in on goal.

Up until 89, I thought the second half until that part was good. To your point, I think we saw a lot of that in the first

game and we saw a lot of that up until midway through the second half tonight, so I still think that's going in a good direction.

**Q. The positive -- the extra pass --**

BOB BRADLEY: Well, the extra touch. Look, when you get an advantage in the box, the timing of, am I shooting, is there a better play to be made. Sometimes I need to see those over to know if the decision that the player made was a good one. You know, sometimes it's right decision to go a little further and there's a role chance to make a pass for an easier goal and if you miss the pass, then you can't complain that it was the wrong decision.

So you know, when I look at all this stuff, I try to understand, you know, are we making the best decisions, and then are we executing.

But to your point, I think overall in this game, there were moments as we got in and around the box, we weren't able to do enough with some of the advantages.

**Q. You touched on this, but do you have any sense of the guys that were missing tonight, are they close to being back? Could they be back next week?**

BOB BRADLEY: I think Ayo has a good chance to be next week. I think Theo might be a week or two more. I'm hopeful for Lorenzo, but you've got to see what happens as he's training and moving. If in certain training sessions he's not in a situation where he has to stretch for a ball or whatever, then maybe he thinks, yeah, I'm okay. But there still seems to be a little -- a little pain in certain moments as he has to reach out for a ball, the same way that it happened on the play in D.C. So I'm hopeful that it's not, you know, we did a scan, I think there's potentially another scan to make sure it's nothing more. The initial scan was very minor but he's still feeling something with certain actions and we want to be very careful about that. So I don't have a clear idea of what that one means.

**Q. Overall, it's still early --**

BOB BRADLEY: Not happy. Look, we had a chance to get a great win in the first game, and we let our says down with an inability to just see the game out.

Last week is not what we want football-wise but from a mentality standpoint, on a night where our football wasn't the best to take a point, was -- was quite good. I mentioned a few times I liked the goal we scored last week. That shows a lot of what we would like to work on. I thought there were moments in the first half tonight that were pretty good but then in the second half, I didn't think

we did a good enough job of finding a way to get back, get control of the game, play more in their end. So look, I think each game, there's been bits and pieces of things but no, we are not at the level that I think we can be.

**Q. A large number -- what stood out to you --**

BOB BRADLEY: Look, I think we've brought in a bunch of good experienced, solid guys, and a guy I always look to in that regard is Matt Hedges. Matt is a guy who you know exactly what he's going to bring to the game every night. He's a leader. He's a competitor. So there's nothing that he did tonight that we don't know. But it's always great to see what he brings to our table.

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