

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto FC 2, Inter Miami 0

BOB BRADLEY: I mentioned I think in one of the -- maybe yesterday, just at times keeping everybody a little more tuned in on every moment, but by and large I thought that was better. We just made a few reminders at halftime in terms of just connecting passes faster, especially on a field that's slick. Oftentimes, playing less touches, getting it to the next guy and I think there were some good moments like that, and good win.

Q. What can you say about the way your team defended tonight?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it fits in with what I just said. I think we were solid in all ways. There was a couple moments early on, two times on Raoul's side and one play on Richie's side where we got a little bit -- and one in the second half, too, where the connection between the outside back and the center back, his side, those little details weren't perfect. But overall the team commitment to find moments to press and in other moments make sure that we were compact and closing things down, I thought that was quite good.

Q. You must have been a fan of your team's first goal. I thought it was a nice team goal. What did you make of that goal?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I liked the way we stepped up on the play initially and maybe Brandon was the first one to pick up the loose ball but then it was some quick passes and then Mark made a good pass in the back post and then the timing of if he had a and Richie on the overlap and so as we know, it's just a great way of getting into good positions, timing to run into the box. But a good ball across and a very good team goal.

Q. What's been your impression --

BOB BRADLEY: Solid. That's a lot of really good starting points. He's a very good guy. He wants to learn. He trains well every day. He's got a good mix as a midfielder between working hard and still having a way when balls come of how he can arrange himself. There are things we

talk about that are slightly different than things he's heard before but he seems to be always open, and I think he's played well.

Q. What did you see from the group in the scoring --

BOB BRADLEY: There was a period where I wasn't really happy because I thought we had four or five moments with where when a ball came loose, we didn't connect the first pass in a good way. Oftentimes when they have the ball and the ball comes loose, there's a group of people around the ball. Finding a way to make the first pass out of pressure and then getting it -- then that gives you the chance to make two, three, four, five passes. So there was a few minutes there where I didn't think we did a good job but I still felt like the focus of the group was good, and then little by little we started to regain that. I thought, look, Mark Anthony had a good game but I really liked the second half more than the first half. I thought he was really anxious in the first half. At times, he wants to get into the box, he wants to do a lot of things but sometimes, I know him well, sometimes he can start running all over. In the second half he started slowing down a little bit and he'll still see moments to get into the box but when I see him and there's more times where he's in a good position, he gets the ball. He receives it. He passes it and he's not receiving every ball with guys around him and he's spinning and twisting. When you see Mark in good position, and part of sequences where he plays it, gets it quicker and gets it to the next guy, it's good for him and it's good for the team.

Q. What have you made of him and Michael --

BOB BRADLEY: It's really a midfield three today and I like the way that they do that. One thing that always has to get worked on is teams usually start out with some plan to have somebody follow Michael, so there's going to be an idea then of some fluidity so that if it can flow to Michael from the defenders, it can go to somebody else and we can start to connect some passes. And when Mark is in a good way, he can do that.

And yeah, like I said, I think the understanding of the three of them was good in terms of if Michael has to slide out to deal with something in the half space, that the opposite



eight tucked in -- is running back and is ready to stay connected to him, so I think that those are little things that are getting better.

Q. Johnson, his performance tonight?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, early, there weren't many big chances but when you need them one or two times early on, he's there. You can always see what Sean brings just in the way when situations develop, he sets himself well. He's always in a good position. He's not guessing and so that allows him to make those kind of saves, so yeah, he makes those plays, handled some of the different situations with our build ups in terms of mixing up some of the idea, so in all those ways, I thought he did a very good job.

Q. Bigger picture, how does it feel to get your first win of the season?

BOB BRADLEY: It was important tonight. You know, the beginnings of seasons are strange between weather, between fields, between -- you know, and look, it is what it is but cold weather teams have it a little bit harder because you finish up preseason and then the season starts, and are you training outside, and the continuation of the work in preseason to get into the season.

So there's challenges early in the year. The games are not always great yet. And I think that we hurt ourselves so badly at the end of that first game. What a good win that would have been because we played a good second half. And look, actually I thought going down -- we played well but let it get away with some plays in the game. I feel like we managed that, and most of all, the players needed to feel a good win. They needed to feel a team effort where everybody comes in at the end of the game and everybody knows that all of the guys around him contributed and look, that includes guys that don't play. Because if you're going to have good training in a week, you've got to have everybody coming in every day with the right mentality.

Q. This is Oso's 11th season and he's scored in all of those seasons. What does it say about his longevity?

BOB BRADLEY: If he's on the field, he sees moments, opportunities to get into the box. And I know it's been part of the way he played since the beginning because I've seen so many of those goals. It's a quality that he has. Tonight you also see the versatility because you line them up as the left side attacker but then there's moments where we encourage him to come and try to make more of a midfield four. So he finds a good mix of doing both but still has ways to help us try to score. So yeah, really good player.

Q. Inaudible.

BOB BRADLEY: Can't even comment on set pieces the last two games because he didn't have enough of them, so it's just a product of not having enough sustained possession. We had some moments of good football, especially in parts of the Columbus game but it led to I think one corner. But when you're up the field a little bit more, then you get some opportunities. I think we have some guys who have the ability to deliver good balls, and that's the starting point for set pieces.

We also now have some guys that in their careers have been good targets in terms of the way they are running the box. Hopefully the combination of being up the field more, playing in the other team's end gets us more opportunities, and we can use that as an area to help us score goals.

Q. Playing right wing --

BOB BRADLEY: That's his favorite position. He loves coming in from the right side. In the moments when Oso drops into the midfield, we encourage Fede to get a little closer to the 9 and not be so wide. I thought there were three or four times on the day where he moved forward and we weren't quite able to play the ball that gets him into the box off the edge of the left back. The one in the second half was pretty close but maybe he slows down a hair, a couple in the first half, the balls weren't good enough.

But from that position, getting him on the move into the box has got to be something that we continue to build on because it's a way that he can be a real threat.

Q. Can you speak a little bit just on his mentality? It seemed like he's brought good energy to the group.

BOB BRADLEY: Fede is an interesting guy. You know, he's fun. He's what you see on social media, is -- is a great part of him. We've got to make sure that he's always also on the inside. Like I challenge him now to also be a really good leader in a team, to be a good teammate and to be a more consistent player and to be a guy that even if now he's not getting the ball, he's doing as much as he wants that he's doing more to help the team in other ways.

So I think he's capable of doing so much and then I think we try to keep it pretty simple with what we talk to him about. You know, we talk during the week about, a little bit more direct with his runs, forward a little bit more, coming back in moments. If he comes back in moments to help us and in those spots in the field play simpler, connect passes, don't get stuck trying things in those areas that

lead to turnovers, and use your physical qualities. You know, he's worked very hard in the off-season. He's fitter. He's strong. He runs hard and those can be really important qualities in our team, and look, he is a guy that brings life. You've just got to make sure it's all in the right way for the group. So yeah, it's a good challenge.

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