

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Charlotte 2, Toronto FC 2

Q. Conditions were difficult with the wind. Did you see something change in the second half?

BOB BRADLEY: No, the wind was a huge factor tonight. Conditions were tough. But still in the end after being ahead 2-0, we let them back into the game too easily. Just didn't deal with two situations that developed at wide crosses. So we let ourselves down in that regard.

Second half, you've got to find ways to connect passes because any ball that you put up in the air is going to come right back at you. We created maybe 2 to 3 good or half chances but couldn't quite make the final part of it work. But most disappointed in the way we, like I said, we let them back into it too easily.

Q. The goal -- was that the product of the wind? We haven't seen a goal like that for Toronto FC ever.

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, it's his ability to strike the ball in and on a night like tonight where we know the wind is blowing so hard, if you put a ball out there, it's going to be a real threat going towards the goal. It's a combination but obviously he has a special way to hit balls. You see those from time to time. But he hit it well and took advantage of the conditions.

Q. What was the rationale of starting Ayo --

BOB BRADLEY: Deandre came out of training one day this week, so we were still watching him a little bit. Ayo came back from camp confident. We felt that it was a good time to put him on there at the beginning.

Yeah, there's moments where he's involved in good plays. There's moments where he comes up a little short. Good action in the first half where he's not able to keep himself on side. You know, a moment where he's got an advantage in the second half but he can't slow down and get the pass right.

You don't want to -- look, when you play as a striker, there's things that you do in a game, you hold balls, you

bring other guys into the game. Some of those things are going pretty well.

But you also look for final moments, and so obviously that didn't happen tonight but still, I think Ayo is hopefully moving himself along and I thought he was ready to start and give us everything he could.

Q. Big picture, this five-game stretch, it's only one win in that span but do you still think that it's been a positive stretch for the group since the D.C. United game?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, I would say even over six games there's been a lot of good thing. We know we lost a major opportunity in the added time at D.C. The mentality since then has been good. Right now our margin is small. So you can play well, do certain things but that doesn't get us a big enough margin in terms of creating a few more chances, scoring a few more goals and so we've got to continue to grow as a team where our ability to balance, attacking defense is right.

But certainly as you've seen, we're defensively much more solid. But we've got to be able to raise up the level of big chances we create and find ways to control the game. It's hard to talk about controlling the game tonight because the conditions are wacky. So it's not a night to spend too much time talking about that.

Overall I still think we are going in a better direction but we've got to find ways to take nights like tonight and turn them into three points.

Q. The decision to bring on Alonso in the second half, what was the rationale?

BOB BRADLEY: That I think he helps us connect passes at that moment and some fresh legs. We felt that that was a way we could maybe connect a few more passes and get forward a little bit towards the end of the game.

Q. It's my understanding you can't use him any more in MLS in terms of the short-term call-ups. Did that factor in at all tonight?

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BOB BRADLEY: No. Look, we've had discussions of the idea of now adding him to our roster. You guys have to do more homework -- the rules are hard, so with the internationals -- there's these categories. There's one, I think they made a change before last season where Canadian teams, if you have -- you're allowed up to three players that if they have been on the team for more than a year, then they count in a certain category, and then you still have the regular number of international spots. That's because in the U.S., in all those situations, they get players green cards. So that was changed last year.

And so that still means that we do still have an international slot.

Q. But with two appearances, can't appear in --

BOB BRADLEY: Yes, but what I just said is that I think we are close to the idea that now we will move him into a first team contract.

Q. Another start from Jahkeele. Is he progressing the way you want to see early in the season?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, he earned the start tonight. Again, young player, some good things. Little things that we keep trying to move forward and push him on. Solid enough effort. You know, when we look at some of the situations that were created, I mentioned that in terms of some of the defending on the flanks and crosses and stuff, there are areas there that we need to look at as a team. So there's always things that now you're trying to help guys see and improve upon. But still, see good things happening with Jahkeele. He's been in a good way. He's trained well and everybody was excited that he played well last week and that he deserved to start tonight.

Q. We've seen a turnover -- in the near post and tonight Michael had one. What did you make of that play and what do you like about that?

BOB BRADLEY: We have players that can deliver a good ball in the near post. That's a smart area to attack. You know, we felt that we could put them under pressure in that zone and then on top of it, when the conditions are the way they are, it's even more dangerous to really crowd some people in in the front zone and whip the balls in toward a keeper. In a way, that led to both goals.

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