

Toronto FC Media Conference

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Bob Bradley

Media Conference



Toronto FC 2, Atlanta 2

BOB BRADLEY: Getting a late goal is important because we've had chances in other games when a late goal could have gotten us three points.

So there were moments where there was -- where we played pretty well and had some control but it was inconsistent. It was a roller coaster, kind of. In the second half we lost some control. But to see the group -- and there was some frustration and guys were frustrated that there were a number of times where the referee just waived off calls and felt the guys went to the ground too easy so there was a level of frustration.

But to still put all that aside and make a play at the end is something important for us so that was a big positive on the night.

Q. What did you make of Lorenzo in his 15 minutes or so?

BOB BRADLEY: He needs more time. You know, I mean, he's still -- can come into little pockets, get the ball, slip little passes. Obviously you get Lorenzo at his best, it's also going to be mixed with dynamic moments, and so, look, it's good to get him back on the field. It's a start.

Q. Was Michael missing something?

BOB BRADLEY: Yes, he's had a little bit of some lower leg things that just added up and we don't want to let it get away from us.

Q. Did you find any similarities in your team with the last game against Atlanta?

BOB BRADLEY: They were different games. Playing there is hard and they pushed us deep in that game and we defended well deep. We scored a very good goal.

But tonight, generally speaking, there were periods where our buildup was better. We had more moments where we got into their half. Again, I said it in the beginning, it was still inconsistent, especially in the second half. But the

game is more balanced in that regard. In the first game, the pure -- because they pushed this deep, we didn't give away big chances, but they had a lot of shots and they had a lot -- it was just like they were on us even though it didn't lead to big chances, and defensively, we don't give up much. Giakoumakis on the header on the corner early and on the cross late and for the most part not too much else.

In that regard, different game, and look, we say it every game, we still have to have an ability to take certain advantages and do better. There's no special way to make that better. It's just work week-in and week-out and seeing which players can get sharper and seeing how we can -- if there's a couple of times in the first half where there is a connection of quick passes and we did find some good spots in some of the half-spaces and now we had people on the move going through the defense but we just don't take it and get the next play or finish it off.

So that's going to be important for us because we know our margin in every game is small and there's a lot of things that are going in a better direction, more and more solid, we defend better as a team. Generally speaking we defend transition better, before tonight, set piece -- defense set pieces had been good, we gave up the early one. We didn't do well with Giakoumakis's movement. There's been pluses but we have to find ways that we can take some of the football that we play and turn it into more chances and more goals.

Q. Brandon Serviana scored first goal for the club tonight. What do you think of his performance?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, Brandon has grown. Started really well. He had a couple games where he maybe dipped a little bit but I thought tonight in the second half, he kept going, found good spots. And we see in training that he is someone when he gets around the box can finish. He took it really well.

Q. The double switch at halftime, was that injury related?

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, not injury. Not injury-related. Jordan gave us a lot of energy. We thought Ayo could

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come on in a game where, physically he could hold balls and be a threat to get behind. Some of it is timing and some of his runs obviously needs to improve. There's a few balls --

Q. Are you talking Jordan?

BOB BRADLEY: No, switched over to Ayo. Jordan worked hard. Not every touch is perfect but you see it every day in training. Jordan comes out with a good mentality. He works hard. He tries to make runs. He runs in the box and you hope that if he can get a ball that sits for him that he can finish it. He's on his left foot a pretty good finisher.

Ayo physically can still hold people off. We thought that that could come in in a good way in the second half. Alonso is making big strides. He was a little tentative. And so you know we just remind him that he's going in a really good direction. We thought that getting Oso deeper and more in the middle of the field could give us a little more. There were moments that seemed to work and there were other moments where we didn't sustain any good football in the second half.

So, yeah, that part still, the consistency of that over 90 minutes, some games -- tonight that was up and down.

Q. How much more do you have to ease Lorenzo back, another week of training will he start or does he still need to come often bench for a while?

BOB BRADLEY: Need to see. He's only had two training sessions with the team, and you know, I said it last year when he finally got over the calf injury that he brought with him. He's smart enough to know how to manage himself, and then you just hope that there's no sort of random moment where he reaches and then feels it. That's actually what happened on the minus one when we were trying to get him ready for the, whatever, whatever the home game was.

But as far as going into game and still being smart enough and know how to handle certain moments, he can do that. And now as I said before, we need to just get him some -- so that it adds up more so that he's more dynamic and that he's the full package of what Lorenzo could bring.

It would be impossible for a player who played 30 minutes on February 25th and now has had two -- two training sessions, and the one day he was in for part of the training, and then we took him out, and then minus one training sessions, are not -- are not much. There's a little bit to get the group going and some tactics on set pieces. So we have to keep getting him pushed along in training. We'll

see what next week looks like.

Q. For Richie --

BOB BRADLEY: Yeah, really good goal.

Q. Is he okay --

BOB BRADLEY: When Richie gets space going forward, he can cause trouble. What I like in that moment is when he saw spaced, he backed up a little bit and he took advantage and took a shot. He didn't try to keep going through everybody. The ability for him, because he's tricky as a dribbler and he has a way of getting people on the wrong foot, so there's times that he always tries to go by the next guy but did he really well in that one. He took his chance and finished it really well.

Q. It's essentially a quarter of the season in the books now, I'm sure you'd like to have a few more points on the board, but overall, is the testimony trending in the right direction? Do you like the progress?

BOB BRADLEY: We're better but I say the same thing every week. We haven't had enough opportunity. We talk about Lorenzo. We have got to get Theo going again. So what a different discussion we would be getting if along the way when some of these advantages are created we do a little bit better.

You know, if you look at what most games are like, you know, by and large, as I said, our team defending is better. We still find a decent mix of when to step up and try to press versus when we are in a little bit more in a mid-block. I don't think we are a team that can press high all the time. I think we developed some good understandings in the back. Again, Sean has helped us, and if you just look at what we give up most games, it's not that much.

But, come on, we've got to find ways that when, you know -- I look at the games a lot of times, a lot of times, and so when I speak about advantages, advantages sometimes, you know, for FC fans, advantages don't show up on the sheet if you don't guess the pass right or it doesn't actually lead to a shot. So the ability when you've created a situation of -- is the pass going in inside the defender, is it going across the front of the defender, is the attacker on the move, we still get into that area just like -- just behind their line, say, 12 yards out, 14 yards out. But our next ball across, whether it gets cut back for a runner or whether it gets played through in a way that the goal that Oso scored against Miami was a good one, okay. Richie gave him a ball and Oso was running hard. But we get in those spots a fair amount and we don't produce enough chances from that end. That's also at times a function of the movement

of our nine.

So look, there's a lot of little things that we work through every week but until we get more consistent with that part, then we play games where the game is tight. The game hangs in the balance one way or another until the end.

So yeah, there's parts that are better but no, we can't look at it like we're the complete team yet because we're not.

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