



## Toronto FC Media Conference

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*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

### Terry Dunfield

Media Conference

Chicago Fire 1, Toronto FC 0

**Q. Obviously it's a disappointing ending to the game, and certainly not the result you wanted. But I'm interested to hear what you thought of the overall performance of your team over the course of the 90 minutes before conceding that late goal.**

**TERRY DUNFIELD:** Yeah, football can be a cruel game at times. It was a tough one for sure but I'm really proud of the work our team put into the 90 minutes. We really, really battled hard and played some good football at times. We need a little bit of sharpness and work in and around the opposition goal but felt like we were in control against a good Chicago team that's in form, and yeah, really proud of the guys.

**Q. We saw some debuts tonight, Ibarra and Latif came on in the second half. What did you see from the two of them today?**

Ibarra's presence in the middle of the park was key to a lot of the stuff that we did. I liked his relationship with Osorio. That got transferred nicely from the training ground. So yeah, I thought he was -- he was very good on the night. He brings a nice calmness, too, to our midfield.

I thought Latif Blessing gave us some energy for sure. He arrived late Thursday night. Really only had a match day minus one training session with us, but you know, from what we've seen from some of his work in New England, we felt like with the game just opening up a little bit, some of his directness, athleticism, ability to go past someone, the timing was right to play him. I thought both can be proud of their performances, and it felt like for me, too, Sigurd and Matt were making debuts. So it was great to have them on the pitch as well.

**Q. I just want to know, even though you only had these last four games under your belt, in your opinion, was it a more difficult challenge coming in as a head coach to a team that was already near the bottom of the table?**

The opportunity was unexpected and Bill (ph) called me three weeks ago and said be ready to take training tomorrow, the club needs some help. I feel very fortunate for the opportunity. I've enjoyed every minute of it representing our club. Yeah, I guess I never really went there that, yeah, we are at the bottom of the table. I believe in these guys, and so do our technical staff and everybody at the club.

So yeah, we just need to make some plays in key moments, and we don't have to be great. We just need to be an eight out of ten. I think both games today, the goal we gave up late on, and the goal against St. Louis was avoidable and just a little bit more sharpness in and around the opposition goal and we're there. We got to some great spots. So no, I'm okay with taking over where we were in the League, and I think the pictures, too, were clear. They are repeating themselves. Our actions are no longer random. Yeah, we just need to be a little bit more ruthless.



**Q. A couple early subs in the second half, Latif and Alonso coming on, a little bit of a formation change. Was that an attempt to connect up with the forward line a little bit better?**

I think it's tough. We unfortunately had to change three of our back four due to -- the feeling a little bit, the tempo of the game. Yeah, our thinking with Alonso, his form has been great the last three games but I thought him and Ibarra brought a nice stability to our midfield and they found nice spaces to get on it and gave us a little bit more structure with our offensive marking to take away Chicago counters. So I thought that was -- was important, and then it also freed up Osorio to live between the lines. I thought at times their centre-backs dropped deep and I thought Osorio could influence the game a little bit higher up the field and take away a little bit of his defensive responsibility.

**Q. Can you break down the goal for us? What did you see happening there?**

I think one of the moments we knew we would have to make plays in was protecting our goal. And I thought our structure was good. I think it came from a tough turnover in transition and now we've got Jahkeele and Latif on the same side of the pitch. Chicago created a little bit of an overload. I still have -- Alonso shifts to deal with the 2v1 and they are able to get it in the box. Yeah, I think it's a good finish, but our structure was there to make a play, and a little bit more sharpness and we're able to get over the line in possession and how we protect the goal.

So it's for sure a tough one to give up and I thought once the game started to become a little bit more stretched, you know, we started to see our identity playing across. Yeah, I felt like we were good. I felt like we had more power to finish the game than we have in the last three.

**Q. Sort of you kind of danced around it here but are you able to sort of piece together what's happening late in games, why this team is continuously giving away goals late and dropping results and sort of to piggyback on that, what do you guys as a group, as a coaching staff, as a team what do you guys need to do differently to ensure that those are not happening and that you're not dropping these results?**

Yeah, thanks for your question. Yeah, I think I was pretty objective that it was a tough turnover, where now our structure is a little bit unbalanced. Chicago created an overload down their right-hand side. We still have nice numbers to deal with it. We have our centre-backs and right fielders -- to deal with the cross and we are just not able to make the play. With St. Louis, we can clear it, we don't. A couple of small error are compounded and it's in the back of the net, and that's MLS. There is a lot of parity in this league and yeah, we have to make plays, and these plays are makeable. We are challenging our players and we are holding them accountable the following day when we review it that you can do this and we need you to make plays and if we are going to turn the club around and get it back to where it belongs. So yeah, I think it's just trusting in the process and making play in key moments and we need a little bit more around the opposition goals but we are getting into really good spots.

**Q. You mentioned about just needing more around the opposition goal. It's now four games without a goal, and it's five shutout losses in six games, and not to pile on, it's 398 minutes without scoring. Obviously the scoring issues predated you, so I appreciate that. But do you have a sense of like what needs to happen here? How do you get out of this scoring rut?**

Yeah, I think those statistics are very surface-level for sure, and we can't hide from them. We do need to score and start winning games. But we are now getting to good spots and the picture is clear for our players, and it's a little bit of decision-making, it's a little bit of sharpness and some work on the training ground. But it's no longer random. You're starting to see our ID come out. I'm proud of our work. And again, tonight, I believe we had 11 or 12 shots and half of them were on target.

**Q. I want to ask you about Sean Johnson because you went straight back to him after his goal cup appearance. From what I saw, I thought he was outstanding on the night, made some really key saves in the game. Wanted to get your thoughts on his performance tonight?**

Yeah, it was great to have him back in the changing room. We had a conversation just before he through back from California and shared that we're excited about work with you. Spoke about the change from a zoomed out lens, and then



Sean and John Conway and myself Friday morning had a really nice connect over the work we have done over the last three weeks from style of play to culture to values and you could see some of the heaviness left. We shared with him what his role is, and how his experience was going to be important and that, yeah, you were going to come straight back into the team. And we also had a great conversation with Thomas and said we felt like your performance against St. Louis was excellent. You've made this decision to bring Sean in a little more difficult. Yeah, I thought Sean was excellent, made saves he should but his presence at the back and some of his decision-making with the ball I thought was excellent.

**Q. You've got a little bit of time before the next one when the League's Cup gets underway. What does this next little spell look like for you guys?**

I think the change of competition is nice and something we can look forward to for sure but I think bar the statistics that John spoke about, and I don't think you can hide from them, there's been a lot of good work and we can be positive for sure, so I think it's just continuing to trust in the process, build. Players coming back from injury is going to help as well and just starting to build some nice relationships for sure.

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