



Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Terry Dunfield

Media Conference

Columbus 2, Toronto FC 0

Q. We'll just start with your thoughts on that one, please.

TERRY DUNFIELD: Yeah, it was another difficult result. Again, a similar story to our previous matches; that the goals we conceded were unnecessary and were better than that in those moments, and I thought tonight against a very good side in Columbus, we created five or six very good opportunities, and we should score one or two.

Q. Can you just give us the rationale about starting Michael at center back? And was the plan always to play him the full 90 or with Shane's injury situation, extended him a little bit longer than you would have liked?

Yeah, I think there's evidence over the last four or five years that at times, Michael has played at center back. I think his skill set suits the position in certain moments, and I thought he brought a stability on the ball for sure.

I thought the way he reads the game helps us. Columbus players coming off the front line or running behind, he's also able to organize there.

And after being out for three months, I thought it was a top performance today. He manfully, too, with our guys, protected the box really well. He intervened on numerous occasion when is protecting the ball.

Q. You've been in some tough moments with the club as a player and now you're experiencing it as a coach. What's your message to the team in difficult moments like this with the team in a bit of a rough spot at the moment?

Yeah, my message after the game was, thank you for your efforts tonight. I thought our boys worked our ass off as we have done for the past nine weeks.

You know, if we keep creating opportunities like that, we're going to start scoring. We're going to start scoring consistently two, three goals, and I'm gutted for the guys; the two we gave up were tough ones. And the way we defended under pressure at times from wide areas I thought was different class. And that was the area of the pitch we just had to give up, and when Columbus got there, I thought we dealt with it really well.

Q. You mentioned the good chances, I'm thinking the early ball to Sapong, Lorenzo off the post. Between those two, Columbus gets there first. Is that just how it goes when the tide is against you guys, and how do you tilt that back in your favor?

Yeah, two or three half chances Bernardeschi created off the right side, the sublime pass in from behind Lorenzo Insigne Deandre Kerr. So yeah, I just think it's -- these are moments we've been working on, so it's great to see our work from the



training ground come out.

But I think in these moments, you need to be ruthless, and also, the two that we gave up, we just need to be more ruthless in those moments.

Yeah, that would be how I'd answer.

Q. You brought in Cassius in the 64th minute, a little bit of a runout. I just wanted to get your impression of what you saw from the South African in his team debut?

Yeah, speaking of chances, I'd add Cassius's header at the near post. What a start that would have been to his TFC career.

I thought in broken play and transition, he was excellent. He protects the ball well when he receives between lines. I think the more training he gets under his belt, the more we'll see just a little bit of sharpness in and around the box. I thought he worked hard to step out and press defensively at times and reorganize and give Themí a hand as well managing Gressel. Overall it was a pleasing debut, or second game.

Q. If I'm not mistaken that, was Michael's 300th appearance with the club. You've been involved in this game your entire life. What does it mean for a guy to get 300 appearances for a club?

In MLS, too, with the travel, the shorter season, to win championships, as well, he's one of the best players to play in MLS. He led TFC right to the top of the mountain when we were there three years.

What stands out to me about Michael is it's never about Michael. It's always about the club, and he's just such a top player and leader. Today it was incredible, he was just focused on us obtaining three points.

Q. Obviously the results haven't gone the way -- for the team since the coaching change but in your mind is the team making progress? Can you point to anything tangible that you can say, yeah, look, we are making improvements in this area that gives you hope that things can turn around?

Yeah, I think the biggest thing that it gives us hope is that collectively, we're becoming difficult to beat, and the goals that we give up are right now individual errors. So I'd say as a team, we're organized defensively. I think we are now becoming a threat in transition, and I think consistently from where we were nine weeks ago, we're creating chances. We're creating five, six, good chances that we now need to take.

I think our medical team have done a fantastic job to get players back on the training ground and on the pitch as well, so I think we are becoming stronger. So yeah, I think there's lots of positives bar the results.

Q. There were a lot of young guys out there tonight: Themí, Kobe has been doing well this season, Lorenzo, Deandre off the bench, Kosi coming off the bench. What do you want them taking away from these experiences?

I think the biggest thing is belief that they can go out there and perform. I think with each play they make, they start to earn trust, not only with themselves, but trust and credit with their teammates.

I think that's important, and I thought today in particular, Themí and Kobe were excellent at fullback dealing with overloads, and then that was a space Columbus often gave to us build from in that fullback space. I thought it was two top performances from those two.

They never shied away from making a play with and without the ball.

Q. Just on Owusu, I assume his illness kicked back and he couldn't make it tonight? And the broadcast said O'Neill was a concussion sub. Do you have an update?

The Shane O'Neill one was a concussion sub, and Prince, yeah, he didn't travel with us. It's a lower leg injury at the moment that we are assessing.



