



Toronto FC Media Conference

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Terry Dunfield

Media Conference

Cincinnati 3, Toronto FC 2

Q. Great comeback effort, but fell short but aside from that, how did you rate the team's performance tonight?

TERRY DUNFIELD: First and foremost congrats to FC Cincinnati on a terrific season. They are a very good size that's well balanced, and they don't give you a ton, and they keep coming, too, and punish mistakes, and so no, I think that they are a top, top team, and have found a way to win in this league.

For us, I thought it was a bright start. There's a nice feel in the changing room. The guys are excited to be back at home, and then we just get caught on a set piece, the marking is not great, you're 1-0 down. The second goal, there's a bad step out of the back line, and we knew Cincinnati were good in transition, a couple passes later, it's in the back of the net.

I thought it was a fantastic response, and we showed some nice football at 2-0 down that we started the game with, and yeah, we got our two goals coming in at halftime but the mood's nice. I think we struggled to match the energy of Cincinnati at the start of the second half. We were a little bit on the back foot. We were hoping our substitutes would be impactful and make a difference, and at 2-2 there's maybe a half chance for us, there's a couple of shots and then there's probably three opportunities to make a play on the goal that we go down 3-2 on, and then at 3-2 down, it was tough for us to find a rhythm. I think we were trying to hit -- open them up in one rather than maybe finding a rhythm with the ball.

Q. You mentioned yesterday about the fluidity of their front three and they are hard to contend with. Was that a problem today for you guys?

Quickly reviewed the goals, again, feels like Groundhog Day. I feel like our guys can make plays on the goals for sure. So I think the overall athleticism of Cincinnati grinds us down a little bit but if you isolate the three goals, we can do better there. I thought that we found different ways to manage their front three, and overall did a pretty good job.

Q. You just touched on -- at halftime, what was your message to the team going out in the second half?

That they are going to get crosses into the box, and to be tight with our men and make sure we are not just marking space and that we've a midfielder coming the player around the penalty spot as well.

And then we reviewed the goals we scored. They came from being patient, nice position that went with it, and we created nice 1v1 situations for Fede, and we take our two goals. And I just thought that, yeah, we struggled to get into in a rhythm, and the first 50 minutes was a little on the back foot and yeah, you just saw the energy of a championship team.

Q. The first goal -- or was that exactly why you took the shots on target?



It's funny you say that. Yesterday we spoke about rebounds in our finishing, and we knew that they would be important. So it wasn't a bank shot, and I don't know, the guys called it, but we knew to come in for rebounds. But that was part of our strategy.

Q. Did you think the ball went out of bounds on the third Cincy goal?

Yeah, it was close. And even if it does stay in, I still think Kobe could probably make a play and look, we have -- maybe in Atlanta you go below and tracking your man and gets between us. Yeah, then you just see a little bit of magic from Acosta. Our centre-backs were a little bit wide.

Q. Are there any updates on Deandre?

No, not at the moment.

Q. When you have to make an early change like that, does it set you guys back? How do you deal with something like that?

I felt like Mbongue played with an edge when he came on and those are three big centre-backs that he's battling. He brings different attributes and different mindset Deandre Kerr who has been excellent. I thought it was possibly Hugo's best performance for Toronto FC and yeah, I think he can be proud of his work. I saw the play at times was good. He worked hard off the ball defensively. Too bad he didn't have that opportunity to maybe make a goal.

Q. What are some of your takeaways?

I think I've been saying this for the last 15 weeks, that I'm barely fortunate to have had the opportunity. It's been tough for sure but there's been some nice moments in there as well. I think I'm just going to need a little bit more time. I'm going to need some time to breathe and to really go through it and I'm sure there's some stuff that we could do different, too, and some of our work we'll be proud of as well.

Q. Nice to see --

Yeah, I think it was yeah, just another solid performance from Jonathan Osorio, and even under the adversity we're going through and the tough times, he continues to keep going. He keeps coming in every day and working hard, and so no, I'm glad his hard work is rewarded. Yeah, I thought his performance was pretty solid.

Q. You hinted yesterday that there would be some tweaks. What did you see from those...

We felt like having a structured change halfway through the half might help us a little bit to control Cincinnati's attack and just have an extra number in our back line, and then at the right moment, we pushed Michael into midfield and our fullbacks a little bit lower, and I thought that created more opportunities to get on the ball and build a little bit more and we get both of our goals from our 4-3-2-1 that we've played most of the time this season at the back of the second half and you get a nice 4v3 in transition against our three centre-backs.

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