



## Toronto FC Media Conference

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*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

### Terry Dunfield

Media Conference

New York Red Bulls 3, Toronto FC 0

**Q. Tonight seemed sort of a case of déjà vu all over again. Your team seemed to have a solid plan in the first half and was holding up defensively, and then all that good work got undone just before the halftime, and then you gave up the goal afterwards. Did it seem like that, kind of this has happened before?**

**TERRY DUNFIELD:** Yes, I think during my tenure, we've given up some tough goals, and I think that is part of being in a difficult situation where your confidence is a little bit low or maybe you second guess yourself. But again, I thought there was some nice passages of play and the guys stuck to our strategy and punched back at times in transition and finished with some nice football as well, albeit easier to play at 2-0 down.

**Q. Before the goal right before halftime, what do you think worked for you guys? Because they had some chances but it seemed like you did a pretty good job of frustrating them. What do you think worked up until that point?**

Yeah, I think in my opinion, there's two ways to take on the Red Bulls, total football, and that was our strategy and how we wanted to finish and take on their high press and counter press, and I think the other way is to sit a little bit deeper, invite them on, so you protect the middle up the field. And then just kind of push them wide. Those are the spaces you start to give up and protect the goal well. The further they come on to you, the more space there is behind. Having said that, they brought a couple of very good centre-backs. It's into the easy to get it behind that high back line. I thought the boys executed it really well, and it amplified some of our strengths and so no, I was -- bar the errors, again, happy with the performance.

**Q. Can you walk us through the Red Bulls' goals, please.**

Yeah, I think we're in a comfortable situation. The Red Bulls aren't coming flying out. We just take an extra second on the ball. Turn it over, and it's in the back of your net, and that's what the Red Bulls can do with that high press.

The second one, again, comes from just a little bit of sloppy play, a turnover, and I believe we're 6 versus 2 in transition. We should be able to make a play on that one at some point. It is a good finish. And we just changed structures to be able to dominate the ball a little bit more on the third one, and yeah, they find a free player in the box. If our structure is a little bit tighter like it was in the first half, we are probably good in that moment.

And it seems as though teams in the MLS are organized. They don't give up some of the goals that we do, and we have to work really hard for our opportunities.

**Q. We saw many positives from your squad during the first half before conceding the first goal. What aspects of the team's performance were you pleased with the most, and do you see like any room for improvements when John Herdman takes over?**



I thought what stood out was after a difficult season, the guys kept believing and stayed connected and trusted in our strategy and executed it to a tee. Bar the mistakes in the second half, it was the same. So that's what I shared with the guys after the game; they gave everything. You know, you just can't make mistakes like we did. The connectedness would be the way I would describe that, the first half for sure.

**Q. I know you're handing over the keys to John now, but there's one game left at home against an opponent that is not going to move in the standings whatever the result of that game. What is the motivation now of the players? Is it to try and offer some light at the end of the tunnel?**

The motivation is to win, and leave our fans, ourselves, with a nice feeling heading into the off-season and a nice body of work to help us move forward. So yeah, it's same as every week, we're going out there, trying to win, and I don't think the mindset will be any different.

**Q. Man yell makes a nice play to strip Michael of possession, but I don't think it's unfair to say Michael has to do a little bit better. With something like that, because he's a veteran, do you have to say anything to him, or does he understand that? Are any words said to him after something like that?**

I think when you're in the fight, it's important that you move on to the next play. As you just said, I think a player knows when he can do better. Unfortunately at that moment, you're the last man back and it's difficult to recover from that one. But if there's one player you want on the ball in that moment to set up our attacks and give us control from a deeper position, it's Michael. I thought some of his passing tonight was excellent.

**Q. Obviously you're going to be a part of John's staff going forward, but this is your last game in charge. Just wanted to know how you're feeling, what you emotions are you feeling about this being the end of the run?**

Yeah, great question. It was tough. It was tough addressing the guys after the game. It's been -- every time we speak after the game, bar Philly, it's, man, there's some nice parts to that performance; and, man, guys, we can do better in some of those moments.

And then we talk after the game and it's tough because you've been beat, and we're competitors, and you want to win and believe so much in your players. But what gets me out of the bed the next morning, I'm so privileged and lucky to be in this opportunity, is working with the amazing people across the hall in the- changing room that afforded me the time, the open-mindedness to work with them. It really has been a privilege. That's been a big part of my motivation to stay strong, and when Bill offered me the opportunity to come into this role to be the head coach and custodian of the club, I didn't think twice. I knew we were in a difficult spot for sure. As tough as it's been, I've loved every minute of it. Can't wait to continue working with the group.

**Q. We've talked about how easy it would be just to go through the motions in these last few games but I wanted to know what it told you about these players that they found the energy that they did tonight?**

Yeah, I think it's been the same every games, and that's we've got a group of players that just love football, that love competing. Same as we didn't think twice when the opportunity presented itself to re-sign, come through the academy and be part of the new team or come in as a new transfer; that we believe in Toronto FC and that we are here to continue working hard to get this club back to the mountain. There is no easy fix. It is going to take hard work and good decisions and stand strong. There's a lot of character in that changing room.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you about your staff that you pulled together to work with you for the last 15 games. I understand that those in the club are going back to their roles but I mean, the group that was pulled together on short notice and helped keep the ship afloat, I just wondered if you wanted to talk a little about your crew.**

For sure. When Bill and I spoke, he expected Chris Pozniak, a former player, Dejan Jakovic, also a former player, both Canadian internationals; that Bill felt like the three of us would connect well with the group, and we added Taylor Lord to the group as well, the young academy coach that I worked with last year as well as Dwayne De Rosario to help us find goals and bring his personality to the group. We've also worked with Harry Jamieson, our analyst that was here before and Steve



Haines and the rest of the staff around the first team.

Yeah, everyone's been great. Probably our biggest strength would be after each game we dust ourselves off and it takes 24 hours to get over it, go through our review. By the time we come into the next game, we're ready to go. There's a new strategy and a lightness and belief that, yeah, you know what, we can do this. The way we've continually been kicked in the nuts and kept going, it's been -- the staff have been a big part of that.

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