



Toronto FC Media Conference

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John Herdman
Jonathan Osorio
Media Conference

Toronto FC 5, Simcoe County Rovers 0

JOHN HERDMAN: A little bit disappointed. Can't be too happy with that performance but ultimately happy to get past Simcoe Rovers, as you know, always the David and Goliath story line there. Yeah, we got through. Proud of the lads and happy for the fans that turned up tonight.

Q. What did you think of the opposition?

JOHN HERDMAN: I mean, we weren't able to get much eyes on them coming in. You know, I thought they -- I know they struggled first half. It was difficult for them. I mean, the occasion is always going to be tough for the lads. And then you come up against this quality here and the pace of MLS and it's different.

But I thought they adapted in the second half when they went to a back five and just started to get numbers to manage our width and switch of play, it was better. It was better. But all in all, I think the first half, we just knew we had to kill the game. And to some degree, get ready for Orlando at the weekend.

Q. Prince has five goals in his last six appearances, what's been the key?

JOHN HERDMAN: Well, I think distribution, delivery. I think we've worked on that. We went into a game against the Whitecaps and I think we had 13 crosses, and only three of them got past the first man. The players have been putting the work in, the wing backs, the inside forwards, and Prince has been finding that part of the goal, which is the back post areas, more often.

So I think the work the lads have been putting in has been starting to payoff, and for him, he's been carrying, like any sent are forward, when you have not scored for a long time. You sort of carry that frustration and once he got his first, I think we all felt there was more to come and we just had to keep feeding.

Q. How important was it to get that goal off the second set piece --

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, I mean, the set piece coaches are certainly happy with that. Again, I'm hoping more will come from those set pieces. One of the biggest things we've looked at is defending our set pieces. Given our MLS form, defending the set pieces has been a big area they have worked on. They will be happy with that tonight, a clean sheet and those set pieces.

There were moments in set pieces, for the underdog teams, big moments. I thought we defended them well tonight.



Q. Does it ever get old --

JONATHAN OSORIO: No. No. It doesn't get old. I wasn't even aware until five, ten minutes ago. But just I think you just take it game by game, day-by-day. At the end, you hope the number is a big one.

But no, just happy today to play this game with the guys and get the job done and now looking forward to Saturday, which we have a big game, and then of course in this competition, looking forward to the next round as well.

Q. How special is it --

JONATHAN OSORIO: Yeah, it's a beautiful thing. It's great for Canadian soccer. To think a few years ago, League I teams were not even in this competition and the fact that a League I team -- League I itself is a very young league. It just started not too long ago. It's giving kids and players another pathway, another pathway to get seen, and what better way for these guys on the other side to come to BMO Field and to play in a stadium like that on a big stage, and feel the level and see where they rank and how far or close they are.

It's a great opportunity for them to show themselves. I thought they showed well in the second half, especially. But yeah, again, it's pretty special to play against a team that I have friends on the team, as well. I think that's a really cool thing as well.

Q. How many goals did you want tonight?

JOHN HERDMAN: I mean, we were looking at the record. I think the record was six goals for TFC, so the target was seven. We fell short. Disappointed. We could have had a few in the second half but the keeper, to be fair, he made some great saves, particularly from Sigurd.

Q. Times have changed. You're not happy with five goals.

JOHN HERDMAN: Well, we came here to set records. We came here to be first in as many things as we can, and that's the standard I've set for the club, the team. You know, we missed that standard tonight. They missed a big opportunity. I told these men, we missed a big opportunity tonight to make history.

Q. Cassius getting a goal --

JOHN HERDMAN: I'm really happy he got his goal. He's been pretty patient through the season and in the season. When the game is one game a week and you've got players like Osorio and Bernardeschi playing at the top of the box or those forward areas, it's very difficult for Cassius to get game time and minutes.

Again, I think he's a young player. He's come from a league in South Africa where it's different, the style, the standards are very different, and he's still trying to adapt to life here in MLS. So every week, he keeps his head down. He works hard. He's always got a positive outlook. I think players like that, they build a resilience through MLS. The season might not be his season; it might be. But if he can keep doing what he's doing, which is staying focused, he's got a chance.

Q. Was Fede okay?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, Fede was just rested. Fede and Raoul Petretta. Again, wanted to keep a look for the weekend. Hence, all the rotations that we had to make. Gomis at wingback just to give him some minutes to get minutes in his legs this week.

Q. You've won the Canadian Championship plenty of times. You're the all-time leading scorer. What does it mean to play in a competition and have an opportunity to lift that trophy?

JONATHAN OSORIO: It's an important competition for many reasons. One, to call yourself the best team in Canada, but two, to qualify for CONCACAF, Champions League. That's a big thing for this club.

And looking forward, that's a competition that we are looking to play in and compete in, compete for.

So yeah, it's an important competition always, and you know, being at this club, you always want to show that you're the best club in Canada, so that means a lot for us?

Q. What should the Rovers take away from this match?

JOHN HERDMAN: I think like anything. It's a stamp on a journey, what John than said. You know, I think we are all proud to see the veterans giving back to the legacy of the game here, people like Atiba, Doneil, Beckie, Julian de Guzman. I think it's awesome that they are trying to commit to the fabric here and it's just a journey. It's the journey for these League I clubs. They have to have these experiences. They know what the standard is. They know what the level is.

When they come here, again, they will not be taken in by an occasion. So you know, we hope to see them back again, I'm sure in the next game, it will be a lot closer because that's just how it works. They will experience it. They will come back stronger. But I just hope that other veterans can do what the likes of Atiba and Doneil into the game here and give back and keep developing football in Canada.

Q. Can we ask you about the activation of Derrick Etienne? What's he going to bring to the club?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, he's an exciting talent. We had a chance to see Derrick lift silverware for a couple of MLS clubs. We were surprised he was available, and for us, while we might or want to recruit in different areas, you know, given the injuries we've had and the big run of games that we've got, potential losing key players to Corporate America, I think Derrick can really add some value to our squad. So he's a player that I think will excite the proud. He brings goal threat. And he wants to win. So those things are good for me.

Q. What does it mean to you personally to be able to coach in this --

JOHN HERDMAN: I think it's a first for me. Like simple could he, it's the first. -- on the side of those FA Cup losses, with Newcastle -- I just didn't want to be on that other side of history. So tonight, it was a bit nerve racking to be honest. Yeah, but I mean, again, like Jonathan said, this is a big competition. You know, one, you get access to the next level of football, and two, you know, there's a trophy at the end of it. These guys want to win and prove that they are the best in Canada.

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