



# Toronto FC Media Conference

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## John Herdman

Media Conference

Toronto 3, Saint-Laurent 0

**JOHN HERDMAN:** I think I want to start by saying what a performance by saint Lauren. I thought they were outstanding tonight. Hell of an atmosphere. Loved. It felt like a proper cup match. I think 4,700 turned out. 6,000 tickets sold, and this is more media than I get in Toronto. So this obviously is a football city.

Yeah, I think a lot of -- Saint-Laurent ought to be proud tonight. They pushed us, pushed us hard. Obviously for me what I'm happy about is the clean sheet, that was one mission. Tonight, just a professional performance, no injuries, and yeah, we got out of here. Tough night. Tough night. Cup match. Everything you expected it to be.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Just be patient. Be patient. There were a few things tactically. There was a bit of a gap we were opening on that right-hand side. I thought they did a hell of a job posting us against Thompson and the wing back running off Kobe. They got behind us three times that side.

We tried to clean that up and just solidify there, and then tactically, there was opportunities on that left side that we had seen. Just to roll out the midfielders and create that overload. We knew if we did more work on the left, the right would open up and that's where we felt we had our biggest threat tonight. It sort of paid off but at the same time, the message was just be calm, be patient. It's a Cup game. They are bringing everything they have got, and you know, you've absorbed everything they have got at the moment and quality will come through.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, they deserve something tonight. I think everyone has seen, they deserved something out of that game. There's no doubt that a goal, two goals probably, the score line could have been a lot closer. I think just that little bit of quality on a big occasion for those plays, and I think for us, yeah, we look at that type of team, and after doing the scouting against Halifax, we could see at least three players that are right at the level. You can see, there's at least three in that team that, you know, when we look at some of our roster, they were not far away.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** The three players, I won't shout them out yet. Wait for their return. Give them some credit after that. Just know that we will be having a deeper look at some of these guys coming out of this game.

I said this to the players before. You know, these nights sort of make heros of players that were previously unknown, and I think keeping a clean sheet, the lads did well. I think largely at halftime, we had a plan on our minutes. We have a tough



match against New York at the weekend, so we were on rotation plans for players. We're on a big run of games. So our goal was to get out of this with at least a couple of goals in the bag. You know, in three, four games, when we've had a lot more 90 minutes, back-to-back games, two games a week, we can be in a bit more control with our selection.

At halftime, I think them changes were already planned. There was no genius in that.

**Q. To be here in this little stadium, playing against a team that the players on the other team -- how did you find this atmosphere?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, I mean, I was telling the lads, I watched the new hope county game versus Man City in the FA Cup and they were held scoreless, I think 1-0 at Newport. I said to the lads, anything can happen on these nights. A lad can score -- heartbreak, you just never know. All we can do is be disciplined and recognize the clean sheet was really important and then take our moments.

I thought a couple of our lads were really on the ball tonight with that. I thought Mabika -- and Deandre Kerr, we knew he would get one or two challenges, and I thought he was clinical. We got here last night, we seen the pitch.

We knew it wasn't going to be a game you were going to be able to put an expansive plan to football. I think it's a 64-meter pitch and we turned up in the wind and the rain, and you're like, it's a proper Cup night, lads. Anything is going to go. Just stay in the fight. Keep fighting. Stick together and we'll get through. Thankfully we did.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** No, we expected them to have an open game. I think they had a very deliberate style, and that deliberate style involved really utilizing their strengths. I mean, the coaching staff did a great job. They knew exactly where their strengths would be, and I thought they were brilliant at, like I say, exploiting that right-hand side of ours just through some clever little tactics, that up, back and through rhythm.

You can't defend against that. Your time's got to be right. If they have reversed it more than you've rehearsed at them, you're going to suffer.

I'd just like to say, I thought they did a great job tonight. They were brilliant. They were brilliant against Halifax. I thought their individual quality came through in the collective fights. They never give up. Right at the end, they probably could have scored, you know, one or two to get back into the game.

So I just tip my hat to them. It will be different in Toronto. It will be very different. When you get on a playing surface, that sort of changes things. But tonight, hats off to them. Great job for their coaching team, and their lads can hold their heads high.

**Q. Did you have a chance to see --**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, cracker. Absolute cracker. I mean, the commentary Ferdinand was talking on a job interview in that game. He really did put his hand up to take that next step to just the biggest club in the world, really, Real Madrid. I really hope he gets that opportunity.

But to see a Canadian score in the semifinal, what a play.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Not my problem anymore, lads. I've moved on. I wish Mauro and everyone else the best. I'll have a place in my heart for the Canadian team but my focus is Toronto FC. I'll sing the anthem as loud as I can and wish them well. Whoever takes this team next has a wonderful talented group to make big steps on the world stage.

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