



Toronto FC Media Conference

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John Herdman

Media Conference

Nashville 2, Toronto FC 1

Q. Are you wondering how on earth your team lost this game?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, I think we just had to be more clinical. We talked about after the D.C. game, just that killer goal, the goal that kills an opponent. We just couldn't find it. And when you play a team like Nashville with the quality of Mukhtar, Surridge, you just know with their style of play, as well, they are going to get chances. They always get chances. But you've got to be ready to kill that game off but also defend properly. Defend properly and manage the moments.

Again, moments tonight where the ball could be put in a rose head (ph) -- and the game and the moment's managed, the danger's managed. But we are in this mentality that because we're 1-1, we have to keep the ball, we have to do something special. We have to use that moment to attack, and that's what's costing us.

We're just not managing the moments in that last 30 minutes of games. It's been dreadful.

Q. After Chicago, you talked about how you would have to show up -- did that happen?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, I thought for 60-odd minutes, the crowd see our identity at home. I thought we had good control. First 15, we knew it was going to be a bit of a bat royale with Nashville. But I thought we were able to get that rhythm that we find, and just needed to be more clinical to put the game out of sight.

On a different night, we've seen that against Dallas or Montréal, we're able to just go for the jugular, and tonight we didn't. And again, you know, when you're going into that last 30 minutes, and you're going to have to make changes and bring quality and experience out, it's tough.

Q. Is the giving up goals so late in the game a factor of the fact that you don't have enough quality in this roster right now to stretch it across the whole game?

JOHN HERDMAN: I think you've got to look at a number of factors. I think the factors are, you know, we dropped our intensity in the second half. You can see there's an intensity that gets dropped. We just sag a bit too deep and we're not able to get the pressure on their build the way that we were in the first half. And some of that's, again, just the makeup of our squad, some of it's the players and some of it's around the output they put out in the first half and not being able to sustain that.

Then when you bring certain players off like a Lorenzo, who was gassed tonight, you could see he was fatigued, coming off the back of 90-plus, you can't replace that quality, you just cannot.



So for us, we've just got to stop making excuses in that last 30 minutes, and for us as a coaching staff, as well. We've got to look hard at ourselves as well. Tactically, the type of subs we're making, being able to shift into a different way of thinking and playing, to manage us through periods of time. I can point fingers at the players but the staff have got to take a big responsibility there, as well. You know, we are making those changes, and yeah, we've -- again, to answer your question, I was proud of about 55, 60 minutes tonight. But that last 30, again, it just feels like old TFC is back. We just wobble and we look unsure. We look timid. And we look like we can score.

But when we look like we can score, but when we look like we can score -- we look like they are going to score the other way very quickly, and that's a challenge. I mean, you look -- a couple of square pegs in round holes. But people like Derrick Etienne has done well at wingback, and he's not played there in his career. I thought he's done good job there.

And obviously Matty Longstaff playing in in that higher attacking mid role, he's put a shift in every game. Alonso scoring his first goal. Did a great job, again, the first 60 minutes to control the play and show his bravery. And given some of the mistakes he made, he really showed his bravery tonight. And Davey, the first 55, 60 minutes was an absolutely destroyer. He dealt with Mukhtar.

So the story of this last 35 minutes, yeah, we've got to figure some stuff out because the stats don't lie. We are dreadful in that last 30 minutes of games.

Q. Were those goals preventable in your eyes?

JOHN HERDMAN: Absolutely. I think the last goal was horrendous. It's absolutely horrendous. I mean, it's poor. It's really poor. And we just shifted tactically to a 5-3-2 to try to get a little bit more proximity to Mukhtar because we felt in the transition, he was starting to get available and they would get in that rhythm Mukhtar discouraged.

But again, it starts with us. We can clear a line. We can manage the situation. We can put a fire out earlier, there's no doubt. And 1v1, there's an opportunity to empty the player and just show that commitment to keep the clean sheet -- or sorry, to keep the result in that moment.

The lads apologized. You know, they will tell you, we're sorry and we made mistakes there, but again, it's a collective. Those things happen higher up the pitch. We weren't getting enough pressure on their build and we were inviting us, and that can't be us at home. I can understand if you're 3-0 up and trying to save legs for the next game, but there's definitely a bit of work for all of us to do to collectively to learn how to finish these games stronger.

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