



# Toronto FC Media Conference

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## John Herdman

Media Conference

New York 3, Toronto 0

**Q. Long and difficult night at the office for you. A bit of a wait before speaking to us. Wondering, did you have words with the team?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** No. There was a fire alarm that we had to deal with, so we've just been dealing with some kind of emergency that's been going on, whether we had to get out of the building or not.

My apologies for the wait.

We spoke to the team on the field. We've had some harsh conversations in recent weeks, but tonight, you know, the conversation was out on the field in the huddle as we normally do.

A number of us spoke. The key message, the guys didn't quit. It wasn't good enough. We know that. We keep shooting ourselves in the foot in key moments at key stages in the game, and we got to get next task, got to get back to work on Monday, and get a good week's prep in to Atlanta, which will give us a chance to reset, refocus, and come back to an identity which is tough to beat.

Which as you've seen, we've had some ups and downs, some really good moments across these three games, and tonight and had some just moments that are way below the standard that's required to compete in the MLS.

I think collectively we'll be getting in this week to move forward, and that's all we can do. We can't look at what is on the outside. We've got to stay tight together and move forward this week.

**Q. John, any positives? Anything that you can look at this sort of performance and say we can build on for the game against Atlanta next week?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** It's a reset, a back to basics reset. That's the reality this week. It's coming back to the identity the commitment around the tactical identity and the rhythm, just trying to build that rhythm with a consistent group.

So I think there is some positives. There is moments -- again, tonight I thought there were moments where we looked threatening. It's a tough place to come, as you know. The Red Bulls' arena is not easy, and it's a team that has a well-defined identity, and it's been an identity they've been able to impose all season on teams here.

The positives, they didn't quit. That's an important piece. Guys kept pushing. The guys that came into the game had more energy, more bite, more fight, but at times we were just lacking that a little bit of quality, the quality in big moments to unlock them or protect our net.



I think as you watch that game, John, when you concede straight after halftime it's an awful time. Now you're going up against the best transition team in the league where you've got to open up a bit and guys are thinking more forward than back. You're playing right into their hands.

So for us, we just needed to be more patient. 2-nil down you're still in the game, but we just left that stretch where they thrived in that moment. Sometimes it's hard to get that through to the players. The players are thinking, we've got score, we've got to score.

Yeah, so, again, that's part of the discipline, the journey that we're on when we're coming into away environments.

**Q. Is there an update on Alonso? It looked uncomfortable.**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, it's a hamstring and he heard something as he went down, so usually when they hear it it's no less than a grade two, so we're expecting that will be three to four weeks.

That's probably the first reality when you hear from a player that he heard it. Fingers crossed it's less than that. But, yeah, that's another one on the list.

**Q. John, the two goals, the second and third, were off giveaways by your team. You mentioned the transition and they moved quickly. How frustrating is that? How to see silly giveaways lead to goals like that?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, that's been one of the consistent themes across the games. You know, as a collective, players, staff, we're just not learning from it.

That's what this week will be about. It will be a back to basics. We're not a direct team, John. Like the profiles of our players, it's not set up to be a direct team.

You are reliant on a possession-based style of play where you have to draw the a player in behind to play underneath to across and around, and that takes precision.

At times when guys are fatiguing, those passes go awry. Then you got to hope. Just about being narrow as a team, so that those lanes weren't as open in transition.

Again, when the guys are fatiguing and they've gone forward and in a stretch game now, it plays right into the Red Bulls' hands. I don't want to blame the players. They're giving their all. There is not a guy out there that's not giving this their best, but all know our best isn't good enough at the moment.

There is more to come from this team because we've seen it away to Orlando, at home, to Montreal, we've seen some big performances where this team has been right at it.

It's key we get back to that.

**Q. John, a VAR (indiscernible) two-hour rain delay, fire alarm post-match. Was there a moment you got the sense that this wasn't going to be your night?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** No. I was happy for the rain delay because being done in the channel twice in the first ten minutes, just give us a chance to manage that.

Then again, I thought coming out just looked like a game where we would be okay. You know, it looked like you're in the game, you're away, they are getting momentum. But it wasn't absolute Lukas making save after save, crossbar shots, corners.

It wasn't that.



But coming out of halftime I think when you concede that early, you know what the team talk has been. You're right there. One goal away to the Red Bulls; had some good moments. We're come off the tactical identity the last ten minutes. Let's get back do that process. Showed them some clips of the where the opportunities are and the two things we need to clean up and then you're 2-nil down after two minutes.

So goals change games, and we'll get back. I mean, as I've said, they just have to go to the next task. That's all we can control at the moment. Just next task, back to basics and looking at it evolving tactically for a tough match in Atlanta.

**Q. John, watching a game from television is not the best way to examine it. Seemed like Lorenzo had a quad night. Everything okay with him?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** He's coming into his third match. You know, it's always a challenge. You are always pushing to start your strongest lineup, a way for him to create that magic. I thought he had some good moments the first 25 minutes, and he's a talisman for the team because he can turn the game on its head.

I think a couple of things, like we've got to keep looking to give him better service. Better movement when he's on our the ball because he can pick passes. At the same time, as a team, we've got to make sure we can -- when Lorenzo comes on the pitch we can bring that next level of quality collectively.

So I think all in all, from Lo, he's put a big shift in over three games given he hasn't played consistently now for the first half of the season with his injury, being away with the paternity.

You know, coming back now and pushed out 90 minutes, 100 plus first game and 70 in the last and now he's pushed out 60. If anything being we know he's more durable and hasn't broken down which is great news.

Give him a week to recover. He'll come alive I think with a week's prep into Atlanta.

**Q. Any word on baby Petretta?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Not yet. Not yet. We were hoping to get him in on a flight today. She gave birth yesterday. But she's gone into labor and obviously dad has to be there. He has to be part of that and experience it.

So we miss Raoul. He just has so much quality. But there is no way he's missing his son or daughter being born.

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