



Toronto FC Media Conference

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John Herdman

Media Conference

Columbus 2, Toronto FC 0

Q. Tough result. Maybe just describe your team's performance on the night and how you felt your team did?

JOHN HERDMAN: I think it was a difficult, difficult night. I think we should have taken something out of the first half. I mean, that was pretty clear. And then second half, when we had momentum, we had to capitalize on the moments that we had. I thought tactically the team was sound. Minimized their opportunities. One shot in the first half, and then six or seven in the second. But you see Cucho come in and first touch and do what he did.

So for us, I thought the lads were in the fight tonight. There was a good spirit. They tactically were disciplined. I thought they tactically were committed. I thought players that were asked to do jobs, like Richie Laryea were absolutely brilliant tonight. I think he really showed his leadership calibre and his desire to want to get this club into the playoffs. I just think that we need that from every single player. We need that absolute hunger and desire to play above their level, and that playing above their level means that as a collective, we win these matches.

So a lot of good things, as I keep saying. I thought it was, again, effort, spirit, fight, tactical discipline but enough quality when we needed it to take that game to the next level.

Q. How much losing Oso tip things in Columbus's favor?

JOHN HERDMAN: I don't think it was a massive shift in terms of Columbus's favor but you lose Oso, it's a big one. It's your skip, and he's been really pushing this team, really pushing the team in training. He's been pushing it on the feel. He is TFC. To lose him, being close to good momentum -- he had a good structure, and the team were in a good flow on the right-hand side, and the team was connecting a lot of the dots with Richie and Fede. For Oso to come out and Cucho to come in, that was tough.

But again, I didn't think there was a massive swing tactically when they brought in different levels of quality. I thought we still had enough opportunity there to do something but like I say, a cross comes in, no one is on the back post, it should be headed in. It's just those little dots that can make a difference in this campaign.

Q. What did he say he was feeling --

JOHN HERDMAN: He had a tightness. He reported some tightness around the 35th minute. As always he just want to punish. He wanted to push after halftime but we've done that before and we've ended up missing him for a lot longer than we'd hoped. So hopefully we caught him at the right time and it's something he can comeback quick hopefully for that cup final that's just around the corner.



But he certainly was feeling it, yeah.

Q. Prematch had a difference --

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, that was the case again. I think we had three good opportunities the last time we played them on the back post. With the lads, there's going to be that fast pace to goal, ruthlessness because they are a very athletic, well organized team. You don't get too many second chances with them. I thought when the moments were there, we were close but just not clinical enough or as ruthless as you need to be.

Like I say, if he had a puts a cross in and someone has to arrive on the back post. They have to be there. Orlando, you had two players there scoring that goal, you know, that's the difference. We have some young players. We've got guys that vent experienced an MLS playoff, and you know, those are fine margins. Those guys are going to have to grow up quick and be very, very harp coming into the game against Colorado.

That's what I've said to them. Just got to go next task, no corner-cutting. Do all the right things and we experienced something in Houston, and hopefully we can do something similar in Colorado.

Q. Do you think Herrera should have been called for a foul?

JOHN HERDMAN: I mean, it was a soft goal. I'll have to see that. I mean, that part of the field, you've got to be more aware, more switched on, I think more ruthless with how we were defending.

And to be fair, I thought Richie, Siggy had done a great job all night. I think we might have played them on side and yeah, I mean, it looked like a foul from where I'm at but you know, with VAR, you know, there's going to be a review and it was reviewed. Yeah, we didn't get it.

Q. The random substitution --

JOHN HERDMAN: I mean, he had a tight -- it was disappointing. I think he was starting to tighten and it's a game where you know, a player like that has to stay on the field and help you win a football match. He has to. That's what he came to this club for, to win these big games. Unfortunately he was tight and he had to come out.

Q. Inaudible.

JOHN HERDMAN: Proud of him. That's a 10-month return and just recognizing and appreciating. He's put a hell of a shift in. He's been patient for this opportunity and again, I thought he brought a good energy. But I do think he'll get better through the last few games we have left and we can rely on him more.

Q. Do you view this as a missed opportunity?

JOHN HERDMAN: Massive. Massive. We had to score in that first half. We had to. We were putting our best lineup out there. We knew they were going to strengthen in the second which would be quail lies things. I thought we he again played with a great tempo in the first half. I thought we got into good areas.

But yeah, we're just lacking that killer punch, that next-level quality it's going to take to get us this. That's where I'm challenging the team, the staff, the team, that we have to focus on those areas, the finishing end products. It was not an issue last week but it was an issue this week. The issue last week was just some of the defensive work. I thought the defensive work was above our threshold tonight.

Yeah, we'll keep pushing. We're in the fight. We're right there. I think the way these results are going, no one knows. I don't think anyone can predict who is going to be in or out. You know, a couple of results went our way. A couple didn't. But you know we're playing the champions. We're playing the best team in my opinion in MLS in terms of the team, the depth, the quality, the tactical execution. And I thought we were right there for long periods.

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