



Toronto FC Media Conference

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John Herdman

Media Conference

Colorado 2, Toronto FC 0

Q. Your team, you weathered a storm in the first half with the re-jig side. Was there any hope in the second that you might come away with something when you brought on some substitutes?

JOHN HERDMAN: That was the plan, to get ourselves into that 55-, 60-minute mark, right in the game. I think that was important for us. We knew the first half, it was about set pieces, counterattacks, and just to weather the storm. You're playing in tough conditions here. You're against a team that has not dropped too many points at home.

So we knew it was going to be tough with a rotated roster but the same, I was comfortable with where we were at, and being able to make subs coming into the second half to try and throw a few punches. I think, again, we did. I was disappointed with the goal.

To see a fullback scoring on the top of the box, you don't see that too often, so that was disappointing, given how well the guys had been able to weather the storm. But I thought we had enough opportunities in the second half to get out of the game and enough possession in their half but we just can't seem to find that killer punch at the moment and that's a challenge for us, whether it's the accuracy of our shots top of the box, whether it's the crosses, getting picked off from post or just not being there in the right moment. It's been a consistent theme across two games now. We just can't find our way to win a football match.

Q. Just given the heavy rotation and so much player changes with the heavy slate of games you guys are in, did you make of your team's performance off-season all tonight in Colorado?

JOHN HERDMAN: Well, I was happy with the the resilience and fight in that first half. That's a group of players that majority haven't played together since Nashville, way back when, and I thought they did very similar, just like a resilient first 55, 45 minutes where their job was to limit those big moments, those big shots, big opportunities, limit them as much as thick, and then try and grab something on the counter or from set pieces.

They had some big moments themselves. But at the same time, I thought that was a first half performance where Colorado, they had chances but nothing that I felt was guilt-edged. It hit the crossbar, hit the post, that type of stuff. Some of it was controlled and the amount of defenders and defensive profiles we had on the pitch, we were anticipating we would be able to control those areas around our box.

But the second half was where we had to go and win the game, and you know, I thought we made a decent account of it. The periods, we had our momentum. We just couldn't find that killer punch. I think that's something, you know, I'm challenging the guys to get after. Like if it's fight and spirit, the guys were in the fight.



But you know, we're missing that real killer punch when a cross comes in at the back post, we have to be able to score those opportunities. You know, when we have a long throw in and it's bobbling around in the six-yard box, someone's got to come firing in and bury that.

There's got to be a killer punch to our work at the moment, and you know, I think that's certainly what we'll be pushing coming into that Cup Final. Someone has to have that final moment for us.

Q. What was the breakdown on that Cannon goal?

JOHN HERDMAN: I mean, I think just appeared blind at the top of box. If you had a look, the numbers were right in width of the goal. The numbers were right around the goal. That cut-back cross at the top of the box, usually that's snuffed out by a central midfielder, and we just didn't track it. We didn't see it. And it's a good finish. That's the fullback, again, arriving on the penalty area.

I think we had a couple of players arriving in similar pots and we just couldn't find the back of the net. So it's a great finish by Cannon. He's a quality player. But again it's just the awareness, defensive awareness.

First half, I thought we were dealing with a lot of that stuff and then second half, I didn't think it was a substitution change. It was just, again, just a switch-off moment. Player arrives in a position they normally don't appear in and players are switched off.

Q. Do you expect Oso, Insigne and Long to be available for the Cup Final, and what kind of selection headaches do you have going into that game?

JOHN HERDMAN: I would expect everyone to be available outside of Nicksoen, Gomis. I'm hoping people have come out of the game with pain tonight. I know Etienne had a problem at halftime. So we'll be assessing that. His was a forced change at halftime. Precautionary, but there's definitely -- he was definitely -- in that first half, he was struggling to accelerate. Hopefully we're able to turn him around. But he would be one of the concerns and outside of that.

Again, you're playing at altitude which takes a bit more heat out of players, gas out of them and I think with that, we'll have to be thinking about who played big minutes tonight and whether they can backup. But again, I'm expecting outside of Gomis, everyone to be available for selection on Wednesday.

Q. Including Wingo?

JOHN HERDMAN: Expect Henry to be available. He's going through his final return to play, work tonight and tomorrow. He'll be on the pitch a little bit later tonight and straight after this game, and he'll do a bit more tomorrow. We'll try and ramp him up.

Again I'm anticipating everyone fighting to be in the squad. We've been preparing the team this week with that in mind. The goal has always been to get to the Cup final with the strongest squad we could potentially field. Fingers crossed, the players hit the right track at the right time but I'm optimistic at the moment.

Q. Just looking at the standings, the five teams below you in the table are all within three points and Philadelphia plays tomorrow, so they could conceivably move into a tie with you of 36 points. Given that sort of situation, how big of a setback was this sort of result tonight in terms of the playoff push?

JOHN HERDMAN: Well, I mean, you're hoping to get a result on the road but I think given everything we're managing, I think you have to temper the expectations. We're coming here to win to get football play to win points on the road but at the same time, you know what we're doing here. We're managing a squad that's turning around with some injuries. We're managing a squad that's got a Cup Final on Wednesday.

So you know, we've got a different reality to a lot of teams, and again, I think we did our best tonight with the circumstances we're in.

If you look at our losses in other moments, whether that's D.C. or a home loss to Nashville or Atlanta, those are the games where we look back, we go, they are big moments.

But at this moment in time, when your squad is hanging in by fingernails and you're on fumes, we've got a thin squad as it is, without DPs playing tonight and being able to start, it's not an easy road to hoe at the moment and we are pushing as hard as we can.

Again, you know, when you look at this loss tonight, of course it hurts. You're trying to pick up a result on the road. But at the same time, you know, we're not in the same space as some of the other teams that can come out here like Colorado tonight and put out their DPs and then know that they have got a full week off next week to get ready for their next game. You know, it's apples and oranges at the moment but we're doing our best and the players are doing their best.

Q. What do the next few days look like? Are you heading straight on to Vancouver? I guess everyone is looking forward to that final.

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, it's next task. We addressed it in the dressing room. We missed a moment tonight. There were some moments left on the table, there's no doubt in any mind we could have taken something out of this game, given the shift they put in in the first half to get us into the game and keep us in the game for the second and to bring more quality in, we missed a big opportunity.

So we've left it here. We have to. It's next task now. It's on to a final, and get excited for that. They have earned the right to step into place and play for a trophy, play for a Concacaf Cup spot. These are all parts of our goals and we'll get after that and then we'll address the MLS with a game against Chicago and New York coming.

So it's next task. That's all we can control, how we get ready for Vancouver. The excitement going in, the competitiveness and the players push to get themselves ready and more importantly for our fans to be able to show up there with a strong spirit and a good mindset to get after a trophy. You know we won't be able to get into Vancouver early. It's always difficult to get training venues there. So we'll hang around in Colorado for a little while and then get ourselves in ready to push.

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