



Toronto FC Media Conference

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Coach John Herdman

Media Conference

Toronto 1, Chicago 1

Q. Hi, John. Disappointing result obviously. Maybe just talk about the performance. It was your third game in eight days. Setting aside the result, how do you think your team performed on the pitch overall?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, I mean, coming into a game against Chicago you know that they have a very deliberate style, very direct team. They have a way of approaching and imposing themselves in their own stadium.

You could see the first half they were very direct and there was a pretty strong wind, which made it I think difficult for us to be able to build with real purpose.

But I thought we stuck to our tasks. We knew in the first half against the wind it was going to be tough dealing with a lot of direct players, second balls. But I felt we nullified a lot of the threats. The channel run (indiscernible) underneath the center midfielders that would arrive typically, and then for us it was about hitting them on the counterattack, being really physical.

I thought we stuck to our task. Coming in 1-nil at halftime it was really workmanlike performance given the way that we had come off the match two days ago. I was really happy with what it was feeling like. Felt like it was a proper playoff match and we were going to dig in.

I thought second half we just had to kill the game in transition. I thought we had some wonderful transitional moments. We knew we were going to have to defend with real intensity and deny them.

They didn't create as much as you would have anticipated given our line of engagement. I thought we were comfortable. We needed to hit them in transition and we did. We just never really got that killer punch.

Then that last goal, if we're fresh that, doesn't happen. People are sharper to stop the cross, sharper to win the first contact. All in all, given that it's been a heavy week, I thought our lads put in a hell of a shift in.

Then I think we should have won it in that last six, seven minutes when we started throwing everything at it. We had some big moments. Can't seem to capitalize. As you said, the lads had a tough week, a three-game week; east to west travel. I thought they were fighting for the club, fighting for the playoffs, and six minutes away from getting what would've been a massive three points tonight.

Q. You called for more quality from your side leading up to this game. That little touch and turn from Fede that led to the penalty kick, that the difference that moments of quality can make?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, I think that that quality is really important. I think Prince's quality scoring the penalties, big



moments, is really important.

You look at that first game against the Caps, we had a lot of good buildup play. Then it was either some good goalkeeping or the final finish.

Tonight we were still missing that bit of end product as well. I think Fede showed his class. He can really turn a team inside out when he gets moving. That touch, yeah, it's world class.

But I think generally, you know, we are still lacking that a little bit of edge to finish teams. I think those moments in the second half, big moments we don't seem to get away with those moments when you play Red Bulls, et cetera.

So we're going to keep pushing for that. Again, I'm not here to hit up the lads. The lads were class. I mean, you got to you said when you come in for three games you're coming up against a physical team like Chicago, had a full week off. Full week tactically to prepare for you and they're a physical machine as you can see.

They thrive on a very direct style. They were never going to let you impose to level of quality in what I thought was a tough pitch, conditions in the wind and a physical team that thrives in those conditions. Proud of the lads. I thought they put a hell of a shift in.

Like I say that a little bit of quality, it came through to get us that penalty.

Q. John, understandably a big week for your club, big games. You used the word playoffs. Why did Lorenzo not start in a game where you really kind of needed the three points?

JOHN HERDMAN: I don't know, Michael. I think, I don't know if you've been following the team all season, the away matches are very different to home matches. When you look at Chicago's style and Lorenzo came off a tight match in Vancouver, I don't know if you watched that game, but on turf it was a tricky game.

It's not easy for Lo to turn around for these matches. That's the first thing.

Second thing is when you come up against Chicago it's direct football and you're going to have to fight for a result. We knew that if we needed to bring Lorenzo into the game if we were chasing the game we would, and we did.

The team is built around the whole team. I think you'll see teams are always going to look at a certain opposition and their style of play, the type of pitch, the wind, the conditions, and obviously you start to build a roster around that.

But if you watch the game we were 86 minutes 1-nil up and four minutes away from a massive result.

Q. How much of this was a missed opportunity do you think?

JOHN HERDMAN: Yeah, I mean, mean, it's a missed opportunity, John. It's three points. We were four minutes away, five minutes away from taking three points. Big missed opportunity of course. Results in MLS went our way we could have been two points clear of the other team.

Yeah, frustrating, but it is what it is. We have got to get after Red Bulls New York, huge match for us at home and Miami at home. Got to go and win at home.

Q. John, I was going to ask you about Prince. That was his second well taken penalty in a couple days. I think I'll throw in a little -- just how difficult is it going to be to -- the fact that you guys aren't going to play on the final day of the season? How much does that throw another curve ball at you this season?

JOHN HERDMAN: Got to win the next two games, James. That's key. Six points. Six points could put us there.

But as I say, only thing we controlled tonight was picking up three. We picked up one on the road.



We've got to take six at home. Better to be at home than on the road. For our lads, we've got three days to turn around. It's going to always be tricky, three day turnaround for a team like Red Bulls who have got a lot of intensity, a three day turn around into Miami which we'll get excited for.

These are Cup finals. Tonight, like I said, the lads were just right there. They were right in the movement it was just that one little lapse of concentration defensively.

But we're right there. Right there. With our fans and I hope they turn up in droves, we're going to need that energy on Wednesday night. Going to need all of their support to push us through.

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