

New York Red Bulls Media Conference

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Gerhard Struber

Press Conference



New York Red Bulls 1, Portland 1

GERHARD STRUBER: A difficult game, what we expect. I think we start, I think in a good direction in this game. We have control. We know that possession would be more on our side on this day and I can see also that we create something over possession.

And we create also in some moments in transitions in the first half with Tom Barlow a big chance and also in possession I think with John Tolkin, a big chance I think in the first half in these moments and this is I think what makes me a little bit disappointed that we don't use that. I think we cannot always expect against a team with this quality, they stay in a low block and that you can create in every few minutes a big chance. I think in these moments, you have to score.

I think from the stability over the whole game time, I think my boys have a big high work rate. We have from the set up in the second half, a bit of problems when we come and start the second half. We have not the momentum and the control, and also in one or another moment, our distances between the lines and our staggering was sometimes between six and center backs and also between the tens and the six, too big, and sometimes we have not the right anticipation what's coming.

We give the center too easy open, especially in the first 20 minutes in the first half and then they can switch the game, and this was also our match plan; that we do everything that they have a big issue to change and switch the game. And in the first 20 minutes in the second half, we have problems with that and find not always the control.

But we grow in the second half also. My boys show me after the lead from Portland, we never give up and we stay focused and then I think in the end we deserved absolutely this point. And the statistics tells me it was clear in front in every direction but we have to score in a better direction, and I think also in this moment when they score we was not 100 percent consequent. And I think maybe this is also

a little the bigger word today that that our consequence was not always on this level what we need in the end to bring points home.

Yeah, I feel a little bit sad, and for our fans. It's crazy, we win five times on the road, and at home, it's for us at the moment, looks like a bigger challenge to win. And on the same team, we create never game at home enough chances to do it.

Yeah, I think every single player today, is disappointed. The expectation grow in the last few weeks in a direction that no one can live with a point at home against Portland. Yeah, I can see in the dressing room right now, yeah, a little bit frustrated team with, in the end, not the points what we expect today.

Q. Couple questions about forward selection for today. Obviously you went with Tom Barlow up top instead of Ashley Fletcher and obviously the out, Patryk Kamala, and you decided to bring on Zach Ryan as the substitute for Tom Barlow instead of Fletcher. Your thoughts on what went into those decisions and whether you got what you expected out of Tom Barlow and Zach Ryan today?

GERHARD STRUBER: Yeah, with Ashley Fletcher, we try everything in the last few days to bring him on a fitness and healthy situation on the game day.

But he has a little bit muscle tightness and the risk to bring him today was too high. We know that we have in the next three weeks, five games more and we need him healthy and ready and this was the -- this is the situation where I am bringing him not in today.

On the same team, I think Tom Barlow, he did a good job. He go in good forward runnings. He work against the ball. In this direction, what I expect from him. He has also in the first half a big moment, a big chance to score. He invests so many things in every game, and yeah, I would feel very, very happy for him when he could create his personal benefit sometime with a goal. But he works hard and I have the feeling he is so close to do it.

Yeah, and also with Zach Ryan, I think he show me the training in many times that he grow and he deserve also game time on this level, of course he's a very young player with not so much expectation or experience in this league, yeah, and for him, it was I think, yeah, a good time to show everyone that he's also for us right now an important suit, and yeah, we hope we can bring him and grow him in the next few weeks in a direction that he can bring or come more in game time.

Q. In the second half, you definitely pressed for the win. So what about playing at home that's such a big challenge for you guys to try to get those three points rather than playing on the road? Can you put a single finger on it or is it more than just that?

GERHARD STRUBER: No, there's always a reason behind. Of course we can see that every team here in our stadium, every opponent, they stay much deeper. They give us not so much space for transitions, and also, I think in this time, also we have to be more in on-ball moments. I think I can see that the boys grow in this direction. We find also in possession a better setup.

But I think the situation is that we have in these times when we create chances, not always a dynamic advantage, and not always the space what we have away, and this is the difference. I think in these moments, we have to be sharp and clear and we have to use that.

And of course we can see at the moment at home, it's for us a little bit more difficulty to realize the space in the right moment, and realize in the end to score in this -- in this moment when we get chances. We got also in the last few weeks when we play at home enough chances to win. Also today.

But I think when we compare this with the chances away, then we have I think a different number of chances at home and we have to work for that, and I can see we grow and on the same team, we have to realize, also, Portland is also a team with a high quality. And today, we can see this, how they defend with all what we have. They let it on the field and we were sometimes, yeah, extremely close to do it.

But thinking forward, I think we grow in the process in a very good direction. But of course, today we are not happy with one point. This is not only me. This is every single player in the dressing room. The expectation grow extremely in the last few week, especially when we look on the table. But we have to be also a little bit realistic what is possible in a situation like that with so young a group, and how we can grow also in this direction to be in possession, more a team who can change the rhythm, who can be --

yeah, to create more chances like what we did today.

But I have a big trust in this group, and I can see in so many directions how we grow, and I think also to win at home will come. On the same team, we see how many things we have to invest that we can realize that. Yeah, I think it's a way, it's a process and we have to be ready and be ready for the next game at home. The win, the victory will come.

Q. You mentioned just a second ago about being realistic. So I just wanted to ask you if you feel, this team, is it missing a dynamic player in moving forward to solve some of these problems, or is this an issue of experience; that this group can make it happen with a few more games, a few more training sessions? So is it the personnel you have or the personnel you don't have?

GERHARD STRUBER: First of all, I have enough dynamic and enough quality on this team that we can win at home. This is clear.

On the same team, of course we have a young group, and when you count all the games from my players together, then you will see very quick that we have not so much experience. And especially I think, when also expectations from the fans is a little bit more on the shoulders, the pressure we can feel, you can see also that every single player has managed and handled this situation different from the mental side.

And this means not that they are not ready to give and leave everything on the field. This is more that some players have also in the most important moments in defending moments and also when we create chances, the freedom in the brain and be in a good balance; and I think, of course, trainings, experience, in game time on this level help the players to grow.

My biggest strength is not patience, yeah, but I have that at the moment where I work so many times with young players and I know what they know and what they need that they can bring points home every week.

We are unhappy today. Yeah, we know we have, yeah, something to do but I have a very good feeling, and my trust is already on a very high level with this team. Of course it's good when Patryk is ready, Ashley is ready; that we have in the end always a situation to bring outstanding, strong players on the field, and also from the sub situation, we have always a big impact. But also Omir showed me today when he come in, he is ready. Dru is ready. Zachary is a young player; he needs of course a little bit more experience in game time.

But we have in the end enough players also for the next few weeks that we can bring away again the points what we want, and also that we bring also especially for our crowds here, for our spectators here, the points home that they can celebrate. I think this is a must-have and we work very, very hard in the next time that we can realize that.

Q. One thing you have to be pleased about is the fact that you scored on a set piece today from a corner. I think that all the work put on the training ground just to be able to execute that must satisfy you.

GERHARD STRUBER: Yeah, I think we can see how many flow-ins, how many corner kick free kicks we had in this game. This tell us also the story about our domination in many moments. Yeah, I think of course we are happy with one goal and on the same team, I feel a little bit we could do more. We could make in some situations the situations for us a little bit easier. That we have, yeah, always in these situations the right setup, the right players in the right sport in the right time. I think we work very good in this direction, and I hope also that we can, yeah, grow in these set pieces in the whole set play topic; that we can realize, also, wins over set plays.

Q. Couple times in the first half, it seemed like some of your players were holding the ball too long and kind of missing chances, taking shots on goal. I think one particular instance, John Tolkin especially was on the left side of the net instead of taking a shot on goal. He passed in. There was a couple other one, especially with Cristian Casseres. Did those catch your eye at all? And what was your reaction to that, and did you say anything at halftime to them?

GERHARD STRUBER: Yes, I think this is a little bit, the question that I can come back, the experience to break the rhythm. I think for us it's at the moment at home when we have possession; also in these moments that we cannot in a situation that the opponents bring our tempo in a low direction, and this means we forgot in this topic sometimes to play forward, quicker.

This is to realize when the opponent is not organized or stay a little bit more in the chaos and we have possession more in our brain that we forget our normal, typical game, and this is at the moment a challenge that we create, of course, a little bit more control in possession, but never forget, moments when they stay in the chaos and then we have to use that very quick with the right timing and forward runnings and also with the right pass in the right time forward.

And of course, I think I missed this a little bit in the first half.

It was also a topic in the halftime, how we change that, how we play with more brave, quicker, behind the last line, and play the game with one, two touches.

I think this was in the first half sometimes the issue that we need too much and too long time to bring the ball in dangerous areas in the golden zone. Yeah, I think this is still the learning curve or learning from today what we have to improve.

Q. Obviously you and the coaching staff are doing your best to have the players play well at home and get the full three points at home, but are you going to need maybe former players who have played here to help these kids to get more confidence to go get victories at home like Bradley Wright-Phillips who is with the club or even Connor or someone like Luis Robles who have won in the past here at Red Bull Arena?

GERHARD STRUBER: I'm very happy with my team at the moment, and I think for us, it's the most important thing, we look not so much outside. We look inside with all what we can do, and we have influence.

And one more time, I have a very big trust in this group, in my strikers, in my tens. And we believe in this group, and the group believe in yourself. I think this is the most important thing. We don't look so much outside. I think this is not -- not the topic right now. We know we are, I think very critical with ourselves, and we are ready to make step by a big jump in a direction that we can also be successful at home.

This is a process. I know this is not always easy for the fans to realize that. You can drive home with one point, and I have a big understanding for our fans; that they are not happy today with one point and I also am not happy.

But the group is young. We have to help the group. We have to push the group in a direction that they can win at home, and I know the process is not always easy, but we go this way with this young group and we have a big trust with very, very soon in a direction that our fans are happy and can celebrate after our home games.

Q. You have mid week Open Cup game against D.C. What is the message to your team going into the next few days of training trying to get a win and advance in the tournament, and potentially improve your scoring form?

GERHARD STRUBER: Yeah, tomorrow that we do everything for a good regeneration, and then I think my boys can enjoy also the Mother's Day and come back with different thoughts. Then we come back and create the

match plan and the mindset what is necessary.

I think we play in D.C. It's also a big challenge to make the next jump but we'll invest everything that we can come in the next round and then we have the next big game in the League against Philly and yeah, we create step-by-step the right setup, the right match plan and we think from game-to-game and have also for the next challenge in D.C. a very good feeling.

I think we know we are very sexy away and we will do it again on the road, and I think Tuesday is a good moment.

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