

New York Red Bulls Media Conference

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Gerhard Struber Press Conference



New York Red Bulls 1, Houston 1

GERHARD STRUBER: It was exactly the game what we expect. Houston, in a low block, in a deep block and my boys, I think they create over the whole game our typical style. I think we have many, many possession moments today. It was maybe a little bit different to other games.

But my boys work very, very hard over their whole game time to bring our break the ball down. I think, and also, they handled in the end the situation very well when we concede the goal, and I think, yeah, I think the belief in my group of players, I can see this after a very difficult week one more time on a very, very high level how the boys work together with our typical spirit.

Yeah, I think what I must say to my boys, a big respect to how we handled moments like that, and in this direction, of course, we expect a win today. This was our clear goal. In the end, again, a draw, this makes us not happy, but we cannot forget the circumstance, and I am in many, many directions happy how we come back in this game, how we have a big belief to change the result. Yeah, I think in this direction, respect for my boys how we worked today.

Q. Do you have a response to the groups that left after the beginning of the match that they want you fired?

GERHARD STRUBER: Yes, of course, I realize that, and I feel that, and it's not a good feeling. This feels -- yeah, it was a painful feeling today. For me, it was the first time that I realize the situation like that. But on the same time, I have respect for the opinions. Also, the feelings from our supporters. I think for one moment -- there is a situation, and this is not for my players, not for me, for my coaching team and also not for our supporters. I understand that, and I realize what we did all together in the last Saturday game.

I will say this again, and I apologize for the leaders of the supporter group last week, and I speak with them in front but also today, I can say this again. I apologized the last

Saturday night game.

But we have to look forward, and I hope, yeah, the feeling process has started. In more directions, we will bring our group of players quick, close together with a good spirit. I think on the field, we can see today how we handled a difficult week. The spirit, the belief is on a very high level, and yeah, this makes me proud of my boys, and yeah, I hope the weekend come together closer in the next time but I have also the feeling with our supporters, this could -- yeah, this needs time.

Q. You talked about the team's resiliency. Looking at the stats, 18 shots, five off target and five on target. Why is the team having such a challenge trying to get the ball in the final third? Was it mental? Was it tactical? What's the reason behind it, despite the fact that you definitely had -- play in the first half?

GERHARD STRUBER: Yeah, I think it's a good question. I think it's a mix of more things. This is sometimes also a tactical topic. When we have, I think, today we conceded so many times that we have enough numbers in the box. But our connection, our moves, was not always right, especially when we had to go on the first post with a better dynamic that we create a little bit more space.

Especially Cameron Harper make a great game, how he comes and break the last line with one-one dribbling. I think he played on a very good level today.

But I think we have to find better connections in the final third with better runs from the tactical standpoint, and of course, you need, also, the right determination and the desire and you need to score and we have to take chances.

Yeah, I think this is sometimes -- I was also a professional football player and I remember we have sometimes moments that it's difficult. And I think that you have to show in moments like that, resilience, togetherness, and then you break the ball down, and we worked so hard for that, and my boys, yeah, I think keep going. Keep fighting. And I think this is our slogan. This is our motto in the next days and in the next few weeks in our games. We can do



it, and I have a big trust in my boys the time will come soon, then we have also more goals in every game and also the victories will be deserved.

Q. The second match in a row you started Fernandez in the ten role as opposed to the winger roles he's played. What have you seen from him the last few matches?

GERHARD STRUBER: A player with a very good conviction and confidence. I think, also, his decision what he makes in on-ball moments, clean, good dribbling moments, good decisions. It's more we have to go more in combination, more in one-ones, also, his lay-offs, his combination was on a good level.

I think it's very difficult to defend him at the moment and very unpredictable with his mobile moves. Yeah, he helped us in the moment on a very good level and today, yeah, I think he work also very, very hard in both directions, in on-ball moments but also against the ball.

Yeah, I think he deserve in the end that he score, and yeah, I feel happy for him and he deserved it.

Q. The Houston coach just credited the team with being able to handle chaos here at Red Bull Arena, and it's something that he's come to accept. Do you agree that that's something that you are working towards or something you lean into going forward?

GERHARD STRUBER: What do you mean with "chaos"?

Q. Just being able to manage the ball, regardless, with everything happening; it can be a whirlwind.

GERHARD STRUBER: Yeah, I think, of course, we will create always chaos in the opponents either with our quick transition moments, and we can see them, have to-dos with that. They have in the end always a big mission, and sometimes I would say a mission impossible. Yeah, but we end not clean or clear enough.

I think this is my feeling, they have sometimes a big overload and cannot manage the moments always good. But the benefit in the end makes the difference and we create the benefit not often enough today.

But yeah, in this direction, I think the match plan, the tactical set up, the mindset, the relationship together was exactly in this direction what we and the boys prepare over the whole week. Again, I'm very proud of my boys how we handled it.

Q. Jeremiah returned tonight and he was playing the

third center back in the back. Talk about his performance and about his assist.

GERHARD STRUBER: Yes, I think, first of all, I am very, very happy that we have Jeremiah back. We can see with his technical power and his tactical understanding, he makes us better, and this helps us also, of course, that especially when we play a team like that, with a low block and mid block, you need answers how you break the first line. With Jeremiah, we can see he has the power for that and this helps a lot today.

Also, he has a good feeling with this position. It was the first time we bring him in this space but he handled this very well. I am very, very happy that we have also right now with him more variability, more flexibility for this position and this makes us, yeah, more unpredictable.

Q. Obviously this last week, Gerhard, the coach, had a job to do in terms of getting the team ready and getting the team to focus but I wanted to ask what the last week has been like for Gerhard the person, reflecting, like you said, getting ready to heal and everything that's been going on from a human level. What's it kind of been like just as a person going through what's going on, and obviously something that a coach never really is prepared to handle or ever really wants to handle?

GERHARD STRUBER: I think I have right now, close to 18 years' leadership experience in many directions, and sometimes you come on your personal a little bit this week. But I would say, this is not only say situation, I have this to manage, I have this to handle. I have a group of players and we have a big trust and I have not always the feeling, so I must be now with every answer, the best one.

I think everyone understands, this is a little bit -- a little bit; a completely new situation, and I try the best in this direction with all my strength, with all my weakness, and bring the group together.

And I think when we start the healing process on Tuesday, I think we had very, very good conversations, and I think this helps that everyone has the chance to bring his feelings out, speak about that, and give everyone the chance. This is for my white boys, also very important and for my black boys. In this direction, I think everyone has the chance to speak, to say -- to say something, what's going on with his personal feelings.

I think this helps to bring the group in a good direction on a good level, and for myself, of course, in this direction, you learn, you grow, but we have to grow together in moments like that, and I think we create the frame, a very trustful

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

frame over the whole week, and especially the basic what we have together here with our staff and with our players, this makes a situation like that, not easy, but we can do it.

Yeah, this is right now the situation.

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