

New York Red Bulls Media Conference

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Sandro Schwarz

Press Conference



New York Red Bulls 2, Nashville 0

Q. I just wanted to ask you on your team's ability to facilitate the ball around Nashville's half with the area and around your defensive half and how that helped build toward a 2-0 tonight?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Yeah, it's very important, first of all, the result, our home opener, our starting game today in our Sports Illustrated Stadium, and it's good to have this now for directly the first game to win.

I would say when I analyze the first half, I would say we were very dominant the whole first half and we created a lot of situations and we were very aggressive in our pressing, and then we scored two great goals in those moments.

And second half, I would say middle of the second half, we lost a little bit our control of the game, and then Nashville had some situations but not big chances at the end.

Yeah, at the end, I think we deserve today, the win, and the performance was good. And this is what we have to continue now.

Q. Just what did the last 24 hours look like regarding Lewis Morgan, this injury he picked up and what do you think about Mohammed coming in his place?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Yeah, first of all, it's tough because Lewis is a very important player for us, especially with his runs, deep runs, and we had this issue yesterday after our pre-match training, and then our decision was, okay, that we want to play with two strikers today, and then was the decision, okay, clear for us. We need next to Choupo one striker with good deep runs and with speed, and Sofu made it in the preseason very well and good steps in his development.

Yeah, it's great. It's great now when he played the first game in the starting lineup and to score in these moments,

very, very important for us. It's what I said directly in the locker room, it's good, not only to have these guys.

But to have the spirit that can happen then that guys directly come in from the second team, from our first team training session and then directly to be ready, and that's very, very important us because we have some injuries. We have some players today, they were out, but now, it's a good reaction, very good reaction, and I'm very, very proud of the whole team, of the whole guys, how they handled this situation.

Q. Circling back to Lewis, obviously had the injury history in 2023. Is there a concern with what's going on with him?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: No.

Q. In terms of Cam right now, is there a preliminary diagnosis?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: I hope that Lewis is coming back the next two, three weeks, maybe next Saturday. We will see now the next days.

And Cam, we have to check tomorrow. But it seems that it could be a little bit longer to be honest.

Q. Can you speak a little bit about how your strategy changed once Cam came out of that game? Seemed like everything was flowing, a lot of things were flowing through him in the game, and what was the thought process behind putting in Dylan Nealis as his replacement?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Yeah, but I would say Dylan made it especially in our buildup moments very well. He played with a lot of confidence in small spaces to solve the situation and good, deep balls, especially then for our strikers behind the fullback. He made it very well.

And then his defensive behavior, he played also very serious. But this is another profile of player. It's not like Cam with diagonal deep runs in the box.



But the decision was then to have Dylan on the side.

Q. Raheem Edwards coming in at left back, do you have any insight in his experience, being an MLS veteran at this point and how he's stepped into the back line? He looked good tonight.

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Yeah, he missed, I would say, I think the first two or three weeks of our preseason, so he needs, also, time to adapt how we want to play, how we want to play very aggressive, and needs time.

But now he was ready for 20, 25 minutes, 30 minutes like this, and that's good. That's good to see him directly on the field. And last week in his training session, in our training session, it was good quality to see him with the ball and against the ball, and now, hopefully he will be ready then for the next weeks as well to adapt more, more, more our style of play, and also physically that's important for us. Because it's a long, long season, and these injuries now, and some players came a little bit too late, but it's okay.

But the reaction, this for me is the main part today, the reaction of the whole team. That's for me great to see that because it's tough. But to win the game, to play the first half very well, very dominant, that's great.

But we have to be ready and to be careful, also, for the next weeks. That's clear.

Q. What more would you want to see from the guys? Offensively and defensively, I thought on both side, they played great but still something I thought was missing. Anything from your side?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: To be honest, I can't criticize something today because I know this is the second game. We start with some new faces, with some guys, they didn't play, I don't know, the last eight months, seven months with some guys. With some young players, some injuries. We have some injuries.

But what I have seen, it's great. It's great behavior. Great mentality. And to believe in ourselves, how we want to play and what I have seen in the first half, this was top performance.

But yeah, the second half was maybe we struggled in some moments. But I would say what I said at the beginning, Nashville didn't have so many chances in these moments, and in some transition moments, it could be easier for us to score in the third goal or fourth goal maybe.

But at the end, it's 2-0, our second match now in this season, and I'm pretty sure, I'm pretty sure that we need

this development, as well, and it needs time.

But with three points, everything is a little bit easier for all the guys, and to see the behavior, the mentality, that's top, top. And especially the first half and also the first 15 minutes, and last ten minutes was good. But this is normal. This is normal. It's a young group. But at the end, it's great, and I don't want to criticize to be honest today about what can we improve.

For sure, we can improve, and we do that on Tuesday in our training session and in our video session. But at the end, a lot of respect for these guys, a lot of love, everything, to be proud of those guys how they handled this situation. That's top. It's great.

Q. Omar Valencia gets his second start and adds an assist to his 2025 stats. What were your thoughts on his performance?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Yeah, look, when we talk, I don't know, maybe the start of the preseason, I would say, okay, when we talked about the starting lineup in the first game or the starting lineup in the second game, I'm not sure that we are thinking about, okay, Omar Valencia is playing two games, Sofo is playing one game, Julian Hall now two games, and that's great. That's great.

And Omar Valencia, as well now, the first, this is today, and it's good for the whole group. It's good for the whole group. We need everyone, and hopefully some players coming back as soon as possible.

But the way, how they worked hard every day, and then to see it in our first game in our stadium here, that's good, and Omar Valencia played very well.

Q. Two weeks ago at your opening press conference you said that you wanted to create emotional moments. I've been here since 4:00 p.m. this afternoon; the parking lot was full and excitement was in the air.

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Very good question. I don't know the question, but it seems very good (laughter).

Q. Then we had the red carpet; the excitement continuing to build. We had the new Running With the Bulls Ceremony to start, and then a goal within the first seven minutes, 30 minutes, and then we had the --

SANDRO SCHWARZ: Yeah, come on, yes (laughing).

Q. I just want to know, what are your reflections on tonight? You created those emotional moments,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

congratulations. And how do you look on building on this for the rest of the season?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: And we had middle of the week a great event here with our supporters in our stadium, and our conversations, very open and very thankful from both sides, which emotions we had last season; and to see this then when we are coming here, and the welcome from the supporters, red carpet.

I said directly when we came in here in the locker room, I said directly to some guys, okay, when I compare this, for example, to the beginning of the last season, for example, and to see now all these emotions, it's great, and we need this.

This is -- and I repeat so many times, but this is true, and it's also what I feel. That's the reason. That's the reason why we are working so hard at the end; that we celebrate together; that we fight together; that we are happy together. Sometimes maybe sad but disappointed together; that's also normal, then, in a long season.

But it's good. It's good to have the support, to feel it, and not only it see it or to hear it, only to feel it. And I feel everything in this club, and with all these supporters, and it was great to see.

It was 4:00 p.m. we had our prematch launch, but 5:00, 5:30, our arrival time was here. It was good.

Q. It felt really cold today. Did it affect the game in any way, and how do the players stay warm during halftime?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: It's very simple. They have to run during the game and in the halftime, okay, calm down a little bit, and then they have to run when they are outside. It's easier and it seems not so cold.

But yeah, nothing special. Nothing special. Nothing special. They sit. They sit and hopefully they listen what I said (laughs).

But nothing special at the end. Nothing special.

Q. You mentioned in the second half, Nashville started to gain some momentum and started to get more presence in your own end. Just talk about how important it was for you guys to keep that clean sheet, especially for Carlos after last week, that goal, to open the season at home, what does that mean for him with that performance?

SANDRO SCHWARZ: For every goalkeeper and

especially for Carlos because very competitive guy, and to have a clean sheet, it's then necessary for a goalkeeper, especially maybe after last weekend in Cincinnati with these unlucky moments in this one situation.

But at the end, everyone is responsible on the field to defend all together and Carlos also made his job very well.

But I would say, they had not so many chances today, Nashville. We controlled the game the whole time, and in my opinion, we had very good moments; and this is a good step in our development, especially with the ball in buildup moments, built-up situations.

I'm pretty sure when I'm watching the game, I see the chance in the second half where we can score the third goal, this was very good in our behavior, and our positioning behavior, to play very clean and play forward.

It's good to have this clean sheet and to score two times. Sofo scored in his first game in the starting lineup. He made a great goal, important goal for us, and important player, as well.

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