

# Florida Cup: Everton vs. Millonarios

Sunday, July 25, 2021

Orlando, Florida, USA

Camping World Stadium

**Everton F.C.**

**Manager Rafael Benitez**

Media Conference

Everton - 1 (10), Millonarios - 1 (9)

Q How pleased were you tonight with the three new signings?

MANAGER BENITEZ: More than with the new signings I am pleased with the attitude of the team. So it's not easy at the beginning of the season when you are not fully fit to play these kind of games. It's hard. And the first half we had some chances that we didn't play at the level that we were expecting. The reaction of the team, the reaction of everyone. So obviously some of the new players, they make a contribution but the reaction of the team was very good and I was very happy, very pleased with the second half and overall with the work of the team.

Q The second half, you brought in Demarai Gray, and he played a more central role. I think people would have thought you would play him on the wing. Do you think the central position is something he can offer you this season?

MANAGER BENITEZ: Yeah, when we signed him I knew him really well from his time in Leicester, we were following him. I knew that he could play the three positions behind the striker, but I like this position that he has the ability, he has the pace. So then we have wingers with (indiscernible) and Townsend, so it was an opportunity to place him there and he did very well. His movements were very good. And he was a threat and he was great at scoring penalties, but especially in terms of the movements and the game on the ball he was quite good.

And also defending, he was quite organized. Still obviously it's too early; we have to improve the fitness of everyone. But really pleased with everything I could see from him and from the rest of the team.

Q And a very confident start for Begovic. A really confident performance from the goalkeeper?



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MANAGER BENITEZ: We were looking for a keeper with experience, that he could help the team. And I think he did really well today. He will be pushing and that's good. If you want to win the competition between players it's a key situation that you have to manage from the beginning until the end as well as possible.

Q [Question in Spanish]?

MANAGER BENITEZ: The game I think was an entertaining game. I think both teams the first half did well. We did much better in the second half. And I think the fans will be happy about that.

In terms of players obviously as a team they were doing well. They have a couple of players on the right side -- the cycle, they're quite dangerous.

But I think for me it's more important for the other coach to be happy with the performance of the team.

[Question in Spanish].

MANAGER BENITEZ: It was difficult because they did well and also because we were at the beginning of the season, of the preseason. And we need to work on our fitness, we need to work in our understanding. So, new manager with the same players.

[Spanish]

Q How do you rate James Rodriguez's performance in the game? And how do you rate James Rodriguez's performance in the game? And how important it will be in your plans for the team in the season?

MANAGER BENITEZ: At the beginning of the preseason it's not easy. I think you can see he has the quality on the ball, but still the fitness is not what we are expecting, so it's normal at this time. And then we will see obviously we have more training sessions, more games. And then we will see how it's going on and every player depends on them. They can make a difference or not. But at the moment it's just see how they progress, how they improve and then they can argue about the quality of

(indiscernible).

Q What do you think of the performance of Millonarios?  
Were you surprised at the level of the Colombian team?

MANAGER BENITEZ: Not really. I think that we show some collection and we knew it was a good team, well organized, that they could play good futbol. And they did it, especially I would say in the first half.

The second half we had more energy and we were quicker and we were more dangerous on the ball and in the counterattack. But overall what I said in another question, I think they did well. And I'm really pleased that the fans have enjoyed a good game.

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