

Florida Cup: Orlando City vs. Arsenal FC

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Orlando, Florida, USA

Exploria Stadium

Orlando City

Óscar Pareja

Michael Halliday

Media Conference



FC SERIES

Arsenal 3, Orlando City 1

OSCAR PAREJA: Well, I was happy to see a very enjoyable game for the fans against a fantastic rival, and we brought the heat to Orlando and competed with them in front of our fans, so that was pretty good. A lot of good things happened to us, a great experience for the boys.

We know that we have our heads on the league. In two days we need to compete. We have our head in the semifinal that is coming, as well, but today the boys understood the message of taking care of this one game, that it was important for people, too, and we didn't want to disappoint them, and they did a fantastic job. We're proud and ready to move on for the next one.

Congratulations, Michael. We're proud to see our academy boys raising. Good things.

Q. Oscar, you just talked about having your eye on the MLS games and the Cup semifinal coming up. Can you give your thoughts on what went into how you selected the team for this game and why you stuck with so many key players so late in the game?

OSCAR PAREJA: Well, first, with Mauro and Ercan, we were taking care of them. During the week there was some tightness that we wanted to give priority and let them heal or let them rest and not risk them.

We all committed with the game. The players understood, 45 minutes, 30 minutes, knowing that we have a game on Saturday, I think it was good enough for them. We kept some of the players that needed rhythm, like Antonio, Andres, Pato, so our process of that was just to keep them longer, but the rest of the players we wanted just to share time with them and especially just give some opportunity for the youngsters that were waiting. It was a special day

for them.

You always want to compete. I know the boys, they don't want to lose games. They want to compete. They want to come out. They want to stay. But a lot of things happened today that is great experience for the club.

Q. Mikey, it's been a kind of whirlwind last couple weeks for you with the U-20 national team and now coming here playing against Arsenal. Talk about this experience for the first half marking Gabriel Martinelli and what that overall experience was like for you.

MICHAEL HALLIDAY: It's crazy to me being so young and just coming into it so quickly like with the national team, getting minutes there, building experience and then hopping from there into playing versus Arsenal. It's crazy.

But it's really good. I think it's really good for me to play against guys at that level, which is obviously different than the MLS. It's the Premier League. But yeah, it's good.

I mean, I'm critical to myself, the mistakes I make. Pretty solid performance but definitely want more, and I think a lot of that comes with more experience and more minutes played.

Q. Oscar, a lot of international exposure with this game today. What do you think your club proved to people outside of America and outside of MLS with this performance?

OSCAR PAREJA: It was a challenge. It was a big challenge. I think people understand that we are in the middle of the season and we have a game in two, three days. But at the end, the players want to compete, and they don't want to disappoint, especially we're representing the club and we're representing Major League Soccer. The energy was up to that competition, and I'm very proud of them.

That exposure today was positive. I think in the first half especially, we showed a lot of personality, and I've got to say that probably we were the best team on the field, and then we knew who is Arsenal, and then after that obviously



they started just getting on top of us. But that exposure internationally was positive.

Q. Mikey, obviously you were just with the Under-20 national team. Talk about that form that you're looking to sustain for this second half of the season.

OSCAR PAREJA: The 60 minutes were very bright for the match, for the people. I think they enjoyed it. The class and the quality of the players is incredible, and having one of the best teams in the world here in front of us in our city and with our fans and playing against them. But not just playing against them, competing. That's the highlight of our night.

It did not surprise me the quality of them. It made me feel proud, our team competing with that level.

After 60 minutes, it started just making a lot of stops and changing, and it was a different game. But it was good. It was good. I think people enjoyed it.

MICHAEL HALLIDAY: For me, I definitely think that the U-20 camp and the tournament was very big for me and the season and my career because obviously it's clear that I haven't been playing very much the past few seasons because I'm young coming into this team. But getting a lot of minutes there is just really good for me to help build my confidence and get me more comfortable because when I used to come into the MLS games I'd be a little shaky, obviously being a little nervous, but the U-20, the games definitely helped me calm down a bit. Like tonight I was pretty calm, felt comfortable.

Q. Do you believe that this game kind of, I guess, was a little bit of a jump start for your team going into Saturday? Are you kind of expecting a little bit more from them knowing what they were able to give, what they were able to do against this team tonight, and in a way now you know and you expect more from them, especially coming into Saturday and the Cup coming up?

OSCAR PAREJA: Right, you would like to think. It's a great opportunity for us, as well, to understand our potential. It should give us confidence towards what is coming. That is very challenging, too.

So I hope so, yeah. The boys were very excited tonight because they felt that they compete well, and that should ignite our spirits and our team, and we will be ready for Saturday.

Q. Oscar, I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about the value that facing such a strong worldwide

known team and then in a friendly it gives you a chance to rotate your team a lot and the other team is also rotating the squad a lot. I'm wondering if you could talk about the value that a game like this brings to your squad in the middle of a season.

OSCAR PAREJA: Right, the value is what you guys said, about that confidence that we may get in this moment of the season. The proximity of the games has been a lot, and just having this quantity of games is difficult. The boys today were challenged. But again, one of the best teams in the world, and they compete very well. Just make the team feel that we can do better, that we can compete better. That confidence has to be raised, and we hope. That's what we're aiming, because this is an important part of the season. What is coming for us is crucial, and these type of games for sure just give you that confidence.

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