

St. Louis CITY SC Media Conference

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Olof Mellberg

Postgame Press Conference



St. Louis 0, Vancouver 0

Q. What's the takeaway from a match like tonight? What are some things that stand out to you?

OLOF MELLBERG: I thought it was a really solid game. Could have won. Could have lost. I thought we had the bigger chances and didn't concede that much. We worked extremely hard on the -- yeah, we had a solid game, I think, against a good side.

Q. The Kessler injury, how much did that change what you guys did on defense, if at all? How do you guys makeup for his absence?

OLOF MELLBERG: We didn't change too much tactically. But obviously a player that has done extremely well for us at the start of the season.

But really happy to see the center backs out there today. I thought all three did extremely well, Josh, Timo and Kyle.

Q. What went in this week to playing against Brian White, who scored four last week against Austin, and now limiting him to zero and expected goals of under 0.1?

OLOF MELLBERG: Again, I thought they did well. We've been scouting a lot during the week, how they play, not only him but the rest of the team as well.

It's, again, as I said, it is a solid team. They have good players. So you know, we were ready for how they play. We expected them to play the way they did.

You know, again, happy with the game plan and the guys did really well. They looked confident out there.

Q. It seemed like there's more of a willingness in the attack to take defenders on 1v1. Was that based on how Vancouver looks to defend against a counterattack?

OLOF MELLBERG: Sorry?

Q. Looked like there was more of a willingness in the attack to take on defenders 1v1 than in previous weeks?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think so. But that was also something we were looking at, when we get in those situations; that we were going to take them on, both with the runs in behind and also in the 1v1.

I mean, they have a good defense. They have good center backs. They are on the bigger side. So you know, in turning and running backwards, can struggle sometimes. We tried to exploit that.

Q. What do you hope the takeaway is, you don't get the win that you're looking for but you against a result against a Vancouver side that's been very good this season so far?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think there are a lot of positives to take from today's game. We were well-organized. We worked hard. Again, we lost the ball too easily sometimes but we worked extremely hard in transition to defend.

You know, we prevented them from creating big chances from that. Happy with that today.

Q. What was the injury with Kessler, and how long is he expected to be out for?

OLOF MELLBERG: Hamstring strain. Grade two, I think. So probably looking at a month or so.

Q. Looking at the game, can you speak to the adjustments you made in the second half, looking at how you changed a little bit in what Marcel Hartel and Conrad were doing on goal kicks and otherwise initiating transition? What did you see that caused you to go with some of those changes?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, they have quite a lot of -- we had some alternatives there we were looking at, and the freedom for them to rotate there.

So Célio was rotating a little bit more on that left-hand side, and it worked well for us on a few occasions. So he continued to do so, and that's something we've been working in training. You know, especially on the left-hand side, there was rotations, with Kyle, as well, Conrad, Célio -- Célio, not to be predictable for the opponent.

Q. What's the level of frustration? You guys get another goal that's taken back with the video officiating. What's the level of frustration with that?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, it is frustrating, and a little bit difficult to understand the inconsistency in their decision-making, and looking at last week's decision, as well.

Q. To start the game and throughout the game, Hartel was over on the right side a little bit more. How important is that? We've talked about the balance there, and you mentioned the combination of Célio, Wallem and Hartel had so much success. How important was it for you guys to make that switch at start of the game and get Hartel over on the right side and bring some balance to the attack?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I mean, we thought it was an opportunity to -- well, with Conrad and Célio on that left-hand side, they can create a lot of danger, even without Célio.

You know, we thought it would be a good idea for Célio to help out a little bit on the right-hand side, as well. So we could be a threat there, as well. But again, I said it before. He's a very mobile player, Célio. Covers a lot of ground, both attacking and defending. So we try to use him in as many ways as possible.

Q. The first half, especially, you guys were shift to go a 4-3-3 and bringing Wallem into the center midfield, and I talked to you on Friday about getting more bodies in the midfield and you went with three forwards again. Can you talk about how important it is and why you decided to go to that switch more, and how important it was to get Wallem to switch midfield and what it did for the attack?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, we wanted not to be predictable there, either. We varied it a little bit. Sometimes we were building with a back three, sometimes with four. We wanted a lot of movement there. We thought it was a good idea against their formation.

I thought it looked good at times. With the longer option, I thought Ben did well on that end especially in the first half of finding that option as well. I think Klauss is improving all the time, also, in his target play, winning more battles in the air, is important for us to have that option as well.

Q. Célio Pompeu taken out in the 69th minute, another time where he doesn't play a full 90. Is this more of a strategic thing or is he still not ready to play a full 90?

OLOF MELLBERG: I think he's ready. I thought he dropped a little bit in energy at that time, and he did that last week, as well, and it was a good timing to get energy in the team.

You know, Mykhi is an energy player, and so is Simon. So we thought it was an opportunity to, yeah, to get the energy on the pitch, and to try to push for a goal in the last 20.

I thought we found that, and we looked dangerous on a few occasions at the end.

Q. What was the explanation you received on the off-side call on Conrad Wallem?

OLOF MELLBERG: I haven't received an explanation, no.

Q. Have you seen the play back?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, for me, I don't understand it. I think the goal should stand, especially as they decide to give it. Again, as I said, where is the consistency? You know, last week, they gave the off-side, decided to review and it was obviously not on-side.

So now, I mean, it's definitely not obvious off-side. I think anyone can see that, and I can see how long it took for the referee to review that. So you know, with that said, why change, you know, when we probably should have changed last week. Unfortunately for us, it costs us points.

Q. I wonder if you can talk about Joyner's performance, giving him more minutes, his second appearance in MLS. What did you see from him and what did you think of his performance tonight?

OLOF MELLBERG: I thought he did really well. Worked harder. Spoke about his role there, as well. It was important in both attacking and defending and I thought he did that really well. Put a few nice crosses in. He's good in the air, as well. Strong both defensively and attacking.

So I liked what I saw from him.

Q. Last week, you thought he played more of a defensive role by nature of the game. Is this where you see him in an ideal role, on that attacking side?

OLOF MELLBERG: I think it's all right. As a left-footed player, he'll get more deep runs and more crosses, maybe, from the left-hand side, while on the right-hand side he's able to come in a little bit more on the inside and be dangerous from those positions.

So it's pros and cons. I think he can play both those sides. But yeah, those positions are, I think probably his best.

Q. I know Marcel is playing that deeper role, but the only touch in the box he had in the game was the goal that gets taken away. Can this offense be successful, can you win games, if a player like Marcel Hartel who is so important to the offense isn't touching the ball in the box?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think so. You know, he had some really good positions just outside of the box throughout the game, as well, and this is one of his biggest strengths, that final, final pass. With Klauss, Cedi, Conrad on the pitch, we have players who can score goals. You know, I'm sure they will come.

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