

St. Louis CITY SC

Media Conference

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Olof Mellberg

Postgame Press Conference



San Diego FC 2, St Louis City SC 1

Q. Talk about the effort? If you scored in the first half would we be talking about a different result?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think so. Like in many games before this one, getting the first goal is so important, especially in a period when we're playing well.

So yeah, tough to concede that first -- I think they had one chance before that, the shot in the post. That was I think their only shot on goal as well before that. I think it came in the 7th minute or something.

So you know, defended well, and not only low, our high defending was good, as well, and yeah, we had quite a few chances and probably should have scored on at least one of them.

Q. Offensively, like you said, you had your chances. There was some flourish but just not enough of them.

OLOF MELLBERG: Well, enough of them, I thought we had -- there were not so many finishes. But we had a lot of situations, a lot of moments that were very dangerous. When we were in 1v1 or even 2v1 situations, when we managed to get the crosses in, they were dangerous, as well. And they lost the ball on a few occasions in dangerous areas where we could have hurt them as well.

Yeah, I thought we were the better team for seven to eight minutes. But wasn't enough.

Q. Your team had blended more of a high press when San Diego had possession of the ball in their own half but dropped to more of a mid to low block when San Diego would have possession in the final third or your own half. What went into the decision to be more aggressive when San Diego had the ball in their own half compared to when they had the ball in your half?

OLOF MELLBERG: I think that's normal. That's the way

you defend have in football. They get closer to the goal, and the further up the pitch we are, the more possibilities of being aggressive in that high defending.

So I think that you see that all over the world, the differences in high defending, mid block and low, and I thought we did that really well. You know, all those three blocks, and San Diego is another team that is good on the ball, and I don't think we saw too much of that today.

Credit to the guys for putting a good effort in all those blocks in defending.

Q. Wonder if you could talk about the second half subs, Tomáš Ostrák had quite the game playing as the defensive midfielder, he had the most touches in the first half and among the most in the second half when he left but taking him out moves Conrad a little deeper. Can you talk about what after that change occurred and do you think it exposed midfield?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, it was unfortunate because they got tired. They asked to be taken off. We really need to work on that fitness to be able to keep the guys for longer who are doing well. Similar to the last game in Seattle where we also took Tomáš off, he had a good game.

But you also have to respect that he was out for a long time, and he didn't have a full preseason, so we're still building on his fitness.

Yeah, a little bit unfortunate to have to make changes at that point because we look good, and we are short already.

So you know, I don't want to fault any of the guys that came on. It's never good to have to make so many changes during a season, and we have some guys who have played in five different positions. We have Carl and Conrad and a couple of other guys, and it's not ideal, you know.

Unfortunately because of all those injuries that came at the same time.

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Q. Can you give an update on Nilsson and Löwen?

OLOF MELLBERG: Edu is out for personal reasons and Joakim has a sore knee. It's that same fee. We have to have a good look at that. Hopefully it's not going to be out for too long.

Q. You do get to bring on a player that you've been waiting for to get reinforcements, Jayden Reid comes on. How do you think he did over the final 20 minutes, even as San Diego were kind of chasing?

OLOF MELLBERG: I thought he did well. Jannes was another player. Jannes did well. I thought that position that worked really hard and also got extremely tired. So we had to take him off.

So Jay has been out for a long time, as well, since December. And played a little bit with City II but obviously is another player who will just improve with time. I thought he did well today.

Q. You mentioned playing a lot of players in different positions. You made some positional switches today. You put On the left wingback and Kyle over at left center back, and you put Wallem permanently in the midfield and Watts outside. What went into the switches? You've been steady with the other look for those three or four players. What made you change that look today?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think the whole season we've been looking forward a little bit to have Conrad in the more central position. I think more central is where we get more out of him. He's mostly played -- well, he can play wingback, as well, both sides but I definitely think, like we saw against Kansas away, when he was tucked in a little bit, and you know did well there.

So it has had mostly to do with injuries and not having so many players in those fullback wingback positions. Now we're hopefully getting Tots back and Jay is coming back. We haven't had many options. That wasn't the reason. I think Jannes has done well interest in that wingback position. We let the left foot, he puts some crosses in. He's played there earlier in the season.

Q. You were able to get Teuchert higher and central than he had been in previous weeks. How important was that to the game plan?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, it was part of the game plan. We knew they were quite vulnerable behind, not necessarily immediately after combinations, we knew they could be vulnerable in their back four. I thought we could

have put more balls in behind them in the first half when he were in good control and in possession, especially on our ride site.

We could have put some earlier balls in behind because they were constantly on the run, Klauss and Cedi. But yeah. I thought they looked dangerous. Unfortunately didn't give us the goals but had quite a lot of chances or half-chances.

Q. I feel like we're getting better at chances attacking but seems like there's more hesitation for the perfect moment to shoot. Will you be working with the players to take some riskier chances like shooting from outside the 18?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think that's a good point. You could see their goal, they took it from an extremely difficult angle.

So yeah, I think so, or in some moments make it a little bit too complicated where we finish a little bit earlier, on the first it up or the second touch.

Q. And Célio created a lot of chances when he was on the field. Will we expect to see more of him coming up?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, we'll see. There's competition for places and it's up for grabs. I not like we have scored loads of goals during the season. So you know, anyone who could contribute to assists and goals and hard work will play.

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