

St. Louis CITY SC Media Conference

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Olof Mellberg

Postgame Press Conference



St. Louis City SC 2, Sporting Kansas City 2

Q. You must have been in the room for a long time. What's being said in the team right now about this?

OLOF MELLBERG: Extremely disappointed not to be able to win this game, to be 2-0 up, and yeah, overall, a lot of disappointment in the team.

Q. You guys over the last four MLS games, you've allowed eight goals in the 70th minute or later. Obviously something that you talked about coming in was not having things like that. What's happening late in games for you guys?

OLOF MELLBERG: We really need to build on our physical capacity. It's not where we want it to be at the moment for various reasons. You know, first of all, we need players to be able to play 90 minutes. And you know, we need a lot of energy from players coming on as well, and for various reasons, we don't have that at the moment.

Again, it's no secret with all the injuries we have and have had, players coming back from injury, also, and so they are not ready for those 90 minutes. It's a puzzle to be able to have that energy that we want for 90 minutes.

Q. What did you see in the last 20 minutes today that was lacking?

OLOF MELLBERG: I thought today, strangely enough, it's probably one of the worst 45 minutes we've had this season, and we're 2-0 up.

It was a very slow tempo game. We struggled to create chances. They had a few. They were the better side in the first half.

But great to be 2-0 up, and then I think we improved a little bit in the second half. There were chances both ways. But we had some really big chances for 3-0.

Yeah, it was a strange game in that way. I think the result in the end was probably fair but I mean, 2-0 at home in a derby like this, we need to get the three points.

Q. What's the effect that this can have on a team when you're going through struggles like this and you have a game that had give every reason to think that you have won?

OLOF MELLBERG: It's tough, and as you said, it's not the first one, we've had a few now. We are going to go up in Seattle and play well. We were extremely close to get the three points in L.A. We have a few games now where it's tough not to come away with the three points.

Q. Following up on that, it seems like allowing so many mistakes, a lack of confidence, is that what you're seeing now?

OLOF MELLBERG: I don't know. Again, I spoke about it the other day. We have to make changes. Changes in positions. Changes in personnel that we might not necessarily want to do. You know, when you feel you're playing well and have a good result.

But you know, that's how it is. We were building on the fitness of these players, and they are improving. So you know, and then with more players coming back from injury now, the situation will be better.

You know, I think we're coming out of the worst period in that sense. But you know, with that said, we should still be able to get the three points here today.

Q. Some of those changes, Jannes, do you have an update on him?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, he felt something in his knee yesterday. And yeah, we're examining it now. It doesn't look too bad.

We'll wait to get the results. We're hoping it's not too bad.

Q. Following up on Jannes Horn, was this an injury he

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sustained during training?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, he was just putting a cross in. So it's a strange one. He felt it a little bit in the moment but he didn't think it was too bad and then he came home, and felt more, it was stiff.

He had an MRI today and we're waiting for the results but hopefully not too bad.

Q. With all these injuries adding up in blaming, do you put any of the blame or responsibility to the training staff or management of the players, that keep getting injured leading up to training?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I always look myself in the mirror and see what I can do better, and I hope we all do that. Players and staff.

Yeah, they are all different from each other, the individual cases. There have been knocks and there have been strains, and a hand with Roman. They have been very different from each other, the injury. I wouldn't say it's like a pattern. Some have just been really unlucky. Others, yeah, could have been avoided.

I think I said previously, I don't really -- I'm not a big fan of the small-sided games, especially for the keepers that have a lot of situations. Sometimes you have to do them. But obviously when they get injured, you look at yourself and you say, you shouldn't have allowed them to be in that game. So these kind of things, you know, you look yourself in the mirror.

Q. The back line you rolled route, or your staff rolled out tonight, same four in the back line that you've rolled out the past three games. In those three games, you've allowed eight goals. Would you characterize that group of players as your only option on the back line, as far as healthy players that can go greater than 45 minutes, or what are your characterizations of why that line is allowing so many goals?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, again, they have been a little bit up and down; the individual performances. But they have had some, all of these guys have had really good games.

I don't want to fault these players or the defenders who have played but there's no doubt that we have a lot of injuries there. We have Joakim with Jannes and Henry, as well. Michael has sort of been stop-and-start a little bit. He has not been fully fit. And Jay Yaro potentially could play there. Played midfield today; is coming back from his injury.

Yeah, we haven't had that many options in that position. But you know, I don't see any of those individuals that have played us having done extremely bad. We always defend as a team, and attack as a team.

Q. Talking about the back line, why the two offensive subs instead of two defensive subs when you're leading 2-0?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, he needed energy up front, and a lot of games -- a lot of games, Cedi played the full game. We need our front players to have that energy.

They got a little bit tired. So you know -- and I thought we had that -- you know, Xande had his moments, and Simon definitely worked really hard and gave us that energy. I didn't really see that as a problem, changing those two.

Q. On that second goal, threes three Kansas City bodies you and only have Watts and Becher. How does an overload like that happen in a set piece like that?

OLOF MELLBERG: I have to have a look at. It very aggressive there, winning that duel. That's something that is extremely important for us, you know, to win those aerial duels all over the pitch but especially in the final third of defending and attacking. You know, credit to him but obviously we need to do better attacking.

Q. Your starters that scored, will you try that strategy once again?

OLOF MELLBERG: We'll see. I mentioned the other day as well, whoever scores or gives assists and works really hard will play. This is a position, also, up front where we fortunately haven't had that many injuries. So there are a few of them to choose from, and you know, whoever shows good form in giving us points and hard work will play.

Q. On the topic of Célio, he's back in the lineup today. He obviously brings something different. What kept him out of the previous two games?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I think what I just mentioned. You know, yeah, I agree. He's had some moments. It's the overall picture of trying to put the team on the pitch that can give us the points. And for all over the pitch and up front, we hope for assists, goals and hard work.

Yeah, choices we make, and again, whoever does that, if Célio gives us a lot of assists in goals and putting in hard work, he will play.

Q. Is it surprising or disappointing that at this stage

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there's still not enough guys that can go 90 minutes?

OLOF MELLBERG: Yeah, I mean, you know, there are reasons for that. A few of them, I've already mentioned.

So yeah, it's not good at this stage of the season but again, as I said, I think it will look better within a few weeks, players coming back from injuries and all these players are building on their fitness. I think Tomas is one of those players who is hopefully can build on the minutes he gets at the moment.

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