

# St. Louis CITY SC Media Conference

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

## Yoann Damet

Postgame Press Conference



St. Louis City 1, Charlotte 1

### **Q. Yoann, just how do you feel about that game today?**

YOANN DAMET: There is two sides of my feeling. There is bit of disappointment not to get a result that we wanted, but also a lot of pride in the effort that the guys put in this afternoon.

The performance from the beginning to the end I think was really good. Really pleased with what I saw.

I'm disappointed for them because they put in a shift and I think we deserved a little bit better.

### **Q. You had plenty of chances there and stoppage time. Were you expecting one of those -- you would find one of those to go in?**

YOANN DAMET: Again, that's what I just said to them. We are going to go again. We believe in who we are, who we want to be. It's not going to be perfect. Like I said many times we're building. It's a work in progress.

But we're going to keep pushing. What I loved about the end of the game is like we were still on the front foot, still trying to create opportunities. We didn't think twice about should we close the game, should we sit, should we wait, or should we go.

I think we went, created a bunch of opportunities in the last 10, 15 minutes, and that's what we want to have, especially here when the fans are behind us.

That's what we owe them.

### **Q. You guys had so much possession in the first half. Was that what you were expecting and hoping to see from the team, to control the ball as well as they did?**

YOANN DAMET: Yes. Like that's stuff I've seen in

pre-season. Again we know each team is going to be different. Knowing a little bit about Charlotte and what their game plan was going to be, we were expecting like that kind of mid-block, very good on the step-out press.

So we took control of the game. I felt like we exploited that position positively, like creating some chances. Again we planned for a lot of things. When they happened, great. Sometimes it's not perfect, but I thought the guys executed really well what we asked them to do.

### **Q. When we talked to Marcel Hartel to kick off pre-season he was very excited about his role in this attack, in this offense. For him to get the first goal, how does that feel for the whole thing coming together today?**

YOANN DAMET: Same thing I just told the guys. I think we need to celebrate those little moments, and Cello being the first on the scoreboard this season is a good sign. I love to see that. I'm happy for hem. He works really hard.

I'll keep in mind the goal, but like all the work he's been doing during the pre-season and again today, definitely to organize, to get in the structure when we don't have the ball, that's the kind of player he is.

He's got a chip on his shoulder but at the same time he's got the humility of the great player you want to work with. He puts the team first every single day, and today is a good example of that. He did it again and he gets rewarded with the goal, so I would say it's very positive. I'm happy for him.

### **Q. We've seen McSorley and Becher switch off through pre-season, but that he comes on to play with Simon Becher, what were you looking for in that moment?**

YOANN DAMET: Again, we're going for it. When we put Brendan in it's the idea of like Brendan can make things happen. Maybe a different profile than Sangy that can maybe come a little bit more into fit, play a little bit more in between the line like we ask him for the first 60, 70



minutes.

I think Brendan is going to play a little bit higher up so maybe not have that much of a position in between the lines. At the same time he's going to stretch them. He's capable of like holding up, turning. He can also run in behind. So he brought a different aspect to the game that at that moment when you're trying to push to wrap the game up you want to have on the pitch.

So that was the mindset behind having him come on because he's got a big activity and I think he can help the team on both side of the ball.

**Q. You talked about sort of just creating opportunities that you guys were able to. Obviously a little disappointed that didn't convert more. In terms of going forward, how do you look at the ability that you guys showed to create opportunities and to have those chances as far as just looking forward to what you guys have ahead?**

YOANN DAMET: I would say it's a big positive for me. Again, in pre-season you need to start somewhere, so when we started pre-season, after week one or two, we're quite good on the high press, on the buildup. We have to be better in defending the box and attacking the box. You try to assemble all those elements in 28 training session, in five weeks' time, and you try to maximize everything you can.

So having that progression in pre-season, we knew we were able to create. I think that start today with that amount of shot, that amount of opportunities that we were able to create is a big positive.

Then like I said, today is the first opportunity to really assess the team in a competitive environment and to take some lesson, and again, go back next week and what can we learn and implement and how can we get better. That's how I'm looking into the next week.

**Q. Now five of the six seasons you've coached professionally, so far have ended or started without a win. The one win starting coming in 2018 with FC Cincinnati. You still found a good amount of success in your coaching career. Tell me about the importance of bouncing back and fine tuning things early in the season rather than trying to pick up the pieces later?**

YOANN DAMET: Bouncing back from?

**Q. Pardon?**

YOANN DAMET: Can you repeat the question?

**Q. Yeah. Can you tell me about the importance of bouncing back and kind of fine tuning things early in the season rather than letting them grow and picking up the pieces later?**

YOANN DAMET: I'm going to be honest, I would not call that bouncing back. We spoke about the strategy we want to have. This moment to day is the start of the trajectory. There is no bouncing back. I see that as a starting point. We had five weeks of pre-season. Played a bunch of funny games. That gives you a decent amount of information to prepare your first game, but now like I said you're going into a competitive environment where you can really assess the team and have your starting point for the season.

So the result today is what it is. What I'm looking at and what we can control is the performance and I'm really proud and pleased with the performance of the players. I think we're moving in the right direction. I think on and off the ball we created like what we wanted to create, the scenarios we wanted to create going into the game. I'm looking at building on that rather than bouncing back from that.

**Q. One of the things you talked about earlier in the week is understanding game dynamic. Came out in the second half, scored. How do you think the team did with understanding the dynamic?**

YOANN DAMET: Yeah, it's interesting. We scored in the second half. At the same time I thought the second half, the game got to be a bit more stretched and a bit more open, so you could see we started to rush the attacks a little bit and then the game became a little bit more transitional. That's also the start of the season. Guys are getting tired so decision making gets affected.

So I would say like today is a good lesson from that standpoint. I think we did some good things in the second half, but as well at times we made it a little bit more difficult when it came to managing the game and maybe keeping the ball, finding those moments.

But also, like we were able to create like a bunch of opportunities in the last 15, 20 minutes. Again, we need to assess and make sure we create a common understanding of like let's capitalize on those moments where we can attack and maybe be vertical like we were at times and moments where we need to use the possession to breathe and reestablish our shape and also at the same time prevent counterattack.

When we attack too fast the problem is like then the game



starts to open up. We don't have time to organize defense. Then in transition the game goes as quickly back in your half than you left it.

So quite happy overall. I think we managed it quite well. But of course I'm hoping as we progress and as we learn like ourself, about ourself, we can get to common understanding of when to attack quickly, when to keep the ball and breathe and reorganize, and go through those moments in the game that could be a little bit crazy because it's right and left, you know.

**Q. Your first match as a head coach. What were your impressions out there of the environment? How did things feel for you?**

YOANN DAMET: Yeah, incredible. Again, we spoke a lot about the fans going into the game, but also for the players, like the players feeding off the energy of the fan but also like giving the energy to the fan. I think that's the collaboration we had today where I thought the way we played gave that energy to the fans, but at the same time they gave us so much.

It's as exciting asset to have us for to play in a packed stadium like it was today and to feel the support of everybody. I think I mentioned as many times this week, this place has to become a difficult place to play at for our opponents. I think when your environment is like that, when have 20 plus thousand fans behind, you can feel it.

And then of course it's up to us to perform to that level as well.

**Q. Curious what you made of Simon's play? He was a player last season that wasn't first choice and now he obviously is.**

YOANN DAMET: Really happy. Again, you can see the work ethic of the guy, like on and off the ball, a lot of movements, a lot of stretching the pitch. He can make things happen. He was very good today I thought. On the linkup we found him a couple of time in two feet, quite solid, able to lay off. Now touching on decision making at times.

Like, again, very mobile. Makes it very difficult for the center back. Creates space for himself and he's able to create also chances. So really pleased with what I've seen from Simon so far this pre-season, and this start of the season.

Again, like I'm excited to keep working with the guys, keep working with him. There is a lot of little things that we can work together to get better. But the base, the foundation is

there. Between his ability and his mindset, I think this is the kind of player we want to have.

**Q. How much do you expect to rely on him when you look at your roster? Maybe he's the only out-and-out striker.**

YOANN DAMET: I think today you had a good idea of like his impact, how we used him, how we associated him with Brendan. So I think there is a couple of option there.

Sang-bin did really well for the time on the pitch. So we've got a couple attacking option there that are all a little bit different. It's more like looking into those association and what we're trying to create that we have to look at.

You know, what kind of players do we want on the pitch and with who next to him so we can create a little bit the dynamic of the game we're looking for based on the game plan and the profile of the players.

**Q. You talked about some of the positives that you saw today. Obviously there is no such thing as a perfect performance. What are some of the things that you might look for in training this week that you can improve on?**

YOANN DAMET: I think the game dynamic is a big one. The decision making in the second half, like I just mentioned, is definitely something we have to get on the same page, especially going a way next week.

We need to understand those dynamic. When we're playing home, like I said, you have the energy and the support of the fans so you're getting pushed and you have to still have to control those moments.

But when you play on the road those moments, if that happens again where you're getting a little bit tired and a little bit stretched, you've got to be able to bring it back together and get compact, get organized, or keep the ball, can the play a little bit, organize, again.

So that's definitely one of the area.

And then we're speaking about like a lot of details on the defensive structure, moments, timing, orientation that we need to look at again. How can we get better from that standpoint.

Offensively, again, I thought the buildup was good. Thought we were able to create some chances. Could we have created more? Did we get into good areas? Those are the question we need to answer before the start of the week.

Again, it never stops. There is always stuff to work on. I'm not too concerned about that?

**Q. Was Durkin cramping?**

YOANN DAMET: Yeah, as you probably saw this week, or maybe not. On Thursday you came to training so you saw he wasn't there. He had to deal with sickness this week so he missed like big chunk of the week, so I was expecting at some point to have some issues on the physical side with him and him getting tired.

Again, fair play to him. He went through a lot this week staying away two days and not feeling too well, and today put in like quite a shift. He is that kind of character. I think that's what we want from the team in general. When you have players that embodies that, hard work, work ethic, this is him.

So I knew he was going to leave everything out on the pitch, and I knew at some point leaving everything out was going to expose him not to finish the game.

That's why also I was happy that Miguel was able to come in, finish the game. Thought he did really well the way he came in, and thought he was really good as well.

**Q. Bringing in MacNaughton, what was behind that move?**

YOANN DAMET: Again, we're trying to manage players. They were all in different places. So bringing Lucas was just like Dante was getting tired, also feeling like his body was starting to cramp a little bit, tighten up.

So bringing Lucas in was more a matter of like Dante couldn't go anymore. So like I said at the start of the year to the guys and probably to you as well, we're going to rely on everyone. Everybody is there to play a part, to have an impact. I thought the subs today came in really well. The way they finished the game and the way they were able to impact the game was really good.

So really pleased with the four guys that came in today and their performance as a well. That's what we want. We want to be able to rely on everybody.

**Q. The buildup to Marcel's goal, starting at the centerline and coming forward, how did you see that buildup and how did you like it?**

YOANN DAMET: I'm going to be honest with you, I don't remember it. There is some parts of the game that are more of a blur that I need to piece back together. Again,

you probably saw today the intent in terms of manipulating the opposition, creating some spaces, moving them a side to the other and trying to exploit we have numbers around the ball or whether we are attacking on weak side.

Again, I felt like we got into great situations that allowed us to create some opportunities, and I would have to re-watch that specific moment. But like I said, I'm really happy for Cello. He gets rewarded for the work he put in today and for the previous six weeks.

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