



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

FC Dallas 4, LA Galaxy 1

Q. As you close the chapter on this season, what can you take from the season and what are you looking for from next year as you begin your process building the team out? What's first and foremost of what this team really needs going forward?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, first, anything like that just a lot of emotions today. It's been a challenging year. It's been a grind. We've had a lot of guys sacrifice physically over the course of the season who have taken injuries. Some, most for the first time, and having to do that, losing those guys because they know how much they care about it and they care about the group and they wanted to be successful. They sacrificed.

You know, the guys who stayed healthy, I feel like battled and did the best they could, really, and down the stretch, you know, we didn't have enough. In the end, it was -- when you have that much lack of continuity kind of in and out, just, we struggled. And I from my side wasn't able to kind of connect all of those new pieces and the pieces and deal with all the changes and the way they solidified us down the very stretch. We were doing a great job, and we lost Riqui, we lost Marc and we lost a few more, and that became the thing that tipped us over the edge. You could even see tonight when Riqui came on, it's a different game.

So we'll reflect on every aspect of things from a new and sort of a new process is the way this league works now because with throwing a tournament in the middle of the season meant that at the beginning of the season, so many games were coming fast and furious. Having to manage the proximity of those games and really rotating players, and obviously you want to stay as healthy as you can. Some of those things you can kind of control through as many mechanisms as you can control sports science. Autumn those things you can try to do to look at to try to keep guys as healthy as possible. The guys, for us, they were massive injuries. I'll have to reflect on it. If this is the way the league is going to trend where we are going to play a ton of games all pushed together at the beginning of the season and play a tournament in the middle of the season and there's Open Cup and other things, all of us need to reflect a lot on what that's going to look like over the course of the season with our rosters and rotations and how we build things. Because I was talking with the coaching staff on the other side after the game, or before the game, and it was the same context for them, so many games on top of each other. They have been going through injury stuff. For us, it's to reflect on that process and find the best solutions and way to attack that. It obviously to think about.

Also, nuances in terms of how we want to play. We obviously conceded too many goals. For me, there are a lot of reasons for that. We ended up getting -- we were not scoring goals at the beginning of the season and we ended up scoring goals to the tune of 50-plus goals over the course of the solutions. So we found some solutions on the attacking side. I don't necessarily think -- some of it was maybe at the cost of the defending but really think some of the defending was just we didn't have any continuity in our back line and with our center backs. For me, a former center back, the foundation of a team is off of your two center backs and back line being able to manage things on the defensive side, control things. Doesn't mean you're going to control the game but if you're just conceding goals easily it kind of undermines anything that you're trying to



build with the ball or against the opposition in many ways. There's so many things, I could probably ramble on forever.

Ultimately we have to reflect and see what things out of this that we can really control and be better with those things. I'll probably beat myself up on about everything, but I think it's really being able to analyze what we can control and being able to improve upon those things. Every season, new players going in, new players going out, I think it's important we get as many guys into preseason. And because of the way the season starts, I just think you have to get guys in the preseason there and you have got to get some continuity there and you have to start strong because the points at the beginning are just as important as any points throughout the course of the season.

Q. Are you glad this year's over? Are you glad to be done.

As a competitor, no. Because again, I think I've been around this league for close to 25 years. There's very, very few, like the tune of three or four, where I haven't been in a playoff scenario with a group whether as a player or not a player. It embarrasses me when I'm not, which is hard to swallow. And that's part of the emotion.

In terms of the endurance that this season has required, I think in some ways, yes, to be honest. But I think that's going to be part of the reflection of making sure it doesn't happen again. But for me every day, every week was a process of trying to analyze how to help this group with things constantly happening to find its foundation to be successful to put partnerships on the field that could be successful to organize the team and prepare a team to be successful, with the staff, with everybody around, the players, everybody. It was a grind. So never happy to see it end but I'm ready to move on to another chapter.

Q. Talking to a few coaches in the League about Leagues Cup and how it would impact the scheduling, I don't know anybody who likes it. What, say, if any, do the clubs have in this? What arguments can you make to the League, especially if you've got a roster limit that are placed on these teams; that all these games in such a short amount of time to where -- how often do you play two times a week early in the season and coming out of the Leagues Cup, it impacts the product itself, and this league seems to, right now, care more about the product than the game itself. How do we combat that, if at all?

I don't know the best answer. I think all of us who have been inside of the locker room and inside of the teams that have been trying to work with our groups to manage our groups through this type of season, like it's really -- it's how Leagues Cup impacts everything else, is really what the problem is, right. And it's -- everyone -- not everyone.

But there's a lot of people who say, well, in Europe, these guys play 60, 70 games, all that kind of stuff. It isn't apples-to-apples, it really isn't. And I know we want more games because it's -- whether it's more money or more visibility for the product or more relationship with Liga MX, all those things can make sense.

But I tell you, for the players, for everybody around, it is absolutely brutal. It is difficult. Like I said, between the travel, and, look, MLS isn't the most efficient league in the world when it comes to the playing and every time you go a little further down in your roster it gets a little less efficient on the field. And the inefficiencies that exist means workloads, exposure; all these things go up significantly over time in which players are now vulnerable in my opinion.

I saw this in 2018 with Toronto when we did not have Leagues Cup but we went deep into the CONCACAF Champions League all the way to the final and absolutely paid for it the rest of the season. Couldn't get the group healthy. It's the intensity, the volume, the inefficiencies that come with all of these things that just take a toll on teams and players, and that's why I say the best we can do is if we are there is to find the best ways to manage it to make rotations to try to do it hopefully, if we stick here, there will be more resources to broaden our teams to be able to have more rotations where rotations don't mean more inefficiencies which means more exposure, which is what tends to happen.

We'll see. I think, again, I think technical folks will share their opinion in the discussions and the meetings and all that stuff. I just don't know what that will mean at the end of the day.

Q. You guys have missed the playoffs two out of the last three years, with nine teams in each conferences making it, this feels like a men mental miss when you're looking at everything, and obviously we've talked about all the things that have sort of affected the team this year. But how does the team feel about the way this all ended.

Extremely disappointed. I would say to you at the beginning of the season, you look at it and there's nine spots there that you



can't miss it but that's before you write the story of a season, that's easy to say. When you start to write the story of a season; a season is a lifetime for those guys. When you start to write that story, there's things that you understand, there are things that you can't understand, there are things, decisions along the way you would like to change.

But yeah, it's something that, look, we can't be there again. You can't have seasons like this. I've said this before and I've talked to multiple GMs and technical directors and other coaches. Like you guys have had the s*** you can't get in five years, you've had it in one year, and what a challenge. That's the facts. We learn from it and we have to grow from it and we have to accept it and we have to be better for it and we have to improve and we don't have to be okay by it. We have to be sickened by it and figure out the best way to improve from it and not let it ever happen again. But I've not seen a season ever in all my years of playing and coaching where I'm at now with this many season-ending injuries of this style. Like I said, seven years in Toronto, one ACL injury. We had multiple -- we've had Martin's injury, the doctor is like I've never seen an ACL tear off a tibia like that in an adult body. The things that transpired, they are unique. And unique is still possible, right. Unique is still possible. And when he had what I hope is a unicorn season in the worst way and I hope that's never -- can never duplicate that again.

Q. I know you talked about process, and so much whenever you got brought in was about changing the process or creating the process. Do you feel like you're in a position -- I know this is tough coming off of the end of this, do you feel like you're in a position that the process has changed enough where you get different results?

Yeah, I do. I do. Because for me there's always two parts of a club. There's the part that's in front of the curtain that you see on the field every week and that happens in front, and that is your results and all that kind of stuff. And you can have a horrific season that way and still be growing underneath and still be behind the curtain, getting your departments together, getting them functioning, being more proactive, putting the right people in places to do certain things, and be prepared so that you, again, when it's time to keep moving forward and moving forward fast in this sport, you're prepared for that. Those things have been certainly happening.

Since I've arrived, I have never been more confident about and -- about how far ahead we are in our process for this next window than ever before in the history of being here because the resources are there. The people are there. The departments are connected, statistical analysis, video analysis, scouting. Everything is interconnected now and intertwined. So those things, even though the season has been incredibly hard, in front of the curtain, behind the curtain, there have been a lot of things accomplished that establish stability for success. We have to make that work for what's in front of the curtain.

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