



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

Chicago Fire 1, L.A. Galaxy 1

Q. Wanted to know, it seems like ever since Charlotte, this team has been defined by the fact that you did not put yourself in bad positions and were able to take care of the ball. What did you see from this game, and do you think maybe that not taking care of the ball really was the reason for this game?

GREG VANNEY: Yes, that's part of it. I think first half, again, I don't think we collectively defended the way we talked about we wanted to defend, and we were in between things the whole first half of how to get pressure on the ball, how to deal with the numbers in midfield, the two strikers. And for me we just didn't create clarity for ourselves in the first half, which meant a lot of work trying to deal with possessions, then getting deeper in our half than they probably should have. And you do that, you deal with more things in and around your goal and your box and invariably, you have more of a likelihood that something can go wrong.

For me, that defined a little bit of the first half. Maybe you have to defend a couple more set pieces because of it. You don't get the advantage in the counterattacks because you end up a little bit in a lower block, lower than we wanted to be.

For me that was part of it in the first half. And then because we are a little bit scrambling defensively, that means, I believe, on the attacking side we are a little bit all over the place again. We didn't really establish, I thought, a clear shape in the first half. It was very fluid, very mobile but that's not necessarily a good thing. That's sometimes creates a little bit of chaos. I don't think we need to be so -- moved so much.

I think we need to organize our structure better and be a little more patient in our positions. Set up our numbers where we feel like we are going to be able to create numbers and hurt them. Again, when you play teams that play in a back five, you've got to be able to be smart about how you organize your numbers.

Flip to the second half, I thought we organized our defending a little cleaner. I don't feel like they did anything in possession that was really hurting us. Goal kicks they were just hitting long because we organized our press properly and they didn't even try. They just hit the ball long. We were able to recover most of the balls in good places.

And then, you know, again, we hurt ourselves off of a lot of possessions where we maybe tried to force one through the middle of the field when building our numbers off the outside and working across was a little more effective for us.

Having said that, we had some good chances. Mauricio played some great balls across the face of the goal that we'd like to be able to put on goal. We had some chances in the second half when we were able to orchestrate our attacks a little bit cleaner and not specifically or necessarily straight through the middle of the field.

So yes, to some degree, yes. But I think part of the reason for that was the overmovement and the not necessarily the



discipline of the positional play, and also just the fulfillment of our defensive responsibilities in the first half. I felt it cost us, in my opinion.

Q. Johnny Perez, his first MLS start. How do you think he did? And you subbed him in the second half and brought Berry on. What were you trying to get from Barry and Joveljic out of that and did you get what you wanted out of that?

So I thought Johnny's performance was pretty solid. In the grand scheme of things, playing against a back five and having to deal with a wingback and with more numbers there, he didn't have as much space to run and that's one of his strengths is to be able to pick up the ball and run with people or run without the ball, and it was a little bit tougher given that they had five across the back line.

And we weren't as efficient, I don't think, with creating our attacks in the first half. It was, as I said, a little bit random. I thought he did his job on the defensive side. Something we are working with Johnny is consistent execution on the defensive side, little roles here and there.

But it became difficult because I think there was a collective miss which was making each guy's decisions a little more complicated than they needed to be, and Johnny suffered a little bit from the complication of those decisions instead of just having the simple, very clear references that he should have had to deal with, he had to do more things.

The second half, again, I think in transitions, when he was able to build speed, I thought he had some good moments. He's able to get some shots. When I thought we were missing against the five was really kind of like a second forward up there. You know, in the first half, they were taking Teran and he was literally just marking Miguel everywhere he went and just kind of looking up our forward.

So whenever we were trying to come back across the middle or come into the area of the goal or to link off of our forward, it was very difficult to be able to utilize Miguel. And their two outside center backs were able to release with freedom to get wherever they wanted to get pressure on the ball and release their wingbacks.

So I just felt like we needed another forward to try to get the three, to really have to worry about two instead of being able to play one-on-one and let everybody else flow around. And I felt like it would open up actions in the wide channels a little bit more for us to be able to get crosses with more numbers in front of the goal with more possibilities to break their lines and to get some goal=scoring chances.

By and large, I think some of our chances came after there, and things were a little clearer as with Mauricio, again, we were able to get him wide and in crossing positions. And we were able to get our two forwards and another midfielder in higher in spaces where we were able to overload a little bit more, and I thought, again, we were able to get in some spots and create some chances because we created some uncertainty for their back line. It just wasn't so clear as it was, I felt, in the early stages of the game.

Did we get it? Yeah, for the most part. We didn't get the goal. So we didn't get everything we wanted out of it. But I feel like Dejan maybe had a decent look. I felt like Diego came in and had a decent look. Probably there might have been a couple others in there.

Again, once you're behind in a game and teams are sitting a lot of numbers behind, it's not as easy as it sounds. But we were able to get to some good spots, I thought, and weren't able to execute to even up.

The incidents on the goals were, again, as I said to the guys, when you have a tendency sometimes to jam plays through the middle of the field, when they don't come off, they come right back at us really quick. We weren't able to organize the pressure on the ball; he finishes it.

The first goal, I'm still not even quite sure how it ends up bouncing in our box but it didn't really bounce because the field is a little bit soggy. I think Maya's attempt to clear; the ball didn't pop up. He fanned on it, is what I recall. Again, I haven't seen. Again it's just like a series of events.

But I think that, as I said, the series of events comes from the lack of clarity that was kind of going on in front of things.



Q. Maybe if you have more of an update or timetable on Gastón and his injury after Wednesday's game?

Yeah, he should be back seven to ten days, should be back on the other side of this break, or at least preparing to get back in. It's a bone bruise. It's nothing more severe than that.

Obviously we found that news out yesterday. He's not here, so he's already started his recovery and rehab and all that kind of stuff. He'll benefit from this break for sure, and hopefully he'll be on the right side of it when we return, as should Joe. This break comes at a decent time for us, midseason.

I'm pretty happy with the point total that we have in the first half of the season. I think we've let a couple opportunities to be a little higher go, and I think we've learned a lot about ourselves in the first half of the season that we are going to need to, a, clean up, and b, keep using, as we understand ourselves a little bit better as we move into the second half of the season, which is going to be a super important part as we know.

Q. The team has had three games this week. Was the rotation a product of tired legs or in the case of Johnny, a reward for his good play in the last match?

Yeah, you know, for Johnny, it's a reward for not just the last match but he's trained really well. He's been really dynamic. I think came on in last game and he looked good. He's put a lot of work to get his opportunity. It's not so easy for a young winger when you have two DP wingers that are ahead of him. So he earned the opportunity. So.

We wanted to also take a look kind of where he's at and what he's going to bring as we move into the second half of the season. This was an opportunity to take a look at him. So he earned it, and he certainly didn't hurt his chances. I think, again, it was a tough game and a little bit of a tough setup for him.

Was there someone else you asked about?

Q. The team in general, specifically about Johnny, and then the rotation for the rest of the team.

Yeah, you know, with Jalen, he has to the played a ton back-to-back and he's about to go to the Olympic camp, so he's not going to get a break in this period. He's going to be going straight into another camp and have to play at least one game if not more than one game.

I'm still trying to play long game with Jalen a little bit after coming off the injury that he had. So we rotated the center back.

Again, a little bit more with Martín, those guys have been rotating a bit.

With Dejan, it's the same with Dejan. He's had a stop/start season. So again, we want him to come in for the last 30, 40 minutes, whatever it was, while also not trying to force him too long at the start after travel and after coming back from an injury.

Some of it is just management and trying to get some of these guys who have had issues either coming from the off-season or beginning of the season, something like that, trying to make sure we get to this break as healthy as possible but also for guys who earned opportunities to see how they would do out there.

Yeah, that's it.

Q. Pec didn't have many space today. Can you talk about that?

Again, I think Gabriel, Johnny, those guys were a little bit the subject of some of the same challenges. Again, you have a back line of five, who was fairly stable as a five in the first half it was hard for them to find sort of their spaces and be able to work off of the opposition. Because again they just took their middle center back, marked our forward and now if our wingers played inside, their center backs were jamming them. If they stayed wide, their fullbacks, their wingbacks were jamming him up.



I felt like because we were not really overloading the sides and creating a certain level of uncertainty, I felt like it was hard for our wingers to really get involved in the possession stuff and be dangerous, and then so there are only moments where we're really in transition

I thought that was a little bit better in the second half. We tried -- we moved Gab a little more centrally at the beginning of the second half, and he was on the right and he slide over to the left. We were trying to find different areas of space where we could bring him more into the game. We were trying to find different ways to get him involved. The game was not always finding him with the right scenarios there for him to be able to execute some of the things that we would like to see him but it can happen.

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