



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

San Diego FC 2, LA Galaxy 0

Q. How would you assess the group's performance from the first half to second half tonight?

GREG VANNEY: I thought most of the night, a little disconnected in terms of our positions and specifically kind of in our midfield and where we needed to be and when we needed to be there.

I felt like we weren't very dynamic in the front half of the field, and when we were getting forward and getting into forward positions, we weren't really turning, kind of advancing possessions into attacks. Because I felt like it was a little bit stagnant and not as dynamic as what we've seen obviously in the past.

In terms of breaking the other team and things like that, I felt like we weren't very dynamic on that side of things.

In the build, again, I think between our midfield and between the guys in the build, I felt like we just were not positionally where we needed to be when we needed to be there and showing up and working off each other. We just looked a little disjointed, and that maybe means we weren't prepared for where we needed to be with the new additions that we're sliding into the group.

We looked, like I said, it didn't look like a team that just won the championship. We looked like a team that's fitting some things together still, and that's what it felt like tonight.

Yeah, I mean, ultimately the game turns on a mistake. You know, it was between the boxes and all that. It was a bit of -- as I said to the guys, it was going to be a cat-and-mouse game because they like to draw you out. They are very good in possession. They are close together. We saw that in Coachella. So organizing the recovery of the ball isn't always so easy because they are in good spots and they move the ball pretty quickly.

So it was -- there wasn't a ton in it until we made the error. We go down 1-0. And then things start to open up and change a little bit as we start to push forward, things like that start to happen.

I thought towards the end, when we had some urgency in our game we started to get a little more dynamic. We started to move a little bit more. Break lines with our runs. Get to the end line. We see some good balls cut back. We are starting to see, again, some more things that look like real opportunities, I think, in the latter part of the game.

Q. That happened when you brought on Elijah and I think Miguel and Ruben. Any second thought of maybe starting those guys? What was your thought process?

GREG VANNEY: Whenever you lose a game, you can always have second thoughts. That's easy.



Yeah, it was Elijah's running and his power; it would have been his first MLS game, too. You're kind of gauging that.

With Lucas, is maybe a touch more experienced. But also I think when he came in, it's a whole new setting and surroundings and things like that for him to get used to.

So just with Elijah, we thought with Elijah coming in he would bring some power to the game and some running, and with Miguel, is certainly more of a runner. Christian is more of a linkup player, and Miguel is more of a runner.

As I said, I felt like we needed a little bit -- something more dynamic and that it was going to stretch and go behind and try to force their back line into more decisions than we were giving them in the early part of the game.

Those guys came on. I think Ruben came on and he was good in good spots and he knows what we're trying to do. At that time I think also for Marco, he had not gone past 45 minutes in preseason, and we also have to be mindful of how far we are trying to push him in the grand scheme of things. It's still the first game.

Q. Obviously before the game, the team was out there to see the trophy come back, the fireworks go off and the banner. A lot of guys have been talking about there's a target on your back this year; that winning the first time, it's much more difficult to win the second time. I'm wondering if this is, I don't want to say a wake-up call, but if this reinforces that; that people are not going to lie down for you guys and that you have to prove everything all over again?

GREG VANNEY: I believe that's true. I also believe that the Galaxy are always going to probably get everybody's best shot. Everybody likes to beat the Galaxy. And you know, because of the club that it is, that's something you deal with all the time. I think being the champion, for sure.

I think part of it is we had some significant changes over the course of the off-season and we have got to settle our group in and figure out how this group is going to be successful at the moment without Gab, without the guys that we have, which is something we need to adapt to starting with me and the guys, as well, and integrate guys in. Because again, I think it looked a little disjointed, and it didn't look like we were ready for what the situation was.

And so, we've got to continue to build and prepare and get better with each training session each day and be more ready for the next one than we were tonight. Each guy understanding their positions and their roles a little bit clear are than we were.

But back to your point, yeah, I think being champion is very difficult to go back-to-back in this league, and teams are going to give you their best. Especially a new franchise that's down the street that's been preparing for this moment for years now, and they certainly came out with the right energy and emotion and had a good game. Good credit to them. They have done a lot of good work in short period of time.

Q. On the first goal with Emiro and Novack, what would you like to see happen there? Is that more of a mistake on Novack's part, or are you looking at Emiro who slips? Do you not want that ball played in the air where it's at?

GREG VANNEY: Well, that's a tough ball to handle. I think, I have to look back just to see. I didn't feel like Novack was as under as much pressure as it looked like he did when he hit the ball. So for Novack to maybe be a little bit more calmer and to believe a pass that's a little more friendly. At that point that it arrived at Emiro, I think it was almost more self-defense than it was trying to actually do something with it. He was actually trying to bring it down.

The whole thing just felt a little bit rushed, and it didn't really need to be. And we saw that at times, I felt like, through the course of the game where there were a lot of, what I call for our group, uncharacteristically sort of unforced errors through the course of the game. Choices that just didn't sometimes make sense to me. We were hitting long balls when we have simpler, easy solutions.

So I say, it looked a little bit not settled, and that's something that, again, we have to keep taking steps forward there.

Q. Last year, you guys had this unbeaten streak at Dignity Health Sports Park, and that's gone in the first game?



GREG VANNEY: That's what I said in the locker room, yeah.

Q. How does the team feel about that? Is that something that you can do anything about? Do you use that as a rallying cry?

GREG VANNEY: It's just a fact at this point. I said to them, this can't happen. Like this is where we get points. This is where we win. We establish that as something that's very important to us. It's something we did last year. But we don't lose at home.

Is it a rallying cry? It's a wake-up call, I guess, as all of them are. It's just would he have got to be more prepared and we've got to be better, especially at home, but we've got to be better and we've got to build ourselves into the season.

So, as I said, the integration of our group and the understanding of playing at home versus playing on the road, all those things need to be tightened up.

Q. After a pretty good preseason from Diego, he didn't really see a lot of the ball, especially in the second half. Was that by design, trying to get Pec into the game a little bit?

GREG VANNEY: I think a lot of it is it's positional things that I didn't like about how we were set up. I felt like there were a lot of times where Diego is on an island on the outside, and he didn't have support around him and somebody that he could play off of and work with.

I felt like we were -- the spot and the position that was supposed to be there to helping was constantly leaving and moving into other areas of the field to try to find ways to get involved in the game. So in the first half, we were trying to adjust maybe who might be in that gap to help him.

So I just feel like, again, he was isolated a lot, and that was -- yeah, that's something that, again, has to improve on all of this stuff where I didn't see the isolation during the course of preseason. And then we get to the game, and then things start, you know, people are moving and trying to get involved in ways that break sort of the structure and change sort of the picture of what's supposed to be happening.

So that's something that has to be worked on because Diego being out there on his own is not going to accomplish the things we need Diego to accomplish. He's a guy that plays in collaboration with two or three other players and he's a guy who connects and runs off of and does very smart tactical things and he is not a guy who is going to go one-on-one and dominate his side on his own.

Again, I go into structurally some things that we had not seen in preseason. I felt like we saw some of those things tonight, and those are things that have to be cleaned up.

Q. At the start, you mentioned a little bit at the lack of dynamicism. Just your levels of confidence that there's maybe growing pains in the season, and improving on that as the season goes on, and are you scared that this might be the new normal for the team?

GREG VANNEY: I'm not scared. I think it's adding some new players. It's the profiles of the players sometimes that are out there and making sure we find the right balance of guys who can give us some stretch and guys who are looking for between the lines.

I felt like that balance was off, I thought early on, and then we uncharacteristically were making mistakes. We were not great in possession, and then we were not dynamic ahead of the possession that would turn normal possessions into attacks and dangerous opportunities.

So I don't think it's a normal. I think it's this group; it's going to be the growing pains of this group, and not having a guy like Joe changes how dynamic you are at the top and others.

So it's something we're going to have been very mindful of to make sure it doesn't become a habit. It's something we adjust. It was one of my potential concerns of the day if I'm being honest coming into the game was going to be how dynamic and



how vertical we would actually be at the top.

Q. Is there a timetable on Riqui's return and Joseph?

GREG VANNEY: Riqui, I'm not even -- I wouldn't even bother trying to figure out. He's still far enough away that it's not even worth guessing. I mean, it's months, so it doesn't even -- it doesn't even, I don't know, matter at this point.

With Joseph, I don't know exactly. I would say probably still a few weeks, you know. We'll try to make sure -- and he has not had enough preseason under his belt either. This is going to be kind a process for him. We want this to be his only injury of the season, and so we need to make sure we take our time and do this. So we've got to do it right.

Q. Quick follow-up one Nascimento. When do you expect him available, visa, all that fun stuff?

GREG VANNEY: I'm optimistic and I think he would be able by next week. It's just a visa issue, and I think it should get done hopefully this week. We were kind of hoping it would be done before the game. So I suspect it will probably get done next week.

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