



## LA Galaxy Media Conference

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*Los Angeles, California, USA*

**Greg Vanney**

Press Conference

St. Louis City SC 3, LA Galaxy 0

*Q. How demoralizing was that going into halftime?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I mean, that's one of the things we just talked about. We created enough chances to score three goals ourselves today and we have zero. In the grand scheme of things, in their goal creation in the grand scheme of things, they didn't create many opportunities, aside from some transition moments, set piece stuff.

But we give them hope by giving them goals. You know, a team that couldn't get anywhere near the ball, they had no idea how to get close to the ball. They were suffering, and we throw/kick the ball in our own goal, and it gives them a chance to breathe and to believe in something that on the day, they didn't know what they were believing in in the time in the first half.

It changes -- they say goals changes games. It changed the energy of the game. It changed the emotions of the game.

Yeah, I think that's the story of the game in some ways. And then we lose balls in ways that we can't lose balls that then turn into transitions that lead into another goal. These are clear possession moments where we just have to link up the ball and it comes right back at us. We got some really good looks.

I thought we had good orchestrated attacks through the course of the game against a team that was a lot of numbers behind the ball. We were still able to break them down and create good chances. That's a sign of progress for me.

But at the end of the day results are about goals, right, on both sides. Today, I felt like there was some progress in the use of the ball, the coordinated movements, the chance creation, because we haven't seen a ton of that in the first few games.

But then just the ease at which we give up goals can be demoralizing; I think that was a piece of it today. And again, not taking chances that we need to take can also be demoralizing because the hill can seem a lot bigger when you are giving up easy ones and not scoring the easy ones.

*Q. You said you saw progress. You talked about positioning. Did you see that today, guys in the attack?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Again, I thought in certain areas of the field, one of the things that I felt we were doing in the last couple games is we weren't getting numbers where we needed to get numbers to build combination play that could then create some good movements to force the opposition to come have to defend you with numbers and open up spaces that you can now punish them. And I thought we did a better job of that, again, against a team that was in a low block that had five in the back line; that I thought we did a good job of moments where we were able to put numbers in the right space, get movements off of each other that disorganized them; and then we broke through their lines and we had chances to create goal-scoring moments.



So I thought that use of the ball today was better. Again, the first goal can't happen. The second goal, lost possession, I think it was, can't happen.

But I thought, again, we're talking about process now, not results. The process I thought was better use of the ball in general to create goal-scoring chances. But still some of the turnover moments have to be better, and defensively, and situations we can't -- we can't kill ourselves.

*Q. On that first goal, was there a problem with just where Yoshida and Micovic was? Was it strictly Micovic is there, and how, if at all, does this impact your goalkeeping decisions?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Decisions are not going to be in the emotion of the moment, but in the grand scheme of things, I think it comes down to presence, and, you know, if the keeper is going to get it, he's got to be loud and clear and early and take the ball.

Otherwise, the guys who are zoning are going to attack the ball. And so between them, and I leave the goalkeeper as the guy who most is responsible in the situation, needs to make that situation clear.

It was, what, five minutes before, where our two center backs are running to each other, right, when Emi probably doesn't say anything to Maya. So again, presence, communication, clarity. Giving each other information. This will help those situations not occur. And we just saw it five minutes before, and we saw it on the goal five minutes later.

*Q. Micovic, do you have any concerns about his confidence?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I mean, yes and no. Again, I will process this and make decisions. Every position on the field for us is a competition, and so you know, I think for young goalkeepers, they need a few games, three, four, five, whatever it is, games, to show whether they can catch a rhythm, whether they are ready for the moment and all those kind of things.

It's different than when you are projected to be a starter than when you are stepping in to take a game here or take a game there, and it's how can you manage that situation.

So you know, that's the assessment that's been going on in the early part of the season. And so that will be a broader sort of assessment as we make decisions going forward.

*Q. Looking at Parente and his play today what did you like, and then certainly seemed to get Marco Reus more involved. Was there progress there?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I agree. I think one of things I have struggled with in the first three games, two games, kind of three, is facilitating the ball from the initial phase of the attack to the next phase of the attack.

And whoever is in there working with Eddie, it's got to be efficiency with reading and connection and that has to happen fast. It's intricate. It's not slow and methodical.

I felt in the first couple games, just between the guys that were in there with Eddie, they are just not ready for the intricate speed and the tight play that is happening inside of those areas. And that takes time. I get it. It's not the easiest thing to ask somebody to do. I thought Isaiah did a nice job today of doing that and what that does allows us to keep Marco higher and we can get Marco the ball in better positions instead of Marco having to come take the ball in lower positions.

In Costa Rica, we actually played Marco a little lower to help facilitate getting the ball forward and now seeing Isaiah being able to do that in this particular game, helps us to put Marco into better positions to impact the attack and the final action and the final pass and those kinds of things.

So I thought Isaiah did everything he needed to do today from that regard, and that helps. That helps me, again, as I look at the pieces and how they can fit together. I thought Isaiah did himself some justice.

*Q. Just wanted to ask you, what did you want to see from Ramirez get more involved? Today he registered his first touch in the opponent's box through the first three MLS games. What do you want to see?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Some of it, it's about being dynamic and about getting around the field faster and to the right spots at the right times and things like that.

For him, I know probably coming from Columbus, there's a lot of -- he was in a very fluid -- where he wasn't always the nine. Someone else would take the nine and he would play off the line and -- but for us, he's the nine. And it's getting into the box. It's getting into goal-scoring positions and anticipating where the play is going to go and be able to arrive there and beat your guy there to get a touch. It's a little bit of a different feel for things.

I see him thinking about how to get involved in the link-up play and some of that stuff, but then if that's what you're going to do, you still have to return back to the spot that you need to get to in order to be the nine and score goals; and if you do, that's plenty of goals there for you because our team can create chances. If you don't, then our team is going to have a hard time at times.

So it's getting him more connected to, I guess, his overall responsibilities and moments inside of the game and be thinking the right things. And secondly, he's got to get around the field quicker than he is right now. For me, it's got to be faster. Because the spaces, based on the amount of possession we have, the spaces that we have are not big and they are not wide open. They are pretty tight and intricate, like I said, and you've got to show up at the right time and the right space to get moment, or else the moment is gone quickly.

*Q. The team created a couple chances there in the first half. What do you think led to that success, and why do you think they found themselves in the second half not being able to replicate that?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, again, a lot of it for us, it's about timing and it's about, again, coordinated movements and timing. Look, at the moment, Gab is probably the one guy who can on his own one-on-one do something that eliminates a player and creates his own sort of situation.

A lot of the other players, Marco can slip through spaces, but it's through timing and connection and combination play and things like that. It's not through the individual action, right.

Whereas, I don't want to keep taking steps back to last year, but last year we had three, four guys in the final action who could create a time edge on their own, right, either through speed or through one-on-one play, or through Riqui doing some of the things that he does from zone three to four, things like that.

For us, the margins are thin in terms of being able to turn an action from a possession into a real attack and that turns into a real chance because it becomes really precise about the timing. I felt like we are much better at those things today than we had been in the previous; the timing of movement, the coordination of movement, right. Two and three guys working off of each other to unbalance the opposition and get to the space behind them was much better through stretches of the day.

I mean, Gabriel's chance in the second half is a good example of, again, some fluid play that gets squared back at the top, and he misses something I know he would like to have back because that's something usually puts in the bank. So that's another example.

But I felt like the coordination of our movement, the timing, all of that was a little more fluid and a little smoother and we were not having to throw down all the time. Rhythm kept up and the tempo kept up and that's how you turn a possession into an attack, once you change speeds, and you start to maintain that speed. And I thought we were better in that in times.

But we didn't execute in the final action, and that's ultimately what puts the stamp on any of those movements, right, is putting it in the back of the net.

*Q. Isaiah Parente, Harbor Miller both getting their first MLS starts today. What did you see from Harbor Miller, and how do you feel like he can help the team in this period without Miki?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Again, I thought he had another very solid game. He's doing a lot today because he's defending low and he's attacking pretty high because we are trying to open up space to get Gab into the pockets because they were playing a five, and yada yada, the tactical stuff.

But he's doing a ton of physical work, which is not easy to do, especially as a young man. And I think he's competed on both sides of the ball. He's been quite clean in most of his possession moments, and he's shown a little flair in the attacking end with some quick combinations and good balls.

It's being able to not let the moment overtake you but to be able to manage the moment; and for a young player, he's managed two very interesting moments for him as a young guy; and still showed not just the ability to survive on the day but some character to actually make some things happen. I think he did that in both games.

So I have to give him a lot of credit for how he's handled the situation. Look, if he can do that, it helps us to maybe think about other things with Miki, as well, because Miki is a super flexible, versatile player, and it makes me think about a lot of things.

It's two games, so I'm not getting ahead of myself. But he's a guy who can help us.

And also Mauricio, who we have not seen much of this year. But we have an interesting set of right backs right now, and the question is getting them all healthy and figuring out -- like I said, Miki's versatile. I can use Miki in a lot of different ways as well.

*Q. There's been a lot of turnover in the team, and you also have two injuries to two very important players. Did you have a timeline on when you felt that everything would start yelling together? Was that something that you had discussed?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Discussed with the team or discussed internally or discussed with whom? Sorry.

*Q. Even with your coaches, because, you know, it's quite a transition from last season.*

So just wondered if you had a timeline of when you felt things would start clicking.

**GREG VANNEY:** No. I wish I had a timeline. I think the key is we've got to get Joe healthy. We've got to get him back. He literally has been out since the first week of preseason. It's getting him back. I know he's chomping at the bit, but it's getting him back in a way that he's fit, he's healthy and we don't have to play this type of a scenario later on in the season or at any point in the season. Just try to get him back in the right way.

Miki will be pretty quick. He would be pushing it for Wednesday. We'll see. He should be ready for sure by the weekend based on things. So those guys should be coming around pretty quick.

Nasci, who we still don't know how exactly he can help our team, because we just haven't seen him that much. But that's another piece that's still to be determined and how his qualities can help impact our team.

So I think as we start to get healthy and I start to see guys again, I have some clear ideas on what I think this team can look like on the field and who can play in what positions now as I look at some of the new guys and some of the guys that we have that are integrating.

Obviously Lucas is going out. I do believe in Lucas's upside. I think he's adapting to our league, and he's going to be fine.

So we have some pieces but we're just -- we've got to get these guys together in terms of on the field and doing the things that now I feel pretty comfortable and confident in what I want to do with the group. It's now just a matter of getting everybody together and get going.

I wish I could give you a timeline, but it's going to be a couple few weeks before we start to see everybody really back.

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