



# LA Galaxy Media Conference

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*Los Angeles, California, USA*

**Greg Vanney**

Press Conference

Orlando City 2, LA Galaxy 1

*Q. The team appeared to be in control for 65, 70 minutes and then the bottom falls out on you. What are your thoughts on it?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I agree. I think kind of coincides with a soft penalty kick call that -- the problem I have in this situation is there are three other situations that are no less contact than that, and he always looked at us as if we're diving. The whole time, he says "play on" every time one of our guys in a situation like that and gets a moderate amount of contact and goes down. For him, it's always diving. McGee early; it was others along the way. But in this one, he decides he wants to change the game, and that's -- I don't know, for me, that's tough.

Then we have to be more resilient in this situation when it happens. Yeah, we gave up a goal and went to 1-1. And we have to be able to compose ourselves or recompose ourselves, reassert ourselves into the game, get on the ball, and again, one play at a time, try to grab back hold of the game and create some chances and see if we can win it but stay steady in our positioning.

I think once it goes 1-1, we get a little bit erratic in some of our actions. We try to do more than we need to do in situations instead of letting the ball just move and move them around, and the game starts to get a little bit transitional. They are starting to hit in balls behind the back line of us. The game is getting very vertical at that point.

And so then, what are you going to say about the second goal? Honestly there's nothing to say about it. At the end of the day, it should have ended 1-1 on what I think is a soft penalty call. But we allowed another goal. That just can't happen. Ultimately that becomes the difference in the result.

I think the control of the game, I think it changes a little bit because of the emotion of the game, and us maybe getting a little bit, I don't know, overeager or pressing a little bit once it goes 1-1, and we press ourselves out of good positions and things like that where we had good, solid control prior to that.

*Q. The game sort of turned, I guess, when you took off Tucker there. He had a good night up until that point. You have to bring on Joe for somebody, but your thoughts on that?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I thought Tucker had a good night. Reality is, in the grand scheme of things, we've got to get Joe going. And the next stage for Joe is to build his fitness and his minutes. And he doesn't get the 45 minutes without getting 30 minutes; and he doesn't get to 90 without getting 30.

So you bring him in because you hope Joe can give you something in transition. We're up 1-0 and you think, oh, there's going to be some transition moments in which we can put Joe in behind the back line and we can create some problems.



And yeah, that becomes -- I don't think we lost, really, control in that moment. I think it was a little bit after that, honestly, because I still thought we were able to get Joe on the ball in some good areas. I thought Diego was popping into some good spots. I thought Isaiah was able to carry through their pressure a number of times and get us moving into the other -- I think it becomes the decisions that we're making in the final actions. And I think the game sort of switched more on the defending and the situation that led to the penalty and thereafter. I don't necessarily -- yeah, I'm not sure how much it changed before that. I'd have to see to see the exact minutes.

I do feel like after that it started to adapt, when Christian came off. I feel we were having a hard time playing though our striker, which Christian did a nice job of through the course of the night. And of course we went to two strikers when we were chasing it a little bit, and I don't think we got a whole lot out of that either.

*Q. We've been looking back and forth at the goalkeepers, Novak and John. John had a mistake last game and another mistake this game. Is that still a fluid situation for you?*

**GREG VANNEY:** It could be. It certainly could be if they both want to keep leaving the door open for one another. I hope not. Somebody needs to take ownership of it and be the guy. John did it all of last year and he's capable, and he needs to bounce back. But we'll see as we move forward.

*Q. You guys scored first for the first time in a league game this year, had a lead for quite a while there. Does it hurt that much more to sort of be in that really good position for the first time this year in the league, and then to see that slip away?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, a little bit, and the way it slipped away is part of the problem. Because I can go through, I don't know how many goals we've given up over the course of the season, I'd have to add them up, but at least half of them have been somewhat ridiculous for us.

There's points inside of those goals that we've lost because of it; and that, to me, is unacceptable for where we are at this point, and coming back as champions to be giving up these types of soft goals in ways that, you know, again, I mean, you're losing points.

Yeah, I understand, also, we're not scoring a ton of goals at the moment and creating a boatload of chances. That, I think, is going to continue to grow and evolve with this group. As we continue to get healthier, connected, more detail oriented in some of those things. I think we're going to improve in those ways. But there's no reason why we're giving up these types of goals.

We had some other okay looks, decent looks. We hit the posts. We had some other good spots. I thought we had some really good spells of possession. I thought for 60 minutes, 50 minutes, I thought they didn't have great solutions for us. They tried to change the way they were pressing us. We reorganized the way we were setting up, and then we were able to break their lines and go at them again and again.

Again, I thought there were tons of solutions inside the game, and we did a pretty good job of finding them. But you kill yourself, you know, when you do things to give you will goals. And then it changes the emotion of things because we've been battling to put ourselves in position to get three points, and then we lose that in one, two, swift actions. That's the disappointing part, yeah.

*Q. Today was Paintsil's first action of 2025. What did you see out there? And will he be on a minutes' restriction for a few weeks?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I think he looks good moving-wise. I think he's going to continue to have to be sharp. He has not played a game since the MLS Cup. So it's been a while since he's had real match minutes. I think those things are going to come.

For Joe, it's almost like he's in a preseason, but the rest of us are in a season, and we're in a season where we need to kick it into gear real fast.

So I think it's just for him to establish a rhythm, get inside of the group. Get aggressive about his plays. Sometimes he slows down the ball. Want to see him speed up the game, and I think he's going to get there.



Again, it's a matter of getting rhythm and getting going. His preseason is going to be out there for everybody to see. He doesn't get to do it out in Coachella where you get to make mistakes and do things where it's free and all that. Now, unfortunately, he has to go through it in the regular season while the team is pushing to get on the right sides of some of these results. But he's a pro and he's hell of a player, and we'll work through it.

Minutes' restrictions, yeah, we're having to have to build him up. It's more important for us to get Joe healthy and build him in the right way, and not just throw him out there and see what happens. We'll definitely be mindful of this next stretch of super busy games.

*Q. Christian Ramirez: Four goals, four games, continues to roll. Seems like he's fitting into the formation better. I think he's dropping back in. Are you seeing that from him? Are you feeling that puzzle piece is starting to fit a lot better?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I do. I think he's adjusted, where before he was hanging out in midfield positions and spending time in these low positions.

I think now he's starting in high positions, and when we need him, he's arriving into the position, linking up the play and he's getting out. And then that's putting him in better positions when we do get into final actions where he's able to work the spaces behind the center backs and get himself into good scoring positions.

So yeah, I think he's adapting to the group and the needs of our group. We need to keep providing him with opportunities, and hopefully he'll keep finding the back of the net. It's good to get him into rhythm. It's nice when you have forwards that score, but we have to continue to contribute around him as well.

*Q. Still on Ramirez' form. How are you relying on his form while also encouraging other players to help you offensively?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, I mean being I think Christian is a cerebral player when he's out there. So he also helped us on the defensive side. I think he was really smart about how he was dictating sitting on pivots, dictating the direction of the game, to the letting them come in between us a lot of times. He was very wise about how he was also working on defending side, in addition to the attacking stuff that I think is improving.

So again, I think his overall contribution was really solid. There's other guys, obviously other guys around him who you know whether it's -- I don't know exactly the question but the guys who are around him that need to continue to help contribution-wise on goals and assists, things like that.

We know -- I'm pretty confident that Gab is going to find his way into goals and assists and get going. As we can create more danger from different areas of the field, it starts to soften areas around Gab where teams have focused a lot on Gab's side and trying to even overload that side defensively or not release out, sometimes just sit inside of there, which has made it hard for Gab.

But I think as guys start to contribute, I think things will start to open up for others, and that's something we need to happen, and I think it will as Joe gets going. And obviously I thought Tucker had a good night, and I do like Diego on the inside at times being able to help us, which is something we haven't really been able to do through the course of the season.

So these are things that I think will help us on the attacking side as we continue to move forward.

*Q. I must have looked at that penalty a hundred times where I'm watching and I couldn't see the penalty. Two questions. One is, are you surprised the referee didn't go to the screen? It just seems like the logical thing to do. And secondly, what was the vibe in the dressing room with the players? Because I can imagine after self-inflicted wounds, they must be exceptionally disappointed, and it might be tough to pick them up from that.*

**GREG VANNEY:** To me, the only reason you call that is because you're antsy and you want to get involved in the game and you want to make a call. There's really like a tap on the heel, and the player obviously kind of throws himself onto the ground. It's at the corner of the box. It's not going anywhere. There's nothing there.

Again, once you make the call, the threshold to change the call is so extraordinary that it becomes almost a waste of time. Like if there's any contact at all, they are just not going to change it, right, and so that becomes the issue.

And then it's the people in his ear that are telling him one thing or another. They are the ones that would have to advise him to go to actually look at if they think that he clearly and obviously, which should be a high threshold, got it wrong.

And so if they said to him, It's extraordinarily soft and you shouldn't have made the call, but you did get a piece of him, you still can't change it. Once it's called, it's called. That became the issue.

As far as the group, yeah, they are frustrated. I thought they had a good stretch of the game tonight, and I thought there was some good performances to a point where we have the self-inflicted wounds. And then I think that is starting to wear a little bit because it's obviously not getting results, especially at home. It becomes emotional in terms of the energy; energy in the group and the team.

As I said to them, and they see it; it's not so much that we are like playing poorly through the games. Because it's like from box to box, we have been okay. In all of these games, we really have not been played off the field in any of these games. It just comes down to mistakes and the way we are giving up goals, and the fact that we are not scoring more goals than we are giving up, which is going to be a work-in-progress.

You know, I think the frustration is just it's results, and it's the way we're giving up goals as much as anything.

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