



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

New York Red Bulls 7, LA Galaxy 0

Q. Your thoughts after the game?

GREG VANNEY: We started off without Joe and Gab, not really having too much in terms of the wing play. We went into a 5-3-2, wanted to take away the middle of the park with the five in the back and then the three interior midfielders with two high.

We had Miguel and Christian. Wanted Miguel's leg, someone who could stretch them out in transitions and help us create some space to be able to get Marco on the ball underneath him sometimes but first and foremost was their team, they overload the middle of the field. Their wingers come inside. Forsberg plays underneath. They have a big striker, very good.

Fullbacks start getting high, and the the first goal they kill us off of a loss of possession between our lines and then they play right through us which is typical Red Bull soccer.

And what we wanted to take away was the middle of the park and not let them play balls through our lines and pretty early on it's the first goal that unlocks us.

So again the second is I think the game comes off of the left side and we're in a rotation, again not being in a five a lot. We're in a rotation where everybody has to slide around because Miki has released and I think we stopped the rotation and Forsberg runs out, we aren't continuing the rotation and we are kind of stopping and he finds a space right in between us.

I think a little bit of maybe uncomfortable in the set up in terms of managing the different things. We weren't connected as much as we needed to be to take away the middle and because we were down pretty quick, I felt like we, again, confidence drops a little bit, certainty drops a little bit, and we started giving up things and we started getting disconnected at times and things start coming through our lines and defensively we start getting a little stretched out because I feel like we're chasing it just a touch again from pretty early in the game.

On top of that, we have -- this isn't difference in the game but we get ourselves into some really good spots where maybe two or three goals are there for us and we don't get those but I think a lot of things started to go wrong once we started getting on the wrong side of result.

Obviously, Miki, own goal, other situations where we gamble or we make bad decisions on the defensive side of things or in the transition and we start getting separated and I think we start losing -- making some bad decisions and some bad plays. So I would say not much went right.

Q. Is this an effort issue for you did eventually the tide turn so much against you guys that there was no climbing back out of



it?

GREG VANNEY: I don't know if it's an effort issue. At times when you give up goals like that, it can be a little bit of confidence, uncertainty. I thought we were reactive maybe at times where you try to adapt and play into in a different structure and your decisions become different. They are different when you're a three than they are when you're a five than when you're in a four. And I felt like sometimes we were a little more reactive and we needed to be proactive. This is a team that they put you in those situations. You turn over the balls, they are not hesitating. They are running through the line and they play forward and I think they created some uncertainties for us, and I think that led to just some indecision that led to some uncomfortable positions.

We tried to get out of the five and get to the four just into something that I felt like at least the guys were more comfortable and more familiar with. We kind of stabilized a tiny bit for a little bit.

But then we started to get a little uncomfortable there because I think guys are out of positions and guys are not playing their primary positions in some ways and decisions and confidence and reactivity more than effort. I don't think it's an effort issue.

I think it's a little bit indecisive, and at times, getting tighter to guys in duels and things like that where we go the extra yard we don't stop and concede the space where they are playing balls to their line. We were just not connected tonight. And when you're not connected against a Red Bulls team, it's going to be a big problem because they challenge your lines and they challenge the space behind you so often that if you are disconnected, it's a problem.

Q. Looking big picture, is there any thought that this hitting bottom, and parcel of that is that you can't get worse, so things have to get better?

GREG VANNEY: I don't know. Yeah, I guess. Like this is a horrible night we've had, you know, on rare occasions through the courses of a season you have an absolute sh-tter, and tonight we did. But in every game prior to this we've been in every game and we've competed in every game.

If the margin has been one goal in most of these and, I am not excusing it but tonight, it just totally got away from us. That's something we have to address and address quickly.

Again, we adapted the shape and trying to do something a little bit a little bit different because we're missing such critical players, and we don't have a ton of guys who play the same roles in anything that looks like a similar way. And so we tried to adapt. I think inside of adapting against a team as aggressive as Red Bulls, they created uncertainties on us right away and I think that made us reactive and in reactive we got uncomfortable and we made mistakes.

I think the key thing for us is to find a way to lead this on the field in Red Bulls because I think last week we had a very good performance on the road in Kansas City that deserved better but didn't get it and today we got smashed and it's the first time in a season I would say we just totally got out played on the field and looked very uncomfortable and uncertain.

So get back to -- try to get back to the things we do best and get healthy and get guys going and try to build up ward. Let's hope this is the rock bottom part.

Q. You guys have played well enough to win several games this year. The results should be better. Does it feel like the results are happening in an alternate reality?

GREG VANNEY: Sometimes. I mean, we haven't had anything -- today we were sh-t and that's the end of that, and from start to finish, it just didn't -- it wasn't good.

And you know, a spade a spade. That was it. And there's other games through the course of the season where we played well and we just -- we either just made mistakes that hurt us or we didn't capitalize on moments that we need to and that's the difference in results.

The margins are thin. Tonight they weren't thin. Tonight they deserved -- they thoroughly beat us, and they deserved to win. A lot of games, the margins are very fine and mistakes hurt us.



So we've got to figure out within our group and the guys that we have how to try to improve our margins and try to execute. One thing tonight and one thing we know for sure is we have to say connected as a group. We didn't get disconnected because then we get exposed and things can go sideways.

Q. Without Edwin on Wednesday, what's the plan?

GREG VANNEY: We just gave up seven. I haven't thought enough about Wednesday and that but we'll have a group of guys that want to go out and compete and we'll put together a group that will be ready.

Q. You talked a couple weeks ago about getting Sanabria and Nascimento up to speed. You played them a little bit extended today. What did you think of them tonight going into Wednesday?

GREG VANNEY: They look like what I think they look like and they showed where I think they are at. I think Lucas shows in individual duels and competitiveness, he can battle and he can scrap.

And he has a lot of upside. I think there's times where I think he's a little all over the field because his nature is just to get out and kind of play and duel and do those things which I think he can do, and he did fine, and he managed some pressure and he got caught in possession a couple times. But I thought he got out and he tried to cover ground and duel and do the things that he does.

I think inside that have is really getting him more aware of his surroundings and making sure that he's connecting with his group and not running and doing individual things from time to time.

But it's getting him to see and think more of the game and connect with the group a little more. He has the raw sort of power and he has the ability to do things in the confrontational situations. You see him get into challenges and oppose people hard.

I like that aspect of him. I think this team needs something like that desperately, someone who want to get in a challenge and cheat and duel and it's about when and where and how and those are the things I think inside of this league and group he's still working through. He's a young player. He'll get there.

As far as Elijah, some similar things. They are different types of players but Elijah has a lot of physical gifts. He covers ground. He's rangy. He's powerful. He's a guy that he's younger, and again, combining the game reading and connecting to the group, technically getting a little bit tighter sometimes in spaces that are a little tighter in the midfield, things like that, are things he's going to have to get through.

But again when those guys came on the field we could cover more ground and run and compete and do a lot of things, but inside of that, it's improving the decision-making and making sure we are running and competing in the right ways and places and not just separating ourselves or being ambitious but not saying connected together.

Again, these guys have upside. It's part of the learning process. So we're just trying to get them time and experience through training and everything else to get them ready to go to help this team. It's a process for them.

Q. I know you said this wasn't an effort thing but what is it lacking?

GREG VANNEY: In this game when they get disconnected they get exposed and it's not a connected team. We got separated and played in a different structure, which means when you play in a different structure, for those who don't connect to this, your decisions become different, right. Your rotations become different. If you're playing in a back five, the rotation to step out the wing back and everyone sliding around to cover becomes a little bit different.

And I think inside of it, because we turned over a ball and got penetrated early, I think we started to get a little bit indecisive. And I think when you haven't played in a system all that much, when the opposition starts throwing different things at you, you don't know how to necessarily -- you don't have clarity on how to adapt to the different things that are coming at you.

That's why I don't love doing it that much is trying to stick to something that guys are familiar with that they are comfortable



with adapting inside of the game because it's their base foundation, is the best way to go about it.

And, you know, we tried to adapt because we truly didn't have the wingers. I would have been putting players in uncomfortable positions and we tried to do something that was a little different to protect ourselves and win the middle and try to prevent their penetration, and it didn't work.

So indecisiveness can look like lack of effort when what it is is reactivity. And when you are second-guessing or you're uncertain, then you're going to be late and when you're late it looks like a lack of effort, and it's not that. It's just a lack of clarity and a lack of certainty, and when you're on the field, you don't want to be uncertain.

You want to be in control of things, and so that's where I think some of what I think is where we're getting reactive, as we started to take goals, the confidence started to sink a little bit, which also leads to indecision and indecision again leads to being late and so are there duels we should win? A hundred percent. A hundred percent, as a team, we weren't -- we are not physical enough and I said that is one of the reasons why I think Lucas is so important to getting us up to speed and helping us is because again winning duels is an important part of the game, and we need to be better there. We don't win enough duels, and that's one of the reasons we don't win midfield often enough I think in some of these games.

Q. Would you say this is personally the biggest adversity you've faced in the game?

GREG VANNEY: I don't know, 2023 was a tough year, you know, and this is in it. This stretch of games is difficult. It's a group that is in certain areas, we have players that are trying to learn and catch up and certain areas we have players who have a ton of experience but are not really ready and suited for a team that has a little bit of lack of experience in certain areas.

Our guys who have really good brains aren't in the perfect moment of their legs and they need the game to be organized and they need the game to be connected and they need to have those runners around them who are making good runs and doing things.

So we're kind of in this interesting mix of young players who can really run but their decision-making is a work-in-progress, and we have some older players who can really think who need some of the young players to do some of the running for them.

We don't have a ton of guys in the middle. You can look at our roster and probably see that, especially when you don't have a Gab and a Joe, and when we start looking into the rest of the group, it gets young and older, and we need to find that balance where these guys are meeting the same level. Again,.

Tonight is an exacerbation of what I think has been a difficult year but on the margins. Tonight wasn't on the margins. Tonight was we just got out played tonight and we were indecisive and we paid for it heavily and I think tonight is not the same night as the ones we've been having previous in this journey, and so I think looking at tonight is something to go back and say, hey, we tried something, it didn't work. We weren't comfortable in it, and that's something that we should put in the bank because we tried to adapt under the circumstances and we didn't accomplish it.

Q. Do you feel like with three DPs out, that's got to be tough. You're seeing it in the results. Do you believe with a fully fit team, it's a totally different story?

GREG VANNEY: A hundred percent. Look across the league and take their three DPs out and you have a very different team. I think in addition to that, not just the three DPs, and I'm not slighting any of our guys. We have a young group of players because some of the middle tier of players that I was just talking about are guys that unfortunately that we weren't able to keep this past season and we replaced them with young guys in our midfield, per se.

We're in this weird place where we're trying to, again, give young guys the experience to get them to where they need to be and they are surrounded by older players who have a ton of experience and know how but they need the younger players to do that work.

When you miss Joe and you miss Gab and obviously Riqui, those three guys I think combined probably accounted for about



60 to 70 goal contributions last year. That's a big deal because the opposition also has to worry about them. They have to think about them on the attacking side which helps us defensively and obviously creating chances.

Look, tonight was a sh-t night for us. We were poor. We tried to adapt and it didn't work, to the situation, and the situation includes who we didn't have. For sure you put the whole group of this team together, we're in a different place. Does that mean we don't need to still get better? A hundred percent, I think we still need to get better. But I think when you miss three of the -- three of the more dangerous players in the League, it's going to impact your team, and it doesn't mean we should

Q. Like they just said, you lost your three DPs with injuries, Zanka, as well.

GREG VANNEY: Zanka, personal reasons he didn't make the team.

Q. What are your plans for the next trip?

GREG VANNEY: We have to assess as we go to Philadelphia and try to set up the team with something that feels more comfortable and guys feel a little more certain about their connections and their decisions because tonight was not a great example of that.

Yeah, and see who is healthy, who is ready, who we think we can still compete to win the game on Wednesday, and what that might mean on flying back.

In our league and the way the schedules work, you go two on the road, Eastern Conference frequency, you come back for the third one, it makes the third one almost feel like a road game in a way because you've been on the road the whole week. We've got to find a balance. I don't have the answer for you right now. It will come in the next couple days as we prepare the group.

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