



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanne

Press Conference

LA Galaxy 2, LAFC 2

Q. Maybe tonight you saw some moments that reminded you of last year, certainly the midfield maybe between Cerrillo and Sanabria seemed to take a step forward. Can you talk about the game and where you saw successes?

GREG VANNEY: I thought the game certainly had its ebbs and flows. There were stretches early on where I thought we were in control and were playing in their half of the field and good in possession, creating some chances, get the first goal.

I thought specifically to those two, I thought they did a nice job of just controlling the midfield. Lucas's aggression in the challenge and physicality was a nice addition to the group. It's something that I think that we lack, and so it was nice to have that. I think, again, he's settling into the featured for the way we want to play the game and that kind of stuff.

But I think, again, his physicality, the amount of ground he can cover, things like that, is good for us. I think it helps Eddie to settle in and do what Eddie has been used to doing a little bit more. That's been nice.

I think after the goal there was a stretch where especially the last part of -- well, we turn over the ball in a bad spot, comes right back at us. Hell of a shot but we don't want to give them that transition from there, and we have to deal with him because he's done that too many times. Then the last ten or 15 minutes of the half, I felt like we were under it a little bit.

Our ability to kind of stop them from being able to play side-to-side, things like that, I think we spent a fair amount of energy just defending to protect ourselves and being able to secure the ball in transition to back them up and try to regain control of the game, it didn't really happen there on the tail end. We came out slow in the second half at the beginning.

That's what pisses me off the most about the game is just coming out of the locker room and being slow because we talked about win or be even at the end of the first 15 minutes of the second half because that's something we have to be better at.

And we give up a goal in the first five minutes. After that, I think the response is good. I think we start to get a little bit more proactive, a little more aggressive in ways that we need to and we start to move the game back in their half of the field. We create some chances.

Obviously Gab scores on an off-sides, or clear and obvious off-sides that went to the VAR. So clear and obvious. I think off-sides is black and white and you don't really go to the VAR but it is what it is --

Q. (Off mic).

GREG VANNEY: That's fine. Then call it clearly off-side. Don't go to the VAR. It's black and white. They tell us that you don't need to go to the VAR to see if it's clear and obvious. The guys upstairs need to do it.



Where you should go to the VAR is for the one on Joe. That's where he should go because that's subjective, and I think he misses it.

And what I'm tired of is those calls go against us, and we can't get one to go for us. I'm not asking for special treatment. I'm just asking for consistency in some of these situations. That's it.

So we don't get those two chances. We stick with it. We build some numbers.

The thing I thought we did well tonight is we got some numbers into places where we were able to play in combination, move the ball quickly, penetrate, get to the end lines. Get through lines. I felt like we some speed in some of the transitions. There were some good things inside of the game on the attacking side, I thought, tonight.

Defensively, some good moments. They are a good team. So you have to manage certain parts of the game and we did so. I don't think we gave up a ton of chances.

So I thought we managed the game pretty well defensively. There were stretches where I felt like we were under it a little bit too long, but we managed to deal with most of those situations.

So I thought honestly that was a pretty even game in the grand scheme of things, and yeah, and it probably is somewhat of a fair result, I would say, in the grand scheme of things. Though I would have liked for him to take a second look at Joe's non-call.

But hell of a finish by Marco on the free kick. We needed him to step up and he did in that moment. I'm proud of the guys. It's not easy going Eastern Conference two games in a row, and you come back after two Eastern Conference games, makes this one almost feel a little bit like an away game. When we see our schedule, we always hate these games where you go away and you play the third one at home.

So it's nice to be home. It was great to be in front of our crowd because the energy felt wonderful for our guys. We're proud of them and happy that they are sticking with us and supporting us through the challenges, and we keep fighting. I thought the guys fought tonight.

Q. And I know this doesn't snap the winless streak, now at 14, but do you feel like you have enough building blocks getting Joe and those guys back?

GREG VANNEY: I do. The key for us, one of the keys for us is just getting healthy. I think given the pieces that we lost, beyond what we are not healthy, we start to get thin in certain positions and certain skill sets, speed being one of them, things like that.

So being healthy gives us some of the things that we need to do the things we want to do. I think Lucas is coming along. That's wonderful, because he gives us something that's different in our midfield. That's what we've been hoping for and looking for, and it's just taking him a little time to get to that point. He looks more confident and more settled.

I thought it was probably Nasci's best entrance in one of the games. I thought he looked engaged and was moving. There are some positives there. We have some young guys that I think will be emerging through this process. Hopefully we can stay in long enough to see them emerge. That's the objective.

Q. You scored first, gave up the tying goal, lost a goal on the off-side call, came back and got a goal ten minutes later. Considering where the team is, do you look at baby steps and say, okay, these are all positive things and things are moving in the right direction, especially the fact that the team didn't give up?

GREG VANNEY: First, I don't think there's such a thing as giving up, especially when you are playing your rivals. That would be an absolutely unacceptable position to be in.

What I think is the group had to manage certain emotions through the course of the game, which I think is important, being



ahead, managing through your emotions and dealing with the game as it is when it's ahead, and then being even and being behind and getting an off-sides call called back.

All those things take you through emotional swings in the course of the game and we were able to manage our emotions because the emotions have been tough on us this year.

But to be able to manage our emotions through the course of the game to get the equalizing goal says I think a lot for the group's commitment and togetherness, and their continuing work for and belief in each other.

I think tonight is -- I do. I said to them, tonight is a positive night that hopefully we need to think about using as a springboard. This is as a good team as we've played against and we played them very even up, I thought, and we had our chances. We had our chances.

Q. Talk a little bit about what we are seeing from Marco right now, both today and first half against Philadelphia, he was just fantastic for you, and becoming that play-maker.

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, he's such a smooth customer.

At the end of the day, the keys for Marco is getting on the ball, getting him in places where he can face forward. Getting guys who are running with him and around him so that he can just deliver because his vision is so good and his touch is so soft.

And so again, I think as we continue to get healthy and get Joe around him and Gab around him and guys who are going to give him those runs that he's going to help slide into players and pick out the passes that he needs to, it's going to help him a lot.

Again, he's not in a position now where he's going to pull off wins all on his own. He's going to help be the engine and the guy who facilitates a lot of these final actions and get guys on the ball and put them in the places they need to be, and then do what he did tonight, which is put one away; put two away but put one away on a set piece which is enormous.

I think I mentioned to you guys, when he first got here, one day he was hitting free kicks hit probably 30 of them and probably 28 of them looked just like that. Like a ceiling on the ball just went, poof, and just dropped right into the net. It's nice to see him doing that because that's a positive thing for us.

Again, he facilitated the first goal. Gab has the chance to finish it, and he just runs it in. But he facilitated the whole action all the way down the stretch and his following up of the play led to the goal.

Again just getting right guys around him is so important to him being able to bring all of his attributes to the game.

Q. More of a big picture question. You're 14 points out of the playoff spot. 20 games left to play. Six teams that you've got to leapfrog to get to that point. Is the playoffs in the back of your mind? Forefront? Is it something that you have to get to be satisfied with this season or if you were to continue with the improvement and not quite get there, could that be a satisfying season?

GREG VANNEY: Look, honestly, it's for us to win the first game and win the second game, win the third game. Those are the things I'm focused on, the continued progression to try to make our margins a little bit bigger in terms of getting results.

It's not a call here or one missed chance here or there that becomes the difference in the game. We've got to increase our margins, and just start to get one win at a time and then start to put some wins together.

So I don't look at, like -- I honestly don't look at the standings because it doesn't make any sense. I know where we are and I know what our points look like. What I look at is our performances and try to help make this team better and help our guys to prepare them to win.

In our league, you've got to start stacking some wins. You start stacking some wins, then you can talk about whether the playoffs are a thing or not. For us, it's to start getting the first win, the second win and then going from there and then I think



it's a better time to have that discussion.

Right now, we have to focus on one win at a time.

Q. This felt like the most complete performance by the midfield and maybe it was the weak spot over a period of games. Do you feel like if this midfield can play that way, this is kind of like the blueprint going forward? And secondly, do you think maybe for the first time this season, you actually enjoyed the game as a coach?

GREG VANNEY: I thought there's some games that I think we played pretty well but maybe not 90 minutes well. You know, Kansas City, how you lose that game is really hard to explain, but I feel like we were really in control that have game in pretty much every way. Just couldn't find the net.

But this is different because I think it's a top team, a rival, a team that has a lot of weapons and a very good midfield. And we went toe-to-toe with them, and I think it shows. I think it's really difficult to have consistency if you don't have consistency through your midfield and those guys able to dictate control, adapt, all that, you know.

So I think they are growing. Lucas's evolution will really help that midfield. The two of them and their durability also give Marco the chance to be maybe a little more free sometimes to be the facilitator of moments like this.

Yeah, I think the more our midfield steadies, and it's not just on a couple guys, but the more our midfield steadies like that, the better chance we have of winning games. You have to dominate or win the middle of the field if you're going to stay and get results.

This helps a lot. Hopefully, again, this is the start of something we're going to see a lot more of as we continue to build forward.

Q. Paintsil, I think you said a couple weeks ago he was behind Gabriel in return to play. Was 30 minutes all you expected coming into tonight?

GREG VANNEY: Yes, 30 minutes was what I was and he canning. It's the difference of injury, Gab was a hip pointer. So it's more of a contusion or bruise that becomes pain management and things like that. Whereas Joseph was a strain, a slight strain.

So the positive thing was upon the imaging and talking to the specialist, the strain wasn't in a place that they were super concerned about. So it was a minor strain but not in what they would call a non-significant area.

So you have to give it a chance to heal but not necessarily something that's going to take a long time. It's also a fatigue type of injury. So we knew that we were going to be limited in the amount of time that we could have them out there tonight. So we knew it was going to be 30 minutes.

So we held it and then the decision was to bring him in as the nine instead of on the wing and see if we could get something out of that.

Q. You have been around Marc Delgado seemingly forever. How different tonight to see him on the other side of the field?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, I mean, Marc is Marc. I didn't pay attention to him tonight because I'm paying attention to my team.

But I can tell there's times when he's dropping out into spaces and he's moving around the field and he's creating pictures that we are having to figure out how to defend. That's one part of it in the first half. He kept dropping out of the midfield a little bit and creating kind of a three, and then we weren't cutting the field in half.

Again he's clever. He knows how to move around the field and create different scenarios that we are having to figure out how to defend.

It's Marc. That's what he does. He's the great balancer. He's always flowing around the field. He's a very good game



reader. And he covers a ton of territory, things like that.

Again, I didn't focus in on him, per se, but I saw him out there at times like, oh, sure, yeah, there is Marc doing Marc. What do you expect.

Q. Speaking of Marc, he was able to get his ring. What was that like; his impact on you all being able to get to that point last season?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, Marc and I and some of our staff go back to since he was maybe 15 years old, and so back in the Chivas USA days where Marc was playing in the Academy at the time, and I was kind of helping to oversee the academy, as well as I was an assistant coach to the first team, and Dan Couchman was his coach on the U-18 team.

We have been around Marc since he was just a kid of the it's crazy that he just turned 30 a couple days ago. It's been pretty much half of his life that we've spent in some way, shape or form with him. He's grown so much as a player and as a person because when you know somebody that young, you see how much he's grown up in life.

He was with us at Chivas. He was with us in Toronto. He's been with us in the Galaxy, and so he's more than just a player, you know, just because for us, just because he's somebody that we've been around for so long.

So he's a huge part. He knows the system. He knows the things that I want from him when he's with us and as I said he's the great balancer and he does a lot of work for other guys. And he facilitates the game so that some of the great players can do the things that they need to do to be great players.

You know, he's still doing his thing. It's just not with us. But he's still doing his thing. I'm happy for him.

Again, he was quite emotional when he picked up his ring the other day. But I think that that was probably more just seeing people from his past that he's close to and as much as it was getting the ring and all that.

Q. You spoke earlier about the difficulty of that East Coast road trip the last couple games and having to come back here. What's the conversation like for you with your team to be able to turn that page and get ready for such a big rival game?

GREG VANNEY: It's probably a good thing we played LAFC tonight because if it was just any other game you're probably trying to grind the guys. You travel six hours on a flight back, three time zones, you're trying to recover, get guys reeled in. The thing is, you don't have to worry about their motivation because it's LAFC on the other side.

So that's probably a positive thing, given -- I would say it's definitely a positive thing given the road trip that we had them on the other side.

So I thought the guys responded well. Yesterday, the first day we got back, maybe even the second, guys looked tired, maybe a little down and then yesterday came out to train and it was like a completely different mood and mentality and I'm like okay, these guys are ready to play.

So I was looking forward to tonight because I felt like the energy was correct and the guys were ready to go.

Q. Rivalry game tonight, and another in-state rival next week. You lost to San Diego in Week 1. Any extra motivation to go out and erase that sour taste from your mouth from week one?

GREG VANNEY: We don't have the luxury to look across and be too concerned about catching up with people. What we need to do is go out and perform and get a result.

So I think what we're looking to cross is trying to build off of the game tonight, take away the positives, the things that we can really use moving forward. Keep getting guys healthy and prepared, and yeah, each one of these games, the in-state rivalries, if you will, are great. Again, I hope it keeps our motivation up and our attention and that we keep looking forward to battling through each one of these.



Yeah, we're ready to line up for the next one. I think these guys just can't wait to get back on the field each one of these times so they get a chance to start building some momentum.

Q. When we had Bradley Wright-Phillips on our radio show this week he said after the Red Bulls game from far away, I'm speculating. But it seemed to him as if maybe some of the players were losing some of the muscle memory of how to deal with adversity because it's been happening too much. Today being down 2-1 late in the game, first of all, does he have a point? Do you think he had a point in saying that? And what's the value today, coming back late from a goal down?

GREG VANNEY: As a former player, and Bradley is a former player, and he know this is very well, we try to adapt the group. I tried to adapt the group and we played a different system. We went into a 5-3-2. This is one of the reasons why I don't listen to the world; everybody wants me to adapt but adapt can mean a million different things.

There's lots of ways to adapt. If you mean by shape, adapting by shape comes with different type of decision-making decisions. If I play in a back five, we have to rotate a certain way. Guys have to release. Guys have to choose when to step out of the line. It's different than playing in a back four.

If you play in a three-man midfield; it's different than a four-man midfield and it's different than three up top or two up top. It changes your decision-making process.

What I felt like is, when you get on the field and I'm looking at the guys going, we're indecisive. We are not solving, we are not recognizing when we need to be rotating across. We are not recognizing when a back line guy needs to step out and oppose the ball. They are staying in the line.

Our midfield is a little bit spread apart because the decisions are a little bit different. I feel like when I was watching the game that indecision was the biggest problem in the game. Like, uncertainty.

When you get into uncertainty, then it's hard to be aggressive. And when you're not aggressive it looks like people maybe aren't as committed or aren't, whatever.

I've been in these games. I can tell you games straightaway, we played turkey in the Confederations Cup in France, and -- U.S., Turkey. And I played in that game, and I couldn't figure out if I should step forward or in because they were overloading in different ways, and I didn't know which way was up.

At halftime and at the end of the game, I get blistered for not putting in an effort. I promise you; it wasn't the effort. I didn't have the solution.

And without having the solution, you look indecisive. You look out decisive; the outside world may think that you are not committed. But the reality is, you just don't have is the correct solution to be decisive.

So I felt that was us, and then we were getting punished for that indecision. We were getting punished for exposing ourselves and had a game a game that started to weigh on us. I think that was the emotion of it, and I think it's very clear. Because the group stepped out in the first half of Philadelphia and came out and competed their asses off right from the start. We competed every minute since that. I think that happens. You hope it doesn't happen often.

That's why I don't love to adapt especially with a team that's new in the midfield or has some different younger guys or some different things. That's why I don't love the idea of just adapting shape. We adapt all the time inside of games but not necessarily our shape specifically. So for me that was the night. It wasn't much else out of that. We made some indecisive plays and we paid for it and we paid for it heavily.

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