



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

San Jose 1, LA Galaxy 0

Q. Seems to be the same script every week. Lively start, halftime scoreless and somehow, some way, San Jose breaks through and they get the win. How did you see the first half, first of all, and then the goal, how that broke you guys down there in transition?

GREG VANNEY: It's interesting because each one of these games, there's some similarities to it and then there's some differences to it, right.

The similarities, I think, are the guys come out and they fight and they work and they compete and inside of that, there is -- you look at the opposition, you go, they are not better than us. Not better than us.

It comes down to execution. The amount of open three versus two, four versus threes, the breaks that we have with space with our best players in the actions that we -- that we squandered over the course of the night is tonight. That is tonight. Like there is, yes, we gave away a goal but it's the sheer number of man-up rushes, if you will, or transitions or attacks that we have that we squander over the course of the night that becomes the difference in the game.

Now the opposition is staying around. It becomes, our guys want to win so bad, and we feel that, that we expose ourselves sometimes. Maybe we make choices -- our decisions were poor in those moments. Our execution wasn't great, and we let too many of those moments squander tonight.

To be honest with you, I haven't looked back exactly on the goal because I think I was talking -- I don't know what I was missing at the second, but when I saw the ball get out to the right side and it get whipped in and cross the face of the goal, somehow we lose a runner in the box again, and they are getting a tap-in. In a situation that didn't look like it was going to be much of anything and somehow it becomes something. That is the same story in some ways.

But for me tonight is the sheer amount of positive-looking attacks where we have the right guys on the right ball and moving in the right direction that we just, we don't get anything out of any of those.

And then the margins become fine as the game continues, and it's just one mistake and that's that. It's not to say we made one mistake in each game. But when we make mistakes, we get punished and that happened again tonight.

The frustrating part for me is we had more than enough opportunities to open that game up and be on top, and be on top, I don't want to say comfortably but be on top and we just never got there. And that's -- yeah, that's disappointing tonight.

Q. The first half, you could tell they wanted to come out and get on top of the game early but in those situations, 3v2, in the advantage, you expect the guy, when things are going bad to try to do it on his own. How do you get that message around



that says we're down to maybe look to your right, to the left, maybe the play opens up that way?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, I think, we'll go back and we'll probably look at ten of those, and we'll analyze our decisions.

But guys in these situations ultimately need to make the best decision for the team for the goal, to make the best chance. And sometimes we choose ourselves. Sometimes we -- sometimes we lose. We just don't execute. We lose the pass. Maybe it's the right intention with the bad pass.

But sometimes tonight we chose ourselves when we needed to choose our teammate, and if we choose our teammate I think we have a much better look at goal. Again, I think that comes down to guys wanting to win so bad. They want to take responsibility. I think we let ourselves a little bit down in those situations tonight.

Q. Do you have an update on Marco?

GREG VANNEY: I don't know. I don't know. It doesn't look good because it's a wide-open game where he made some really good runs through the back line that we can maybe slip him in and we don't, and I think he was on his fourth one of those over 40 or 50 yards and on the recovery, he looked like he was struggling. And I don't -- I don't know if it was hamstring related. I don't know if it was cramp related. I don't really know yet. We'll keep you posted but I don't know.

Q. Just what you thought of Joe, he seemed active to start the game and Gab, as well. What did you think? What did you not like in the final third, per se?

GREG VANNEY: I think this game is ideal for those guys because the amount of space they had to run, to run with the ball, to run into, again, because the way San Jose plays, they try to get to a man on man press. They try to release. They try to get you stepping forward, and if you can break that press, there's lots of opportunity on the other side.

We talked about that coming into the game, and we wanted to get Marco, Joe, Gab, these guys on the ball facing forward, running and either in behind or running at them. I think a lot of those scenarios came.

And I think, yeah, I just think we -- you know, we didn't execute on those actions the way we should have. Sometimes it was, like I said, sometimes we doesn't make the right decision. Sometimes we didn't execute on the decision and we tried to flip-flop them, so maybe they would be running maybe on their strong foot to see if that could be changing some of the decisions and the thoughts and the ideas, maybe not a ton.

But we got into some really good spots. I think that's the nature a little bit of how San Jose plays. Because there's a risk/reward with the way they want to press and step out, and we got what we wanted out of it with some of these breaks with the guys that we wanted in the breaks.

And you know, I think Nasci gave us some legs at the top and running into channels and spaces and some of those things. I thought we looked really dynamic in the front half of the field, and it's just about execution.

Q. You just mentioned Nascimento, first start, looked at times active. Novak made a couple big saves. Seems to have a confidence that we didn't see early in the season.

GREG VANNEY: I think first, with Nasci, he's been trying to settle in. And we've been trying to identify with him as he's settling in, what are those ways he's going to create opportunity -- not create but score goals, get on the end of things.

The thing I like about him that I've gotten to know about him is it's not when he's hanging around midfield and coming off but it's when he's active and he keeps moving and he's testing channels and he's testing depth and he's busy.

So that's the thing we've been kind of trying to adapt his game with because I think he's so used to coming off playing like a false nine and sitting between the lines. That's not something we need. We need him to be direct.

Tonight, because the way the game I thought was going to shape up; that if we broke those initial lines of pressure, there was going to be space to run. I wanted a more athletic forward. I wanted somebody who could compete if we had to put balls in



the air. Didn't have to win them, but if he could make them knock them down into areas that we could pick them up and run with them, that was going to be good.

I wanted his active level, his capacity to threaten space, and I thought he did a nice job with those things. You know, for him, it's going to be us making good decisions, him getting to good spots, finishing opportunities when they come, things like that. But tonight set up for him in a way that -- and he did a good job inside of his minutes.

With Novak, he looks more settled. Maybe coming into the season, the expectation of being the No. 1, some of the moments that -- tough moments that he had earlier. Maybe once you go through that, punches you in the mouth, and it settles you down.

And I think we're starting to see the goalkeeper that we think can be a goalkeeper for us for a while. Again, his decisions, his capacity hit the ball deep and to do some things, to build, to pause the game at the right times and to play a nice entry pass, there's things I liked about his game tonight. He obviously made a couple good saves in a couple moments. All positive stuff.

Q. I lost count, but you had somewhere around ten corner kicks. I'm not sure you guys were dangerous on any of them. What can you do?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, for me, it's a Catch 22 because they -- it's the opportunity sometimes to play short. You know, these teams that they have three big center backs that are pretty good in the air. They have got a striker. It wasn't that big in the beginning but Kikanovic is a big guy. They are just big in the box. We are not a super aggressive team in the air. That's one of our problems on the defensive side set pieces, too, is we're not great in the air.

It comes down to how we manufacture chances a lot of times off some of the set pieces, whether it's through playing short, getting them moving a little bit more and then trying to hit people in.

So I just felt like we didn't connect on our longer ones, which is really going to be Zanka or Maya. They know that, too. We know that. Everybody knows that. We didn't connect on those guys on the longer ones and I felt like the shorter ones, they weren't sharp enough for us to play off of them when we were able to get them in motion. Yeah, something we have to look at but tonight was not our most effective night.

I think in previous games, we've been pretty dangerous without necessarily always getting goals, but getting the first touch, getting some looks, things like that have been better. Tonight we were not that sharp.

Q. Considering the team's performance this season, conceding last-minute goals, making minor mistakes that cost the team. Do you feel like luck has been playing a factor in the team's performance?

GREG VANNEY: Lack of?

Q. Being unlucky.

GREG VANNEY: Well, I'm a guy that's not like -- I'm not a big believer in luck. I'm not a -- I'm a believer in, you do the work and you create those situations for yourself. It's execution. You put yourself in positions for -- to get beneficial moments, if you will, things like that.

So I'm not a big believer in luck. What I would say, though, is we are not getting many bounces. We are not getting many things to fall our way. We're not getting -- some of these things that might be a little more 50/50 or we need something to deflect off somebody and then go in the goal. Just something. We're not getting those types of things. Like everything for us is a battle and a war.

But I don't -- I subscribe to the things that you can control as much as possible, which is our performances, our efforts, our execution, ideally, and the things that we can get better at on the training field and things that we can do better.

And you hope inside of being more proactive and being the aggressors in certain situations that you get things to go your way, you know. That wasn't tonight, and it hasn't been much of the season.



Yeah, we haven't got many things to go our way. I don't know if we want to call that luck or not.

Q. After the game today, you walked towards the second supporter section, and they are shouting, "We are with you." What does that mean to you as a coach in these times in this period of the season?

GREG VANNEY: The first thing I want to do is thank them for their support because, you know, the guys feeling their support helps them to battle and to fight and the guys are frustrated, too. Everybody feels that frustration and they want to perform for the fans. They know they are there. They want them to have the feeling of winning and all that kind of stuff.

The first thing I want to do is say thank you. We are going to get this moving in the right direction. The conversation, and I think they see it, too. It's not a lack of effort. It's not the guys working hard, trying, battling. Like we haven't been able to turn the margins and execute on the victory.

I'll speak for everybody in that locker room. We're eternally grateful for the support that they are giving us, and I mean that in a positive way; the positive support that also they are giving us, because, yeah, it's a grind right now. And I can understand being super frustrated with all of the results.

But they are still there, and I think they hopefully see a team that's still fighting for everything. That's important. That's one of the things that I think that's very important about putting on this jersey is that every time you come out, you fight for it every single time.

And then we have to execute and be better and in key moments of the game. And then we can get the good emotions. As I said to the guys in the locker room, this is not about an effort thing. This is about an execution thing. We need to be better in moments of the game that determine outcomes of games, and that's how you are rewarded yourself with victories.

Q. You said you don't want to ascribe it to luck -- but you don't get a bounce -- in a low-scoring sport, there's another name for luck. Is that part of the message, as a leader, that you try to give to these guys is you have to keep working, even though you're snakebit at this point in terms of 16 straight games. That's not a real thing, but the only way to describe what's happening to you guys.

GREG VANNEY: I think, again, I think you control what you can control. The more times we make good decisions at the end, we put ourselves in the best situations to score goals. We'll score goals. The more times we hit shots on goal, maybe it will deflect and hit somebody and go into the goal. The more things that we can control and do in the best way to give ourselves the best chance to win, I think and I hope, things will fall in our favor.

But I think you can't get caught up in hoping that luck is going to go your way. I think you've got to really emphasize what is it that we can really impact out there, and in preparation, training -- on the training field, in the game prep, all those kinds of things.

I want the guys focusing on that, and every game, whether we win, lose or draw, and it's been a lot of the draws and loss this year. It's still analyze and process and how do we improve. That's what we focus on.

Our emotions, obviously, are riding some of these results but our mindset is on the next game, the next game, the next game, process, do the right things, put the right effort in and all that good stuff. Control what you can control is really the message on that.

Q. You guys have RSL on Saturday and then a two-week break. What does that represent to you guys and what do you hope to put right in those two weeks?

GREG VANNEY: I think at the end of this week and given our results, a positive result going into a two-week break is really important. Not to put more importance on things. But it's been a busy week for everybody across the league, and it's the third game in the.

Week. We're fortunate to get for the first time back-to-back home games so we don't have to travel. We can recover here,



and we've got to go get the result on the weekend. And then we'll reassess going into the two weeks.

You know, some things -- maybe we adapt some things but in order to adapt with this particular group, I'd like to have time to work with them. We'll see.

Again, I feel like our results are on the margins. They are not, like, if I was going out and going, Jesus we're getting hammered every game or losing I'd be adapting a lot of things but it comes down to execution. It's not like the moments we're looking for aren't there in these last four or five games -- take New York out of the equation.

But the moments are there for us to get results. We'll reassess as we go into the two weeks. But it's a period where we have to give guys time off. This is a break where we have to give them time off which they need, but it's the opportunity to reassess what the next series of games are really going to look like and how we want to approach them.

But for now, it's all eyes and energy and thoughts on RSL and a home game where we really need to work to get the result that we need.

Q. (Would one point be enough to be a positive result)?

GREG VANNEY: I would always say, it depends out the game goes but a win is a positive result. The win is the one we need. I never look at a game that you don't deserve to take three and you take one as, okay. But I think we are at home and I think we need to go for it and we need to take three.

But we do that by executing in every single moment of the game, not coming out and trying to win the game in the first minute and throwing all these numbers high and doing some stuff that at times were happening tonight. A lot of guys were getting ahead of the ball and the ball would turnover and there's loads of space in transition.

We have to do that in a controlled, methodical way where we are controlling ourselves and imposing ourselves in executing the things that we need to execute on.

Q. You're so meticulous in your planning and approach to the game. Are you shocked by what's happening?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah. Just the -- again, just the -- it's the inability, or turning solid performances into points and just our ways to not find success in some of our attacking moments and then the ways we sometimes are finding to give up goals.

It's tough. Tough to swallow. Because again, I think in these moments, I think we've been -- in every one of these games in some ways, minus New York, I think in many of these games, it's been tight lines that have been the difference in these games.

And usually sometimes you get tight lines to go in your favor. Sometimes you even get games that don't even really look like you should win to go in your favor. And we haven't been able to get any of them that look relatively close in our favor. That's been the one I'm trying to process as well and find the solutions for with -- for the group and to help the guys out.

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