



LA Galaxy Media Conference

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Los Angeles, California, USA

Greg Vanney

Press Conference

LA Galaxy 2, Real Salt Lake 0

Q. Greg, congratulations. Just how does that feel? I know it's been a Long time coming and I'm sure there was lots of pressure behind the guys, behind you, maybe some outside voices talking a lot to everybody. Now that it's across the line, does it feel like there is a relief for you guys?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, definitely. I mean, it's been hard to come by the first one. Again, I don't think we've played horribly through much of the season; just not been able to turn things into wins.

I've seen teams play worse and get results and that's been hard to take. Proud of these guys because they stuck with it, and today they battled and it was a commitment for 90 minutes. You know, the last part of it we went into a little bit of a protect when we for sure got to the two goals and the two guys transformed and did pretty well in that kind of a setup.

I thought tonight we showed a few different things, again, against, another team that's up against it a little bit. They haven't gotten a few results, so they're feeling it, too. So it was going to be a battle no matter what. Third game in the week is always a battle.

Just proud of our guys for staying in it and competing to the end. Again, in game after game showing up and putting it out there. So they deserve this. This is a hard-fought first win, jeez.

Q. San Jose, Nascimento playing against them, he showed some things there. Tonight it feels like he was an integral part of this offense. What did he see from him?

GREG VANNEY: I think over the last two or three weeks even in training and everything else he's been settling into the group, getting more comfortable. You know, looking at the San Jose game and the way they were going to play us, I thought his mobility would be really useful for us.

Again, I think that game gave him some confidence in addition to getting connected to the group, and tonight was going to be a different challenge for him because against a back four versus where he was kind of one-on-one a lot in the San Jose match.

He did a nice job of at times coming off and linking up the play. Obviously a really good turn in the box to get to the end line and cut it back to Lucas. I thought he had a complete performance, so now just continue to get him minutes and up to 90 minutes fit.

I thought the second half came out and looked just a little bit tired on the defensive side, but he battled through the early part and got us to a position we could win. I thought he did a great job.



Q. Through this 16-game stretch, did you ever have those moments of like why, questioning yourself, things, everything really?

GREG VANNEY: I mean, you think about a lot of things. You know, I don't know if I go into why. I just kind of look at each of our guys and what we're trying to do and how we try to continue to build and stick true to the process.

How our young guys, whether it's Nasci or Lucas, how they need to come along, because they're going to play a big part in what we're trying to do to get back to what we been doing in the past. So it's really just trying to be solution oriented as much as possible, taking that to the training field, the room, talking with the guys. Also managing through the stretch is a big part of this with the guys.

Again, yeah, it's tough because we haven't had a lot of things, bounces and things go our way. Maybe got one or two tonight here or there tonight, but we haven't gotten a lot effort course of 16 games. Had to battle for every inch. I think a lot is just reflecting on our performances and how can we get better and how can I be more clear, how can I help guys come along, all those things.

Probably a lot of whys inside of that, but I think the biggest is more sticking to our process and trying to continue to improve individually and collectively; getting guys a little more committed to certain aspects of games at times and things like that. Guys have done a good job working through it.

Q. You sub Lucas at halftime. Precautionary?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, precautionary. I could tell at the end of the first half he had a hitch in his step and was pulling his leg along a little bit at halftime. He felt like he was tightening up. I don't expect it's anything too serious but don't know yet. Definitely injury related, not anything else.

Q. Did the team prepare or do anything differently this week in training? Got to ask because you've been in every single match and the results haven't come. This one worked out for you guys. Anything different this week?

GREG VANNEY: Not entirely. Just the stretch of the last five games or so we've been more healthy, and our healthy guys who are getting healthy have gotten more fit. Unfortunately we didn't have Marco tonight, but I thought Marco was on a really good stretch of games and performances and Joe was getting going again, and Gabe after missing the east coast trip, trying to get him going again.

Getting Zanka back reintegrated because he didn't go on the east coast trip because of some personal things. So I think we just kind of finally after lots of ins and outs, we had the majority of our group together as we attacked this three-game week.

We've also seen younger guys like Lucas, game come around within the group. Nasci's game. I think more of the pieces are starting to come together and fit together through health and the guys developing in what we're trying to do.

I think with that, I think some clarity in our play and things we're hoping to see are starting to come together. The guys overall have just been competing and fighting to try to get this result, and continue to build off it.

Q. Joseph got a goal tonight. Gabriel Pec seems to continue to struggle a little bit. Seemed frustrated at times. What is going to get the best out of his play?

GREG VANNEY: I think, yeah, Gabe just needs to continue to just play every play. Just play every play at his level and his expectation, and his opportunities are going to show up and things are going to start to fall for him.

We don't want him to do, and this is something we talked about this week, is not to just play for his moments where he can get his goal. Then I feel like he gets disconnected from the group a little bit. Tonight I thought he had a more compete performance. Even though he didn't get the goal, he helped us to defend and get out of some situations when we were low. He helped us to create some tackles.



He did have a shot at the end, or one or two maybe, but I felt like I played a more complete game. The more he plays the complete game, he'll start to find the things he's looking for and those moments will come together instead of separating and trying to find him a little bit.

If he keeps doing that he'll be fine. He's had a couple injuries, and so in the training environment because he had a hip pointer and something earlier on, he hasn't been able to do a lot of finishing and a lot of stuff that he likes, like the repetition and getting into a rhythm.

He's really going game to game and in training sessions. Because of nature of the injuries he hasn't been able to get a lot of repetition in the final moments. That's tending to mean he's not as confident as he would like to be in that moment. He'll come around. If he keeps doing what he did tonight. He'll start to find his flow and rhythm and he'll score.

Q. Novak had a really good game tonight. Not just getting a shutout, but came up with a huge save early in the game. What have you seen from him the last couple games and do you feel like sort of the Novak you wanted at the beginning of the year is now what you're seeing?

GREG VANNEY: Yes to the last question. I think all the goalkeeping abilities we've seen we knew he had. What I see in him now is a presence and confidence, a personality back there. The things you want as a defender, coach, that you want to feel behind you. He comes and takes some balls out of the air and makes some plays that makes the defending job easier.

Incredible save in the beginning because that could have got us off on the wrong foot really fast. Got a little over-aggressive on the jump and they got in behind us. He did a great job standing it up. To be honest, that probably dictates the whole game just emotionally and everything else.

Massive. I don't think you can understate that. This is the Novak we wanted to see and this is the Novak we believe in. I hope with this confidence he just continues to blossom and grow in the role.

Q. (Off microphone.)

GREG VANNEY: My knowledge is it isn't anything significant. Hopefully as we come out of this two-week break he should be ready to go. I think he was groin, it was a groin, but nothing too serious. It was on a little twisting action that bit him a little bit, but we don't foresee anything too long.

Q. What's the vibe in the dressing room like after that? And then also, results just haven't gone your way, but is there any reason you don't see why this team can't go on a run now?

GREG VANNEY: First, the vibe is probably a fair amount of emotions. Probably a little bit of relief. A lot of fatigue. Three games in a week and the effort put out there has always been there in my view. And also there is a certain amount of joy obviously that you get after a win.

I also give a lot of credit to our fans. I mean, the fans were in it and have stuck with us and the celebration after with them was incredible.

So seems odd that it's one win and that was the kind of celebration we had. It was great. I think I that gave a lot to our locker room after, too. Just the joy of that moment as well.

So, yeah, I don't see why, again, we can't get on a run, can't get results. Again, in all of these games it's been in the margins. For us it's really learning as a group how to win and get these games across the finish line.

Hopefully tonight will be a big lesson. I think everybody was really committed even down the stretch on the defensive side of things to make sure we were protecting ourselves in the box and everybody was really committed to all phases of the game and I think that helped us.

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