



## LA Galaxy Media Conference

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**Diego Fagundez**

Press Conference

LA Galaxy 2, D.C. United 1

*Q. We went over this before you got here so we could ask, but 77 goals, 76 assists. You're closing in on that 80-80. I'm sure you can tell us about how you guys started and going up 2-0 and how that really probably helped you guys, but individually for you right now, are things starting to click a little bit more for the team for you?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Yeah, I think so. I think the game against Vancouver definitely set a type of play style we have. I think our mistakes are showing a lot less which is help helping us a lot, but at the end of the of the day, I think the work rate that everybody is putting in, all 11 players, is showing and that's the difference maker.

Last game I told Gavi, I think this is your best game. Not because of your attack, more because of the defensive work. When you do that kind of work, you're going to get attacking and you're going to get those chances and we know how good he is that way. So when you have players like that that can help the team defense, there's no way we shouldn't be winning games and today, again, everybody's been putting the shift.

Second half I think we struggled a little bit but at the end of the day, we were able to get three points at home, which is huge, and that's the important thing.

*Q. Talk a little bit about the struggle. You guys had a chance to go up 3-0. Gabe had a pretty good look at one there and then it comes back and makes it 2-1. In a short week we you have Austin coming on Wednesday, It seems like that would hurt you a little bit, that you guys had to grind it out the way that you did.*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Yeah, I think that's what makes a good team great. Do we want to go up 2-1? Of course not. When you get scored on, they get momentum. I think 2-0 is the most dangerous score in soccer. After they scored the first, everybody locked in and said hey, we're going to grind it. We going to do whatever it takes. If we have to do this for 15, 16 more minutes, we're going to do it and everybody did that and it was so amazing. Everybody's so happy and I think like Coach said, let's get what we deserve and I think today we showed that we deserve to win this game.

Like you said, I think we need to finish those chances so it makes it a lot easier on us to finish out games and that's a learning process for all of us, and I think our legs were giving up a little bit at the end, but everyone was able to grind through and that was important.

*Q. One thing I asked Greg about is the club's confidence in this stretch. I think you guys are what? Four out of five or five out of six getting points in games. What do you think the confidence is now compared to maybe early June, late May?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** I think it's one of those things that we want to forget about what happened before and focus on what's happening now. I don't think we were a bad team before, but I think if you look at the mistakes we were making, I think we



were punishing ourselves and now we're not making those mistakes. We're actually allowing other teams to make those mistakes. We're finishing our chances when we have to.

Do we have to be better at that? Of course. We have to be mindful of mistakes that we make, but right now everything is clicking and everybody is putting in the shift and when everybody puts in the shift and everybody gives their 110%, we can win games. I think everybody has been doing that lately and the confidence, of course, is going to grow throughout the group and that's what we want to see.

We have a quick turnaround and everybody needs to be ready and like we told everybody, if we play this good, we can beat any team. At the end of the day, we have to just show up and play and work our asses off.

*Q. And what does 80-80 mean to you? As you get closer to the milestone, what do you think that accomplishment will mean to you?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** To be honest, it doesn't mean much. It's just another number that I get closer to. At the end of the day, I just want to be one of those players that will be recognized as what I've accomplished and maybe it doesn't show as much when your numbers are not showing every game, you know? But the work rate and everything that I give, that's what matters to me and when winning games. Winning games is what people remember, not the achievements that personally you have. It's always nice to have those things, that's why I have it in the back of the my book, and I just keep those to myself but like I said, if I can end the year with 80-80, I'll be happy. If I don't, there's another year and I just have to keep working harder and get there.

But right now we want to win games and make it as far as we can in this league and hopefully talk about playoffs sometime.

*Q. How did it change when D.C. brought on the subs? Bringing Benteke, you've got to pay attention to him, but they just seem to take command of the game a little bit right there.*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Look, today I think our defensive work, our defense I think we stopped them pretty good and that was important. We knew it was going to be a harder game when he walked in and but like I said, I think today he didn't really have clear chances besides maybe that one shot outside the box, that's the only one I remember that was clear, but everything else we just had to stick to our game plan and our game plan was working.

But I think the second half, we just needed to keep more of the ball, feel more comfortable playing their side and not giving so many balls back. At some point, our legs were a little bit shocked and I think those tired legs were making mistakes, myself and everybody else. We just need to be better at that. Especially when the games are coming up fast, when it's Saturday, Wednesday, Saturday we need to make sure we're not making those things.

*Q. And you guys did a nice job of absorbing it, but did they change the game on you guys?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Was it 2-0 at that point?

*Q. It was 2-0 when they brought in the subs right after the second goal.*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** At that point we knew they would throw everything in. They had nothing to lose. When you're going down 2-0, you want to just throw everything in on the field and hope for the best and I think that's what they did. They moved the ball pretty well, but I don't think they had clear chances, so defensively I think we did a really good job and we were able to get to the ball pressure and move it, but like I said, I think we need to be better at keeping the ball, making sure we're attacking more and keeping the ball and feel more comfortable with it.

*Q. And this team has looked better. They've looked more like the Galaxy since the midfield has been Edwin, you, and Marco. What's the difference there? You got veterans who can play with the ball. What...*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** I don't know if there is a difference. I think right now the confidence is high, which is a key part. I think the difference right now that we have in this team is the work rate that everybody is putting in. Everybody is putting in their shift. If we keep doing that, we can win every game. But I think last game even when the subs came in, they made a



difference and that's a huge part. Today same thing. Subs came in and the tempo stayed high and I think that's a huge part in the team.

*Q. Please tell your dogs I said hi. Greg's been using you in a new, tactical way. You've been in the midfield but you've been dropping deep to receive the ball a lot. Talk about what that switch has been like and how have you enjoyed that? Have you enjoyed linking up the play a little bit more? Does it let you see more of the ball?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Yeah, I think that position is a lot of fun because you get to touch the ball quite a bit. You get to make plays happen and when you have an amazing player in front of you like Marco that can make plays up front, it's a lot easier. But for us, I'm just doing my job. Wherever they put me, I just do my best and learn that position as fast as I can. I think we all know how to play football and at the end of the day, if you can do that you can play any position. But when you have Eddie next to you and he puts in the same work rate and shift with you, you it's a lot easier. And Lucas in there. If you put Lucas in there, he's a machine, an animal.

*Q. I asked you on Soccer in 60 this week sort of gave you my theory if you got ten points before Leagues Cup there might be a path to the playoffs. You at least didn't say I was crazy at the time. I just wanted to follow-up and you mentioned playoffs a second ago. How do you feel about that theory now based on this win and the way that you guys earned this win?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Look, do we believe we can make it? Of course. If we didn't believe it, we shouldn't be here. We just have to take it game by game. We have a lot of home games coming up. That's a huge part. We have an important game now again Wednesday. If we get points out of that, who knows next two games we play in Austin and then in LA. You do those things, you take care of business and get the points you deserve, then you never know. You could be talking about it. I think tomorrow there's another game that's happening and if the game goes the right way, then you're tied up with points and things are going the right way.

Like I told you, I think right now is the best time to get momentum and when we have all these home games you have to take advantage of it.

*Q. We have the pleasure of seeing you excel a little bit more in that deeper role. Can you tell us what those conversations were like? When did that decision happen to make that switch? What were the practices like for you to learn that position?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** I played that position before in Austin, so it was something that I already kind of learned a little bit but the way that we were playing here is a little bit different and then you have a Ricky Leshner that would come and pick up the ball and do his stuff like always, it was easy. This year I think we wanted to try to get two guys in there who can move the ball and like I said, with Eddie it makes things easy.

Once you know soccer and football and you can move the ball you can play any position, but right now I feel comfortable putting in the shift. Defensively trying to learn as much as I can and with the guys behind me giving me commands and stuff to do, it makes it easy. I just have to keep doing my job. At the end of the day, I want to win so I'm going to do whatever it takes and wherever I'm put on I give 110 and do my job.

*Q. I have been watching you since your debut in 2011 in New England, and then I saw you again a little bit more when you were in Austin and now you're here. Your style, I know you talked about the goals and how you're not doing crazy 30 goals in a season, stuff like that, but I think your style of play is really what drives a lot of the teams you've been on.*

What's allowed you to keep playing like that, even though you don't feel like you're getting crazy numbers because you do a lot for the team as far as attacking. What's allowed you to keep doing that?

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** I just want to win games. I once said to myself if you want to be a good player you don't always have to be scoring goals. You can put in the work rate, you can put in this shift and that's what I've tried to do every game, no matter what it took.

Like I said, I'm not one of those players that gives ten goals, ten assists every year but if I can do that, that would be amazing, but if we're winning games, it is what it is. If I'm off the bench, I'll give whatever it takes to make sure that we win games. If we have to cover for other players then we do that. Like I said, I think the older I'm getting maybe I'm dropping a little bit more



and more but I'm enjoying it a lot. Like I said, I'm having a lot of fun out there with the guys and when you're winning, confidence is high and you can play a little bit better.

*Q. As you're getting older and I was around the same age when you were coming up, you don't seem like you've changes that much, though. It seems like you're moving and feeling the same. Do you still feel like you got that spirit in you and that drive?*

**DIEGO FAGUNDEZ:** Of course. I can't compare myself to Gabriel Peck or Joseph who are a lot younger but I remember when I was playing in New England, I was young, I was fast, and I know people are probably surprised I was fast before but age kind of takes a toll on you and you have to learn how to play faster in your head and I think that's something that went away. If you can play with your head in soccer, you can do anything.

I always tell people if you look at Marco, if you look at him, he plays in slow motion but that guy makes plays happen. It doesn't matter how hold you are. It doesn't matter how slow you are. If you're fast in your head and you can make plays, you're still here. The day I can't run and do those things, I'll hang up my shoes but I think there's still five or six more years.

**THE MODERATOR:** All right, thank you. Let it be known that Diego is in a race with Luciano Acosta to join the 80-80 club, the fourth player in MLS history to do so.

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