



## LA Galaxy Media Conference

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**Greg Vanney**

Press Conference

Inter Miami 3, LA Galaxy 1

*Q. Saw in the second half certainly with Nascimento coming in that you guys looked a lot more dangerous and fell back into that game maybe a little bit more. Was there a reason that you kept him out in the first half? How does that fall into how you guys are trying to look for Wednesday?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, look, Wednesday he'll go. I had a plan on rotating some guys. Nasci was going to play a portion. Gab was going to play a portion. Marco was potentially going to play a portion.

But we found ourselves in the game and I felt like we had some guys -- I tried to set myself up with ways to split the game up with some version in half or two-thirds or something for the group that we wanted to get off depending on how the game was going and how much we felt like guys were drowning or losing or getting fatigued, let's say.

Nasci coming on was always going to be the plan around halftime. Elijah was feeling a little tight in the hamstring as he wasn't necessarily a total plan but we made that adjustment there.

I agree; I felt like we started to find the game better. We started to look more dangerous. Told them I was going to give every opportunity for ourselves to get back into the game and then it was 1-1.

Yeah, just trying to manage two things, which is seeing that game out, and getting a result but also being mindful of a couple guys just in terms of turnaround and things like that.

Again, it's a difficult moment to try to be thinking about two things. But I thought in transitions we were getting out and we were looking like maybe we could get something but when we were breaking down we were very split apart as a team.

So the idea there at the end was to try to keep a little bit more control of the spaces behind the ball when we did break out in transitions.

Yeah, I feel like we were all right, and then, you know, Messi dribbles by us, which should never happen, and he does what he does, which is finish a chance when you get him the opportunity to look forward. But everything else was more or less -- more or less dealt with and it shouldn't happen. Lucas was there. He was in front of him. He needs to be a little less naïve, even foul him. But he can't let Messi dribble by him and have the ball facing our goal and have an opportunity. That changes the game; that changes everything, the momentum, everything, and I think the emotion down the stretch.

*Q. Clearly you guys are not the first team to be victimized by Messi and what he's able to do there. Just the ability to play in the small spaces, and certainly, like you said, just take Lucas on and get around him, and then still be able to finish chances, and the assist as well. What do you see from that on the sideline?*



**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, it's incredible because he literally, to me, he looks like he's not healthy yet. That's just me. I'm not speaking for anybody. But he was not really moving. He was conserving and stretching at times. I felt like for guys behind the ball, we need to recognize, okay, he's not really changing speeds or hitting top speeds. He's coming off a hamstring injury. We just have to make his life really difficult and make him fight through every touch he gets. Make him fight through that moment.

And that means talking to each other and making sure we are organizing the marking of him, and that is situated. He doesn't get -- just make it difficult. I feel like if you give him the opportunity, he can pull off any single play in any game from anywhere, and we just needed to -- yeah, I feel like we let it slip away. Because I don't think he needed to come off free.

And if he does get free, then you've got to impede him and make sure that he and the ball don't both get on the other side of you. If he passes it you have to make sure you track it and stay with him.

It was a little frustrating because I feel like he wasn't as dynamic as he's capable of being but he was still able to make the difference there. I know the pass was ridiculous. Again, the vision that he has to flick it right in the heel into the path of Suarez, I think it was. It just shows his quality and his awareness of the field.

But again, I think at that point in the game at 1-1, we have to be a little less naïve. I know that's easier to stay than maybe to do sometimes with him but I feel like we just let one slip away. I thought there was at least a point there for us tonight.

*Q. And my final one, on Joe and his goal, he's sort of been turning it on here in the last, I don't know how many games, nine games, something like that, where he has seven-something goals and assists. Are you starting to see him sort of become the guy who was the guy that you needed down the stretch last year?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, I do. I feel like he's becoming more direct again, which is when I think he's at his best. When he's facing forward, when he's running forward, when he's playing and running, if he's going to pick up the ball on the dribble, just be direct and really go after guys. I think you noticed that he had a match-up that if he could get faced and forward and get the first couple steps that he could get around the corner in the match-up that he had.

And I feel like he's recognizing these things in the game and these opportunities, and he's been able to, again, create chances, get some goal-scoring chances, finish a couple along the way. We need him to keep being dynamic like that.

I liked him coming from, obviously, the outside, which we knew we were going to could as we shifted into the half. The first half we thought maybe we could catch him in a couple transition moments because they like to put their fullbacks really high, and we thought maybe we could get Joe running off the center backs in transition. But I liked him coming off the outside tonight for sure.

*Q. We saw Gabriel Pec come off in the 79th minute. Was he brought off precautionary with a look ahead to Wednesday perhaps?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, there's a couple things. There's a few of our guys who I think had a little bit of food poisoning discomfort over the last few days. Gab was one of them, a couple others, and so I was concerned a little bit about fatigue, hydration, stuff like that with him, as the game was progressing.

Gab is a guy who is usually pretty good for every minute and pretty durable in every way. But I could see him at times kind of grimacing, and I felt like maybe he wasn't feeling so great out there.

So there's a couple guys who have been fighting that over the last couple days. So I was a little mindful of Gab in that situation as well.

*Q. This team has not been able to find the three points on the road yet this year. What do you think, amongst other things, and a crazy year this year, what does that say about the mentality of the team* **GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, I'll say what I said to them at the end of the game, is we were here and there was an opportunity to take something out of this game. Sometimes I think when you're on the road, 1-1 -- and against Miami, is not the worst result. But we have to be more mature and more



savvy about how to go for the win without giving up the draw.

And I feel like, again, little moments inside the game, our organization behind him underneath the ball versus sending too many numbers in the attack to trying to get the win and exposing ourselves in the other direction. There's some savviness that for us and some maturity in some of those moments, especially when you're on the road that you don't need to overexpose yourself with the goal of getting the win. The win is something you should be able to work through and you'll find your moments.

But you can't -- sometimes you can't force it on the road. You have to be, like I said, a little more savvy, a little more aware, and a little more protective in certain situations. At times in some of our long possessions, just numbers just kept going forward, and we kept going forward and if that attack doesn't finish in transition, you're spread out. The recovery runs become more expensive physically.

So I think, again, so many things are just maturity issues for us in certain situations where winning on the road little, like, details, especially on the defensive side, become so important.

*Q. What's it been like for you navigating through a challenging season in the League, but also, we see it everywhere in football now, there's so many games that players have to play. And player health seems to be -- I know for you it's at the top of your list, but for the game itself, they keep demanding more and more from players. How has it been for you to navigate through this?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, I mean, look, it's been an interesting season. I'll speak for MLS as a whole, as we, again, increase the amount of games, the amount of competitions. For us, obviously going through some roster changes after winning the championship, things like that. If team sort of depth is something you're still working on or bringing along younger players or your team depth isn't quite interchangeable in some positions, and sometimes a little bit like tonight where if you want to put somebody new on to the field; that person has similar qualities so that you don't have to change the game completely.

The depth of the roster has become such a big thing, and you see it all around the world. If you look at a club like Manchester City, the amount of high-quality players and the amount of money they are spend to go load up their rosters, a lot of it is just to compete in all these different competitions and deal with, you know, whatever these guys are playing, 70- to 80-plus games a year sometimes; that, to me, becomes a difficult one.

For us, we got a little younger and we got a little thinner in terms of our overall depth, and trying to manage these different competitions I think has taken its toll. Some of the profiles that we're mixing in different moments are just different.

So we don't have anyone that's really similar to Joe and Gab that comes into the game at times if we need to give them a break to push them to the next game. So there's little things that we have to continue to work, and we are, and talking about as a group and how to continue to work how to build these things into the group as we get into two more transfer windows before the next season. Again, trying to build the depth and the quality and be able to sustain all these games that are coming our way.

And also in our league, it's the travel and the distances. And next year we are going to be dealing with a World Cup that cuts out seven weeks, I think, roughly, in the middle of the season potentially which is going to push games closer together, more midweek games.

It becomes a challenge. We've been facing it and we haven't been great and successful in it. We've done pretty well in the competitions, but we have not done well in the League in managing these moments.

*Q. The silver lining could be winning the Leagues Cup. If you do that, would you consider the season a success?*

**GREG VANNEY:** We have to get through recovery and get through Wednesday but one step at a time. If we can put ourselves into that type of situation, I mean, I don't consider the season a success. But I consider us as having a success inside the season, which would be a good feeling as we would re-secure our Champions League; we would have another trophy.



It would be a silver lining inside of what's been a really difficult season. But I don't know if I would just turn it around and call it a great season because of that. I think there's a lot of things that we need to take away from this year as we continue to build forward.

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