



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

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(In progress.)

GREG VANNEY: Tonight was a night I saw a ton of progress that maybe we haven't seen in other games for some of the guys, but with a real opportunity from the start you see that some of the guys are making a ton of progress. That's a good thing.

Elijah was awesome tonight. He was really, really good. I thought his field awareness, feel for time, his relationship with Edwin was really good. His power to carry beyond lines and to drive the game forward and obviously to get himself into goal scoring position is something we kind of talked about at halftime, is that our pivots, specifically Elijah, could roll off and join the attack based on how they were trying to press us.

He took it and ran with it. Yeah, he was excellent. Again, can't say one thing about him off the top of my head that was out there.

I thought Lucas had a great game. Probably his best one for us. Started off a little higher up the field this time. Thought he looked powerful. He was running around the field. He was compete. He was combative. Again, the ball was popping off his foot at the right speed and getting to the right places.

Yeah, I'm going to end up going through everybody. Some of the guys we already know, the Mikis and the Johns and the Zankas.

Chris Randolph was outstanding too, like just Steady Eddie. He's been like that all season with the second team. He's been kind of the stabilizer for a pretty young back line on this team, and he came out like a seasoned pro today and really did his job.

Tucker was great. Just can't get ahold of him. Gets you out of situations and keeps the ball moving. Yeah, he was smooth.

And on the side Harbor, which was where we started. Harbor is kid with a ton of confidence and ability. He wasn't even really playing his position. He was going back to his days as an academy player out on the wing. We wanted to use him as a hybrid wingback/winger so he would defend a little bit lower and match Cannon a little bit on the defensive side.

We knew he could handle that no problem and attack up the left side. He was mature, good decision, showed a ton of confidence out there. He's ready for the level. This is where he needs to be and continue to play and progress and move his game forward.



It was fun. Miguel put up a good shift up there occupying those guys and giving us an outlet sometimes when they were going man-on-man press.

I thought JT, I was really happy for JT. You know, the thing is that JT came into this situation and he was the third goalkeeper, as the third goalkeeper not playing with the second team, training every day, like you just don't really know what your purpose is sometimes.

We tried to keep him focused and he never wavered. He was always working on getting himself healthy again after what's been a long road of knee injury for almost 18 months or so. Getting a couple games.

But he's been a top, top pro every single day. His communication is incredible. His presence is great. I was happy for him today. He earned and deserved the opportunity today and he lived up to it the way he's capable. This guy has been a starter in the league, so it was just about him getting himself back to health and getting into a rhythm and getting an opportunity.

He was the right guy for today given the group that was around him. They gave him a lot of stability and confidence back there. It was fun to watch and fun to be a part of. Obviously when the other team is gone 60 Minutes and trying to track those guys around, to come on with the other three is just a nightmare for the other team. I felt sometimes when we were playing into the depth I could see the faces of the guys that were having to chase Joe down and Gabe down, and they were spent by that point.

Not so bad to have that kind of quality and kind of danger coming into the game a little bit later when the opposition is, like I said, a little tired. It was a fun night. We haven't had a ton of those this year. It was a fun night. Built some momentum and confidence for the group as we go into a huge night on Wednesday. We got some guys rested and get some guys ready to go.

Q. Expand on that. What does that do for you now Wednesday? You got rest the majority of the guys I think you wanted to get a rest; you got to play the guys you wanted to play. How does that keep you rolling towards Leagues Cup on Wednesday night?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, couple pieces alluded to. First is we get some guys some rest who have been playing a ton of minutes over the last stretch. So that's good for them. The second part is the guys that went out there today were fantastic. Whichever guy I call on to come into the game or help our team on Wednesday or whoever is -- like those guys have to be really confident and ready to go and championing at the bit for another opportunity too.

It really helps from top to bottom everyone who is going to be involved Wednesday. Sometimes when you rotate that heavily you don't get the emotion we got out of today. The locker room was buzzing for the guys, two guys get their first goals, couple guys getting first starts, and Chris getting his maybe first MLS start maybe. So the locker room was buzzing and that kind of camaraderie just is positive.

It's going to be a really tough game Wednesday, but to have this as a foundation to build off is nice. Proud of these guys.

Q. What are the plans for Harbor going forward the rest of the season?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, he'll be with us. He's going to get some opportunity for sure to play, and we want to try to get him ready for next season and build him forward. We always knew at about mid-point, some point mid-point this season he was going to transition into being more closely with us. Obviously it's coincided with the emergence of Maudi (ph) as well on that side, and typically his position is on the right back. Miki had a great game tonight, too.

He's so comfortable playing on the right side, on the left side. Not necessarily always as a winger, but he needs to be playing at this level. It's on me and us to get him opportunities to utilize the rest of the season to put his floor higher as we go into next year.

His ceiling is very high. It's just about, again, and it may be that somebody won't be playing as much as they want or maybe he is -- we'll find some opportunities for him, but he'll be getting some minutes down the stretch.



Q. Did you also look at players like Lucas and Elijah for the same path to get them up to speed and ready to go for next year?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, for sure. Going to be a big part of this season. It's investment time now. Investment in these guys' growth and wanting to see the things we been trying to work through over the course of the season. A lot of our season is going to be really spreading the minutes around and really getting guys opportunities to further their game and prepare them for what's going to happen next season.

In the meantime, we have a championship we're playing for here over the next week and then we have the Campeones Cup as well, some hardware that we're playing for, but some of the seen will be about investing in some of these guys as we move into next year eventually.

Q. Randolph, came from Kansas City. What did you like about him when you brought him in? He's like the oldest defender.

GREG VANNEY: He is. Got to give a lot of credit to the guys, you know, who are putting the team together and seeing and recognizing him. We always have liked and had guys in the past with G2 who we always like having that one veteran centerback, especially with young centerbacks that we are bringing up next to him, a stabilizer, a leader. Chris is top a pro. Like every day without fail he's the first guy here. He's in the weight room, got his buds in, and doing his routines and working out.

He's one of the last guys to leave. I saw him now. We've had him on the roster for two games. He goes out to the field and he is working out of his position and visualizing the things he's going through. This kid is a top pro. He's investing in himself and his career. I've seen him doing it in watching the second team all year, and he's just been a rock for that team and a leader, and I'm glad that he got the opportunity tonight.

He earned it and he's going to earn more opportunities with the way he played tonight. It was good for him. Great way to present yourself when you get the opportunity. That's what you're supposed to do.

Q. Earlier in the year I asked you in particular about a lot of the young players, what you wanted to see from them. You responded something verbatim seeing them take their chances. Seems like they really did tonight. What does this tell you about being able to rely on these depth pieces?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, it's imperative with your roster in this league that you have depth, especially when you're playing in multiple competitions, and we were at the beginning of the season. A lot of the younger guys were maturing at the beginning of the season, some of them just settling in and hadn't seen the league, played much in the league or been in the country for Lucas, for example.

My hope for them was growth. Sometimes that happens fast and sometimes that's a little bit slower, but I think tonight was a great example that they are -- there is growth there. Now, every game is different. Every challenge will be different. Just because tonight went so smooth for them there still will be more challenges in the upcoming opportunities. That's why the last 10 or 11 games or whatever we have left will be important for them. They'll see different things than was tonight, and that's going to -- they'll have to respond to those moments.

But we need to make this team deeper, and part of that is moving these young playing coming along, and part of it over son where you bring in players to fill roles and spots. These two things have to converge as we move into next year so we can have a deep team, because with the way the schedule is next year it's going to be super congested with the World Cup break and games will come fast you have to have rotation and not big drop offs.

So that's the big part of the investment for us in the stretch, too. Just bring these guys along.

Q. Tactically, Lucas and Elijah seemed to flourish alongside each other. Is that what you're envisioning when you put them out there, seeing their qualities bring out the best in each other?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, I like Lucas a little higher. He's a powerful runner and I like he's willing to run through the lines and he can -- he likes space. He likes to work with space in the duel. So I liked him up there in that role today. Again, it was one



of his better games. Just in the last 30 minutes when we took Eddie off he dropped down into the pivot with Elijah. I thought the game was a little looser there, not quite as tight as it was in the first part, the first 45 it 60 Minutes.

I thought he benefitted from that. He looked again when he and Elijah were together, but I thought there was space in between the lines that was good for him. But I like him higher. One of the things I thought was Elijah showed his ability throughout the course of the game to play in good coordination with Edwin. I thought the two of them had really good control of the lower pivot of when to show up and show up for each other.

I thought that relationship was good and like I said I like Lucas high. I like him having space to run. That's what he did more in Uruguay, he played up higher in the gap and not so low.

So we will bring them both along and see what suits them. That's part of it. For me and I've been trying to figure out are these more comfortable high in a gap in between -- behind the midfield line and in front of the back line or are they better in between the forwards and the midfield line where there is the intricacies of the pivot stuff.

To be fair, I have been also assessing them to figure out what was going to be their comfort zone as we work through the process. Tonight was a good look at that. We will see as they keep growing.

Q. Injury to Nascimento, update on that?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, groin strain. Was not major. He'll be -- we will see how he fares over the next few days, so I say questionable for Wednesday but possible. I don't see it being any longer than that, but I put it one more day today just to see how he responds each day. See how he goes, but for sure tonight wasn't worth any of it, right?

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