



LA Galaxy Media Conference

Saturday, September 6, 2025

Los Angeles, California, USA

Greg Vanney

Press Conference

LA Galaxy 1, Houston 1

Q. A wild one. How much of this is staying patient and being in a position to try to take points whenever you've got chances?

GREG VANNEY: It was a big part of it, even the mental at halftime was I could feel a little bit of the tension and the frustration. We didn't create a ton of chances in the first half. But as I said to the guys at halftime, listen, we're fine, right. It's 1-0, we are on the road. Let's get the emotion out of it and let's just be solid.

We'll adjust. Get some guys on as we keep pressing and keep pushing for it, and I thought the guys did a good job. I thought the last 20 minutes or so, we were definitely leaning on them. We put the ball in the back of the net a couple times. Had a couple other decent looks. I thought by and large, the group managed the game pretty well.

The first half, we had a really hard time giving the group to threaten them in the spaces behind. I felt like the pressure kept mounting on us a little bit in terms of them feeling more and more comfortable to step forward to us.

So part of it was us being able to get them to worry about the space behind them a little bit so we could get between their lines and we could get across the field sometimes, things like that.

But again, on the road, I thought it was a good performance in terms of just scrapping things out. J.T. made a couple big saves, which we might need in a game like this, and we stuck with it and we found a way down the stretch, a great goal by Lucas. He had a couple great runs at the end there we broke the last line and gets the cross across on the one that hits Christian on the goal line and makes a hard run into the header woman that he scores and he almost has another he had header a few minutes earlier. I thought the positioning and work he was doing around the box was excellent.

To your point, I think that's it. It's us playing the long game sometimes on the road and understanding that we don't have to win it right off the bat.

Q. So many times you've been in a similar position as Houston, 1-0 or 0-0 and you've been not taking the chances that were really there because I think Houston probably left a couple goals out there. Maybe you guys did as well. I have to imagine it feels good to be on this side of things and maybe see everything play out the way that maybe you envisioned it a little bit.

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, I was happy. It felt a lot like the reverse of last year's last game here. You remember the last game of the season where we could have won the Western Conference and we gave up that very late goal and it felt a lot like that but in reverse.

I agree. I think they had a couple chances to get the second; they could have made it a little more difficult. We managed to thwart those moments, and I felt like we found ways to get more numbers high, to put the ball in some dangerous positions,



get into wide areas where we could cross.

Yeah, I feel like it's a game that we've seen some of those go against us over the course of the season. It was nice to get one to go a little bit more in our favor and to see the guys just keep battle willing till the end, especially in moments like this where we are in the season. Guys battled it all the way through.

Q. In the last couple moments, you kept Maya up high and that seemed to cause some problems. Is he the second striker in the making there?

GREG VANNEY: That was the second time. He had a big goal in LAFC. It's the second time that we've been down the stretch there and we need another target there, another guy up top who we can play off of, who will win some balls in the air and keep some things alive.

Yeah, when we are in that situation, you should get used to seeing Maya up there and keep giving us that target and keeping things alive for us. He set up a couple chances off of it.

Q. Wanted to get your thoughts on Lucas, that goal, what that does for his confidence?

GREG VANNEY: I think it's huge. I think he's had a tough time settling in here and there. Also for us, just trying to figure out what's the best role for him, is it higher, like he did tonight and he got into some great positions? Is it a little lower, because he is a disrupter and he can tackle and break things up? Is it in the pivot position?

Recently we really kind of decided we like him higher and making those hard runs through where he has a little more space to run and operate a little more freedom in some of his actions. But yeah for his confidence, I think it's huge. He's a guy that he's felt it. He's felt the pressure of not totally settling in the way he wanted to but he's always stuck with it. He's a great kid and an eager learner and he's a warrior and tonight he battled to the end and he got to some great spots.

I like it because it also gives me, again, more information on him that he does get himself into good finishing positions and he can vary things, and it's good information and I'm sure it's great for him mentally. He had the biggest smile I've seen on his face when he came into the locker room and everyone cheered for him, and I think that's wonderful.

Q. Looking to next year, if Riqui doesn't get back this year, next year how do you see him fitting around Riqui and Elijah, playing versatile out high or wide?

GREG VANNEY: When Riqui is there, we know Riqui likes to dominant down low and pick up the ball, get on the turn, play through the lines. And so you know it's important for us to have a player on the opposite side of Riqui who can take up high positions, and he can present himself in the gaps and be a target for Riqui to play through as well as when Gab is wide and things like that.

It is a role that we need and so between the two of them, sometimes we'll sit a guy lower and then we'll have to drop him out to create space for Riqui and sometimes we can put him higher like we did last year, sometimes with Marco, and we play almost like a more traditional 4-3-3. There's certainly room for what he did tonight with Riqui on the field, and there's room for our guys to sit a little lower like Marc did at times last year, too.

We'll have to organize how we want players to move and Riqui comes on because obviously we have to create certain spaces for him and allow him the freedom to move where he likes to move. It certainly plays into the big picture.

Q. Are you at the point where you want the season to be over or are you looking forward to these next few games, finding out more about the players you have and thinking towards next season, as well, taking advantage of that?

GREG VANNEY: I'm definitely looking forward to these games. As you see a game like tonight is huge for a player like Lucas to come on and do something great that's going to build his confidence, I know he'll be super motivated as he goes through training this week.

We need these little types of successes for guys and they will come back in a better place as they start the season next year.



So these minutes are huge for these guys. Maudi got minutes, Lucas, Elijah; Harbor and slightly, again, the role he played against Colorado, not his long-term role but getting out there and competing at this intensity is incredible for him. Chris Rindov got 90 more minutes.

These are super valuable minutes for these guys and I look forward to working with them all the way through to whenever we have to break and keep trying to move guys forward as we build on what they can bring for us in the short term but also in the long term.

Q. Have you started thinking about next season at all, or are you just immersed in seeing what you can get out of the players for the next few games and less about planning ahead?

GREG VANNEY: I think internally, we are always discussing long term sort of projections into next year. It's how does each player that's on our current roster player into the vision of where we want to be in six months, in 12 months, things like that. And also, what qualities, what things do we really want to focus on the players we have long-term plans for, like a Lucas and others.

So there's always ongoing discussions because it also informs the guys with Will and his team up there as to what we need to be looking for as we build our roster into next year but a lot of that is also dictated by what the guys who are currently on our roster bring to the table as we go into next year.

So these things are always ongoing, while my day-to-day is also, you know, really focused on preparing these guys and preparing for the games and everything. But it never stops, let's put it that way.

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