



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Greg Vanney

Press Conference

Sporting Kansas City 2, LA Galaxy 1

(In Progress)

GREG VANNEY: We play a ball into forward, which is fine, but then we have guys kind of running beyond who aren't going to get involved in the attack. They're not going to make it, and they're running beyond guys that we could controlling in transition and then not being mindful and/or talking through Dejan, rolling to the outside, dealing with the situation.

I just think, again, you're at the 47th minute. That's going to be two extra minutes. We've got to be way more mature in that situation to see the half out. So that was one of the moments.

I think Novak probably makes one save maybe that was there. Second one is another moment, missed exchange on the outside. We kind of dribble ourselves into a bad situation, missed the exchange. Again, it turns into a counterattack.

Yeah, anyway, they find a way to get it on goal. I felt like it was savable, if I'm being honest, and that becomes two.

I think for us that's them. I think Novak makes one other save. Other than that, I felt like they were playing for the transition moment. They had some possession, but not threatening really in the grand scheme of things, but they had some possession.

For us, I felt like at times we were rushing things. Then there was times where we needed to play with a little more urgency, but not necessarily rush attacks. There's times where we rushed it and we lost it, and it came right back to us. We tried to play maybe too fast, and we gave away a ball or we gave away a situation, and it came back to us.

We had a couple of chances in there early when we win the ball in the transitions and play it back across to the front of the goal. We need to make them pay for stuff like that.

For me, it's a couple of missed opportunities in there to maybe go up one in the first half. We didn't create a ton of chances in the first half. They went low with five in the back. Suleymanov was dropping low into five in the back. It just became a little bit of can we build numbers and momentum to be able to finish some of our attacks? We didn't finish many of them in the first half, but we had a couple of looks.

The second half obviously we came out, and we tried to put one a little higher. First it was Erik Thommy who was taking up a higher position, bringing Elijah a little higher, so we added an extra number into the attack because they were going lower, and I think we started to create some problems for them when we started to find some interesting opportunities, but then we give up the second goal.



Then I felt like urgency really kicked in after that, and then I felt like we were into some really dangerous areas throughout the course of the latter part of the second half. A lot of them came off the same play that ultimately ended in the goal, but for me there was a questionable PK in there potentially. I haven't seen it all back, but I kind of saw a bit of it, but in the end we have to do better with our opportunities.

We let some slide the other night, and tonight you got to make due with some of those opportunities. They made due with two out of the three and a half that they had.

Q. If you look at your I guess, what, first three or four MLS games, you aren't giving up a lot of shots on goal, but like you said, you're not taking care of your chances there that could probably put games away. How do you get to a point where that's sort of reversed where you guys are putting things away and you are up 2-1 closing games out or 3-1 closing games out, or did this team need to work in that area? Can this team get to that point?

GREG VANNEY: We definitely need to get some time and work in there, but I would say coming into the game without Joe and Gabe, I thought we would probably create a couple of less chances than we might normally. Those are two high-quality players who do create a lot of dangerous moments for us.

So being a little lower in the chance creation wasn't a big surprise for me. However, I think when we do get into some of these areas, we do need to be more clinical, and that's something that I think and I hope that as we continue to build in the season. Maybe even a little more training time, guys get in front of the goal, we build some confidence, we build some good finishing habits.

But right now we have to try to take care of business while we have it and try to take points while we're working through that. Maybe a couple of guys I thought with a little bit tired legs, especially kind of as the game progressed. Maybe weren't as fresh as we would have liked them to be, but I think in the end, it's just a game of moments.

I thought we had control of large stretches of the game. It's just a game of moments, and we have to be better in ours.

Q. Greg, looking especially at the midfield and acknowledging that Joe and Gabe don't play tonight and so you do lose some of that creativity, where do you want to see that creativity coming from, the guys who were on the field tonight?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, I think creativity, it's an interesting word, because I think there's different ways to be creative. I think with a group of players that are out there tonight, it's not going to come from winding, dribbling actions that you see kind of Gabe go on, and he goes on the dribble and he eliminates the guy and plays and keeps things moving. That wasn't going to be tonight.

It ends up being off of good combination play, guys being able to -- and we had some good combination play, but I thought a lot of it was in the midfield and in the build, and it wasn't necessarily higher up the field where we needed some of that interaction to take place. That's what I think.

I think Marco has to be a part of some of those creative moments. Joao is going to have to be a part of some of those creative moments on a night like tonight. I felt like other guys did worker bee type of stuff, like Harbor did some worker bee type of stuff.

I think Erik still has to get into the rhythm of the team a bit, but I think he has the capacity to add some creativity to our group.

I think there was some moments where Elijah shows his power and strength to carry to the next line, and then it's the what happens next kind of a discussion. That's where I think, you know, when you take out the Joes and the Gabes, then some of those situations don't materialize the same way they might otherwise in a day.

So, again, I don't think we have that Riqui Puig midfielder who is going to do some of that creative individual stuff. It's going to be more off of things that are in sync and timing is right and the running and the timing of the running is good, things like that.

Q. Then speaking specifically about Marco, just he surely shows up in the big moments, and you can see when you guys



score goal and just his impact on that, but are there too many quiet moments from him as well, or is that his game?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, I mean, I think that's going to be part sometimes where he'll be in and out a little bit. Some of it's because of his dependency on us to get him the ball in certain areas and then to be moving off of him.

Again, he's not going to create the individual moment where he goes slipping past people very often, but if he has spaces, he'll drive and make great decisions or he can play off of guys.

What he gives us is some quality in the final action where you need to slip a pass or we need to hit across into a good area or things like that that I think of the guys we had tonight, he's a guy who can add that little different bit of quality when you don't have Joe or Gabe or somebody who is going to add that piece.

That's why I was hoping that he could find a magic-wand moment or two in there where we could find him in the right spot, and he can orchestrate a final action. I mean, he ends up getting the goal in the end, and there's a couple good balls that he whips across that we just miss, but yeah, you're not going to see him do the stuff that we've seen some guys where he's going to pick it up and eliminate guys on the dribble and then create a new scenario on the other side of that. It's going to be a little bit of collective and him using his vision and quality to move things around.

Q. Greg, I want to get your thoughts on a little bit of what Kansas City was doing. You mentioned they would drop to five at back in the times, and they would have the midfield right on top of it. There wasn't much pace between the lines.

GREG VANNEY: Sure.

Q. When you were able to get in and try to get some shots off, how many of them ricocheted off of somebody and just went somewhere else? There was just no real open paths to the goal. How do you break that down when they're playing that so effectively, and is that a matter of having the right personalities in there and what you were missing today, it just wasn't there?

GREG VANNEY: Well, I think the first thing is when we have one or two of the earlier chances, we need to score first, because then it disrupts this concept that you can sit low and live on a transition basis.

I felt like we had a couple, again, where we want it in the press or we get to a couple of good spots, and we need to bury one of those, and then I think it may reset sort of the concepts of how they're going to get through the day, right, to get a result to win. Maybe they then extend themselves and then some of the pockets show up.

Again, they didn't have many chances. A couple of breakouts, and you give up one of those goals, it reinforce that they can keep putting numbers behind the ball and numbers low, and then everything is tighter spaces. When you need that, timing has to be better or individual quality has to be better. Somebody who can eliminate somebody on the dribble can then create maybe a better number scenario, things like that.

It does become more challenging. Or we need to be able to put balls into dangerous areas and win some crosses, win some things in front of the goal, as I think a little bit our goal ended up a melee of sorts of two or three, three or four chances before we finally got it into the back of the net.

It wasn't necessarily the first chance that was the one. It was by getting to a dangerous area, putting it on goal, and then playing off of those moments.

So, yeah, I think the biggest thing ideally is you've got to manage transition moments, and you've got to get ahead in those games, and you've got to force the opposition out of that posture. But when they go back to five in the back, I still think with our crew, it's how do we recognize that and get an extra number up high, but still can be able to control the counterattack situations.

Again, we looked better, I thought more dangerous when we were able to get an extra number higher or a little later, but we still have to be able to defend the counterattack.

Q. In terms of the --



GREG VANNEY: And the counterattack, by the way, the second counterattack was our own doing. We just flat out lost the ball in an area that we didn't need to lose the ball, and then it came back at us. It wasn't that they did anything specific in that moment.

Q. And they were efficient when they went on the counter?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, they have a couple of guys with a lot of pace, and they have a couple of guys with some quality, and Dejan is Dejan. No matter what, he has a nose for the goal.

Q. He was very good tonight. In terms of getting everything kind of connected up top, with Klauss brand new with the team, still working out relationships and so forth. Just starting now tonight without Joe and without Gabe, you have Harbor up there, who has shown he has the ability, but these aren't guys who play together regularly. In terms of tying all that together, where do you feel you are? How much further do you feel needs to go before it's in a position where you like it?

GREG VANNEY: I think when we have everybody healthy and everybody together, I think we've had some good moments. We've had some moments we need to be more efficient around the goal where we've created opportunities, and we can be more efficient. In Colorado I felt like we needed to be more efficient.

I felt like the other night in the Cup match we should have scored six or seven, but we were very inefficient in front of the goal. So I think it's a combination of things. I think it's early in the season. It's a lot of games.

For me, Joao maybe legs a little heavy too trying to work through these various games as it gets going, and finishing is sometimes just organizing your feet and doing some of that.

So I don't think we're far off. Again, I think we've had some really good stretches. If we can keep 11 guys on the field, which we were able to do tonight, but in the other first two games I think we have something more out of each of those games.

So we've got to be able to continue to put 90 minutes together with our group and execute. I think we will be in a positive way, because we're doing a lot of good things through the course of the game. We haven't given up many chances over games. I think if we can defend well, it gives us time to get some of that stuff connected.

We just have very little training time to work on things, so guys are working on things through each of these games, and then they're recovering for the next game. When you are looking at patterns or timing of actions or anything like that, it becomes we're working it out there in front of everybody. It's not something that's happening out on the training field often.

But, yeah, we just got to be cleaner. We got to be better.

Q. The team was booed post-game. How do you process something like that? How do you go about working through that with the team? Do you guys address that in the locker room? Do you have a message perhaps for Galaxy fans that might be concerned about the performances at the moment?

GREG VANNEY: I don't address it, because it's the fans that were upset that we lost the game. So I think the guys are upset in there too that they lost the game, and I think the fans have a right to boo the guys if they were disappointed.

I don't know if they're booing us or booing the referees or who they're booing at the end of the game, but there's some booing that could go around in a few different places, so I didn't get too caught up in that.

I think for us is to keep working through our process. Again, keep working through things, get guys on the field together, and get sharper. I think we're doing all right.

We've got to get through CCL and move to the next round. They'll play a difficult game, which is going to be flying from Jamaica straight to Portland to play in the afternoon, which is going to be a beast of a game for us to play, but we're stacking games on top of games right now.



Unfortunately, we took two red cards in two of the four games at the end, and things like that, little discipline moments, where we can be better. There's little things that we're encountering that we've got to be better with and finishing some of our chances, but I think the pieces are there.

I think you've seen a lot of that in the performances. You know, looking at the Colorado game, again, if we don't take the red card, we're moving forward to win the game. They know it. Coach knows it. We talked about it after the game. They know they were in a tough position.

We've got to put the 90 minutes together with discipline. We've got to put the 90 minutes together and finish chances, and we've got to put the 90 minutes together and stay solid on the defensive end, which a lot of those bits and pieces have been there, but not all collectively for enough of the games, but we're moving in the right direction in some of this.

Unfortunately, tonight we showed up without two of our most important attackers, and that's part of the sport too, and we have to find a way to come away with a win.

Q. Harbor Miller replaced one of those attackers tonight, and he looked very, very lively. Certainly getting forward and combining well with the attack. Talk to us about his evolution, especially being that we saw him first as a defensive player and now we're seeing him a little bit further up the pitch.

GREG VANNEY: As I said before, he grew up as a winger, so in his heart of hearts he wants to run around and create attacking opportunities. He's not short of confidence, so he'll go for things. He'll dribble. He'll run. He'll do things. He's talented. He's got good feet. He's very right-footed and left-footed. So he has a lot of things in his toolbox.

His energy was good. At times I thought he rushed a couple of situations. At times maybe he could connect with a final action a little better, but I loved that he was going for it at least, and I think he was doing a good job out on the field just trying to make things happen for us.

Again, it doesn't surprise me because if you know Harbor at all, you know his personality. Put him on the field, and he's going for it. He doesn't have a parachute or a seat belt. This guy is going.

I think that energy can be infectious, and then it's just putting some pieces. You know, as he continued to evolve, I still think his best position is going to be an attacking fullback, and I think when he gets into that type of role on a consistent basis, he's going to continue to show some of those qualities, but he's going to do that arriving in on an attack versus being the primary attacker.

So good things are in his future, and I just love his personality and willingness to go for it, which is great.

Q. This is the tough part now where teams are sort of circling like sharks in water knowing that you are coming from a midweek game and then having a trip. Portland is going to probably have that opportunity too where there are fresher teams you're playing. How do you sort of adjust on the fly knowing that you are having these trips to do and midweek games that some other teams don't have to do that will be playing you? Obviously that's disadvantage in a sense and advantage for them, but how do you sort of counter that and get your guys mentally ready even if they physically are exhausted, in a sense?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, guys look forward to playing. Players like to play games, and they want to go from game to game and play. There's obviously a toll that can take place when there's a lot of travel, but I think we've rotated a lot of guys.

We've started with, I think, six new guys today from the other day. We've tried to go through rotations so that we can keep guys fresh. I was mindful of a guy like Joao. It was a debate whether we were going to start him or not. He was feeling okay, but we didn't want to push him too terribly wrong. The risk isn't worth the reward on that one. So at 60 we knew he was probably going to come off, so keeping an eye on a couple of other guys through the game.

So trying to balance this out at this time of year is always the challenge for all of us, all of the teams that are doing this. Then you just hope that you're not dealing with injuries at the same time that you're trying to balance off minutes for guys, because you're trying to keep guys healthy and fit.



So it's a challenge. You know, the second part that teams have is they get to look at us and train and prepare for us all week, and we get to watch a video and talk about how we want to prepare in one or two days. That's one of the things that I think teams who aren't in Champions League they get a little bit of the value of the longer preparation and really how they want to approach their game plan and work through it on the training field and video.

But for me, it is what it is. If you want to play in these events and you want to be a top team, then you got to deal with these situations. You got to show up, and whoever steps on the field has to perform and win games. That's what we've got to do.

It's just that time of year, but we wouldn't want it any other way. We want to be playing these games, and we want to travel to Jamaica and then to Portland and all that good stuff.

Q. Just quickly, update on Joe and Emiro, if you could.

GREG VANNEY: Emiro is back into training. I think he could be available by Thursday. If not by Thursday, then by the weekend.

Joe probably will be back after the international break probably. He's doing better, but we think it's going to be just after the break he'll have enough time and should be back.

Q. Did the MRI show just what you guys thought, when was a minor hamstring?

GREG VANNEY: Yeah, minor hamstring issue. Those things when you are playing four games in a short period of time ends up being more games than you like, but yeah, not too bad, so everybody I think is okay.

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