



LA Galaxy Media Conference

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Los Angeles, California, USA

JT Marcinkowski

Press Conference

LA Galaxy 2, Salt Lake 1

Q. How important was that three points tonight for you guys?

JT MARCINKOWSKI: Yeah, massive. You can feel it in the locker room, you can feel it after. We've talked a lot the past few days of determination, battling, being able to fight for one another on the field. I think our performance tonight really embodied that and showed us kind of that's the least that we can do for every single game going forward.

I think that a few of our performances at home this year have not been up to par and have not been good enough. It was nice just to be able to find a way to win. It wasn't necessarily the prettiest game by any means, but we kind of knew that going in with the way the Salt Lake plays and the way they set up their team.

We really wanted to outwork them. We wanted to be the aggressors, set the tone. I thought the performance was really solid.

Q. On their goal, have you had a chance to look at it yet?

JT MARCINKOWSKI: It hit the post. I thought it was a pretty good header by me into my own goal, unfortunately. That's just the way it goes as a goalkeeper sometimes. I think I can maybe get a touch around the post, but at the end of the day they could deflect anywhere, and unfortunately hit me and went in.

I'm super proud of the way that we reacted to it just because obviously before halftime is not ideal time to get scored on until that went in. I think the way we managed the rest of the game and we came out in the second half and -- we had to endure some of their long possessions.

We had to sit back defensively and kind of pick and choose our times to go. I think at the end of the day that's what we have to do sometimes. Not every game is going to be perfect. Not every game is going to be an attacking, aggressive style. Today we had to batten down the hatches and figure out a way to win.

Q. Has anything like that ever happened to you before?

JT MARCINKOWSKI: I was really trying to remember. I mean, maybe when I was younger, but it happens more than you would think during training. Not crazy surprised by it. I'm surprised it doesn't happen more during the games. It is what it is.

Q. Having Glesnes back out there, what is different when he's out there? And I realize he's still getting back to minutes. We're not seeing him at his best right now. But his presence, the way he plays that position, how does that impact?



JT MARCINKOWSKI: Yeah, he's a best 11 defender, so of course his presence out there means a lot. He's vocal. He's always in the right position. He is able to lead the team from the back. I think he just brings a sense of calm and brings a sense of confidence with him.

He's been there before. He's done that for this league and been on Supporter Shield winning teams, so it's really nice to have him back.

But again, it's not just him. I think it was everybody who played tonight, and not just the starting 11, but the guys who came in. Obviously there's been a few adjustments we had to make in the second half, but, yeah, I thought it was a really solid performance from everybody.

Q. In the first half especially we saw a lot of the intensity, the guys being intense, winning duels, running with second balls. Can you talk about what it's like seeing the guys kind of be in their element when it comes to intensity and how it sets the tone for the rest of the guys as well?

JT MARCINKOWSKI: Yeah, I think it's one of those things where when you see your teammate doing it, I think it almost empowers you to do it more. You kind of build on yourself, and to build on winning those duels, winning those second balls, winning kind of those 50/50s, that we made 60/40s today in our favor.

So I think when you have guys in the middle like Lucas, when you have Justin, when you have Harbor, Joe, Gabe Marco, like when you see the attacking guys putting in as much effort, of course in the back line you're going to do whatever you can to try to get them the ball and try to keep it out of our own net.

Yeah, I think it was really just a solid, really intense performance today, and it was really great to see from the back.

Q. I think at one point I checked and you were on five saves. Even though RSL had a couple of shots at you, honestly, they seemed to go right at you. I guess my question here is is that a product of your positioning or did you do a lot of homework on the opposition to find out some shooting tendencies? What prepared you for this match and I guess looking so comfortable making the saves?

JT MARCINKOWSKI: Yeah, I think that's the goal as a goalkeeper is to try to make the hard saves look easy. I think I was told that from a really young age. I think it's also the way we defended and the way my back line forced them into tougher shooting angles.

It wasn't like they had super clear chances. I think that's always a benefit as a goalkeeper is when the balls are coming at you, doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad shot. I think the defending forced them into that angle or forced them into making that decision.

At the end of the day, I just try to make as many saves as I can, try to help the team win, and fortunately we did that.

Q. Obviously Novak is the one that started the year; you've sort of been taking over. As a goalkeeper unit you guys must be really close. Have you had conversations to keep his head high when you're playing and he's not playing? I'm curious the relationship between goalkeepers if you guys are sometimes trading spots and playing for different amounts of time, conversations you've had with Novak and your relationship with him?

JT MARCINKOWSKI: Yeah, I think the goalkeeping unit is a super unique position. We're by ourselves most of training and then as a goalkeeper if you're the 1 or the 2 or the 3, whatever it may be, you're pushing the next person in front of you every day in training because it's reciprocal.

If Novak is pushing me, I'm pushing him. If Brady is pushing Novak, then Novak is pushing Brady. We have a really tight group and we have trainings day in and day out, and I think that's the benefit of having a camaraderie and having a -- just because one of us is playing doesn't mean that the other one is hoping he fails.

I think in this world we can really boost each other up without having to hope for somebody else's down fall. I think if everybody succeeds then as a team we're succeeding, so if Novak is playing, then I'm going to be his biggest fan, hoping he



makes every save, and I think vice versa. You establish that trust, you establish that friendship just from working really hard and putting in the time and effort.

Because nobody knows the position like goalkeepers, and I think even the outsiders looking in, the first person at halftime to say something to me was Novak. That's the kind of relationship that we have.

I feel lucky that I'm in this locker room with not just him, not just Brady but with Hardy and everybody else in there.

Q. Ahead of this game there was a lot of talk of RSL's hot start and being the "it" team this season. Did you guys talk about that a little bit? Was that a conversation, because that first half performance from you felt like you kind of wanted to show them maybe who LA Galaxy are, like you took the game to them.

JT MARCINKOWSKI: No, it's a good question. I think at the end of the day, we really focused on ourselves today, and I think that's what a lot of our conversations over the past few days were. I think our performances over the past few matches weren't up to our standard.

We obviously looked at RSL, we looked at the way they played, but at the end of the day, the majority of what we talked about was how do we impose ourselves on to the game, how do we make sure we're fighting for each other. Like I said earlier, winning those duels, winning those second balls, pressing at the right time.

A lot of it was sort of -- a lot of the discussions were about ourselves versus just solely talking about RSL.

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^ **MARCO REUS:**

Q. Marco, have you ever started a game holding a baby during the National Anthem?

MARCO REUS: Yeah, I was already tired. It was from Cesar, their little son. He was unfortunately crying all the time, and I have experience with babies, so that's on me.

But no, it was a nice feeling for me, as well, and for Ces, as well. So all good.

Q. You guys have struggled the last couple home games and some on the road, but how important is this win for you guys tonight?

MARCO REUS: It's huge, honestly, because we were struggling at home very much. Today to win it in this way, of course we take it. I think from the first, I think we deserved to win this game because we were coming out with a different mentality.

I told the guys that we just can't go out and just play. We have to play dirty at some point in different situations on the field, and we did it, especially in the first half.

I think we could score more goals because we was creating, we was very aggressive. It was a good first half. Then the second half the energy goes down a little bit, and then we was, not struggling, but we was always aware of situations where they could be dangerous.

At the end, it was just a mental win.

Q. We know how the rhythm of the season has gone so far with game, game, game, game, game. Now you get a little bit of a more natural rhythm heading into the break, and I'm wondering how you think that's going to impact what you guys are able to do on the training field and then also in games?



MARCO REUS: I don't like it, honestly. I like to play every three, four days. That's my rhythm since 15 years.

For me, I'm used to it, and for me it's not a problem. I always want to play. But of course, if you asked the coach, he would prefer to have more training sessions.

No, I think it's good for us. It was tough games, tough weeks. So it's good for us now to recover a little bit, to have one, two days off and to come back with fresh minds, with new energy, because the next home game, it will be harder.

Q. This is the primetime game. You scored two goals. You get the game-winning goal, score in front of the fans. That feeling must never get old as a footballer, right where you have nights like these where you shine and you're the hero of the night?

MARCO REUS: I don't care, honestly. What I care about is winning. I don't care if I score. I don't care if I give assist. I just care about my team to win games. That's what I'm here for. Of course I want to score goals, I want to give assists, but in my head it's never, ever, I have to score, I need to score. It's just my team, my teammates, to help them to win the game. That's the only what I really care of.

Q. You kind of mentioned it already, there was a couple opportunities there in the first half. In the second half it was a little bit more even. What do you think allowed you guys to create all those good chances in the first half, and what would you like to see in regards to maybe finishing?

MARCO REUS: It starts with the mentality. We was more aggressive in the first -- like up front because for me, it's always when you just sit back and just wait to get the ball or to win the ball but you're in your own half, and to the other goal it's pretty far away, and it's more easier for us, I think, when we try to press in some situations, to win the ball more up front, and then you have a shot away to go to score goals. This was a huge difference, I think, to the other games.

I think that could be just the beginning for us to play with this type of mentality, aggressivity. We have a good team, yes, we knew it, but especially today it was not about just playing. We were playing dirty at some points, making fouls and being aggressive, and we're playing home, so that should be our goal every home game.

Q. As a leader of the team, I'm curious your approach to media. Is talking to media something you enjoy or are you more of a behind-the-scenes person that would rather keep it in the locker room? Curious on your approach throughout your career to media.

MARCO REUS: I mean, that's my job as a pro, to be here, to speak sometimes. I don't like it too much, honestly. Like I said two weeks ago, when I speak, then everybody should listen, and that's been my world since, I don't know, 10, 15, 20 years. I'm not a guy who is shouting all the time.

I try to give my teammates enough energy every day to help them, and of course to help myself, too, to prepare myself every day so that I can train and play games.

Yeah, you're a part of it. I'm part of it. It's not a problem for me.

Q. Unfortunately, of course, you guys lose João for a considerable amount of time. That changes the look of the attack but also provides opportunities for Harbor Miller to step in. What do you think will be the key to the attack and how big of a role is a guy like Harbor Miller going to play in that success?

MARCO REUS: Yeah, I mean, it's huge. You have to step up in some situation as a young player. If you are 18, 19, 20 and you can play for this club, it's a huge opportunity, so you have to take it. Maybe sometimes you need a couple more games to show it, to show your potential, your quality in the team. But it's part of the game. Some players getting injured and some young players have to step up. I think Harbor did a great job today, especially in the first half. He was very aggressive.

That's the only way for us.

Q. Two goals, two different moments. What did you see on the free kick, and right before you took your penalty, there was like a little bit of maybe a scuffle between Pec and Paintsil and then whoever wanted to take the penalty and you took over. What was going on through that?

MARCO REUS: I mean, on the penalty, I was ready to go. I asked Joe and Gabe if they wanted to shoot; both said yes. Of course, why not.

But I think it was my time to take the responsibility to go in front to help the team. I have enough experience in this situation. Of course both players too. But I never shot a penalty, so I think it was the first time.

I think it was the time for me to step up and to give us the lead, and on the free kick, it's just practicing. Practice, practice, practice every day. Not every day, but I did it in Dortmund so many times. It's just practice and reminds me of -- yeah, it doesn't change a lot. Of course it's a different atmosphere around here in the stadium, and the game is a little bit different than training.

But for me it's the same schedule of is it briefing, is it the steps. I'm just trying to score goals. Luckily today I got to score.

Q. Points versus performance, a lot of the times as a football fan myself, sometimes I just want my team to win and get the points, to help win titles, and there are a lot of fans that are kind of concerned about performance and stuff like that. Today it felt like for the first time in a long time you guys put both together in a really good way, especially in that first half. What did you see in that first half that you think could be a blueprint for going forward, maybe something that you haven't shared with us yet that encouraged you?

MARCO REUS: I mean, we understood that you don't have to play nice to win games. Sometimes you have to play dirty to win games. That's maybe we add another piece of how we could win games. It is still a process to do it for some players, to understand it, because every game is different.

But every game is the same. You have to go with the right mentality, with the same energy, and if you don't do it, you can't win the game.

For me, it was a little bit in the last weeks of we just want to play not nice, of course effective, we can play dirty, but today was really good toughness and playing together as a team. It doesn't matter if we're defending or if we're playing forward.

Yeah, but I would say the dirtiness in this game today was the key.

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