



## LA Galaxy Media Conference

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### Greg Vanney

Press Conference

LA Galaxy 1, Vancouver 1.

*Q. Seemed like a pretty gritty performance for you guys, maybe back-to-back now, gritty performances. What did you see from maybe the defensive effort, certainly in this game and maybe just the physicalness of this game?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, it's been coming out of the road trip and the Columbus game, it's something that we've talked internally. Like we need to show up to the competition, and we knew we were going to play in these two games. And regardless if it's there's two teams we played against or whoever it is in the future, we need to show up for the competition and play physical.

These are two teams, RSL, and now them, that are hyperaggressive, play off of the balls they can win in high position, athletic around the field. This team was the No. 1 fouling team in the League. You could see that tonight, and you've got a battle fire with fire, right.

So I thought the guys did a good job of standing up to that type of thing. We were ahead for most of the game and we were in a position to win it.

So I was, again, I was proud of the guys in the battle and the fight and the defensive for the and getting the go ahead goal and we got to see it out. That's where we fell short on what I thought was a foul we didn't need to commit against a sideline with a player facing backwards. It was -- I thought we didn't need to put ourselves.

Having said that, we had also just gone to three center backs on the field. So we were about as big as we could possibly be in that moment, and we have to be able to deal with that situation, even though it happened.

Yeah, that ends up being the difference in three points, and instead, we take one.

*Q. You talked about going to three center backs, basically five in the back. Was that a move you wanted to make because you wanted to sort of try to keep -- you knew there was going to be a lot of pressure on the goal, or was it moves you could make based off who was on the bench?*

**GREG VANNEY:** I think some of it is where I saw them positioning players are. It comes down to our ability to get to the pressure to the ball. If we can get pressure to the ball, then I feel like we don't necessarily need to have the numbers. I thought they were starting -- we weren't necessarily getting to the ball as clean. It's getting a little later in the game. Distances are getting a little bigger.

They were dropping out at times, Berhalter and the question was how are we going to get to Berhalter, and I felt like we could get to Berhalter with a midfielder if we had somebody behind him to deal with the player who is sitting in those high gaps.



And so I was really just trying to help our group create some clarity on the defensive side so that we could deal with their numbers, and hopefully start to get some momentum and deal with the situation.

Also, if we did have to get corners or anything because they were going to start throwing things that we were a little bigger to deal with it, ironically, that was the thought process. Some of it came down to experiences options to see out a game at home in that situation was trying to find a little bit of experience to put inside of there; ironically, and then I went with Troy who is the least experienced guy, and that was, you know, an effort to put something up there who could give us a little bit of target. He's fast. He gave us a little bit of size, a little bit of speed; that if we could transition out, we had another number who could keep up with the situation. It was playing the moments as much as anything, right.

*Q. I wanted to ask you, J.T. has the big save in the first half, prevented at least one goal. How important is it to have a performance like that and the confidence in the group that the goalkeeper could have a performance like that today?*

**GREG VANNEY:** You need that from a goalkeeper. I felt early in the season, if I'm being honest, you know, we probably needed a save here or two there, and it might have preserved us a couple points. I think in this last stretch of games, J.T. has been able to pick up one a game or something along those lines, where he makes a great save, and you need that. You need that across the season.

And so J.T. had a big one today. It was huge. It kept the game at zeros. It gave us a chance to get on top of the game, and then it became, again, a game of trying to see it out. You're always going to need a keeper to come up with a save, not necessarily every game, but certainly along the road you're going to have to get it done. He did a nice job of that.

*Q. Marco came off at halftime. Was that injury precaution?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, it was an injury thing. He picked it up pretty early in the half, too, I think 10 or 15 minutes into it. I think it was a contusion, maybe on the foot or something and as the half progressed, it started to get more limiting, let's just say.

So we knew about five to -- a little less than ten, five minutes to half that he probably was going to need to probably come out. So we were trying to prepare for that as well.

*Q. You mentioned bringing in Troy at the end of the game. Would love to hear a little bit more about his development thus far, and what he's specifically going to be able to bring to the team over the course of the season.*

**GREG VANNEY:** He's a new player to the club and he came in through -- and has been playing with the second team. He's a young man who is athletic. He's versatile positionally. He can play wingback. I don't even know if he knows what his position is; he's been so versatile and where he's played over the last few years and the different clubs that he's been at.

So he's a guy who brings competitive spirit. He brings, again, a little size, some verticality in his running. He's a trustworthy defender. Like all the things that you can start to build a workmanlike career on, and he's got those things.

So good, honest kid. A learner, a guy who is open-minded. So we put him on what role to do and he can take it on.

So again, somebody that can be helpful on a day like this. At some point he's got to get his debut, and we threw him into the deep end for this one.

*Q. What were some of the factors that led to the uptick in opportunities for the offense in the second half?*

**GREG VANNEY:** One of the things we've been talking about, again, since Jakob's come back and since Joe's come back is creating offense through defense, and that's how we ended up scoring the goal, right. We nick a ball into high press with Lucas, kind of stripping it and getting it to Joe and creating a transition moment from a good, short distance.

So some of it is, again, there's different ways to create offense. It can be off great possession play. It can be in transition from low positions and in some particular instance, and some of the things we want to do is try to create a little more offense



through press and recovering balls and between our lines and in higher positions and releasing Joe.

We have a nine who is fast and sharp and quick and is not easy for center backs, and it's about how we can release him into some of these dangerous moments. So that, I think in the last two games, has helped us. If you think back to RSL 2 we had a number of great chances coming off of ball recoveries in between our lines that led in to forward attacks and quick counterattacks.

*Q. With J.T.'s play, he's secured in your mind he's secured the job, at least, for the foreseeable future? That's been, over the years, the goalie thing we've discussed, but do you feel he's provided that stability for the team and sort of the veteran presence that you feel comfortable; that that's one position that you don't have to worry about?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, I think J.T. has proven that he does bring us some stability. Some, again, maturity in decision, being able to make the odd save that you need in tough games.

And so if he's doing that, then it's his position to keep.

*Q. And also, all draws aren't equal. Do you take solace in a game like this where you're playing against the top teams in the league, and they did out-shoot you guys a lot going into the half at least -- I don't know about the final numbers of it -- but is there a draw that sometimes feels okay, better than others for you?*

**GREG VANNEY:** No. Because we were ahead until the 81st minute. For me at home, you're ahead. Again, good teams, when you're seeing games out, sometimes they can get a little bit momentum. So for me, I feel like it's a game we should see out.

While I think they had some shots, aside from the one that J.T. had from really close range, I don't have a lot of them in my head that were super-threatening. Not all shots are created equal, right.

A team can have a ton of shots and a lot of them can be, you know, nothing at the end of the day.

So they did have some chance, don't get me wrong, and they did get to some dangerous positions but I don't remember a ton of really threatening moments. So I thought we held things pretty at bay, and I thought we had a real opportunity to grab three points, and unfortunately we didn't.

So it doesn't feel any better for me or for anyone in that locker room. I can tell you, they wanted to get the three points out of that.

*Q. Do you feel like in this game that final ball was elusive?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah.

*Q. It felt that way today.*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah. I do. I think as we got into some of breaks and we get out running and we're in transitions, especially a couple times where we were able to get to the end line and maybe find a cut back or a player I felt like, yeah, we didn't connect or make the best decision sometimes in some final plays.

And again, against very good teams, your opportunities overall might be a little less over 90 minutes, and then you've got to make due with the ones -- top, top games, two teams, except for the - what do you call it -- the Champions League semifinal the other day that was incredible, but a lot of games that are against good teams, you don't get a ton of chances.

So efficiency is really important, and I thought we weren't super efficient.

*Q. Despite the disappointment of letting in the last two goals, do you feel in the last two games things are starting to click in a different way?*



**GREG VANNEY:** I do. I feel like, again, it does coincide with Jakob coming back, which gives us a different type of aggression and center back and our lines are tighter, and it does coincide with Joe now getting a little fitter and the speed it gives us on the other end.

So Jakob can help us in the defensive side. And in our group, it can give us a little more confidence to be more aggressive and create more transition moments. And then Joe's speed give us a threat on the other side.

So those two things have come into play, but I think the overall mentality of the group to compete and not always look for the beautiful game but to sometimes play the gritty game is something this group needs to embrace, and I feel like we have tapped into that in the last couple of games.

*Q. You were just speaking about Joseph. Can you talk to us about the difference looks that he gives the team? We've seen him as a winger. We've seen him as kind of a withdrawn nine. So can you talk to us about, just like I mentioned, the different looks he gives the team and the versatility and how important he is to the resurgence at the moment?*

**GREG VANNEY:** Yeah, I think, you know, what he gives us is he's fast as hell, and he can run behind anybody from anywhere at any moment.

It gives you something that the opposition really has to respect. It gives you something that the opposition is fearing at all times. And that can help everybody a little bit.

And so for us, he's a guy that with his pace and with his direct running, he's going to get chances that nobody else can get because he's able to do some of those things.

So again, whether he's coming from -- when he's in a central part of it, I feel like he's sometimes more involved in the game than when he's on the wing. Sometimes I feel like you can see him in stretches and not see him in stretches. And I feel like now that he's been in the middle the last few games, I feel he's really involved in more actions.

And for center backs who sometimes like bigger guys they can deal with, when they have a small, quick guy who is as shifty and as fast as he is, it's a nightmare for those guys.

Again, when we can use him in different places, he always brings the thing that Joe brings, which is the capacity to get behind the opposition and cause all kinds of problems both in transition but in also sometimes in just our attacks, our building of our attacks. Everybody needs something that does that -- or someone who goes behind, and Joe is our No. 1 guy in being able to do that for sure.

*Q. Just sort of tailing on that, Jakob comes forwards, gets a pass to Joe, and Elijah has a chance to put you guys ahead. How big is that miss there? I imagine Elijah wants that one back.*

**GREG VANNEY:** I put it in the category of last connections that didn't really connect. A great build, great ball recovery. One of the Jakob's great strengths is the forward pass when he recovers balls and he plays it into the depth. One of Joe's great strengths, the running that we were looking for.

I think it's a great cross. I didn't see how the end of it ended but I saw they didn't make great contact. Didn't get it clean. It was one of those great opportunities that you can salvage the three points. We just didn't get it done.

Anyone else? Thanks, everybody. Appreciate you.

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