

POST GAME QUOTES
Sunday, March 12, 2023
LAFC VS. New England Revolution



STEVE CHERUNDOLO
LAFC HEAD COACH

RE: Opening Statement

“Good evening. We are happy with the result tonight and performance after a strong performance Wednesday night in a Alajuelense. The players implemented our match plan extremely well, I think with the exception of the first 15 minutes. Other than that, you know, I think New England wasn't dangerous at all, complement to our, our backline and our midfield work and obviously our attackers as well. Constantly putting them under pressure and creating opportunities through our press. At the right times, played in the passes and playing good football and I think with another goalkeeper in the net for New England, we would have one or two more – who had a spectacular game. Thank you.”

RE: “You’ve only been in this league for a couple of years so you have a smaller sample size than maybe some of us who have been watching it all along. It is typical that at this point in the season, we're watching teams that are trying to find themselves and it's going to take them a couple months to do so. You guys seem like you've stepped off of the field from last season and are playing at a similar level. What's... it seems like something man in this league has been impossible to do? What's the secret? What is it that you guys are doing right that we rarely see?”

“Well I can't comment on others but I can tell you what we do and first of all I think it's very important and I'll try to quote Jurgen Klopp, he said it in German, it doesn't really translate to English. Eleven good ideas implemented into a team or game are not as good as one good bad idea. And so I think it's very important to stay within your game model at all times, and try to force it on the opponent at all times. And last season, we had a very particular way of playing, we held on to a lot of things that LAFC had already established, and touched on a few moments in transition and defensive organization. We had a strong foundation built throughout the season. I think it was successful last year. We just built on top of that, so we gave the players reminders in preseason and we are very adamant, the coaching staff, very strong opinioned about staying within that model, and forcing guys to stay within the model because that's what they're trained to do every day and we've changed their behaviors and their habits and those behaviors and habits come out in the games in the right moments. If the players stay disciplined and do what they're asked of and I think that is a very professional view. It's difficult in this league due to the travel and the weather and everything that goes on, but I really think that's the secret to success in any league and you see it around the world. Trying to keep it simple and stay within your means.”

RE: “Ryan, is there an update on Ryan? How’s he doing?”

“No update yet, not doing great. It’s one of those plays where - and I tried talking to the officials after the game. Defenders are always at a disadvantage and extremely vulnerable in those moments. If both players attack the ball nothing happens, when both players attack the ball nothing happens, when one player does not attack the ball, bad things do happen. I can recall a scene last season with Chiqui Palacios against the Galaxy, I think with Chicharito it was where Chiqui was concussed there. So nothing good happens out of those plays for the defender

when referees do not call fouls. You're at a disadvantage when players are on the ground and the counter attack is going and players, defenders, usually get seriously injured, so I would love to see the officials protect the player's health a little more there which is part of their job.”

RE: “And the second question is kind of following up on what you talked about, the way you play, the style play. It seems like you know depth is going to be such a big thing. You can just put guys in there and it doesn't seem like you miss a beat. Is that because everyone understands in that style of play what they're supposed to do, and maybe doesn't matter if it's Player A and Player B they all are supposed to do?”

“That's a question for the players, but I do believe that everyone knows what we ask of them. You know, we train quite frequently in the model and put players in the positions that we asked them to play in the games and so yeah, the habits and the behaviors the players will see everyday. We try to disguise those, sometimes it's physically more demanding, some days it's not. But the same habits, the same passing structure, the same movements, the same positioning. Yeah, it's a bit monotonous but the end result is pretty good.”

RE: “Denis, of course, had a massive week this week. Three goals midweek and of course again today. Obviously replacing the goals from last season has been a big concern, a big talking point in the media, you know, you must be delighted with the way that you started but not great go for stuff.”

“Yeah, the way we play, and I was speaking to Ante on the bench, he has a closer look at our offensive game and Mark and I take care of the defensive game and set pieces. I said, Ante it must be fun to be an attacker on this team. Because you do get a lot of chances, you get a lot of good opportunities. I think, yeah, we're delighted with Denis and we knew he had a lot of potential last year to score a lot of goals in this league and to be, you know, one of the best players in the league. Absolutely. Last year didn't click prolifically, but he was still a very important, important piece of our championship team. And this year, yeah, he's scoring and he will continue to score. He's, he's good. Yeah, we're not concerned. I know, it was a theme in the media, Chicho gone, who's gonna score? We were never concerned because we know our style of play will get a lot of players looks, you know, whether or not that player scores has a lot to do with individual quality and it's very important also tonight tonight for Depuy to get a goal. He's been real close the past couple weeks and that will do wonders for his confidence.”

RE: “Coach, you talked about the midweek game with Alajuelense, and rotation being an important part of the game. Can you talk to us about the decision making of bringing on Carlos in the second half and just this decision making of your staff on that.”

“Yeah, pretty good. Carlos is obviously. I don't need to comment on Carlos' qualities. We were hoping to bring Carlos in to bring a little more stability on the ball and calmness and some quality passing around the goal. Set up wingers in these key moments and he did exactly that. Carlos is a player who can play 90 minutes, every week. 90 minutes every three days is tough for any player. So yeah, it's just something we want to look at tonight and nothing, nothing to do really with Carlos. It's more as to get Stipe a start tonight and that's how we decided on the starting eleven tonight.”

RE: “Speaking of players that fit right into the style of play, what have you seen from Timothy in terms of how he's impacted the game? He had the penalty today, and then just getting that reward against also the way he scored?”

“Yeah Timothy is a player that I knew and have known for a while in Germany. And, you know, I came across him, because he fits the profile of our 8 at this club. So you know, he is good on the press, is very good technically and he can score goals as well. And he has a big engine, he can run, and our three in midfield have to run a lot. So he fit our profile. I think that is very important here at LAFC. When we go bring in new players, and we didn't touch on your question earlier, it's easy for those players to implement what we ask of them because we scout exact profiles for exact positions and Timmy is exactly that. On top of it he's really enjoyed his time here in LA and in this group and he's happy and I know for a fact that happy players are also good players, and vice versa. So we're going to see a lot more of Timmy and I think that was the start of a good season.”

RE: “I see. Congratulations on the win. We were just talking to Bruce before and he also identified that 15 minute mark. He said his team played pretty well up until that first 15 minutes he likely saw and then things went haywire for them. What do you think changed it after that 14 minute mark.”

“It was our defensive work in midfield, there was a little bit of a mix up as who was going to press Polster and they were able to kind of get out of our press a few times, which pinned us back in our own end. So we didn't really have a grasp of the game or control of the game at that point. The adjustments in midfield from Ilie stepping up a little bit at times, but also Denis not pressing one of their center backs and sitting on Polster changed everything and our wingers would get a little more aggressive with their press. They didn't have any solutions after that, and we continued to that matter and it continued for the rest of the game.”

RE: “Steve you talked about Stipe and being able to give him a start and how the goal will help his confidence. It seemed early, it did seem slightly indecisive but really grew into the game. Is that something that he doesnt have so much in training and you think its going to translate over to the game now that he has a little more confidence after that goal.”

“No, it shows a lot of quality and competence at training. I just think you have to understand the bigger picture. Stipe, the person just moved a long way from home and he's very young and he's alone and I think that is a lot. To play in front of these stands or this stadium and atmosphere and then go to Costa Rica – there's a lot of new for a young guy, and he's not used to. That's why it's very important to get that goal tonight and his performance has been good, with a lot, a lot of potential and that's what excites us greatly about Stipe. He's a very good learner and very eager worker. And so he will continue to improve and be prolific for us.”