

POST GAME QUOTE

Saturday, September 16, 2023

LAFC VS. LA Galaxy



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LAFC HEAD COACH

Re: Steve, you talked a lot about how you are not panicking, or weren't panicking through this little bad stretch - you have a month to go before the playoffs, is this the right time to have this kind of turn around? And then Denis, I don't think he had scored in two months, and then had two big goals today.

“Yeah I still believe in our players and how we interpret this game and how we train the guys and how we prepare for matches - contrary to all of you in this room and the fans, I get to see the guys every day, and that has a calming effect, because I can see they understand, they do it, they apply it. Sometimes in games things don't go your way, there are things in life that happen - these are all human beings, a lot going on, and sometimes it doesn't click during games. So that comforts me every day to see all of the training sessions and its like riding a bike - the qualities that the players have, they don't go away. Sometimes you get a flat tire but its easy to fix. Yeah again the same for him [Denis Bouanga], attackers going through stretches where sometimes...there is a great saying in German, 'if you have dog shit on your shoe, you really have dog shit on your shoe.' It means basically if you're stepping in dog shit, then you're stepping in dog shit all the time, and it's tough to get off your shoe and you are just kind of in that phase - it sticks around a little bit. Sometime attackers go through these phases, and Denis has a lot of quality he has shown us time and time again. Just gotta wait it out and keep things simple and the ball will fall again - good performance from him again.”

Re: Olivera got his first start, what did you see from him? What were you expecting that he could do different and bring to the attack?

“Energy, verticality in our game, deep runs, a deep threat. This opponent has always struggled with a deep threat on the field and having a pass giver and Carlos coming with Denis and Christian running behind was dangerous and effective; I think we are happy with his performance and that added element to our game.

Re: What did you see from the group this week in training, trying to turn things around, clean up those mistakes and those things that you had talked about before? How special was this victory before the roadtrip?

“Much needed three points. I was happy with the response from the guys all week; they were very focused. I think it was clear from minute one who was winning this game tonight. I think we were the better team, had the better chances - I think statistics would speak for that as well.

There was not a phase, I think for me, obviously when it's 2-2 it's a little different, but we still felt where we were in the game, and that we're always happy to create enough chances to win the game. The goals we conceded were pretty soft, unfortunately, but things that don't happen very often I'm okay with, the amount of chances that were created by the Galaxy were not many. So I was happy with the performance."

Re: Coach, Max between the pipes today, was there something that you saw over the course of the last couple of weeks to make the switch and if so, is that going to be the switch moving forward? And also, what did you see from him tonight?"

"Yeah not a whole lot he could do on the goals, but Max played like Max does. I think he is a player who, much like John too, gives the players confidence, has energy from the back, is a good communicator. Max distributed the ball well tonight, and didn't have to make a whole lot of saves. So I guess we will have to see moving forward, but we are interpreting positions right now - we are fielding players in all positions, in order to win each game. Each game will have its solutions and that's how we decide things moving forward. There aren't many games left in the season and we will treat every game like its our last."

Re: Steve on the first goal, when they immediately strike back - what's the sense when they do that? It's almost like gut punch; you had 10 seconds to celebrate the goal and here they are scoring on you. Is this just another El Trafico moment for you?

A: "Yes and no. The defensive structure and behavior in that moment was so poor it was almost unbelievable. Right after our goal, it's a very vulnerable moment; that's never happened to us as long as I've been here. That's the first time we've conceded a goal right after we scored, and I just think the guys had a mental lapse for a moment. Nothing concerning in mind."

Re: Mario didn't start but came off the bench and contributed to the 4th goal, how do you see the attacking options that you have? Is he better off the bench or is it game dependent? What do you think about it?

"Totally independent - depends on the opponent, depends on our offensive ideas, our match plan. As I said earlier, using Denis and Christian gave us depth, that was the idea to be a little more narrow with our wingers, but you need a pass giver, and Carlos is very good at coming in the pocket and setting guys up. Which worked and every game will have its own solutions and next game we will figure that out as well. Mario is somebody who interprets the night a little higher than Carlos does - so it's a different player, different set of tools. And we will use each player to his best ability to give this team the best opportunity to win the game."

Re: Want to get your thoughts on midfield play; you guys more or less shut down Puig. I thought Ilie had a fantastic game and we saw Bogusz really be active. Just the way that you guys were able to take control of the midfield.

"Yeah, Galaxy did a great job possessing the ball; it's a very good passing team. According to the stats that I read, not sure if it's the same ones, but the ones that I am privy to, they are the best in the league at passing the ball and bypassing opponents. That's a quality of theirs, and a lot of that is because of the guys in the middle of the field and they way they interpret it. These

are the things we know, other teams know it obviously as well, but you can shut down the middle of the park down, their combination plan and rotations, and you have a good chance at beating this team.”

Re: What did you think were the keys to you guys doing well - what were the elements?

“It’s work on the training pitch but it’s also having that understanding that they are going to go through the middle. That’s what they want, and everything leading up to a pass in the middle is geared toward making sure that pass is cutting over the defenses and they are excellent on their combination plays; their rotations are good - so making sure our players understand the simple principles of defending inside out and making them go around us, was helpful today.”