

POST GAME QUOTES
Saturday, April 27, 2024
LAFC VS. Portland Timbers



STEVE CHERUNDOLO
LAFC HEAD COACH

Re: Your thoughts on what you did well and what happened the 2nd half that caused them to catch up.

“We were very pleased with the first half, as you said, that was more of what we’ve seen in the past couple weeks - trying to attack with control of the game. The only situations we got ourselves into kinda created ourselves with two ball losses in the middle of the park - we talked about that at half. I think in the second half what happened - obviously the opponent has to come out and press a little more - that’s fine - but we made some really poor decisions on the ball, more specifically our attackers and our 8s. Trying to go too fast and losing track of staying connected with or without the ball, moving forward as a group, controlling the game again, taking the sting out, taking the tempo out. Those, whatever you want to call them, 35 minutes of the second half, is not what we want to see - it was a step in the wrong direction. That’s what I shared with the guys; I was quite disappointed with it. It’s not professional. And totally unnecessary. Too many guys are cheating and being lazy defensively and not following the rules. You get yourselves into trouble against teams who have attacking pieces who can beat you with shots or set pieces. So yeah, not good enough. I am happy with the way the guys took the game after the red card. They were smart with their attacks and they created some chances; I am happy with that. I think we deserved to win the game because of that. This was much more difficult than it needed to be tonight, and that’s what I’m disappointed with.”

Re: Denis Bouanga showed up big for you tonight - earlier in the season you were critical of him, that he needed to step up - do you think he’s found his form now?

“As finishing in the box - yes. I think that his timing of runs and him being dangerous - yes, in possession. So if you are just thinking final third - yeah I think he is improving there for sure, but leading up to the final third, I think he has a lot of improvement to go. And it’s not so much that he needs to improve, a player of his age and his ability, but it’s more of just being consistent with his decision making along the lines of our game model. I think that would go a long way for the group, more importantly, and of course for Denis himself. The game, from our end into the own box or the final third, should be very simple and very repetitive and very predictable for your own teammates. Unfortunately his decision making doesn’t make it predictable at times, and you can throw a few guys in that same boat as well.”

Re: Maxime Chanot with extended time starting on the back line today, could you just talk about how he’s still continuing to adjust and learn on the fly and how he played today?

“Yeah Max had a complete game tonight; I thought he had a good performance. He plays defensively, was good for us on the ball - had composure and started a lot of our possessions. The best way I could describe his performance was he had a very complete performance, with

or without the ball - so definitely more of that, and it was good to see tonight. He's, with every minute, getting better, and I still think he can improve, but certainly a great performance from Max tonight - both Maxs actually."

Re: With the set pieces, how are you looking at the execution of that and specifically what you guys have been able to do off corner kicks?

"For us, it's all Mark; he runs set pieces for us. With our service and timing of runs, when players are performing and doing what we're asking them to do - it works. And it has been working offensively, but we've also sometimes been cheating defensively this year - we've conceded a few that we shouldn't have. So we continue to work on that. I think it's really important to spend time on that in training, multiple days of the week. And that usually pays off, and it has so far. Because set pieces, as you can see in this league, and all the leagues, it's a way to unlock results and performances. If you can go up a goal early in a game with a set piece, it really opens the door for a lot of other things, which has been crucial for us - especially at home. We'll continue to work and get better at that, but it has a lot to do with the service, the quality of the service, and the timing of the runs. Tonight the service was good."