

## JOSE GOMES AT THE STAR FANS FORUM

28 February 2019

- Over 150 fans in a packed 1871 Suite grilled new manager Jose Gomes for the full 90 minutes in a session hosted by Ian Maynard – STAR chairman
- English football? *“It’s a dream for European and South American coaches to work in England. We are in the football country. I’ve never felt this atmosphere and passion from the stands, the intensity of the play.”*
- Football philosophy? *“First you want to win. But also I want to play good football. I was insistent on this before being appointed here. In England there are good facilities and pitches so you can... if we play direct football with this squad we will have more problems. We have good technical players. I want intelligent football, using the weak points of the opponent, magic players who can do things to get the people in the stand cheering.”*
- Playing out from the back? *“We want to control the ball. But it is not only one way of playing. We train six different ways for the goalkeeper to distribute the ball for example, giving him more options. Our players receiving the ball must have a good body position, to turn as they receive the ball...yes, sometimes they make my heart jump a beat too!”*
- Can the players shoot more? *“You are right. Sometimes I am frustrated, we move the ball around the box and no-one shoots. The three big things we are working on are more shots, a higher defensive line and controlling the game more with the ball.”*
- Bringing on O’Shea versus Rotherham? *“We led and the players were naturally dropping to protect our goal, so we were giving more space to the opponent and more balls were coming into our box. We weren’t playing our style of football. And we are not so strong against direct football. Meite is a set-piece asset but he was ill with flu, so I needed to replace him with someone who could defend set pieces and help us control the ball better.”*
- Losing so many points from winning situations? *“The players’ natural intention is to protect the points, our goal, so they start defending deeper. Next time if we are winning 1-0 I want us to try and get the second one!”*
- Lacking defensive midfield cover? *“Rinomhota will recover soon I hope. We have changed a few details, little positions and Ejaria, Baker and Swift did well, were strong enough in that position. If we go with them again I see no problem in this position.”*
- Who made the calls on the January window transfers? *“It’s teamwork. The scouting did well, the directors did well. We are under Financial Fair Play so we couldn’t spend much. I wanted to reduce the number of professional players and allow the talent from the Academy to come through. Twelve players went out which was good. Aluko received a very good offer and we have to follow the right way to reduce our budget. My mentor told me when building your squad you have 11 friends week by week who are in the team,*

*you have some on the bench who know you and the players who stay out of your squad are like your enemies (said with a smile) and you don't want to be out-numbered by them! We are better than we were before the January window."*

- *How many points do we need in March? "Just let me touch my crystal ball! The most important is to win the next game – 100% focus on the next game at Ipswich otherwise you lose intensity."*
- *What about the U23s? "I talk every day with the U23 manager. I watch their games. We played very well at Man U (won 3-1), good passing combinations. Five or six players train with the first team every day, some of them will be in next season's squad I'm sure. Danny Loader, as you asked about him, is a talented player. I'm really pushing him to give more. He can't relax. And asked about Novakovich - we must consider for next season."*
- *What about our support? "I have always felt the support of our fans – the memory of 3,000 Reading fans making noise at Old Trafford, you fans are one extra player. I like the way you're supporting the players – all Reading fans in every stand."*
- *Many thanks to Jose Gomes for an informative and entertaining evening.*