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Raphael Wicky

Press Conference



Now, yeah, how much better can they get, they can all get more rhythm, more games, and throughout the season, I think even get better, yes. That's what we expect; that we are -- we are getting better.

Q. What are the injury updates on Teran, Collier, Herbers and even what's Kenneth Kronholm's status right now?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, so Kenny had another little surgery on his knee, on his meniscus last week where he had to clean up some things, which doesn't put him back much longer than it was, actually, than he would actually have been out, anyway. Sew had a little procedure last week and he's in rehab now and yeah, hopefully he will be back with the team, not much later than we have expected him, anyway.

Elliot is day-by-day. He's reintegrating into the group. Yeah, so we then always have to see how they react when they reintegrate. Same with Carlos. Yeah, that's -- and Fabi is not yet with the group. Fabi I think, what I have been told, did a good progression but is not yet reintegrating with the group.

Q. Do you have an estimated timeline on Kronholm and when you're hoping to get him back at least training with the team?

RAPHAEL WICKY: No, I don't have that. I don't want to give that because he just had this little procedure. It's not a big thing. It's on his meniscus but it's not the same as Stanislav had, so that shouldn't really put him back too much more. But I cannot give you guys a number or weeks.

Q. Your midfield three Saturday night seemed to have good chemistry. What did you make of Giménez, Medrán and Stojanovic together and how much better can they be?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, they are all three very, very good footballers. They are obviously experienced guys and really good with the ball and they have shown that and there's a lot of creativity between the three of them and they played some amazing, amazing football on Saturday.

Q. Obviously some beautiful football played on Saturday but there was still a couple issues I'm sure you wanted to work on. One of those probably be set piece marking, a little bit different this time. It didn't seem like anybody lost their mark. It seemed like maybe Adam out-jumped Francisco. Is there anything more you could have done on that particular play to stop that goal from happening, do you think?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, we spoke about that with the team, of course. Yes, there should have been physical contact with Adam Buska. We know he's the tallest guy and we know he's good in the air, but at least he doesn't have a free run or free run to then jump. That's the thing which we spoke about and that's something the team needs to have solidarity on the field and take leadership on the field.

We know he's tall. He's good in the air. But yeah, physical contact is what needs to be there, maybe block his run. Make it harder for him to get actually in a free spot.

Q. What was your take on the whole Super League fiasco?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, there was a lot of talk going on over the last, I think years, over the Super League. I never really followed it that closely. I'm not that involved or getting information.

But I am happy that -- I'm happy that it looks like it's not going to happen because I -- look, I grew up watching Champions League. Then I was lucky to play Champions League and then I was lucky enough to coach Champions League. I think that in Europe, you grow up with the football; if you have a really good season, you get rewarded at the end of the season. If you have a bad season, yes, you get punished and then you may be relegated.

But in the end, if smaller club and smaller teams are having the possibility to go into these competitions. That's what these players all dream of. That's what the coaches dream

of. That's what the history is; that you give these smaller clubs, platforms, as well to, promote their work and you want to be rewarded for that. That's what we all want to play for.

So I think that should stay; that in the end of the day, if you have a good season, that you have the possibility, at least, to go into these big competitions where everyone dreams. If that's not going to be any more, like it was at the Super League, then it takes a lot of tradition, a lot of history away and I think it also takes the competition away, yeah.

So I really hope that not everything will be changed in the future. I know that all these things develop and evolve but there are certain things which you shouldn't take away from the game.

Q. Was it heartening that the fans spoke up the way they did? Was that another testament to just the power of fans in soccer and just how much fans matter to the whole sport?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, look, we cannot always say that our fans are important to us; that we listen to the fans; that we live from the fans; we want to play in front of the fans, and then we don't listen to them. Or then we take -- their decision takes -- of course obviously you're not going to ask the opinion of the fans, that's the nature of things.

But yes, it's good that the fans actually showed what they want and certain clubs reacted to that.

Q. If you agree with me that Gastón should be more involved have more touches on the ball -- would you agree with me, the rhythm of the season just starting or is that something the team needs to get better at to get him involved?

RAPHAEL WICKY: This was a connection problem. I couldn't hear what you said, sorry, can you please repeat?

Q. About Gastón and how much was evolved on that first touch on the first game; is there something the team needs to do to get him involved?

RAPHAEL WICKY: We always want Gastón involved in our build up because he's good and strong there. Other teams now know that Gastón is a player who helps us building, so they may or mark him closer so they may mark him closer, so we or him on the field needs to find different solution. But if there a guy or even sometimes two guys near him, that must give options to other guys. So I think -- or he then has to find different spots or different positioning to receive balls. But I'm not worried about that because the midfield we have, I think we will be able to create these

moments where Gastón can have an influence and then again, with games and with rhythm and as long as the season goes, Gastón will normally get stronger and stronger.

Q. Regarding your next opponent, how much information do you have reason about Atlanta and how much did they change for you, and how much information do you have before facing them for the first time?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, we obviously have enough information. We have their games which they played in Champions League and we have the game with Orlando, and we know they have a new coach and we know how this new coach plays. They have some good additions.

They are a strong team. I mean, Atlanta has been a strong team since they have been in this league, very strong. They had a difficult year last year but even last year they had very good players.

So we know that this is a good opponent. We respect the opponent. And we know what they are trying to do and we are going to prepare for that. But we also believe that we have our chances to, to, win these games.

Q. The next game, are you planning to have almost the same squad for next Saturday, and if you agree that the team always plays better when they play visiting?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Are you asking if I have the same starting 11 or the same squad?

Q. The same starting 11.

RAPHAEL WICKY: It's Wednesday. I'm not going to tell you that today. I hope you understand that. But there is always chances that, that, there will be a lot of the players on the field again, but it's Wednesday. We have to see how players recover from the trainings, how they train and how they feel towards the end of the week.

But of course I'm not going to plan changes for the next game; I also believe continuity, but if there is going to be one or two or three changes, I cannot tell you right now. I think every player needs to train well and be ready to play on the weekend.

Q. You touched on knowing what Atlanta is going to do a little bit but one of the advantages you might have is that Gastón played for Gabriel Heinze when he was in Argentina. Have you talked to Gastón about what he would expect from the game at all?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, we've talked a little bit but we also have a coaching staff, we have an analysis department and we watch the games and we know what to expect. But yes, I have spoken with him a little about certain things but there is nothing different he told me than what we saw. But yeah, we spoke a little bit about certain things.

Q. On a more serious note than soccer, yesterday the club made a statement after the conviction of Derek Chauvin and re-upped its pledge to racial and social justice. With all these recent incidents, and especially the video release of Chicago police the shooting of 13-year old Adam Toledo, what kind of conversations is the club having with you and the players? And how are they educating everybody about these topics, especially with Chicago's history of policing and segregation?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, look, we have made as a club last year a statement and a pledge that we will do more against racism, and we still stand with that. We are against any form of violence and racism, and that's -- that's what we are telling the players still. When we have discussions with them, those are things we talk with them about.

But otherwise, to be honest, we haven't had -- we haven't now had a lot of meetings about that but when it comes up, that's what we say and that's what we are standing for. We are against any form of violence and any form of racism, and it's important everyone knows that.

Q. Is there any update on players getting vaccinated or anything? I know things have opened up now pretty much around the city and I think the country.

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, we have been vaccinated Saturday night after the game, the ones who wanted the vaccine, first shot.

Q. Do you have an idea of how many -- what percent of your team and your traveling party was vaccinated?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I have, but I keep that as confidential. So I am not -- I am not here to say how many players got it or didn't get it.

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