

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



New England 2, Chicago 2

Q. Just a little bit of housekeeping, I guess Francisco, his situation, is that just because of coming back from the national team or is there more concern beyond that, health and safety?

FRANK KLOPAS: Right now, all I can tell you is health and safety protocols. That's about it, what I can tell you right now.

Q. And Gastón not in the game day roster, was that because of the turnaround between the national team and coming back to travel with you guys?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, yeah, definitely. They played Thursday night, late. It would have been impossible for him, very difficult. Long travel to be here. It would be asking a lot of the player and risking injury for sure.

Q. Looking at tonight's game, two responses after going behind twice. What was your reaction to how the guys played tonight?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think I'm proud of the guys. I think the team tonight, we went into the game and I talked about the guys being brave; just going out on the field and having the right mentality and attitude and confidence and going out, we knew it was against a very good open. We've played them in some good games this season.

And there was a belief. I wanted them to play with confidence. We had a very good game planned that they executed. I think the beginning of the game was a little bit slow on our part, and I think we grew into the game and we started taking control, but in the end, for me, the important thing is that the team showed a lot of character tonight. Great mentality, great attitude, great belief by everyone. The work rate was there.

But more important, it was just the confidence we played. We fell behind twice against them and we never gave up.

Obviously we made some good changes, I felt, and the guys came in with positive energy.

So it's just a great team performance overall, great point on the road. But I'm just proud of the guys because the belief was there and their mentality and what they put into it, and that's what this team should be all about, and if we were like this all season long, I think that we would have been in a different situation now. That's just my belief.

Q. As you were watching the game, and you've had a few minutes to reflect, do you think about that at all? Like where was that for most of this season?

FRANK KLOPAS: I mean, there were moments where we played well. There were games that, you know, you saw the kind -- same kind of mentality, but maybe the changes don't go in, and then you pay the price on the other end. That happens.

But we can look back and evaluate, but look, I mean, for me, the important thing today besides, look, the result, and I think a very good performance on the whole, collectively, and as a group. You know, guys that were on the field and guys that didn't get in, there was a belief and there was a push from the guys.

It's just the attitude and the mentality. I don't care if you have talent. If you don't have the right mentality and attitude to go on the field and work hard, okay, because sometimes it's not going to be always good with the ball. You have to find other ways to help your team. And I think that there was good moments with the ball, and there was a lot of hard work that everyone put in in order to get this result, and that's what you need.

But there was never a letdown. There was never one guy on the field that didn't leave everything on the field, or, you know, even when went down, you could just sense the confidence and the belief. I always felt like we were going to get back into the game.

So that's why I'm extremely proud of the guys, and we just have to now, look, enjoy this great point on the road and regroup and continue to finish every game with the same mentality and attitude. That's all I ask for, and I think that's all the fans and everyone in the City of Chicago wants from this team, just to leave everything on the field.

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Q. Looking at Ignacio, scored tonight, thought he was active. What did you see from his performance tonight, and how important is it for him to feel the season strong considering some of the ups and downs that he's had not just this year but in general since he's been in Chicago?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think the injuries have hurt Nacho, in order to get that consistency that you talk about, but you see his quality. You see his quality. He's a guy that's very explosive. He's one guy in the final third that can take guys on and he can create and he can score, but he needs to stay healthy and he needs games.

But I told him tonight after the game, you know, when he plays games like tonight and you score goals like that, that's him. He has it in him. But he needs to be consistent, and he needs to do it all the time in every game. He needs to be a guy that we need to count on because he has that quality.

But now it requires taking care of himself, working hard on the field and really being a guy that every day, he tries to improve and get better. That kind of mentality that you need, you know, it's not a light switch that you say: Well, today I'm going to turn it on; tomorrow, not. You need to have the mentality and the attitude. Because he has got all the talent in the world but talent gets you nowhere if you don't have the mentality and attitude. And I'm not saying he doesn't, but he needs to get pushed every day to have that -- he needs to get pushed every day.

Q. I asked you about Stanislav on Wednesday. What did you see from him tonight? Looked like he had a lot to offer this evening.

FRANK KLOPAS: Very good. Very good performance again by Ivanov. I loved it. I loved his performance. He was active. He made great runs. He wasn't scared to take players on. His decision-making was good. He worked hard defensively.

And you could just see, also, he's finding his rhythm with the games. It's not easy when you miss preseason and four months of the season with his knee, and you don't get that sharpness in training. You need games. He's looking sharp. I was happy to see his performance tonight.

But as a whole, collectively as a group, I'm extremely pleased with the group. Don't forget about Gaga, too, what a performance he had.

Q. What can he learn from this tonight, going toe-to-toe with a team as good as New England?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, he's a young guy. I mean, it's amazing, I don't know if he's 17, right, you have goalkeepers that -- it's incredible. But you can just see his maturity, and I think he's a guy that Adin Brown, our goalkeeping coach, has done an unbelievable job with him. But he's very grounded.

And also, Bobby, the veteran goalkeeper, who helps him all the time. So I think he has some great mentors, a great coach. And you know, with goalkeepers, look, you're going to make some mistakes but he made some unbelievable saves and you need to learn. You need to play games.

He's so young, it's amazing. Maybe even in ten, 15 years, we'll be talking about him and say, he's hit his prime now. It's scary how good this kid can be. And you know what, he deserves only the best. He's a great kid. He's very grounded, he's very mature, and he's got a tremendous, tremendous upside and I couldn't be prouder.

I just told him, "Look, one day when you leave the Fire and go play in some big club, don't forget about us, the little people. Give us some tickets to come see you when you're in the Champions League."

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