

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Chicago Fire 2, Austin 0

**Q. Can you talk a little about what this means for the team emotionally and for you as well, especially in a competition with so much history, not just for the club but for you personally as well?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I mean, it's special. But we go into every game, and I told the team, every time we step on the field, we go in with the confidence to win. We set a goal early in the year that we were going to do whatever it takes to try to be the first team to reach five, MLS team.

So one game at a time. And this was a difficult place to come and play against a really good team, a very good team. The guys did an amazing job, and you know, great performance by the group. Great individual performance, but the collective group was amazing today, and you know, enjoy the moment, and then our mind shifts now already because obviously there's a lot of games coming and we have a big game Saturday.

So we're on to the next game already. But let's have a safe trip back, enjoy this moment and then regroup tomorrow and start planning for New England. But just an amazing performance from the group.

**Q. It seems like finally, health is coming together for Shaq and we are beginning to really see it on the field. It seems like tonight he was creating all over.**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah.

**Q. What did you see from your No. 10 tonight with his performance?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Amazing. Shaq is, for me, just an incredible player. He needed games to find his rhythm. You know, it doesn't matter who you are. If you don't train, if you don't get games, just training -- the game gives you the sharpness and the rhythm, and I said after last game, he's just going to be getting sharper and better with every

game, and he's just an incredible player that can make a difference in every match and he's shown that tonight. We was brilliant and it was wonderful to watch.

**Q. We saw a bit of a change of shape today, a 3-4-3. Was that an attempt to counter Austin's back three and what was behind that shift?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, we just felt that it was the best way for us to be good without the ball and in our defensive shape but also be in a position where now we can really hurt them with the ball. We worked on a couple things that you saw tonight. We had a really good game plan. We presented to the players. We were very clear and detailed about everyone's role, and the guys did an amazing job. It all comes down to putting players in spots where they can be successful. Everyone, I mean, there were a lot of great performances, but from a collective group, it was incredible. When you come on the road against a really good team, you know, they put their best foot forward and so did we because both teams wanted to advance. We scored two goals, we created some great opportunities. We got a clean sheet. I think Richie played incredible. The back line played incredible. But the whole team was just superb tonight. And that's what kind of performances you need to win games like this, and we had it tonight.

**Q. We say Jairo, a little bit of him tonight. Curious where he's at and where you're comfortable with playing him this point knowing the recent knocks he's been dealing with?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, even after the last game, he's someone that I need to -- he's training now which is a plus and he's just getting fitter and sharper.

You saw today his run. I mean, the first opportunity he had, it's really special, the way he bent the ball and hits the post and goes out, but he then gives another pass on the outside of the foot, a perfect weight on the ball to strike.

He's a very quality player, and he gives us different options, you know, depending how we want to play. He can play out wide and he can play also in the middle and he can play in a 4-3-3. He can play an eight and he can play a ten. He's a quality player. It's great now that he's playing now and getting sharper and fitter and getting more confidence. You can see the impact he had in the time he

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