

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas Press Conference



Q. Just first off, one housekeeping thing, wondering, a timeline for Carlos Terán's return to the pitch now that he's got some training time behind him.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, Carlos, he participated in the last couple days in training before we left.

I think in everything -- he was left behind in Chicago to continue his return to play, kind of a little bit more intense training while we were aware. So if everything goes well, I see him meeting the team in Kansas City and being available for the game.

Q. The last ten days or so since the team has been -- the little break and then the team has had the opportunity to refocus and reset going into the second half of the season, what has the message been from you as you've been trying to get the team to understand that the results have been what the results have been but there's still a Cup to play for, as well as a playoff push to look ahead to?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, that's a great question. I think the important thing for us, obviously I think one of the things that I talk to the team about with 17 games left, it's getting back to almost the things that we can control from a team standpoint.

I think looking to improve individually and collectively every day, and just really focus on stuff in training every day that we can improve on. You know, the mentality that we bring forth, from exercise to exercise, all those little things, the intensity we bring in, the focus, the concentration. I think that has to be sharp every day and we just look to do the little things right and continue to focus on just improving daily collectively and individually.

And you're right, there's 17 games left to play. I know that we are all disappointed with the result in Houston that we are out of the Open Cup but we put everything into. It everything we enter, whether it's a game or a tournament, we are there to try to win it. We put everything into it.

Unfortunately that day, the little things didn't go our way, and now we have to move on. There's 17 games left and our goal is still to do whatever we can to make the playoffs, and it's been a tough stretch obviously. There were a lot of home games in the beginning that we maybe didn't get the results that we deserved to get, and now there's a tough stretch, and even the next three games will be on the road.

But then you can see a lot at the end of the tunnel where we have that four games that are going to be at home, and you know, those are moments where you can get on a streak a little bit and find your rhythm and get guys healthy and playing well, and hit their stride towards the end of the season and get into the playoffs.

Sometimes it's not always how you start but it's finishing strong, getting into the playoffs, and teams that do that have momentum going into the playoffs wind up doing really well.

Q. You mentioned momentum. Chicago has never won against Portland. So how can the team find a way to change that history and gain momentum so you can push for a playoff spot at the end of the season?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think always in the past, I've been in many games here where again, it comes down to close games, and it comes down to, you know, little moments in-game where you need to have discipline and focus through 90 minutes.

I mean, you're playing on the road here. We know what the crowd is going to be like; how can we take the crowd of it. They are a team that's really good in transition, being good with the ball, making sure that our rest defense, that we are organized and that we are compact and that we recover and we get behind the ball, and when we get chances we need to put them away. We need to have confidence. We need to play with confidence on the field and we need to be together.

I think if we do that with the focus, concentration and intensity, we've played well. We're in every game. It's just now in those little moments, you know, finding ways where we can be better in the final third, the final pass, the final execution. You know, maybe finishing plays off a little bit better, and just staying focused all the way to the end. I

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think that's what it's really going to take, not only in this game but I think in every game that we play the rest of the season.

Q. And you mentioned confidence is huge for the team and how they play. How has the international break given the players some rest and some confidence in themselves, given that the last couple results have been difficult?

FRANK KLOPAS: It's been difficult. Especially when you lose, it's difficult -- all the games you lose are difficult but the one in Columbus right before the break, you come back and then you give up a goal like that. And I think the three days that we had off, I think were really good, and it gave us an opportunity to get back on the field and really work on some things that we needed to work on and things that we saw over those ten-game stretch that we had over 33 days.

But also, still, we're miss something guys now on international duty, but also this break, maybe it's given an opportunity for some guys like Carlos to get healthy and be very close where he can be a part of the team.

So I think the break was good, even though that last result wasn't great, but it gave us an opportunity just to get away a little bit, and then get back with energy and start working again. And especially like I said, we have the second half of the season and a lot to play for.

Nothing is over here. You know, in this league, you get on a run in two, three games, and everything changes. It's just momentums. And we've been in every game; we've played well. Now it's a matter of just being a little bit more consistent and just being a little bit sharper in both phases of the game, with the ball and without the ball.

Q. Considering that you put the lineup, the regular, more of the players lineups during the last stretch of the games, I want to ask you if are you involved in looking for new players for this summer window to hire some forward positions or midfield positions? What do you think is missing in the Fire that can bring some more energy inside the club?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think we are always as a club and as a team, if there's an opportunity to make the team better, you know, we are always looking to improve the team.

Obviously I think that the team right now, we are looking at this window that's going to come and see potentially how we can improve the team. I think there could be a couple options there with some new signings that can come in.

But you know, I can't specify or say anything more than that right now but potentially we could have one or two more players that could be joining the club when the transfer window does open.

And let's not forget, when you look at the team, the injuries, obviously, also play a part. But also a guy like Chris Mueller that probably is out the remaining of the season, that's a guy that you miss anywhere between five to ten goals. You know, how can you replace that? How can we bring someone that's a little more dynamic and has flexibility to play a couple different spots, seven, eleven, or even potentially nine.

So I think the opportunity is there to bring a couple signings, one or two signings that could help the club for the end of the season and also in the future.

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