

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Frank Klopas

Press Conference

Chicago Fire FC 1, Sporting KC 0

**Q. Curious, very busy day overall for the team and the club, your performance, first half, a lot of opportunities didn't work out but then coming out in the second half with that goal and then finishing it out?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Great performance from the team. I'm extremely proud of the group, the effort, the attitude, the mentality, the ability to stick with the game plan and really in difficult moments, improve as a team and from game-to-game manage situations better. You know, two difficult places to come in Portland and here and so start the second half of the season with two huge, huge, massive wins for the team and obviously really good performance. We played well. We created good opportunities, and everybody just stepped up.

Again, everybody played extremely well. Chris Brady in the back made some key saves, and what can you say? It's just a great performance. And congrats to all the players.

**Q. A couple opportunities with Brian Gutierrez today. We talked earlier in the year, especially with Ezra, about wanting Brian to make the right decision when he gets toward the penalty area, be that pass or take the shot on, whatever, and a lot of times, he was taking maybe that one dribble too many. Seemed like tonight was one of those nights where he really put it all together and I'm curious what you saw from your young midfielders. He seems to really taking that next step.**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I want him to be more aggressive, and this is what I've talked to him from the beginning -- making that one extra move, and decision-making that's for sure but in the final third he's got to have more of a killer mentality, finish plays off himself, take guys on, combine. If it's the final pass or someone is in a better spot but then also he's -- at certain moments, he also has to be selfish a bit, unless someone is in a better



spot.

I think that, you know, he's becoming a more complete player because he has the quality and he needs to make an impact with the quality that he has in the final third. In every game now, he's making better runs, he's looking to get behind and he's not just ball-to-feet. He's making great runs to get behind. Whether he gets the ball or not, he's very dangerous because he just creates opportunities and opens up space for others.

His decision-making was great, and it's just his ability to be more aggressive is what I saw starting the second half of the season, it's been great and we need him to continue to do that and be consistent. He needs to be a key guy for us in every match.

**Q. Getting two wins in a row, do you feel like you're starting to get a sense of lineup consistency? I know it wasn't exactly the same as Wednesday, but do you feel like you're getting a really core sense of the group and how you want to move forward?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, 100 percent. There was one change tonight but for me, I believe in the team. It's not going to be the same 11 every time they walk out on the field. I base that on performance. I base that on training, on form the players have. I think that all plays a part into it but obviously the most important component of all of those is performance in the game.

But you know, for us to continue to develop and be a team that's going to be there in the end and in the playoffs, we need -- everybody's got to make sure right now there's no complacency. We won two games and we got a long way to go and we've just got to keep working hard.

I have a very clear idea in how we want to play with the ball and without the ball, and I believe I have the players to do that. So whether it's this guy or that guy, it really doesn't matter. I believe in the team.

**Q. If I can ask about the big news of the day with Ousmane Dombia joining the club shortly, Georg mentioned in one of his quotes that the discussion to move on from a DP No. 9 to looking for more of the central midfielder was a decision made by the coaching staff, going back a few months with Ezra as**

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**well. Curious about the thought process from your perspective on moving to a central midfielder with this DP target, and again, going back to the previous question, how you see him, this player, fitting in your system?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think it's all about having options, you know, at the moment, and you know, we brought in a young player in Koutsias. We have two strikers that are there. If that was the right person to bring in that position, I think as a club that wants to improve and get better, I think we are always looking to bring someone, whether it's a 9 or in the midfield at the time, there were discussions to do.

So Doumbia is a very good player. When you look at him, even before he joined Lugano in Zurich, he was a big part of the team when they won the championship there. He's a solid player. He'll bring a lot of experience. He's a guy that's played minutes. He's very smart. He's good on the ball. He covers a lot of ground, and you know, I think he's just going to add more quality to our team, and so I think I'm excited to have him, and now if we can add one more piece, that would be great.

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