

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. What's the update on Maren going forward after missing last week, and then an update, if you would, on when Carlos and Shaqiri might be able to play more than those bench roles they had over the weekend.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I mean, I think all the players are available. I think you saw Carlos come in in the last game also. And with Shaq it was just, let not forget that the guy has not had a break since -- from last year with the World Cup and everything and when we had that three-day break he had to travel and played in those two games with the national team, so that's always in the back of our mind, making sure that he's able to recover but he's ready to go.

I think Carlos is just an injury situation, him recovering, he's been training. He got minutes in Kansas City and another week of training is going to help him, even a lot more same with Maren, he had limited time. So they all look good and they are ready to go.

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Q. What has been stressed in terms of creating options from both midfield opportunities, guys stretching up the field and setting up things for your strikers? It's been the midfielders the last couple weeks, Fabi really coming through to score the goals?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, but Fabi has been a winger in that game. He's been playing as a 7 and 11 out wide, and if you see all our goals, our build up starts from really deep and the Portland goal we score starts with a build up from a goal kick. We wild switch the point of attack. We had great progression in the final third and then we scored the goal, the Kansas City -- the goal is the same thing, Guti

makes a great turn, attacks the back line, good overlapping run and Fabi as a winger is supposed to be there following up the play.

We have numbers in the box. Look, we do a lot of stuff in our build up, and the idea is how to break down, and then the movements that we need in the box. We work always with our principles and then obviously you know we look at the opposition and you know in ways that we can attack them and that's what we focus on, and then the important thing is just getting numbers in the box wherever we are. We need at least three guys always in the box. We need to push up and be compact always for second balls. We have created a lot of chances. At the end of the day, we should have scored more goals but we have gotten in good spots. Our ball movement at moments has been extremely well. Our positioning has been excellent and it's just a matter of now just delivering more quality opportunities, we have gone into good spots and it's just some of those opportunities going in.

I think they are not all going to go in but at least we get there and we are taking our chances and the ball is going our way right now which is great thing but we are putting ourselves in good spots.

Q. Chris Brady said the two weeks he said without soccer helped the team to become better and prepare better and training. I wanted to know your opinions about that, is that a plus for the team because you made six points in two games, and how is the feeling now in the locker room?

FRANK KLOPAS: The feeling is great when you're winning. But we cannot rest there. I think that there's a lot of games left to be played and continue to work hard and that's what we have to focus on. We talked about the importance of the break. The amount of games that we had, ten games in 33 days was difficult to really do stuff on the field, so the break came at a good moment for us, even though we had that tough loss against Columbus, we had three days off, and then we got back to work, so it was a good opportunity to work on some things that we saw over the past ten games, and I thought the attitude of the players was fantastic. They came in and worked extremely hard and prepared in the right way.

And like I've always said, I think the preparation is what

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gives the players confidence and leaves no doubt when you step on the field. The guys have come back, second half of the season, two difficult places and we've played extremely well. Six points has been massive.

Obviously it's a good feeling within the group. We know things can change very quickly in this league. There's so much parity in every game, anything can happen. It's just about we focus on the things we can control good, preparation, good game plan, and making sure in the summertime that it gets hot and humid here that the guys take care of themselves, not only here on the field. You're here for three or four or five hours, but what's you do after that; that they are disciplined and they are resting and they are eating right and they are sleeping because that's most important thing for recovery, and also to get the most of what we have done in the week.

So that's been very good, good attitude, good mentality, and we look forward to the match on Saturday. It's going to be a difficult one, and you know, but it's all in the preparation.

Q. You've got two results on the road and I'm wondering how can the team prepare to use the momentum in the last two results for another away trip in Orlando?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I just think that -- I think it gives the team confidence knowing that you can go on the road and perform well.

And then obviously, the second game in Kansas City, again, the clean sheet was very important from a mentality where we really were disciplined all the way to the end and gave everything away and found ways to be dangerous. It's just about confidence and belief within the group, and that's always important, knowing that you can go in difficult places and get results. That's going to help. But I just always stress that we've got to be even keeled and really continue to focus on the preparation and work hard, which will give us the confidence and continue to grow and get better within every match.

So I think it's a confidence boost for sure, any time you go on the road and you win back-to-back games, it's huge for the team and for the mentality of the guys.

Q. And what are your thoughts on Fabian Herbers, put in the team of the week the last week. What has he been able to do for the team being a versatile player, just being an example for the young players on the team?

FRANK KLOPAS: Just what we expect from him. He's a

little bit different, than, say, Maren, but it's different characteristics with every player. Fabi is someone that's always looking to get behind the back line. That's one of his qualities that we need and really stress and always to put himself in good spots.

I think he made great diagonal runs on the weak side and always hard to track for defenders, and I think it's just someone that he always helps the team. He always -- there's always a positive with Fabi just his mentality, his attitude, has always been great, and you know, when certain things don't work in his game, he always finds ways where there's a plus, and where it's beneficial to the team and to the club overall.

Q. With Kei being named at that time all-star team. He talked about Ezra who pushed for him to come in, as least from his perspective, so can you talk about watching him firsthand and his place in MLS history?

FRANK KLOPAS: It just shows, the respect that he has, someone that has been around the league for a long time and his ability to perform at a high level even with his age being 38. He's been playing all those years for a reason.

I think you're blessed with certain qualities and characteristics but then I think that you need to be a good pro to prolong your career as he has and to be able to still perform at a really high level.

So it's just a huge plus to him and his professionalism the way he approaches his work every day, and he gives a hundred percent. He loves the game. He enjoys playing. I think that's a plus. He has huge passion for the sport and that shows when he steps on the field and a really good guy in the locker room with the players. So it's been a really good pleasure to work away with him. He's one goal away from tying Donovan for second in the history of the league, and it's just a great accomplishment to be up there and to be mentioned with some of those players there.

So you know, great stuff on Kei's part. He's earned everything and he deserves his recognition because he's earned it.

Q. My question is about the chemistry in the last three games at least, you have put Alonso and Jairo Torres to start the game and the good chemistry you have with Federico and Gastón in the midfield, it looks like it's working out for you. How are the Mexican players fitting into the team plans?

FRANK KLOPAS: You know, sometimes it's all about competition, and we want to bring competition to every spot on the field. Alonso, sometimes Miguel was away

with the national team and then he came back and it's an opportunity for Alonso to step in and he did a great job with his minutes. I think the importance with those guys is making sure that they train really hard and when the opportunity comes, they take advantage of it and they did.

With Jairo, it's a matter of him, we talked about it before. It's a situation of him staying healthy and continue to train and get games and he's grown within every game but we still have to manage and be careful with now overloading him because when you miss a certain amount of time and you come back and you play a lot of games, you still have to manage him and be careful but I think all those players worked extremely hard on the training pitch and when the opportunity came they performed really well, within every game better and better.

With Fede and Gastón, their partnership is great. You know with Fede what you're going to get every game, he's going to leave everything on the field, 100 percent commitment in every play, intensity and energy and he will do whatever it takes for the team to get a result so it's been great to watch all those guys but as a team collectively we have been playing better and better on every phase of the game.

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