

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, July 5, 2023

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. Is there a visa update on Ousmane Doumbia?

FRANK KLOPAS: I haven't heard anything yet but I think that it's day-to-day to see when he can get everything. Hopefully it's sooner than later at some point this week, so maybe he can be available to fly here at some point next week but as of right now, I haven't heard any -- any updates yet.

Q. And then looking at this weekend's match going against a team that it wasn't a great result, but it was a different lineup as well going into the first match against Nashville with St. Louis City Open Cup ahead of it. Curious, what have you learned looking back at that match, and what are some things that the side needs to be doing differently other than stopping Mukhtar, of course?

FRANK KLOPAS: I mean, I think that match was -- as a team, I think we made changes because we were also preparing for the U.S. Open Cup game. So there was some rotation within players so it will be I think a different look this week for sure.

So no, I think it's a team -- I mean, Nashville, it's a team that's really well-organized and more difficult once they get on top of you and they get the first goal. It's obviously a team that's good in set pieces and obviously in transition moments where Mukhtar, Leal, they can get forward, and Shaq Moore. They are dangerous, and Bunbury is always a threat making runs with his pace.

And that is just -- for us, it's again, at home, coming out with really good energy, being organized, being good with the ball. We definitely allowed more runs in the final third and looking to get behind, and you know, just being sharp when we get into certain spots, especially 20, 25 yards out from goal and now we just have to be a little bit more focused with hard runs in the box and just our final pass, whether it's just decision-making in the end or just the execution of the final pass has got to be sharper.

Q. You mentioned the game in Nashville earlier in the year, how did have to rotate for the Open Cup game. Now there are three games coming up this week, does rotation play a factor, and is it an advantage to have them all at home?

FRANK KLOPAS: It's a big advantage. Obviously rotation, not in the first one or second one. I think it's Saturday to Wednesday, and that's obviously from game-to-game.

So the focus is just, you know, preparing well for this first game and then I think there is -- I mean, being a Wednesday game, that's more than enough time, no travel, like you said, and guys should recover. And then it's just decision-making and seeing how we need to approach every opponent a little bit different.

But then that Saturday game for sure, we have to look how guys recover because it's a short turnaround for that third match at home. Everybody's got to be ready and we'll just take it a game at a time.

Q. Are there any other updates with injuries in terms of maybe a timeline for Navarro or anything else?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, Navarro, no. Nothing, not up to date. It's probably a couple more weeks out before he's available and obviously that's a tough one for us because he was really becoming such an important player for us in the midfield and so that's a big loss.

And that's why it's such a key, the arrival of Doumbia. It couldn't come sooner. So hopefully he can get his visa ready and be here next week, and hopefully have Fede back available and back training because right now, I think the prognosis was three to four weeks out but we'll see how it goes week-to-week, day-to-day.

But that's a tough one for us. He's just such a key guy within our team. It's hard to replace.

Q. I was wondering, you've had the opportunity to get to know Koutsias both on the field and off the field over these past few months. What is it going to take for him to become a consist starter in this league and what is has he shown you over the few months he's been here?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think he's a young player that has a big capacity. He wants to learn. He wants to improve. It's a different league for a young player, so there's an adaptation period. I think he's getting closer and closer.

I think there were times when he's come on the field and he's brought a lot of energy and he's scored some key goals for us and he's knocking on the door, man. He's getting fit. He's getting sharper. He's getting to learn the league better every day and every week that he's with us.

And so I mean, it's just a matter of time before he gets a start and stuff like that. Every time he's come on the field he's brought good energy and helped the team. So that's always a positive. Young player comes in, he makes good runs behind and not scared to run on defenders.

So I think he's just getting closer and closer to being in a position where he can start the game.

Q. You've never won a game against Nashville and in Portland, we saw you were able to overcome that result. How important is this that it's a home match in front of Fire fans?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, definitely you're at home, you feel like you need to come out with energy and push the game. But always, you've got to find the right balance for me because this is a team that's dangerous in transition.

So I think the balance always has to be right but definitely at home, the energy, the intensity that we come out is a key. Once we get our fans into the match and that all has to do with us the way we compete and the way we start the match.

And once they get into the game I think at home, you have their support, and always add that little bit extra that you need in moments when -- in difficult moments in the match that we are going to find ourselves in.

That's the advantage of being at home. Just the fan base, really, gives that you little bit extra boost when you need it but it's important for us to come out and get them in a game early just with our intensity and energy that we start the match. I think that's always very important.

Q. And with the suspension of Arnaud Souquet and Walker Zimmerman for Nashville, how important is it to be able to reshuffle your lineup, given that you have another game against Montréal Wednesday?

FRANK KLOPAS: The most important game is the one from us in Nashville. Unfortunately with Souquet that

second yellow, I think it's a tough one, because it's 70, 80 yards away, moments like that, we have to be smarter on the field.

And look, we have other players that are ready to step in. That's what I've always talked about the team and how important it is to be training and always being ready to go because moments like this now, you know, players are out, then someone has to step in. I believe that whoever comes in is going to be ready to give a hundred percent and will do a great job.

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