

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Frank Klopas

Press Conference



**Q. What kind of a game are you expecting from Puebla? It's the first time in a while the Fire have played a Mexican team in competition. How do you expect them to respond to their big loss last week?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think I expect them to -- it's going to be a different match. Obviously when you look at the minute game, I think they had good moments in the game, and you know, I think they got caught two or three times in transition moments, and they paid the price, but they are a good team. They are organized. They have quality players.

So it's going to be a different game obviously. We expect to come out and try to get a result here. We look forward to the match here. Obviously it's exciting to play somebody different other than MLS teams. That's great for our players. We are home. We expect a good match, and we need a good match to continue to be sharp.

And so you know, I think that it's an opponent, it's a very good opponent. It's a quality opponent with quality players, and we expect a difficult match. We are prepared in that way.

**Q. Curious how you're getting the message across to your players when they have some level of cushion going into this match, given that all that's really needed for a result, two penalty kicks. How does that change anything?**

FRANK KLOPAS: It doesn't. The reminder for me is you're playing against a very good team. Irregardless of what happened in the Minnesota game, it's one game. It's a team that with, like I said, quality players. They have a lot of pride. They are going to come in here and be a different game than the previous one.

For us, it's continue to improve and be better as a team. We will take the game. I know the guys are looking forward to the matchup, and we're very focused. And again, we expect a difficult match, and you can't relax at

any moment, because when you do that, you pay the price. We can't look at we have a couple-goal cushion and we approach the match that way.

We just know it's going to be difficult and we need to be at our best to get a result.

**Q. And will Fede Navarro be available?**

FRANK KLOPAS: He will be available.

**Q. Talking about, you're going to face a non-MLS team. Talking about that, how do you see this rivalry between MLS and Liga MX has been growing lately, and here in the United States, how do you see it?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I mean, look, I think in the past, we played Liga MX teams, and when you play in CONCACAF, teams especially in the season for us, there are moments where a lot of the Liga MX teams, we play them in preseason; they are in form.

It's a little bit different now because we are a team that's played three or four games, just not in preseason. It's always great because I think it's a very good league with quality players, and it's also an opportunity for us every time we play to showcase the league, but also to showcase the players and the quality of players we have.

So I think for the players, it's exciting when you play somebody different. You know, sometimes even in our season, if you play against Columbus or you play Cincy, you know, we know the opponent. It's difficult, but it's always exciting when you can face a different opponent and provides an opportunity for different kind of exposure for all the players.

So I think the league here is growing and getting much stronger within every season, and I think you can see that now when MLS teams face Liga MX teams in the CONCACAF games. They are really competitive and tight matches. This is a new format and it shows that the two leagues can come together and play competitive matches that mean something. That's the exciting part. It's a great tournament, and I think one that the fans will enjoy.

**Q. Puebla is a very technically sound team. They seem like they have a lot of skill in that area, very**

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**quick, close passing. Do you feel like that also gives you the opportunity to maybe force them into some turnovers, get yourself some chances and be able to attack them that way? They also had 60 percent of the possession against Minnesota, but Minnesota made the most of what they had with the ball. So what do you think will be some of the keys maybe that you can be able to utilize your strengths against what I mentioned?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think that game in Minnesota, don't forget, they got an early red card. I think that helped a little bit in the possession stats. But it also helped Minnesota in the sense that, you know, Puebla pushed a lot of numbers forward because they had the numerical advantage, and then Minnesota was able to punish them in transition moments.

I think those moments will still be there in the game. Puebla, they do play with a lot of their fullbacks. The wingers come inside. They push their fullbacks really high up the field. There are moments in transition where you can attack them. We analyzed them today to paint a good picture to the players. Whether it's transition moments, definitely I think our ability to be in possession, good with the ball and move the ball quickly; I think the runs, running behind their back line is also a key, quick combinations. You know, I think any of those three or four scenarios that I talked about.

But you know, you can talk about them. But it's just decision-making of the players on the field. I think the possession stats were a little bit in big favor for Puebla in the game because they did that that numerical advantage with the red card.

But it's still a team that want to be on the ball and looks to combine centrally for sure, but a lot of their play still comes out wide with their fullbacks. And their right side in transition, they are very good, especially with this guy, Angulo, with his left foot. He's probably one of their most dangerous players when they get in transition moments when he can run on the back line, and so we just have to watch that.

We need to be good with the ball. We need to be good in possession and we need to move the ball quickly and we need constantly to have runs behind and attack their back line.

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