

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Frank Klopas

Press Conference



**Q. It's been a pretty long break. How do you feel about the long break and how has it affected preparations for this weekend?**

FRANK KLOPAS: I feel really good. I think the important thing is that we had really some competitive matches, starting with the Minnesota game and then obviously the America game, I thought that the team the second half, we grew into the match. We made some technical adjustments that helped the team. And then, really, had one weekend off, which really allowed us to have last week a really good week of preparation, a couple days of a little break, and then really to focus this week on Orlando.

The training has been really sharp, and the guys have had really excellent attitude, really good mentality, and working extremely hard. We understand the importance of every game now in the last 11 matches in the seasons as we are coming into the final phase of play.

Every match is going to be extremely difficult, and you know, the preparation for us is always the key, which will give us confidence against a very good Orlando team.

**Q. Curious, going against Orlando the second time, what specifically the team is focusing on. It seems like little moments, especially early on where Torres is able to slide his way between defenders and just those little momentary missteps defensively. Curious what the team has focused on for this match.**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, look, it's a team that's really very good, organized. They are really good in transition moments. Really good wingers that I think they come in between the lines, and they are very good at attacking the defenders; once they are able to turn the ball, and if you give this many a lot of space to run at you, they become difficult.

Obviously the way they build up that play with the back three, they overload that right side with Smith pushing forward. And so for us, I think in that game, I think going

into it, the team, we were in a really good run. Fede just got injured right before that match. And I felt we started the game well, second half, falling behind, we got really stretched, and that was the one game we gave up a lot of opportunities in transition.

So it's been our focus, also, to stay more compact, to be obviously better with the ball in moments, be patient, and always be really organized. Defensive organization is going to be very important against this team that's really good in transition, and they have wingers that can attack space really well.

And obviously with a player like McGuire, if he's playing he works extremely hard. He makes it difficult. He presses all the time; and just our ability to understand that and know that when we get the ball, it's playing quicker out of the back.

But more than anything, I think our defensive organization has to be really spot-on. And moments we get the ball, I think being patient, finding the balance where we can attack quickly and then being patient with the ball. You know, when chances come, you have to put them away. That's the key with anything.

**Q. Thank you for taking some time for this. My question is, both about the players, we will we see something different in this game? Will we see Kei Kamara or Navarro playing this game in Orlando? How is the health of any injured players right now?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Health is good. Like I talked about, and I think you have to come to the game to see who is going to be on the field (laughs).

I think for me, I told you, the preparation is very important and then obviously we see how guys are in training, the players are in good form, and what makes the best sense against for the team against Orlando.

The good thing is, like I said, the training has been really sharp, really good focus, and mentality and attitudes from the players. That's been fantastic. It's been really high level, the intensity and training, and you can see that there's the focus within the group, the understanding of who we are, and the importance of every game now, starting with this one, and it's been really great to see.

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I know that all the players will be available other than, you know, at the moment with Chris Mueller who I think will be out, and then the question still is with Brady, the goalkeeper, he is still day-to-day from his injury against that América match.

And with Rafa Czichos, due to cards, you know that one, so he's not available.

**Q. I wanted to ask about the competition midfield, Doumbia coming in, what's your first impression, Fede coming back, Gastón playing well. How do you feel about that situation?**

FRANK KLOPAS: I feel really good. I think competition only breaks out best in people, and I think another thing with the break right now, with last week, it's given an opportunity to Navarro to continue to build his confidence in his fitness in training. He's looking sharper and better with every session, so I think it's going to be really important to have everyone the best that they can be, because the games in these 11 matches, there will be periods where we'll play four games in 13 days.

So like I told the guys, I think that decisions will be made. What we feel is best approaching every game.

But we are going to rely on the team. And in order to achieve our goals, they understand that everybody has to be at their best, and that's really been the focus.

It's really been excellent to see how the team has come together. The team is united. The team is committed, and I can only promise you one thing: That these guys will leave everything on the field to make sure that we as a club try to reach our goal in the end of these 11 games.

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