

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Saturday, September 30, 2023

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Chicago Fire FC 1, New York Red Bulls 0

Q. Good evening, congrats on the win. Can you give your initial thoughts on the match and does it feel like a big relief to finally get a win after such a long time?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I mean, I think it does, it's a relief -- not a relief. We are all happy because it was a very good performance and we deserve to get a win. I just think that it was important, we talked before, as far as just really not giving anything away from a defensive standpoint. Just really being compact and making it really difficult and trying to keep a clean sheet. If we do that, I know we are going to get opportunities, and you know, when you're on the road, I mean, obviously everybody has to step up big. As a team we did, really good individual performances but in a collective standpoint it was a huge relief within the group and huge commitment.

They left everything on the field. They fought extremely hard. Well-deserved win when everybody was counting us out, but we didn't. You know, we believe in this group and we believe -- we work extremely hard, and we just needed to get a result and it came at a really difficult place against a team that is fighting to get into a playoff spot.

Massive, massive win. Important thing now, I told the guys, enjoy this, but we've got to move forward. It's an opportunity now from us with the next game being at home Wednesday and the next one, Saturday, really to take the big step. You know, when you go on the road and you win like this, I think it's important to follow it up with another solid performance, and we are looking forward to coming back home against a very good team. It's going to be an incredible atmosphere and we are looking forward to it.

Q. It was a long time coming, but what can you tell to your squad after this win to try to get momentum going into Wednesday's match, and what did you see from the Red Bulls after the half that maybe you can exploit in the second?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think it's a big confidence booster. You come on the road, and against -- we know the implications on both sides. We prepared extremely well for the Red Bulls. We knew that it's a team that's going to play really direct. Second balls become really important.

I think when they get it out wide, they have really two fullbacks that are really dangerous, with Tolkin and Duncan on either side, not easy matchups for any player. Once they get down to the side, they don't really focus -- it's not a lot of crosses. Once they get to the bye line, there's a lot of runners cut back on the top of the box. We were ready for that, and we knew in moments of transition, it's a team that gives up a lot of opportunities in transition.

We could have been a little bit better. We had a lot of opportunities especially pushing late in the game and we didn't convert. We could have put the game away but in the end, everybody just left everything on the field and you know from that standpoint, it's a huge, huge win.

And to take away, I think for Wednesday, it's just confidence, to believe that, you know, we have really good players, we have a really good team. We can play -- we can keep clean sheets, which gives us always an opportunity to be in the game, and obviously it was good to see Guti get some minutes and to get his rhythm. Rafa came in a little bit late in the game.

Unfortunately we lost maybe Jairo Torres. It doesn't get any easier, but like I told the players, nothing that comes easy in life is good. Nothing that comes easy in the soccer field that really comes is good. You have to earn everything. You have to fight for everything.

It's going to be another battle Wednesday. I told the team, only good things happen when you suffer, and that's what we did tonight. We have to take that kind of confidence into Wednesday at home.

Q. With Koutsias, what have you seen with his growth since he got here in the spring and how much of a confidence booster is that for a young strike to put the ball in the back of the net again?

FRANK KLOPAS: He works extremely hard. He's a young player that doesn't lack confidence and he brings opportunity every time he steps on to the pitch. It was a

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team that we knew, I wanted someone that could really stretch the back line and that's more vertical and he brings that energy and makes those runs. It's massive. As a forward, any time you can get a goal, I think it's huge for your confidence.

You know, difficult for us to score goals of late. I know the last game we got two but from our strikers, I think that we needed to try something different, and I felt that his energy was going to be huge tonight. What can I say? It rewards us for the opportunity that we gave him and good performance, really good performance from him but even more important that the team got the three points.

Q. Just touching on the play of the man of the match, another young player, 19 years old, can you just comment on what it might mean for him going forward? The Man of the Match, just helps further his position in the starting 11.

FRANK KLOPAS: Can you tell me, I don't even know who the Man of the Match was, I don't really focus after -- I thought the Man of the Match was the team today but...

Q. Brady.

FRANK KLOPAS: Oh, yeah, look, Chris has been growing within every game. He's been growing, like I said, Zach Thornton, our goalkeeping coach, has done an incredible job with him. He's a super athletic goalkeeper that can make the incredible saves. He's more commanding in the box and he's growing and maturing, he's a very mature young player.

He's got incredible upside. The sky is the limit for him, and again, clean sheets, it's a team effort. But he made some incredible saves tonight which we needed.

Look, he's gotten better within every game, but he's got so much more room to develop, I think he can be an incredible goalkeeper, I really believe that, and he's really humble and works extremely hard which is really good qualities to have.

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