

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



New York City 1, Chicago Fire 0

Q. We know how much you want to get this team back to the playoffs, didn't happen. What are your emotions right now?

FRANK KLOPAS: It's a lot of different emotions. You know, I mean, one is that we were so close, and I just know the great people that are around this club and it starts from our owner and what we put in every day.

So you know, I mean, we wanted to give everyone something to really be positive. You know, because we've gotten so close right now but then we have to look how do we take that next step and really in this off-season look really hard and make the right decision, so next year is doesn't come down to this last day. That's the thing when it comes down to this last day, anything can happen. They hit one shot; it's the goal of the year maybe for them.

And then, you know, we create enough chances but it just doesn't go in tonight and we don't want to be put in that situation. Some emotions towards that. Obviously the disappointment of not going forward for the club for everyone that's put so much into it and then look, obviously you build relationships with these guys throughout the year.

We spend more time almost than our family and we come together, the sport brings us together to do something we all love and we put a lot of time into it. You build relationships that, you know, last a lot longer than careers and stuff and that's the thing, it's always sad because you know that this group of guys will never be together again. There's going to be changes. That's the sad part, you know, because it's -- the emotional part of it all.

So a lot of different emotions but obviously I'm extremely proud of the effort that they put in tonight and like I said, we were right there and we got to make decisions, how do we take the next step so it doesn't come down to the last game again.

Q. In terms of having again the opportunity to lead this club, how do you feel just at the end of this journey of this year with the opportunities and understanding that it might be a different role next year?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, look, I stepped into it, it's not something I wanted to, but when I stepped in, I was 100 percent in, committed, myself and my staff.

I'm very blessed to have had really great people to work with because my success are the people that I have. We put a lot into it. I enjoy being on the field. I enjoy doing this, being that I'm trying to lead this in and help the club get back or be a team that's consistently our goal is being a team that's there trying to win championships every year and that's where we have to get to.

I think we are close. But now like I said, I think that for me, how do we take the next step. So I really enjoyed it. I think we have to assess and see how we move forward and even for myself, and there's a lot of question marks that need to be answered.

I'm not leaving the club, you know. I think we have an incredible owner in Joe. I love Joe. He's a model to all of us. Just the person that he is, his humility, his humbleness, his integrity and just a guy with great values to be here to support us all the time. Everybody wants to go the extra mile for him and our great fans, and we're there.

So we'll see what the future holds. But I really enjoy being on the field and working with the guys, especially because I have really great colleagues with me.

Q. A lot of optimism around the club, six years since the last playoff game. What do you say to the fans?

FRANK KLOPAS: Look, if you evaluate the whole season, even when I took over, I think we can look at it and say one more win. That's what we all said.

But I think a lot of clubs can say that. But I have to really assess now and reflect on the moments when -- when we had that, we won all those games to put ourselves in a great spot, we had that break, how do we continue, why

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did we lose that momentum. I know we had some injuries but how do we make ourselves stronger or better in the off-season.

I think we really have to take a hard look and evaluate that. I felt we were really close and it just shows you that we put ourselves in a great spot. We put ourselves, we created with all the hard work and dedication when no one believed in us. Everyone had written us off but we believed. We believed. We had faith. We never lost the faith, myself, our sporting director, our technical director, definitely not our owner, we believe. We came to work every day. We had high standards and we pushed ourselves. I pushed everyone.

For me, we are right there. I think there's been incredible changes to the club, changes that were needed to put ourselves in the stage where all the other teams are, especially now next year with the performance centre,.

And now we just have to look at the roster and see how do we improve. There's no secret, we need to get better.

Q. Personally after this year, yeah, there's no playoffs, but are you proud of what you've done with this club over the last year, throwing yourself into this role?

FRANK KLOPAS: I'm proud to work for -- to have had an opportunity again to lead the club. I put a lot into it, you know, and I expect a lot from everyone. When I talk to the guys in there, the emotions today, I had the opportunity to get back and work with Zach and C.J., two guys that I know that have been involved with the club in every championship they had. We were together when they won the double. I know what it means to those guys, myself, to come and work hard every day.

And then, you know, the rest of the staff that we had, I had the opportunity when I stepped in to bring Nico from Greece who is a top-level coach, and also Theodore to do the analysis and stuff. So I had great people to work with. I'm proud of the work we did. Obviously, you know, it's easy to say that because I would have been prouder if we had have gotten in the playoffs and would have gotten a result tonight.

But we're right there. I always say one thing, you can never cheat this game. I think we have taken great steps forward. We have to analyze the situation and say, how do we take the next step and that's all. I'm extremely proud and extremely proud of the work we did and extremely proud to be involved with this club and to put the Fire logo on every day.

I love the city and the fans, and I want more than anything

for us to give the fans and our owners something to cheer about. Like he always used to tell me, and he's still telling me tonight, "We're getting close. We'll get there." I think we have taken the right step but it would have been great if we won today and just say, Joe, we are not there but at least we are in the playoffs, we've gotten in.

That's a team that we want to beat. Our mission, our goal is to win championships. But it starts by building a strong team that every year doesn't come down to the last game where you need to get in. We want to be in playoffs and fighting for championships.

But just to answer all this talk because a lot of things are going on in my mind, I'm extremely proud of the work we did and to be involved with this club, that's for sure.

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