

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. Just wondering, Hugo Cuypers has a single shot through two games so far. What's your takeaway from that? Are there more things he could be doing? Is it a question of a lack of service? ? What has been your early evaluation of Hugo?

FRANK KLOPAS: No, I just think the first game in Philly, he was with us a really short time, and that's going to take some time, obviously, for him to adjust also to the players, for us to get to know him a little bit better with his movement, and I think that's important.

But even in the Philly game, I think he worked extremely hard. I think we had maybe not crystal clear opportunities. I think the one in the first half where it was headed across the goal and he almost got a foot to that, and then obviously the header in the second half. That's not enough, but having said that, it's also we played two of the top teams that are really good defending teams that defend the box really well.

But definitely I think our ability to provide him with service in the box but also to get numbers around him where they can support him, I think that's important, also. I think the last game was also difficult because I think we got to a certain point in the field, but then that final 15, 20 yards away from goal, that final pass, the final execution was lacking, but also our ability at times to get more bodies into the box and make it more difficult for the opposing teams and also provide him with some coverage and support.

Q. This week another tough Eastern Conference opponent going to Columbus. From your perspective, what makes them such a difficult side to go against? I know talking to Gastón yesterday, he was like, they're the best in the east, and we need to try to compete like them.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, compete like them. I just think, first of all, they're a team that I think the nucleus of the team has been around for a while. I think we've added seven new players into our team. We've had a good start

for me. I know we're all disappointed, obviously, for the result against Cincy at home. I felt we deserved at least a point out of that one.

But it's good to play, I think, the top teams early on and really to gain experience and to test ourselves. I think for me, I think that really their two midfielders are really good in possession. They make it difficult, really, to put really pressure on them, so you have to be really organized as a team. When you go, we'll have to go together.

I think they're together for a while. Those two pivots at times make it difficult really to build pressure. I think when you go either with them or even on the road, I think our ability to be good on the ball in certain moments and to take the chances well. I think when you play a team like that, when you get opportunities, you've got to make them pay, and I think when you do that, then I think it changes the game a little bit. They have to push the game a little bit more, which opens up a lot more space in transition moments for us.

Q. My question is about the left back position because last game we saw Fabian Herbers at the left wingback and we didn't see any minutes for Chase Gasper. What's your feeling around that position right now with Gutman still out for a couple more weeks?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think we're trying different things. I think that game had nothing with Chase. We were playing at home. We wanted to be more attack minded.

I think in a sense that we matched up in a 3-4-3 like what they play, then tried to put the guys that are in the most form on the field at the moment for that game.

I think Chase is working hard. That's the one thing. I think everyone right now is working extremely hard just to prepare.

Now, if it's Chase, if it's someone else, we'll just have to see. I think we're trying different things on the training field, and we'll see what's the best way to go. We don't want to change too many things. Obviously we had a very good game against Philly, and I think the formation we played against Cincy is the one that we also played and we worked on in the preseason, so that was important, and the

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guys I felt really comfortable with.

It gives us different ways of playing, and I think Chase is working extremely hard, just like everyone else, just to be ready for the selection from the coach, from the staff.

Q. From last week, something has been gnawing at me about the Rafa and the resignation of the captaincy. What was his reasoning that he gave you for wanting to hand back --

FRANK KLOPAS: I just think sometimes -- he's been the captain for two years. I think that's also a lot of responsibility. I think he just maybe needed a break. I didn't really go too much into that and ask him about it. He just felt like he's been there for two years, and I think sometimes there's a lot of focus in other places and maybe he just wants to focus more on -- this is a big year for him. I think it's the final year of his contract, and I don't know if that's a reason, but I respected his decision.

I think that every year when a captain is there, I think the coach and the staff get to decide every year, but this was Rafa's decision. He came to me and he spoke to first when we were down in Florida. I respected that. I think he's done a really good job as a captain, and he's still a leader on the team.

But really no explanation. He just kind of felt that -- he did it for two years. It was time to pass that on and maybe just focus more on this big year for him.

Q. What have you seen from Tobias Salquist so far on the training ground, and what will it take obviously integrating him into the squad to see him get some minutes going forward?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think he just needs time. With any new player coming in, it doesn't matter, it's a new player that these players have to adjust to, and obviously the component of training with the team and getting minutes, I think that's important.

Even though he didn't get minutes in his two games, we had set up games with local teams and we were able to probably get him 60 minutes. Not only him but the other players. It's a new league. It takes time for him to adjust. It's a lot of new players. He missed a lot of training early on. He's an experienced player.

I think with anyone you bring in, it doesn't matter, there's going to be an adjustment period that's necessary. He's working hard. He's looking sharper.

I think the good thing is that I think with all the players we

brought in, I think for me, it's competition, and every position is important that we have that. He's working hard just to get to the level where he was when he was in Europe.

Q. Since we spoke last week, there's been some updates on the Open Cup. We now know that Fire II is going to be playing instead of the first team. Do you have any thoughts on that decision that it's going to be the second team, and do you expect that depending on how the rules work out, there will still be an emphasis to bring some first team players down and try to go for that title?

FRANK KLOPAS: No, I mean, I think the league made a decision. I respect that. Hopefully in the future that's an opportunity for every MLS club to participate in, and we'll see what the future brings.

I think there might be opportunities where we can add players from the first team to that, but it's a league decision. We respect that, and we move on. There's nothing we can do.

Q. A couple weeks ago Navarro was No. 2 in (indiscernible)?

FRANK KLOPAS: I couldn't hear you clearly but I know you talked about Navarro, about being No. 2 in the midfield, but I couldn't hear after that.

Q. He was No. 2 in the league (indiscernible), and I wonder your decision not to put him in the field yet because you want to be more offensive but not more in control of the ball.

FRANK KLOPAS: No, Fede is a good player. He's an important player on the team. It's two games into the season. It's also you have to look where you make decisions and when you come in the game and you see stuff, we make also decisions on a daily basis to see where the form of the players, where they are.

Fede is a guy that works extremely hard. It's two games in. It's good to have Fede on our side and on our team. He's an important player, and I think every time we need him, he's been called upon to step in, to start, he always gives 100 percent.

Don't read too much into that.

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