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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. After the results the last two games, especially how the last game went down, how do you keep the belief in the team up since, to be honest, there were other games like that last year, the year before, where points were dropped late?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think that you have to look at overall the whole game, Brian. Good morning, good to have you back, man.

But I think overall, when you look at the game in its whole, I think you looked at we had a very good game. I mean, when you look at the way we defended, the way we were in possession able to break them down and create opportunities, stuff like that, that was really positive stuff.

Now I think the final pass and moments could be better. I think they are things that we need to continue to improve on. So I think for me, when you look at the three games, if you look at a negative, you say one point in three games for sure. That's disappointing, because we've played and we deserved, I believe, more than that one point.

But I think all these games are making us stronger as a team. I think in the end, I don't think it has nothing to do with anything in the past, for me, really, no. I think we have seven new players here. The mentality is different.

I think that in all these games, you know, we created opportunities in the end to win the game, and that's the difference. It's not that we are sitting back. You know, I think it's just one play that we need to be really focused in the end, and out of nothing, we give up an opportunity.

So for me, there is a big difference. I take a lot of positives away from all the three matches. I think it's making us stronger, better as a team, and the disappointing thing is that, you know, we have one point to show for it. We know that. But I think our team as a whole, our ability, what we've done on both phases, with the ball, without the ball, transition moments, I think they have been very good.

Q. I asked Chris this, as well, but I'm curious, are you seeing the type of frustration that leads to productive training sessions from your team, 1.9, we've talked about it. Are you seeing the proper response from this group?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think for me the training has been great from day one since we got together with this group. I think that it was really important to add quality to the team. I think we've added really good pieces. I think there's really good competition in every spot. I think we are very demanding and clear from the expectations how we want to work together.

So for me, that part, regardless, I don't think that we need results. If we need results, for me, I think that -- you know, I think it's the mentality and attitude to come every day and look to improve as a team.

I think the training is an area where we look to get better and we push the guys. I think the attitude every day has been really good. Training sessions have been really sharp. I think that's why we've been really competitive in all the matches.

I think we don't have the points to show, in my opinion, the way the team has performed on the field. But that part, as far as the training, the mentality, the attitude of the group, has been excellent, and I think that's what's prepared us really well for every match.

I think that has to continue. It's early in the season. It's three games; I know we don't want to fall far behind. We knew that the start was -- when you look at it from the six games, four on the road, but we need to get points and we need to get results at the end of the day, and we know that.

But coming into the pitch, coming to training every day, it's been really pleasant to see the attitude and the work rate of the guys. That's been really positive, and I wouldn't expect anything less.

Q. I wanted to ask, as a former striker yourself, obviously I can imagine you want to get Hugo more looks in the box and you want to see him getting on the end of -- you talk about key passes, more chances. As somebody who knows -- who can probably relate to how he's thinking about things, what's kind of your

message to him as you continue to work on getting him more chances? How do you keep him motivated to keep making those runs? What's your general conversation with him through this growth period?

FRANK KLOPAS: You know, the one thing is that this is not my thing. I think as a guy that's been in that position, I played almost like a second forward midfielder. But I think over the years, my ability now to be around some top-level coaches and some really world-class players that are retired, the one thing they have always told me is that the one thing that takes doubt -- when strikers have doubt, the only thing you can do, the only thing that takes doubt away from any striker is repetition and training.

And I think Hugo is a guy that's always looking for the next chance to come. He's not a guy that, you know, that really keeps it in his mind, if he gets a chance and maybe it doesn't go in, he's always looking for the next opportunity. He's working extremely hard in training, and I think that's what gives players and strikers -- we put them around goal. We do a lot of repetitions around goal, and I think that's one thing that confidence comes from there that can take away any doubt that you can have.

And it's early for me in the season. He had better looks against Columbus. I think it's going to come. He's working extremely hard. We're getting to know him as a player, and as a team, he's getting to know our players better. You know, the last game we did create, you know, better opportunities for sure.

I think now, I think that we have to continue to do that, continue to look for him. He's got to continue to make the runs, and we need to surround him, also, with players around him that can support him. But you take doubt away in training, for sure. That's what gives any player, and especially strikers, the confidence. When there's doubt, the only thing that can remove it is training and being sharp around training.

Q. So Montréal, a team you know very well, two very different games against them last season, and they have had a great start to this season. What are your expectations for them this weekend on the road for them, their fourth straight?

FRANK KLOPAS: My only thing with my players is this: You know, the first three games, we knew they were going to be difficult because of the teams we played and this or that. It's not easy to win games, but it's harder to win games when everyone expects you to win games.

So you know, when you look at maybe this is not putting Montréal down or anything like that, when the schedule

comes out and you look, you have Montréal at home and you're saying, okay, this is a game that we need to get a result.

Those are the games that we need to be very careful about and we need to prepare very well, like we have been. You know, I don't do this, our staff doesn't do that, and it was a reminder to the players that we can't underestimate any opponent in this league. So we have to prepare. It's a good team. They had a very good start. They are going to come in with confidence.

But we are at home. You know, we played teams now that have played in our building in similar ways with a back three; so I think that gives us familiarity. I think they are all different, of course, and we have to adjust some things. But the one thing that we cannot do is underestimate anyone going to the match thinking that, you know, that this will be an easy game because it won't, and we have to prepare the right way.

It was a reminder to the players yesterday. The guys are -- worked extremely hard and we are going to be focused and ready to go on game day, man, to do whatever it takes to get a result and get back on track.

Q. Just a little bit of a different topic here. You guys are playing an afternoon game.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah.

Q. First of three straight. How much does that change the routine that you put the guys through during the week, and just how much of a challenge is that to overcome when you play 7:30, 7:30, 6:30, and three afternoon games followed by I think mostly night games the rest of the season?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, it's difficult -- it's an adjustment. That's the one thing when we looked at it, we've adjusted, also, our training sessions to start at 1:00 p.m. to the guys can start preparing: When do they get up; when do they eat their meals before training. We've been on top of that.

I think that leading up to this game every day, we are training at 1:00 p.m. just to kind of adjust to game time. I think that's very important.

So we are doing whatever we can to make sure that the guys adjust in that way, and they are ready to go. Nothing else we can do other than training the right way, practice at the same time. I think those adaptations are important to the players, also. We're doing that. I think the guys will be ready. I think, you know, when you go three, four days into changing that routine, I think we're trying to manage that

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and prepare the guys so they are ready for Saturday's game.

Q. What did you prefer as a player, day games or night games?

FRANK KLOPAS: I just think for me, I think when I played, I think this was when -- when I go back with my Olympic team days with my coach, Lothar Osiander, and he just said, "Frank, specific adaptation to impose demand." So you go to Jamaica and you play in the heat, we have to go train in the heat to kind of adjust and stuff like that. So I think wherever, even when I was in Europe that we played games earlier or later in the year because of the heat and stuff like that, we trained later in the day just to be better prepared.

If you ask me, I like afternoon games. If it's 3:00 or 5:00, I prefer that, early. You know, I'm not a guy when I was a player to sit around all day waiting for matches, you know. So 5:00 matches would be great. If it's really hot, then I don't want to be out there in the heat doing that. I think that impacts.

But that was just my -- personally what I liked. But I think with the players now with the time change, we are trying to do the best for them to adjust. I don't think we'll have a heat problem here in Chicago this early in the year. They will be ready to go and looking forward to the match.

Q. After the expectation and the first game, there were more than 26,000 fans. How do you plan to maintain that expectation to that people continue to support and attend the stadium despite two consecutive defeats?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I just think the games, when you look at the team's performance, have has been really good. It's been really exciting matches. I think the team has stepped on the field in every other match with a lot of energy.

I think that it's been really exciting to watch the team and see a lot of the new players. And you know, even in the first home game, I think the atmosphere, the support from our fans was amazing, was great. And I expect the same support from our fans. I think they are behind the team. They are here in good moments, and ready to help us through this difficult start, I would say, not because of the performance base. We haven't gotten the results I feel we deserved.

The fans have always been there for us. They will continue to be there. That's important. I think we need them. They play a big role, also, for coming out on the pitch and hearing their support that they give the players. I

think that's important.

But they will come out Saturday, also. I expect no difference.

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