

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. So my first question is first of all, do we have any updates yet on Andrew Gutman working his way back and Gasper?

FRANK KLOPAS: No, I think -- Chase he's going MRI today but he's going to be obviously out for a while. How long, we'll see. I think we'll get a better idea after the MRI today.

And with Andrew, he's getting closer. We'll see how he goes the next couple days for this week and I think he's very close, if not this game, I think then maybe with Houston at home we should have him ready to go.

But we have taken it day-to-day with hip.

Q. And then just as a follow-up, we saw Jonathan ^ Dean starting the game at left back, maybe also Acosta's an option there. How do you feel about that position if Gutman isn't ready to start?

FRANK KLOPAS: Who else, you said?

Q. Kellyn.

FRANK KLOPAS: Acosta left back?

Q. There's where he started, Dallas?

FRANK KLOPAS: No, I don't think so. Maybe that's when I started. That's like saying like when Shaqiri started his career and he played left back in Basel.

I thought, look, I think there's two things. I think without the ball, I think on the defensive side with Johnny coming in, I think he did an excellent job I think from that standpoint. I think there are moments when he got forward and I know it's more on his weaker foot and stuff like that.

He got in some good spots, and I just thought his ability with final crosses and stuff like that, that he needs to improve but obviously becomes more difficult on that side

for him on his left foot.

Q. One thing I wanted to ask you about, you're Georgios Koutsias had a really nice opportunity after generating that steal in New England's half, and I think we could all agree, left something to be desired with his shot. Those are the chances that you loved as a striker. Just curious, as he's a young player, how do you make sure that he takes that as something to build on rather than to dwell on negatively because we're all competitors. Those are the opportunities you dream of.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think Koutsi, he's always a striker that's looking for the next opportunity and chance. I don't think he overthinks stuff like that.

I think that's the really strong point about him, and being so young, I just think his mentality and his ability to move on and just right away, he's looking for the ball again to put himself in that spot, and I think that's -- for a striker, I think that's a really good mentality to have.

I mean, on that play, he makes a really great effort to close the goalkeeper down, and he goes down and then, look, he's do the the defender on him. That puts some pressure on him. I think he tried to pick that corner at the goal. He made a good save.

But as a whole, his ability to put the energy and the pressure to close the goalkeeper down and create an opportunity really out of nothing is good. But I don't think he's a guy that really dwells too much on. It he's really a guy that moves on and as a forward, he's the one guy that if he misses five chances, he always wants the next one because he knows -- he always believes that the next one will be in the back of the net.

Q. You guys are playing in Atlanta this weekend, back-to-back games on turf, which actually I believe is the first time in four years you guys have played back-to-back regular season games on turf. How do you prepare for that change, and are there any sort of things that you adjust with your lineup or player usage because of the turf variable?

FRANK KLOPAS: Obviously you just have to see how guys recover. I think for us, we trained -- I think first of all,

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they are both, you know, I think even going in New England this past game in Boston, I think they had new turf. So with the rain and stuff like that, the guys were really happy with the surface.

I think even in Atlanta, I think it's a first-class stadium. The turf is excellent to play on.

Other than, you know, just the recovery and if there's no issues with guys coming out of the last game and that's the most important thing, I think we have enough time to recover and you know we train on grass.

I'm not the kind of guy that believes in training on turf a whole week. I think that's something that the players don't really like. They want to be on natural grass, and then just go in the day before the game and be ready to go. I think the two facilities are excellent, even though it's grass, I think it's some of the best turf that you can find.

Really there's no issue other than, you know, just making sure that the guys recover well and we have enough time to do so.

Q. Does that affect your thinking, like Gutman may be coming back or any other player might be coming back from something or has a knock, because the turf, I know it's better than 40 years ago.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, with guys like that or guys that might be carrying some stuff. I think there's a discussion to have with that, and also with the medical staff, for sure.

You know, once guys are released, I feel confident that they are ready to go 100 percent, they are ready to go. And I would be a little bit maybe more worried when you're outside in the last game where it's raining and now it becomes really fast, the turf, and where guys are sliding and maybe there's an issue with, you know, your footage and stuff like that.

But I think for us, I think when guys, before they get released to be ready to go, I think they go through a certain process, and you know, they are full strength before they can integrate and get involved with the team. Once they are released a hundred percent, they are good to go regardless of the surface.

Q. Wondering what your takeaways were in the second half against New England? Obviously you guys came out looking pretty strong and you get a gut punch with the goal right before halftime. What did you like, what did you not like, what was kind of your general take away of what you were bringing into this week and into training from what you saw in that

second 45?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, obviously I think it was difficult giving up, you know, for us, that goal right before the halftime because it just changes a little their mentality, but I felt the guys came out because they went in and now they had this belief after that goal to come out and you know push the game.

I still think for me, I think there's two things. First of all, with the ball, there are moments where you know when we break lines in our ability to progress the ball, I think we get that we could be better for sure, and we went over the video today. We had some good moments but I think there are moments where we can look to play forward much quicker. The opportunities are there, and as a team, I think those are areas that we need to improve.

Obviously in the final third, our ability to with that final pass, the final cross and stuff like that, just give ourselves an opportunity with the delivery to have a chance at goal. I think more runners to obviously get into the box, get into those areas, those are things we have been working on. It has improved.

And on the other face, without the ball, just staying more compact as a team. I think when we do that, we are difficult to break through and difficult to play against. And then there are moments where we do get stretched; what are those moments, how is can we move more together as a team and as a unit and stay more compact.

That's what we are going to be focusing on this whole week. You know, we are playing a team that I think it's a team that's going to look to build up play. They want to play through. Almada is a key player for them, but also Giakoumakis is back; his ability to stretch the field and stuff like that. So we have to be alert.

But I think with the ball, without the ball, the things that I touch upon is just things that we need to continue to improve as a team.

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