

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Frank Klopas Press Conference

Atlanta United 3, Chicago Fire 0

Q. Obviously not the result you want. What do you think made it so tough for your side to get chances against this Atlanta team?

FRANK KLOPAS: Well, I mean, obviously look, it all starts from keeping a clean sheet and timely goals. I thought the first half was more difficult for us. I think that in building up our play, and doing the things that we've talked about, but then I think as a team, I think when you look at the moments that we give up goals, puts us in really difficult situations. Obviously 44th minute out of nowhere, and you know, it's stuff that we talked about and stuff like that.

But I think those goals become costly when you're on the road, and you're playing against a good team.

I think the second half we came out and the first 20, 25 minutes, we got in very good spots. But then our ability in the final third; that little bit of creativity, ability of players to take guys one-on-one, beat players, get quality crosses, make things happen. We didn't have that ability to do so, and then obviously we gave up a second goal. Again, for me, it was a tough one.

And then the red card, you know, was one that, you know, in moments like that, making a play like that, put the team in a really difficult spot. Then we took a risk. We try to push the game the best that we could, and then you open up yourself like we did late in the game.

But it all starts, I think for me, just, you know, going into halftime 0-0, it's a lot different than giving up a goal like that. We woke up a little bit in the second half, but it's not enough. It wasn't enough.

Q. Another difficult game for Hugo Cuypers, just three touches inside the opposing penalty box for him. What do you think the deficiency is in terms of getting him the ball in dangerous positions?



FRANK KLOPAS: We have to get crosses to him. How many times -- our whole thing today was we try to overloaded sides, and when we did, you have to look at the game, again, and look how many moments we got in wide opportunities where we can have -- we broke lines. And now we have to change the rhythm of the game, and you have to attack with pace and give him service.

You know, we were in good spots. But if you don't give him the ball, if you don't give him service and if you don't put him in good spots, then yeah, he's going to have a lack of touches and stuff like that.

It's going back to my other point is that we got in good spots. We wanted to attack them in those wide areas. I think we -- especially the second half, the first 25 minutes, but then you know, we have to go with pace. We have got to attack. We have to commit defenders. We have got to run behind and we've got to get crosses in. And we didn't do that; so then it becomes difficult and frustrating for Hugo or for any other striker.

Q. Maren for a good portion of the game was lining up at the left wing, I know that's his natural position, but we've seen him a lot on the right here in Chicago. Is that something you're more open to maybe going forward?

FRANK KLOPAS: I switched the guys up. I knew the right side was the side with Lennon and Saba; that they overloaded that side. You know, but it's also a side that they roll over in transition moments. And we started the game with him out wide and Fabi on the other side because they are strong with their outside backs getting forward. We wanted to free up Guti more in the middle, but that wasn't working, and we switched it quickly because we were getting really not lack of pressure in the middle.

So Maren, I think has the ability, even in the past, that we put a lot on the left at times. He likes coming inside on his right foot. But I think he's comfortable playing on either side. But this was more of a tactical situation the way we started the game.

Q. First couple games of the season so far, you've had to play some of the best teams in the MLS in the Eater Conference, Philadelphia, Columbus, Cincy, Atlanta today. What it is that you think these teams have that



you guys are lacking right now?

FRANK KLOPAS: When you come on the road, and you give up goals the way we give up goals, timely goals, you know, you put yourself in a hole right away. When we get in good spots, and we don't -- are not as dangerous in the final third, we don't create opportunities, we have to keep a clean sheet. We have to team it tight.

When you give up soft goals, like I felt for me the first two goals were, then it's difficult on the road, or against any opponent or even at home. We need to tighten things up there. We need to be more focused on the field. There's got to be more leadership on the field I feel in moments like that because it's hard for us in the 45th minute or 44th minute in front of 45,000. It's not easy for them to hear. This is stuff that we've talked about and we over, and it's a mentality. It's really a mentality. It's a whole team thing.

And we're evaluating, and at this moment, you know, we have to see how certain things are. If not, we've got to find the right solutions. I have to find the right solutions with the guys there that are at least going to be more focused and really queued in. Because when you give goals like that, then you put yourself in a difficult spot. There's no other way to say it.

There's nothing else we can do. We can do a lot of things but then when you give up three goals in games, you're not going to win a lot of games.

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