

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Coach Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. Just another update on the status of Gutman for this weekend? Obviously going back home, and if there are any updates on his injury as well?

FRANK KLOPAS: He's not going to be ready this weekend unfortunately. He's still doing individual stuff out on the field running. He hasn't integrated at all up to this point with the team.

It's a short week. Obviously this week, playing on Sunday. So I see it really difficult for him even to be available, because up to this point, even today, he has not even been involved in -- he's been doing running with our guys on the side and doing stuff with the ball, but still hasn't integrated at all with the first team.

Q. On the topic of availability, do you have any updates on which Fire II players are going to be available for the Open Cup game this week? First-team players for Fire II?

FRANK KLOPAS: For today? We have White is going to play. He's back. He had a little injury from the last outing. We want to get him 45 minutes, at least 45 minutes in this game. And Javi Casas will be available to play.

Q. The team announced today that Laurence Wootton was signed to a deal and loaned out to Indy Eleven. I think everyone was impressed with his performances in the preseason. Obviously won an MLS draft pick, (indiscernible) and a lot of us think MLS Next Pro. But he's been loaned out. I'm curious what you saw from him and if there was some surprise from the coaching staff, because it seemed like he did really well?

FRANK KLOPAS: We followed him in college. Obviously he's much older than some of the other younger guys coming out. He was an experienced guy coming in. He did really well in preseason and someone we liked.

I think it's important that we can loan him out, where he can get really good minutes and we can track him. He was just

a guy that came in, fit right in, experienced guy, worked really hard. He's good on the ball, and good decision-making, intelligent soccer player.

It's good that we're able to keep him. Obviously with our space right now nothing's available. To be able to loan him out where we can get really quality minutes and good competition is important, and we can track him.

Q. Wondering what you're seeing from Chris Mueller right now? And what is the thought process behind his, I guess, minimal playing time right now.

FRANK KLOPAS: It's just Chris is working extremely hard. He missed a whole season last year. It's not easy to kind of get back into the rhythm of things. And he's a guy that his patience -- I think he's a competitive guy, really. He's not the most patient guy, which I think is also an asset he's been able to reach the level he has.

I think he's getting closer. He's getting sharper. I think the last game that he came in also he looked much sharper than the opportunities a couple weeks ago that he got.

I think that he's very close to being a guy now that can step in, whether to start or to come off the bench that can contribute minutes. It's taken a while, but it's not easy when you miss almost the whole season to find that rhythm.

He's looked good in training, but I think the ability to get him minutes now is crucial where he can get his sharpness and timing in the game.

Q. Turning the page around about the result last weekend, you have six games at home, the next ones. Wonder if you're going to start to maybe get some points in these six games at home. What are your thoughts about -- because you have the first six games of the season you have really tough opponents, and now you're going to have some games at home. What are your thoughts about that?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think it's always good to be at home. Obviously the start, the six out of the four games were on the road. But we thought we should have got more than five points at this point, if you look at the games and how we dropped certain points.



But I think there are opportunities for us to learn and grow. The last game, obviously, from the six that we played was one that I felt that we got in good spots but we're not dangerous in the final third with the ball.

We were able to break lines and go backwards instead of being aggressive. I didn't feel we were as sharp. And now there's an opportunity here in a short week from being on the road and losing a game like that, we're looking forward to this game Saturday against a good team. We need to regroup quick and I see the guys even from today, they're looking forward to this match and getting up on the field quick.

It's important out of the next five games, four at home. And it's crucial for us to get on a run and get points and get momentum and some confidence now with these full matches.

Q. I wanted to ask about Hugo. I want to know response you've seen from him as a striker who's not putting the ball in the back of the net every game. What kind of response have you seen from him as he's adjusting to life in the MLS?

FRANK KLOPAS: He works hard. You've seen him in the game. I think the last game we didn't provide him with any quality service, so it's difficult to judge him in a game like that.

Our game plan was to try to get two players around him with Maren and Guty closer to support him. We got in good moments in the final third -- 25, 30 yards away -- but instead of being aggressive and attack with pace and try to get quality service in, things that we talked about, I think that we didn't do that.

But in the six games, you see Hugo, he works extremely hard for the team, and I think in the final third, when we can get him service and get him in good spots, he's going to finish. But he doesn't lack confidence, that's for sure.

But he's always a guy, when he doesn't score, he does those little things that really help the team on both phases, with the ball and without the ball, I think he's been really positive and he's just going to get better and grow.

He's still learning the league as a new player. It's not easy. It takes some time to adjust, but he's going to get stronger and better and sharper, but we definitely need to be able to provide him with more service in dangerous spots.

Q. Through six games you guys, one win. There's been some good performances, but in general one win

out of six, not what you guys are looking for. How much do you need proof of concept that what you're preaching is working and going to work and how much do you need that by just getting wins?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think wins are important. The thing is, we look at the last game, so everybody looks at that game and us losing, it's not that we lost -- when you look at it overall, as a whole, you know, our game plan for me going in, we had a good game plan.

It's not like -- we got stretched at times, but we got in good spots we just didn't have the ability now to penetrate in that final third. We have quality players, and I think we -- tactically we can do things from point A to point B. But from point B to point C, we have quality players. And I think there are moments where they need to make a difference there and be more aggressive and stuff like that.

If you take this game away, and because we lost with the score we did, I think the other games, I think, we dropped points that we should have never dropped. And so I think up to that point the confidence of the group was very good.

Now, this game happens. I felt for me that it's a short week, we need to regroup quick. And we need to really come out with some really good energy on Saturday and take advantage of this home stand and get that confidence and momentum back. Obviously the wins, listen, you can't replicate anything, but when you get the three points it just builds that confidence level within the group.

It's early in the season. We have a long way to go. And I think the guys, we're looking forward to this home stand starting from Saturday to really get things going and get some momentum.

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