

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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## Frank Klopas

Press Conference



**Q. This weekend, MLS has stalked about rivalry weekend, right, and I'm just curious as a Chicagoan how you feel about this new found MLS rivalry between Chicago and St. Louis because the skeptic in me tells me it's been derived but clearly there is an emotion that this game brings out of players and fans alike?**

FRANK KLOPAS: I think when you look at proximity where St. Louis is, it's an opportunity for our fans that always support the team to be there.

But I think with any rivalry, it's going to take time to build. It's set in a great way where I think it can be a great rivalry in the future but I think the great rivalries, I think those take place when you play year after year, when you play in important games and when you play in finals and when you play in playoffs and stuff like that. But I think it's something to build on, that's for sure.

I know if I go back in my time as a youngster, playing youth soccer here with the State teams and when we played St. Louis, obviously that was a rivalry because we wanted to showcase ourselves and make sure that they realize that we were the best in the Midwest.

I think it's there. I think it's going to have to take some time to evolve and be what it really can be, probably a great rivalry in the future. But I think that only happens over time and when you're playing in huge important games and things are on the line and you can make the game even bigger through moments like that.

**Q. Big Champions League day. You know I'm going to ask you about the game.**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, but you threw me off last -- what, I predicted PSG, but you -- I thought the way you -- PSG vs. Dortmund, I thought PSG was at home but it really doesn't matter.

For me today, I take Madrid.

**Q. Madrid to move on?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yes.

**Q. In regular season time? 2-2 coming in.**

FRANK KLOPAS: I know, but away goals don't count now. I'd take them in regular time, yeah. I think they are tough at home. They are an experienced team. I mean both teams, especially with Bayern, they have nothing to play for other than this. You raise your level to play. But I just think that it just seems like the Champions League is a format that Madrid always thrives in; don't bet against them playing at home.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about this week. You guys had a pretty long home stand here and didn't go the way we all wanted to, but do you think a little short trip might be good for the team to just kind of get away, and not a big trip. So it's not like you guys are going to the coasts or anything, but maybe as like a bonding thing, a little quick getaway might be a good thing to kind of galvanize the team together and maybe get things back on track?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, look, most of the trips now other than the West Coast are not long. I think it's just important to get on the field and play again, and for us, I know it's early in the week but I think just our focus is just to continue to stay positive with the group.

Obviously I think for me there were a lot of good things in the last game. It's just now, you know, you can talk about a couple different things, we can always talk about decision-making in the final third, the final pass and stuff like that.

But we got in really good spots. We didn't really create that big chance moment. Maybe we had one, too, but I think it could have. But I think it comes down to those little details that I talked about.

And I think the important thing with every game we go into, it's just a process of evaluating and looking at how we can improve as a team, and then making sure that, you know, once we analyze the game, we look at certain things we did well, we look at mistakes, analyzing those things, and

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looking to improve.

And the thing you cannot do is get frustrated, and that's the one thing that we cannot do. That's just the process with game-in and game-out. It's a long season. I felt -- I feel we are in the right way. I know it doesn't mean anything if you don't get results.

But I felt the team has been playing well. We've got to find a way now to get points. We've got to find a way to -- I don't want to say, score -- we have to score, obviously, or else it's going to be difficult for us.

But maybe, you know, going away, again, we're excited because we haven't been. It's a new stadium. Obviously we played St. Louis last year at home in both games, there were difficult moments. We beat them in the Open Cup in regular season. It's going to be a difficult game.

The only thing is we can just prepare really well and put the guys in positions where they are going to be successful and that's the most important thing, and not try to do things where we take away the strengths of the players. Keep it simple, focus on that, be positive and keep working on the things that the team is really strong at.

**Q. Talking about the ways to get those three points this weekend, St. Louis has the fastest attack in the League. Do you try to counter that with speed or try to beat them with possession?**

FRANK KLOPAS: I think they are the quickest because they are a very direct team. They are probably the one team that from all the teams, their ability to -- the trigger points that they have with the press, once they win the ball, you go back to the old Red Bull days where it's just their first option is always to play vertical and then they get numbers forward, they look to counter-press and create a lot of opportunities like that.

Obviously we know it's going to be a fast start. So our mentality has to be to make sure that we are ready for the first then, 15, 20 minutes of the game, because they are going to come out with energy, being at home. I've watched games there, and gratuity stadium, great atmosphere. They get energized behind their fans.

Like us, we have to be ready for the fast start but always in possession and with the ball, avoid the trigger points that we've been working on. Certain balls, backward passes are going to come. We know that. We know what the spaces are going to be. And now it's just ability to execute, take really low risk. There's no issue, if we don't look to play through our pivots always; that we can be a little bit more direct at times, try to win second balls.

And let the game open up. Let the game open up because in the beginning, it will be a little bit hectic, then we have to be ready for that. I think once the game settles, I think there are opportunities where we definitely can play, but obviously trying to avoid the areas where it's trigger points for them and their ability to press and feed off that.

**Q. My question is about Omari Glasgow, he was signed for one day only, or he's going to be playing with the Fire team just occasionally. I want to ask you, also, about Harold Osorio. I asked you this before. He plays for the Chicago Fire FC II, but is there any possibility that we will be seeing him, too, any time soon to play with the first team? Thank you.**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yes, yes, good question. I think when Omari, when you bring a player up, I think you can have him for six games but you only have the ability to use him in two of those games. So if we use him in the next match, then we have the ability to bring someone else up; it could be Osorio.

I think for us in the last game, because of the injuries we had, we needed more depth in the wide areas, in the positions. Omari was someone that we had in preseason and it with as a situation where we needed cover out wide and that suits Omari. In the future, an opportunity where we need players centrally.

Obviously the last game, I think we had Federico Navarro come back, available. And then Gastón and then Gastón, I think, this week again has some issues with the hamstring and it's day-by-day. But that was the main thing. Those guys came back. We needed more cover out wide with the winger position, in the seven and eleven. And Omari has deserved it because he had a really good preseason with us. We are just waiting for the moment to call him up.

**Q. Update on Maren's rehab is going. Has he made it back to the practice pitch?**

FRANK KLOPAS: He's doing running on his own, so I think that's a good sign. No integration with the first team yet.

I think it will be difficult for him in this game. I think that the realistic probably goal and hope would be to have him available in the Columbus game because he has not started training with the team.

And then obviously with Rafa, he came out the last game. He had a patella issue in his knee. He's day-to-day, also, and then obviously Gastón, he played, but with a hamstring and stuff like that.

Maren, probably for sure, I would say that no chance for him for this game. The other two is just day-by-day. Gastón has not integrated with the game at all. Rafa took part in some of the training today but it still bothers him. We'll see how he goes. Also knowing that we have three games now on Saturday, Wednesday, Saturday.

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