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Chris Mueller

Press Conference



Q. Last time we talked about the need to be confident in the team or the team needing to be confident in feeding your central attackers, and the goals haven't been there yet. What do you think this team needs to do at this point to find the back of the net?

CHRIS MUELLER: I think it's just about, I think, there's a few things, but the one that sticks out me most is getting the ball up high to guys in dangerous areas where they can actually do things and create more frequently throughout games.

I don't think we're getting into good enough spots enough. I think we're getting there here time and time again. And I just think that a little bit more repetitions down there for the guys in the attack would definitely be beneficial.

We need to play attacking football and keep the ball in their half, play that high press and win balls back in order to do that. So there's a ton of things, like I said, that could be rattled off in my opinion.

But it's difficult when you're relying on one or two chances a game in order to win you games. And sometimes you do have to do that. I'm not naive to the fact at all either that sometimes maybe a game is 1-0 or you put both chances away that you get and you win 2-1.

But at the same time I think it's unrealistic to expect to score both chances out of -- two out of two chances in a game. I think that getting the ball in the dangerous attacking spots more frequently is definitely going to be something that will help us, no doubt.

Q. It's obviously been a difficult two-month run for the team. What kind of response have you seen from the group as they try to come back and finally get a win on the board? And also how can you keep the confidence high and get that back when it's been difficult at times?

CHRIS MUELLER: I think you need to get a win. Three

points would be the one thing that I say is how you get that confidence back, so to say. But for us, for now, you have to keep going and keep being positive in whatever fashion you can.

It's not easy in these moments. And I don't think it weighs on anybody harder than all the guys in the locker room because we're the ones here every day putting our best foot forward, trying -- I don't think it's a lack of effort. I don't think that that looks like the problem.

Just the things haven't turned for us recently. And, of course, we all know that we can't control what happened in the past. The only thing we can do is react and respond and hopefully get a good result coming on this weekend.

So that's what the group has done. We've had a good couple of days of training here, and we're just going to continue to look forward, push forward, and keep believing in each other. That's the main thing. But it is difficult right now, like you mentioned. So we are fighting through it.

Q. The thing about you, you started most of the games, actually, this season. I spoke to Frank about you a couple of weeks back about sort of your performance. He's been very complimentary of what you've done for the team and how you've sort of elevated your game. How would you kind of self-assess yourself personally this season, how your play has been? And that includes on the play and off the field, in the locker room, in a leadership role? How do you assess yourself what you've done so far this season, because Coach seems to be on board?

CHRIS MUELLER: I think obviously it's hard for me to give myself credit when the team's not doing well, and myself credit in that sense as well. I obviously want to be scoring goals and providing more assists for the team to help us win games, which obviously I haven't be able to do as much yet.

And I understand there's time coming back from the injury. The team has been going through a tough run of form. So it's multiple things, but at the end of the day I feel I want to be producing more. No doubt. I know that's in my locker.

It's something I continue to strive forward for, but I see a lot of progress in my game as I go through each performance,

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each start. As I'm getting more minutes under my legs, I do think my touches have gotten sharper. I think I'm showing bits in my quality, maybe not all the time like I know that I can, but definitely all those things are coming back.

So for me, those are positive signs amidst all the negatives that have been obvious for all of us to see. But I do think that I'm moving in the right direction. And I think that in the beginning of the season as well as I was not playing as much and tried to just continue to radiate positive energy within the team. I think even now I try and bring that good energy to the guys, when it feels a little low sometimes in the locker room. As I mentioned, the results haven't gone our way, so I'm trying to be just kind of that light for some guys, you know, because naturally I'm a positive person. I'm optimistic, and I always look forward.

I don't ruminate too much and think about the past or things I can't control. I've tried to be that leader in some sense of trying to keep motivating the guys, to keep telling them that all we can do is push forward and look ahead and try and turn things around in one game, one moment, because that's all it takes in this league.

It takes one moment of good fortune, of good luck, and you turn the table for yourself, and right there you get that confidence that's so, so important that can help you catapult to the next level. That's been my essential role, I feel like, in the team leadership-wise. Like you mentioned, for my performance, just happy with the pieces that have kind of come so far, hoping I can just contribute a little bit more on a statistical side of things here in the near future.

Q. Who do you have today Leverkusen or Atalanta?

CHRIS MUELLER: You know, it's hard to bet against Leverkusen because they're undefeated all season. But at the same time I think Atalanta has looked good throughout the tournament, especially in the semifinal against Marseille. So we'll see.

Q. As you talked about getting minutes and stuff like that, you've had minutes both kind of like on the left side receiver you play mostly as well as on the right. I want you to talk about if that's a challenge for you, if you have a clear preference. Most players tell us they'll get any minutes they can on the pitch they can. Has that been a factor adjusting back to the game as you've been coming back from the injury?

CHRIS MUELLER: Obviously you get thrown in different positions. I feel like one of the things that makes me a good player in some sense is just my versatility and being able to play in multiple spots. So that's been a good

challenge for me to play wide on the right where the system has you more wide and you're more crossing balls and serving than being in the middle, connecting and combining and doing other things in that nature.

So it's been a good challenge for me. I like to play both positions. It kind of changes the way I play my game just because of how you're tactically set up. But, nonetheless, I think that they both just, they're different jobs. So you're just asked to do different things. And I just try and do both of those to the best of my ability, no matter where that's at. That's what I always do.

It's been fun. I'm always open to play wherever I can get space.

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