

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference

D.C. United 1, Chicago Fire FC 1

Q. Result on the road, you guys fought till the end. What did you see from your side tonight?

FRANK KLOPAS: Exactly that. I think it's a different kind of feeling after this game. For me it all starts with the team spirit. You know, the way the guys played for each other, the way we fought, the energy we brought all the way to the end, I felt the second half we pushed it. We created, for me, the better opportunities in the game and -- but you know what, we have to take steps, step-by-step.

So for me, and like I told the group, I think I'm proud of the guys, the mentality, the attitude, the energy, the commitment, the grit, everything that they brought tonight and stuff like that, and then the second half, the duels that we needed to improve, everyone stepped up their game and for me it's about consistency now to keep going. Because we have the level. We've shown it. We've got to do it consistently.

But it was a step in the right direction with the attitude, the mentality, the fight with the group, and playing really good football in moments and creating really good chances. A step at a time, we take it, and we regroup and we come out with more energy on Wednesday.

Q. I think the big news coming into the game was Xherdan Shaqiri going into the Swiss National Team. How did the team play without him, and how does his absence change things the next couple weeks?

FRANK KLOPAS: You asked me in the press conference, and I didn't know at that time. It was a last-second decision, and I think it's just normal.

I think at the point where we are at the moment as a group, I think we needed and I needed everyone to be focusing on one thing, and it's just normal. It's a human, you know -- from a human standpoint, that the guy could be thinking with the Euros, it could be the last one. So I think it's best



that we made that decision, and we wish him the best.

I felt the team, for me, you saw it. I felt it was very important, first of all, to come out with good intensity, with energy, commitment, from everyone to understand what it's going to take to get a result and get ourselves out of there. We had that tonight.

We had passion and we were together over 90 minutes, and there was a huge belief all the way to the end from the guys. You saw it. They left it on the field, and regardless of what happened, this is the kind of the team and the effort and the mentality that myself, that everyone expects when you put that Fire jersey on, and if we do that, regardless of the outcome, it's a team that we can all be proud ever.

Q. Speaking of the intensity and putting on the jersey, this was the first time Kellyn Acosta got to wear the armband with the Fire. What did you think about his performance as captain and can you walk me through that decision to give him the armband?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, because he's a World Cup veteran player. You know, when I looked at the field, I just felt maybe it's something he needed, also for his confidence, you know, to kind of help him and lift him a little bit. Normally if Fabi would have started, he's the one, he's in that leadership group that we have, and so is Kellyn. Rafa was the captain and he decided not to do.

I just felt for me, looking to a game like this and trying to instill some confidence in Kellyn, and it's a guy that the players respect a lot because of who he is and the quality of player that he, and is also the human being. So I just wanted to make sure that he knew that. And I felt that, you know, giving that armband to him, I think he stepped out on the field and besides the goal, I felt that he played really well.

And then, you know, taking him out, I felt, still, it was a hot, humid day. Guys ran a lot and we wanted to get some fresh legs. Fabi came in and brought really good energy. From that standpoint, I felt the armband, the player who he is and where he's played, and also giving him confidence that we believe in him, and I think it helped him raise his game for sure.

Q. A point on the road, and you have two more games at home but you say also that you're going to be rotating and trying different things with the players and we can see, you know, the productivity in the game today. I want to know your opinions about Navarro and Terán, I think they did a great game today. And about Cuypers, how you see him on the field. Looks like he was looking for the ball, going down for the ball too much. So those are my two questions.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yes, I didn't say anything about rotation for Wednesday. I think, for me, we have enough time to recover. Obviously we have to assess how the guys are in the next couple days. That should not be an issue, I believe.

But we'll have to see in the next couple days how the guys are, and I think the Saturday game will probably be a little bit more difficult because it's a day less to recover.

The team played, for me, I felt it was a really good performance as a whole from a collective standpoint. You know, Fede was incredible tonight.

Carlos was also incredible. Really tough match up with Benteke. But I thought, seriously, he did a fantastic, a great job on him. Got him frustrated. I believe for me, the guy should have been sent out on a second yellow. I don't know how the referee doesn't give that. He saw it. The fourth official, he told him, he's on a yellow; and for me, he should have been sent off. He was frustrated, and I think it stood -- a lot to Carlos. And also Hugo, I think he's moved a lot. He got in good spots. Brought always good energy, and also Tom, I think both worked extremely hard and well together.

But wouldn't -- don't want to single guys out. For me, it was an excellent performance by the group. I think Guti had a great performance; Rafa. I don't want to miss anyone out. I think as a whole, the team had a great performance, and that's what you need to get results on the road.

We just have to continue and be consistent.

Q. The team had eight corners and once again failed to convert. What do you think the team needs to do to start doing better on set pieces?

FRANK KLOPAS: Well, we work throughout the week. We do the set pieces. We have a set piece coach, Ryan, he did, for me, a really good job. I think it's one thing in training, and I think another thing when you come into games.

This was a difficult match up. I think when you look at the team height overall for them, I think that all of their players, at least where they started, were bigger than us, and a lot with that is, you know, delivery and it's something that we work on. It's a big part of the games, that's for sure, on both ends.

Again, now, we give up a goal on the other end and stuff like that. So we need to continue to work and believe that those are the moments in games that we need to take advantage and be better at, because they can make difference, that's for sure.

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