

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Frank Klopas

Press Conference



**Q. Coming into the break, you had three pretty good games in a row, two draws, finally getting a win against LA. Do you feel like that momentum is still there with the team even though you had a couple of days off where you weren't together as a group?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Yes, I think the momentum is still there. I think this break was good, especially after us getting a really good performance and good three points against the Galaxy. I think the break has been good. I think even after that game, I think the preparation and the training has been really sharp.

But it also gave an opportunity now with the players to take a couple days off just to rest not only physically, from a mental standpoint. I think guys have put a lot into it, and I think the break came at a good time.

The trainings have been sharp here starting this week, and I think that's really good. I think the guys have come in energized.

I thought the break was good, and we're preparing really well and hard to go to Toronto and continue to get points.

**Q. Have you seen a new energy from the team? We talked for a couple weeks about just waiting for that first win to turn a corner. Have you felt that from the players?**

FRANK KLOPAS: I think the energy has always been there. The commitment has been there. But I think it's different when you get some good results and a win. I think that you can just see the sharpness within the guys is there. That's better. I think sometimes the confidence comes back even more. You don't overthink things. I think it's more instinctive where everything just becomes sharper and more dynamic, and I think for sure the results do impact the mentality of the group, and that's why I felt that -- I think just giving the guys a couple days of break and having this bye week, I guess, I think it's been really good.

The energy has been good. I think the results have helped. We just have to continue.

I think that effort and commitment and hard work is the only thing that's going to continue to get us climbing higher and higher.

**Q. Coach, just eight games before the Leagues Cup break. I'm curious what the message is going into that. Obviously the three games of positive results, one thing, but just the mentality and what the team's goals are over these next eight matches.**

FRANK KLOPAS: It hasn't changed even before the three games. I talked to you guys about where we were. I think our approach to every game has to be almost that this is -- it's not a relegation battle, but we have to approach every game like a relegation battle, like we're fighting and we dropped a lot of points and there's no other way to climb out of it except to approach every game like it's a must-win game, with that mentality. That hasn't changed. It's three games. We have some positive results, but we have a long way to go.

We understand where we are, and only effort and hard work is going to get us out, and a commitment. We've got to stick together. The energy has been good. The results have helped. But we have to keep going, and we have a long way to go.

My message hasn't changed. We know what our goals are in the end. We want to be in the playoffs. There's no other way to say it.

We have an uphill climb, and we have to approach every game like it's a must-win situation.

**Q. As you know, there's been a turnaround for Toronto of course under John Herdman in his first season in charge. What are you expecting from Toronto at BMO Field?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Look, I've watched a lot of their games. I think for me it's a team that's very organized, a team that's committed -- obviously new leadership and I think new energy also for them. I think all the players are committed.

Again, they brought some really good players in, and it's a team that's going to come obviously playing at home with energy, the way they press, they're organized. I see a team that's committed, and it's going to be a really difficult match. We have to be at our best. We have to be ready from the start of the game to play a team that is going to bring energy. In moments they're going to press. They're going to work hard. They have no problems stepping up in moments in 1-v-1 situations. They don't mind playing really high up and making it difficult for teams.

I see a team that's organized and not easy to break down. We have to be at our best, and we have to understand and expect a fast start in the match and be ready.

Not an easy task but one that we look forward to, to the challenge, obviously, and it's going to be a challenge, and we're preparing extremely well for them. We look forward to the game.

I think having this break has been good, like I said, but now I think we're excited to get back and play.

**Q. Just a quick update with the week off and some players' availability. How is everybody's health doing, guys like Chase Gasper, Andrew Goodman and Toby --**

FRANK KLOPAS: Those guys are not available.

**Q. Is Fede doing any better?**

FRANK KLOPAS: No, he's not available, either. He will not be available. I think those guys are longer term. Now, how long I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you in one week or two weeks. You know what I mean? I think we're hopeful, but these guys, they're down the road. It's a difficult one because obviously on that side with Goodman and Chase, you have two left-footed players that they're out, so that kind of hurts us at the moment, but it is what it is. I'm sure that every team deals with it. We just have to move on.

But they won't be available.

You know Shaqiri is gone with the EUROS. We know that. Other than that, it's day by day. Some guys are carrying little things, and we're being a little bit careful. We're hoping that everybody is going to be 100 percent, at least for the guys that are -- other than the guys that I said for Saturday.

**Q. Former Chicago Fire player Jhon Durán has been linked to Chelsea. Let's say he moved to Chelsea. Is there any onward (indiscernible). Shaqiri's starts with Switzerland this weekend. Any good message for**

**him?**

FRANK KLOPAS: Can you repeat the second one?

**Q. Shaqiri starts with Switzerland in the EUROS. Do you have a message for him?**

FRANK KLOPAS: I texted him and wished him all the best and good luck. I think that's important. I know that it's a big tournament, and it might be his last EUROS for him, and I wish him obviously nothing but the best.

Then the first one with Jhon Durán, that's a very good question. I think that's one that you have to ask our technical director or sporting director in case he moves, what the contract long-term with the move or what that means for our club. I couldn't answer that question, I'm sorry.

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