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Frank Klopas

Press Conference



Q. Now that Hugo seems to have gotten his footing right, what would it take for Barlow and Koutsias to find their footing as the backup strikers? I know Koutsias plays on the wing, but those two guys, what would you see for them to get on the score sheet for the second half of the season?

FRANK KLOPAS: I think the more important thing for players that don't get minutes is to continue to work hard and be sharp in training; that's the one thing.

And when the opportunities come, you know, both players have played, and I think both players have gotten opportunities in games. They just have to continue to work and when those chances come, you know, at the end of the day you have to put them away.

So I think it all starts with the confidence that you gain here training every day. So you're better prepared when the moment comes and you get into the game, and Tom has come in, and Koutsi, the guys, the minutes they have played, they have brought energy and they have gotten chances, and I think they have to continue just to work hard and believe that the next chance that they are going to get, half the confidence is going to be in the back of the net. That's the kind of mentality that they need to continue to have.

Q. Going back to the offense, looks like the team has been doing a better job of getting runners into the box on offense. Are you satisfied with the way the team has been doing that and do you think there's still more work to get done? So far every time the team has scored multiple goals, they have had a result this season.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think our main focus from the beginning of the season is get numbers into the box. Get more numbers closer. I think when we get in moments where we can cross the ball, it's very difficult when you have just one runner in there.

So we always need at least three in the box, that's for sure.

So we have done a much better job at putting numbers, getting numbers forward, and I think that has helped us with the opportunities that we've gotten. It all starts from there. I think it's very important that you know we need runs, we need runs behind. Every time we get an opportunity where we move the ball and we have players that are facing forward with no pressure, then we constantly need runs. We constantly need runs.

I think that's been a big focus from the beginning of the season, is to get more numbers into the box so we have more opportunities for those balls that come in through crosses or cutbacks and stuff. That's important. We've done a much better job with that. It's shown now in our ability now to finish chances.

Also, I think when we do move up as a unit better and we get more numbers then, we are better prepared to press when we lose that initial first cross and stuff like that. I think that's been a big part. I think we have been very dangerous in games, moments where we counterpress with the ball closer up the field and have numbers closer to goal and quickly transition, and with crosses, cutbacks, shots on goal.

Q. Orlando City looked good against LAFC in their last game and they switched to a 4-4-2 sort of shape which I thought helped them control the midfield. How important is it for the team to counter that? They got 19 shots off against LAFC, and try to win second balls and stuff so it doesn't get into midfield in the first place?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think that, listen, we are prepared. The main focus is to prepare really well every day, and then also find a really good balance with the work on the field, and we're dealing with extremely hot and humid weather, and I'm sure we are going to face the same thing in Orlando. We've been very mindful of that.

I think second balls are crucial, and that's why it's important for us to move always as a unit and stay very compact when we have the ball, when we don't have the ball because then it just gives us opportunities to counterpress to win second balls better, to have options to play quicker out of pressure.

Going there in Orlando, where it's going to be probably extremely hot and humid, I think being good on the ball is going to be very important.

So I think that we've emphasized that. We've been working extremely hard how they are going to press us, and we are going to be ready for the match. You know, the team is in a good moment right now in a good way, not only the players that are starting but I think it's more important that the guys have come in, even the last game, have come in as subs and contributed to the team. I think everybody has looked extremely sharp. They are working extremely hard, and that's a positive thing for me and for the team.

Q. Staying on the offensive theme, seeing Hugo score goals, that's great, Maren playing well. But what does it do for the mood in the locker room after the game and what you see around the team and the mood of the team to have guys like Mauricio and Allan getting in on the goal scoring over the weekend and goals coming from unexpected place, especially some really good goals.

FRANK KLOPAS: I think when the team plays well, and you get result, I think for sure the confidence level goes up within the team. I think there's no secret about that. Results impact the mentality, the mental of state of the team. One thing, though, is when we were going through difficult moments, and look, it's not like we are out of difficult moments. We need to continue to stay grounded and work hard.

But when we were going through those difficult moments, we continued to be together as a team and work hard and try to find solutions. The team stuck together. They continued to believe. There was unity within the team and they continued to work hard. And we have to continue through effort to get out of situations and continue to climb up the ladder. We are not out of this yet and I know results have helped, and they do help the confidence of the team.

But our main focus is just to prepare well, to continue to work hard, to stick together. We have a long way to go, we know that, and we just take it one game at a time.

Q. Congratulations to you on the team of the week inclusion and we see Fabian's name in there as well. How would you describe how important he's been as a leader, unsung hero and a guy whose positional flexibility has been important to what you guys have been trying to do tactically as of late?

FRANK KLOPAS: The first part, thank you. For me, I'm blessed that I have really good staff with me. So for me, I

think any time you get recognized like that, for me, I'm very mindful that it's not only me. It's the people that I have around me, and I have a really good staff, and it's credit to all of us.

Then with Fabi, I think for me, Fabi, he just does all the little things that sometimes go unnoticed but is very valuable to the team. It doesn't go unnoticed with our staff because sometimes you look at guys that get assists in goals but he does all those little things. His work rate is incredible, and he always finds ways to be positive and help the team.

So that's the majority with our guys. It's been all about the team. Our focus as a collective group is to try to improve, and we need guys like that -- for Fabi, it would mean nothing to him if the team didn't get a result and win the game. That's the kind of player he is.

Q. We've got Allan coming up next. What have you seen from him in the six months he's been here? Obviously a lovely goal over the weekend but seems like the type of person that has brought a solid mentality with him to Chicago.

FRANK KLOPAS: Allan is a great human being, first of all. That's the first thing for us. It was important to me when I went and spent time with him in Switzerland, and I had a chance to speak with him and meet with him. First of all, great human being. I feel that he fits really well in our league here and with our team. He's very athletic. He continues to grow. With all the new players that you bring in, there is time where they need to adapt to the new leg. He's going to continue to improve and get better.

The one thing that we have to be mindful is with him and with Hugo also, those guys have not had a break. He went from Lugano straight to preseason with us. So we have to find a way throughout the season where we can give him some time. Because the mental part of it is something that we have to do; the mental and physical part is something that we have to focus on and find time for him to take some time away.

But he's adapted really well. He's going to continue to be better and better. He's got a great mentality. Very likable within the group. He's all about the team. He works extremely hard every day and looks to improve and get better every day. And it's been great for us to have him on the team. He's been a great addition.

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