

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference

Q. Obviously a rough loss on Saturday but a huge opportunity to get three points against another team that's also trying to fight its way into the playoffs.

FRANK KLOPAS: Absolutely right.

Q. What's the mentality and what's the message for the team?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I think we have to rebound. Obviously you have not so much -- well, the performance we could have been better. But also better in areas with the ball against Miami, I just felt the mistakes we made cost us the last game. Unlucky in the first goal but mistakes right a with a in the second half and we let the game get out of hand.

The third goal, it became really difficult. It's keeping things tight. Not giving up more than one goal, we saw even when we gave up two goals in New York, it's about the next play, we got it and we had momentum and tied the game and that's important.

Now every game, we've talked about the importance of every game and we are playing all the teams now that we're basically fighting for one or two spots in the playoffs. They are coming in with a win and confidence. For us it's an opportunity to rebound from the last match and prepare well and make the right decisions and get the guys in good form to go on the field. I know the players will be looking forward to get back on the field after last week's performance.

Q. This is the team's first game of the season at SeatGeek, the history does that change any vibes for the players?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, it's different. Obviously you see the stadium here. The atmosphere, when you get 10,000 people, the atmosphere becomes really great. You know, the fans are right on top of you, so it's a different feeling.

It's a different vibe obviously. It's an area that the players feel at home and feel comfortable. It's where we train almost every day, not in the stadium but we are in this place all the time. For us it will be like being at home obviously because we are not at Soldier Field all the time.

It's a different feeling, the stadium size, the atmosphere that's going to be here. You know, a lot of good history in here with the past with the team and it's I think good to play this game where we can have our fans right on top of us so we can create that great atmosphere that sometimes we miss.

Q. You faced D.C. Is it better now seeing teams the second time? Does it help you prepare?

FRANK KLOPAS: Up to this point we know what the team is all about, and you know, so I think for us, I think it's a lot of similarities going into the first game that we played because we were at that moment desperate. We needed to get back on the right track, and we adjusted to some things. We played with Tom Barlow and went to a back three. We got a point on the road, and we got opportunities to make the maximum points out of that match.

Now we're late into the season, and points are important for both sides. We know what they are all good. The good thing for us is we have almost all the guys healthy. Mauri is still out with a hip situation but other than that, a little bit of some things here and there. But we'll be okay for the weekend.

Q. Your feelings about Koutsi getting the call -- it's good to be playing for the U-21, but a contributor for this week and maybe next game.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, I agree with you, I think an opportunity that was given to him in Leagues Cup, he needed games and performed really well and came strong in Miami. I think he's a kid that always brings good energy. He's good around the goal, and he always gets opportunity. You know, you see him in training and his ability to finish off chances.

So he's a striker that gets chances and scores goals, and that's a positive thing. It's a good thing for him -- I think we are going to miss him. We wish him obviously the best and

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he deserves it. But it's a moment where we definitely have used him in the upcoming matches.

Q. I guess what are you expecting from D.C., playing a direct game, a lot of high-pressing fast offense?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, they have a striker that's good in the air and Benteke's holdup play is excellent. When they get pressure, they have issues where they play very direct with him and he has the ability to win the first ball and then it's about winning second balls. With their pivots, they want to create space to find him.

Without the ball they are aggressive. If you try to build out, they are very aggressive with the wingers and the wingbacks step high up. Our decision-making and understanding where pressure is coming up, that's the No. 1 thing, how are they pressing us, to find solutions to break them down, and when they are aggressive, we are going to have opportunities in 1v1.

So it's about good decision-making and not forcing the ball and understanding where the pressure is going to come when we have the ball. And obviously without the ball, second balls become really important, being good defensively with set pieces. With height, they are dangerous in set pieces, and obviously do a good job on Benteke.

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