

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Frank Klopas

Press Conference

Charlotte 4, Chicago 3.

Q. Curious how you're feeling after that. Obviously a tough first half but fighting back, and the side showing character at the end?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, but I think you have to really look at the game. It's a tough first half because of the way we conceded the goals. If you look at the way how we played with the ball, we had 12 shots at goal, ten at the first half. Our chances were there. I think that the goals we conceded, that's the frustrating part. But this is an ongoing thing. I thought on one hand, we were very good. The third goal, you put yourself in an extremely difficult situation. But all the goals we gave up, it's just, I think for me, very poor.

So it's difficult. You come here on the road and you give up the goals like that, and you know, I think we push the game. We made changes. We took some risk and stuff like that, and you know, the guys again showed a lot of character. They pushed the game and then, you know, I think in the final third, they packed it in and that's what we needed to have some more clear ideas.

I think the guys pushed, maybe they are taking some more shots, getting some more crosses in. The opportunities are there. But it's difficult when you put yourself in the hole like we did like that on the road. It's extremely difficult. That's the disappointing part. But with the ball and some ideas that we had, I felt were very good. It's just I think disappointing to give up four goals. It's going to be difficult to win any game for a team giving up four.

Q. So before you said that defense is about mentality.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah.

Q. The team conceded four goals. It's obviously in a situation where the result doesn't have as much significance as it would have earlier in the season just given the standings. But what do you think about the



mentality of the group at this point of the season?

FRANK KLOPAS: The mentality of the team is fighting all the way to the end, and then that's not a question. I mean, the goals, yes, it's mentality. Sometimes it's lack of focus, concentration. Sometimes it's just losing guys in the box. It's just the little things. When things don't go well, it's always sometimes difficult. I think when the results on games do impact the mental state of the team you know when you come in there. You try to motivate the guys. You try to do things, and the minute some things go wrong, then of course the guys are down.

But you know, we try to push them. We try to do the right things. I never question the mentality, the attitude with the guys, no. There are things we need to look at but that's not -- I think you saw, the guys left everything on the field and pushed the game. When something goes wrong and the team is in a difficult spot and you lose games, losing games with what the record is, being out of the playoffs, all of that impacts the team from a mental standpoint going into the match.

The only thing we can do is prepare the team the right way. Make sure we're crystal clear about the game and go out and try to execute and when it's not, try to adjust and try to impact the second half of the game with adjusting, and that's what we did.

Q. Karol Swiderski is someone I followed with the Polish National Team, and just the quality of player that he is, I think you guys didn't face him the first time around, but he's sort of a Fire killer every year. I remember a couple years ago, he had a brace, also. What did you see from him and why does it happen whenever he faces the Fire, it brings out the best in him, but in terms of quality, you guys had turns containing him. What did you see from him tonight?

FRANK KLOPAS: I know him. He played in Greece for many years. I know the player really well. I mean, he's a smart player. He has good movement. He's clever in the box. When we get in the box it's about man defending. There's got to be ability where you have both references, whether the lower you are, if you cannot see the player, you've got to feel where the player. Is you've got to get a hand. You've got to get tight on players. It's just very simple as that. If you give the guy opportunities five yards

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from goal, you know his quality, he's not going to miss. He's a clever player. He moves well. He works extremely hard. Yeah, it's unfortunate that against us he seems to find ways to get goals.

Q. Also now, weird schedule, three weeks basically off before the last game. What do you do? It's an unusual thing because there are teams that have two games until then. So this long break right before the last game of the season. What do you sort of do? How do you approach for the final game and maybe how you're going to work the guys in terms of preparing for the last one?

FRANK KLOPAS: We approach it like any other game. I think it's good that we have some time off. I think the guys need. It I think we need to get away. We have one home game, the last game of the season, happens to be at home. Maybe probably against a team that's going to be fighting to get in the playoffs. It's important for us to finish strong and to finish on a positive note at home. You know, leave everything on the field.

We have to get a result our last game. There's a lot to play for for a lot of players. I know that tonight we didn't have Hugo again. Maren wasn't here and I know that those guys should be back, I think with Hugo again it's a situation where it's a family matter with his kid and they are in the hospital and I understand that part. Some days they are looking a little bit better and some days they are not. You can see where his mind is. And Maren's better half had the baby, so he should be back, and then we can be as strong as possible for the last game. It's a home game, and I think it's important to finish on a positive note at home for our fans. It's Fan Appreciation Night. It's been a difficult season for everyone.

I believe for me, the team is not far off and it's an opportunity to get it right this off-season. We're close but we have ways to go. We know what the issues are and the problems. We have to address them and next season be in a different spot than where we are right now.

It hits home for us. We take it to heart. It's been difficult. But tomorrow is a new day and we have to look forward. I'm a positive guy and a guy that works extremely hard, and I know that the guys after this couple days that we come back, we're going to work extremely hard and be ready for that last game. FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...