

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Chicago 3, FC Dallas 1

Q. First win with the Fire, how does it feel and how does it feel to have that kind of moment turn around in the last 15 minutes in the game?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, the message to the guys is that all wins are difficult in this league and if we want to win we've got to do the dirty stuff, the small things, and I think we did that tonight.

It wasn't, you know, always perfect but I don't think it's going to be at this stage. And the guys hung together, and you know, some of the solutions made a big difference in the game.

But overall, pleased for the group.

Q. Seemed like Hugo took this game a bit personally and put the team on his back, relatively. What did you think of his performance tonight?

GREGG BERHALTER: He was strong. We needed him to stay on. We went to two forwards at the end, trying to get some bodies in there.

But overall, I think that Hugo had a good match. And it was, I think, a really good sign when he steps up to want to take the penalty, and just showing that leadership.

Q. Leo Barroso not only gets his debut; he's healthy enough to get that debut, and gets himself into position to score. Your thoughts?

GREGG BERHALTER: We told him to come into the game and he needs to be aggressive attacking. We know he has defensive qualities 1v1 we wanted him to be aggressive getting forward, and he did that, and got, in the end, a good goal.

Q. Chris Brady gets his first PK safe in MLS.

GREGG BERHALTER: Last week doesn't count?

Q. No.

GREGG BERHALTER: Come on, he intimidated Benteke.

Q. That's what I said. But to see him make that save at that type of moment at the end of the game?

GREGG BERHALTER: Again, it was the small things and another moment in the game where if you play the next two minutes and they are needing a goal, things can perhaps change. You know, that really helped ice the victory for sure.

Q. So I remember when you were with the national team, you always liked to talk about how the substitutes were called "substitutions," and I heard you use the word right there, "solutions." What changed in the 78th minute, other than just Barroso coming in? Was there something else that clicked at that moment?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think there was a moment where he were on top of them, anyway.

After they scored, they got a little bit cautious, and we were on top of them. You know, Bomba that chance with the 1v1, and we were aggressive.

We changed our shape a little bit. We overload the middle with two forwards, and again, I think we're able to put some good pressure on them. Be a really aggressive vertical going forward.

And it's always important for fullbacks to be attacking, and they did that. But the solutions did a great job in the game for sure.

Q. You touched upon Hugo Cuypers' performance, but I want to ask you a little more about that. Bringing on Tom Barlow allowed Hugo the freedom to roam into the wings and serve in more of a play making role in the final ten minutes. How satisfied are with you his performance, especially in that last segment of the game, and is that something that you're going to apply in tense situations like this going forward?



GREGG BERHALTER: Well, I think that Hugo in the beginning of the game, for a large part of the game, was really good leading the line in our defensive structure. We were very compact, very difficult to break down. They resorted to a lot of diagonal balls. They couldn't play between our lines. And a big part of that was Hugo's positioning and movement. I think he did that really well.

There was just -- he was really close to getting on the end of some good service throughout the game, but then I think when we did bring Tom in, it did help free him up a little and gave him a little bit more room to roam.

And he's such a smart player. He understands where the space is, and was able to attack it.

Q. So one of the things I think that was relevant throughout the game was just how many players that may not necessarily be in the first-choice 11 got to play in this game. Can you talk about the resilience of your squad with those guys coming in and what you saw from some of the players that may not have been in the starting 11, assuming everyone was healthy?

GREGG BERHALTER: What I would say, in general, is that the guys have been doing a really good job of just dealing with adversity and deal with the injuries.

Our list of injuries, it goes on and on, and the guys just continue to step up and guys get their opportunity and guys like Sergio, Sam Williams, Omari, Sam Rogers, also.

So everyone is playing their part and we need that right now. The state of the squad is, we're thin, and you know, you see it; we only had 19 on the bench today. That's what it is right now.

Q. This was Sam Williams' second call-up, second appearance. Barring something drastic changing, he will not have any more. How concerned are you, especially with the cost of going down going forward especially with the depth in the midfield?

GREGG BERHALTER: I'm very concerned. On a scale of 1 to 10, I'm like a 9 1/2.

Q. Building on that last question, looking you have another game in seven days, I believe, are you going to look to bring in another midfielder in these next couple days? I know there are some on the market.

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, I mean, we're looking at a midfielder. But it's not going to be by next week, I don't think. So we'll have to see what happens. Potentially in a league -- someone from the league we can get but our

focus has been elsewhere right now and we'll just have to see how the whole thing plays out.

We may have to activate Sam or Harold or something. But we'll figure something -- we'll figure it out. But it's not so clear right now.

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