

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Chicago 2, Toronto 1

Q. Congrats on the three points. First and foremost, going on the road, two wins in a row on the road, that's the same number the Fire got in the entirety of last season. How does it feel?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, our objective is just to keep proving our performances. I think you saw that today and then the byproduct is competing to try to get a win and we want to do that in every game.

I tell you all the time, MLS games, anyone can beat anyone. So as long as we compete and we continue to improve our performance, we should be in games.

Q. I think there's a lot to be happy with these last two games. Is there one thing that most impressed you today from the team?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think when I look at the last two games, in general, it's the resiliency to come back when things don't go your way. We went down in both games, and were able to come back and get the lead and eventually win the games. That's what I'm most happy about so far.

Q. What does it say about the midfield three, home-grown all from Chicago, All-American, that they could dominate in a game like this, even when the midfield has been so challenged the last couple weeks?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, we're down numbers and people have to step up. Sergio has played every game so far, and so has Guti, and they have done a good job. Mauricio came in and did a good job. It's next-man-up mentality with this group.

Q. Curious, seemed like the high press today was really causing a lot of trouble for Toronto. Curious how you thought that went and the way it led to pretty

much both goals and the Bomba to Gutman goal in the first half?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think we try to be compact from that compactness. We move when we want to move into high pressure, and turn the opponent over in good positions, and we were able to do that at times today.

For me, it really starts with compact ness. At times we lost it in the game and that's something that we need to keep focused on during the week.

Q. It looked like we saw a slightly more aggressive Sergio, was that the directive or just the result of him growing in the game?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think there were spaces for him to move up into, especially when we got the ball on the upper, in the left side of the field, in their space on the weak side for him to find.

In general, he was supposed to control build up and be a little bit lower in buildup from midfield, and I thought he did that well.

Q. A lot of good happening but one thing, the team so far has been sort of letting up early goals and coming from behind. They have been really resilient but what can you attach to the trailing early in games and having to come-from-behind that you've seen so that are near?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, I think in two of the four games, so half of the games, we let up early goals, the D.C. game and tonight. Dallas came late in the second half. Columbus, we scored first.

I'm not sure it's a trend yet.

Disappointed with the start of the game. Disappointed that one chance leads to a goal. I think we could have been defending a little bit better. Might have been off-sides, but that's not my job.

Overall, I think it shows a lot about the group that we don't get fazed by that. We're able to keep playing, settle into the game, and then I think start taking control of the match.

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Q. There's definitely no panic with this team so far. Do you see the guys if they go down early in the game, or at some point that they have that confidence that they know they are going to come back or have that ability?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's a mindset, and we've talked before in this season about how to stay in games and how to stay in moments, and every game has a different story. Sometimes you're under a lot of pressure and sometimes you're the one who has control of the game.

Just riding those moments out, and not getting frustrated, to the getting emotional about those times in matches.

A goal against is a very similar event; that we want the guys to just really have emotional control to deal with it.

Q. Dean goes out early, not when or how you want to lose a player but Barroso comes in, and it looked like the team was getting a lot more activity through that right-hand side in the attack as a result of that move. What did you think about his performance, and how does that help open up the team to have more attacks from that side of the field?

GREGG BERHALTER: Leo is a guy that came in and made a good impact last week and I thought he did the same this week, and it's good to see. We want competition for spots, and Leo was playing every game until he got injured. I think the competition's great.

Q. Just the other subs, we saw a longer performance from Omari than we have other than that one start and looked like he was getting more active across the pitch. What did you think of his performance, and then if you can give me a little bit about what you saw from Maren in his first minutes of the season.

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, Maren is technical player. You can see he's good under pressure. What I really like about him is passes and moves it take up new space; does a good job of that.

Omari was disappointed, obviously, not to start the game, but I think he handled it in the best possible way he could, and that was come on and show why he should be playing. I think he did a really good job defensively, and then was able to hit a couple counters where he had a really dangerous goal-scoring opportunity.

Q. Compared to, for example, the match against D.C. United and also against Columbus, how satisfied are you with your back line's composure today, especially in the closing stages of the game?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, I think we're improving, and that's good to see. We talked with the team about just continuing to build on performances and get better. The back line has certainly done that, and I think the center back pairing is starting to gel. Getting much more comfortable with each other. You know, the individual performances of the back line are improving every game.

So those are some good signs. But we have to take it and keep moving forward because we're not there yet.

Q. Looking ahead to next week, going back across the border against Vancouver, a team that's yet to draw or lose a game, what's the perspective going into that game? Does it feel like a step up, a bigger test than any match so far?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, we'll have to check out the video and see what they are doing. You know, get familiar with them. They are league leaders right now and deservedly so.

Q. I know you said there's not a correlation between the club and the national team but your last couple of trips to this part of the world and the National Anthem, what the crowd is like there, is there any personal satisfaction for you that you were able to get the win here?

GREGG BERHALTER: We just want to win games, and that's the most important thing. To me, all that other stuff surrounding the game isn't what I focus on. We focus on the team and getting better, and try to win soccer games.

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