

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



NC Red Bull 2, Chicago Fire 1

Q. Your thoughts on the performance and the result?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, I have to channel my inner Zen here, still fired up.

I thought the guys, especially in the second half, really competed well. The first half, we were late to some of the balls and we competed, and that was partly the message at halftime is that we needed to step up the intensity.

And in the second half, we did everything that we could do, except score a goal, and you know, that's frustrating. But, you know, I give the guys a lot of credit. It's really about them believing that we can go anywhere and win the game and continue to have that belief. I think at the end of the game, they are certainly going to walk away with that feeling.

Q. Was there anything missing, you think specifically in the final third?

GREGG BERHALTER: I mean, listen, we were close. We had some good chance, right. To me, there were some good moves, good moves behind the back line, maybe the final pass could have been a little bit more accurate.

But there was a lot of good attacks, and normally when you get that many good attacks, you score a goal. And in this case, we just didn't. So that's a little frustrating.

But I think if I had to be critical of the team, it's in that five-minute block right before halftime where we give up two goals, completely unnecessary, completely against the run of play, and I think a little bit frustrating for the whole group.

Q. You had to get a bit creative with the defense, Maren at left back --

GREGG BERHALTER: You like that?

Q. It was interesting. I want to ask about that and where you think the defense is. And we heard Elliott is injured and will miss some time and Sam, and if you have any updates, and Leo, also.

GREGG BERHALTER: That's the way it is, we have to have the Next Man Up mentality. We have all year, and we just have to roll with it.

Whoever is healthy will get an opportunity, and in this case, we had a depleted back line to begin the game, and I think it increased as the game went. But that's part of it. And the guys still showed that if they compete, they can hang in there and that's what we did.

Q. Omari had a couple chances in the second half. Him getting those minutes, understanding that this was a need for depth at those positions, but also seemed like he had a couple chances and there was one where the corner kick was taken short and he had that long-range opportunity. Just curious about your thoughts on him and just confidence.

GREGG BERHALTER: Omari is a guy that will do whatever it takes for the team, and that's what we love about him. He doesn't complain, he does his job, and he works hard and he competes. He did that today. He got them into some good chances. He was a provider for the one chance we had late in the game. He had a shot from distance.

If I would say anything, he needs to continue to work on his finishing and work on when he gets those opportunities, really being clinical in front of goal. Because he has everything else to be a good player.

Q. If you could give a little bit more about what you thought of the performances of the two wingers converted into fullbacks for this one, obviously out of necessity. Do you think they could get more minutes?

GREGG BERHALTER: We didn't have a fullback on the bench so we had to get creative. We looked at their profiles and thought that they could both do it, and so it's not perfect. But again, when you have these circumstances, you have to make the best of it.



Q. The one fullback that you did start, Justin Reynolds, his second career start, can you just talk a little bit about his performance? Early in his development, hasn't had a lot of minutes in his time in the league.

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, he's another guy that has a huge ceiling, and it's really about him believing in himself and his quality. And when he does that, you see he can be dangerous, and when he's hesitant, it's more difficult for him.

But he's a guy that we want to continue to push and help develop because he is a high-quality player.

Q. Tough, tough game, tough loss. There's a been a bit of a trend, when you go up a goal or score a goal, you tend to give one up quickly. I think it happened in Dallas, Vancouver last week, Montréal, too. What is it that? Getting lackadaisical or concentration? After a goal, the other team seems to score pretty quickly after.

GREGG BERHALTER: I'm not going to buy into that completely. I need more data points to really subscribe to that. I think if it happened once or twice, I'm not sure if we say that's who we are.

I think in soccer in general, your biggest vulnerability is right after you score. But you know, we'll keep evaluating that. What I would say is, in general, we don't want to concede goals whenever that time may be.

Q. So with the goal and missing a lot of chances, how do you see yourself recouping from that?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's a long season. For us, it's really about seeing the big picture and the big picture is we know we can compete anywhere, and we know we have some things to improve, and when we improve them, we are going to be a dangerous team.

Until we improve them, things like tonight will happen and for us. We got the lead, and we had five minutes of a blackout period where we gave up two goals. And the rest of the second half was a dominant performance.

We have injury lists. I think that is taking the toll a little bit on the group right now. If we have everyone healthy, it would be nice, and then I think we build from there. We added a piece, a central midfielder last week and we'll continue to evaluate. We want to make the team better all the time.

Q. I just want to ask you really quick if you think the

team has already -- you have created a mentality of how you want to play?

GREGG BERHALTER: We're getting there. It's not all the way there. I think the switch of field takes too long at times.

I think the positional -- the play sometimes it does take awhile to get in their positions. We're getting there. We're doing our best with what we have right now. And the guys just went five games unbeaten, and that is something. And today, it should have been the sixth game unbeaten.

Unfortunately it's not, but we'll regroup and get back to work and look to put in a strong performance against Miami.

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