

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



**Q. After a result like there was on Saturday, what has been the message to the guys this week looking ahead to an Orlando team, especially that has gone a long stretch without losing a game, understanding that you also want to get that result at home?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, in the end of the day, it's a loss, right. And so you have to analyze that.

But I guess the bigger picture is the guys lose a ton of confidence. Any time you're down a touchdown, an extra point, it's not a good thing.

So it was really just about rebuilding that. You know, talking to the guys about our identity, who we are, really focusing on that, and trying to turn the page. You know, what can we do to avoid some of the goals we gave up. But also just trying to get the team confident. You know, we played a lot of good soccer throughout this year. That collective 90 minutes was not good soccer, and we need to move forward.

You know, at the end of the year, you know, it's just going to count as a loss in that column. It's not going to be nothing more than that and that's what we need to focus on, and how do we -- how do we play against a good Orlando team and I think represent ourselves better, because we weren't happy with that.

**Q. Looking at the center back position, obviously with Carlos out for a long time and you gave a debut to Christopher Cupps last week, where does that position stand for you right now after conceding seven goals, and if Cupps is in consideration to start after making his debut?**

GREGG BERHALTER: What I would say is, it's very difficult when in the last two games, you gave up ten goals, right.

So you have to look for some type of solutions. You know, in particular, we did not feel like the back line performed

well in the last two games, and you know, it's evaluating that. I think anyone would be in consideration. Any -- any defender who is on the roster would be in consideration, like they are every game, every match day. We evaluate training. We evaluate match performance and we make decisions, who is going to step on the field on that match day.

I think it would be fair to say that after two consecutive performances like that, we would look across the entire roster to see if we can improve our performance.

**Q. Last week you apologized to the fans who traveled because of the poor result. One of the things the fans at home have not seen is their team win a game yet. Is there added pressure to give the fans that are showing up at Soldier Field every week that win for everyone that shows up and comes? Does that build pressure in any way, or does it make it more challenging at some point, just going into the third month of the season without that win?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think as a starting point, I think it's fair to acknowledge -- I actually didn't even see the fans because of the lighting.

I think it's fair to acknowledge that the fans that did travel didn't make that type of effort to see that type of performance that's what the apology was about.

In terms of our home record, it's really more about what we want to do. We are disappointed that we haven't won at home yet. I don't think there's added pressure due to the fans -- you know, home fans and everything like that. We always want to put on an entertaining performance and we want to win at home and we haven't done that.

So for us, we've been frustrated and we want to get that home win and get rolling again.

**Q. Obviously Orlando came off a weekend with three straight 0-0 draws, sets up with a back five that can be very defensive. What about the way that he set up do you view as a particular challenge with trying to create attacks against this team given how strong they have been defensively?**

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, I have been seeing a

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back four, them defending in a 4-4-2. They build up in a 3-2 shape.

Typical Oscar teams are very good in defensive transition. I always remember about him, when you think about coaches that had an impact on the league, I think he certainly had an impact for how his teams transitioned both offensively and defensively. We all know how important those faces of the game are but he really puts emphasis into that. And you see this year, they are fourth in the League in creating chances off of pressure regains. So they are at it again, and they have a talented roster. They are in a good run of form.

For us, it's another good opportunity. You know, that's the way we're looking at. It we think we have a good team, also. We know we didn't show it last week. But it will be another opportunity for us.

**Q. Beyond the result, what do you think the team needs to do to reconnect with the fans?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think there's been a really good connection with the fans this year. I really feel a lot of positive energy. I know the team feels a lot of positive energy, and the fans just want us to win, and they want us to entertain them. And I completely understand that. I think it's nice when we have home grown players on the field, and it's nice when we have young players on the field

But at the end of the day, you know, the fans want to see entertaining soccer and they want us to win. But I think that the relationship of the fans has been very good so far.

**Q. Are you able to provide an update on Chris Mueller? Is this a player that you envision coming back to the team at some point this season? Is there a place in the roster for him?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, we do envision him coming back. We think he's weeks away, not months away. So hopefully we'll see him shortly.

**Q. I have a few questions about Soldier Field and now the guys are going to play in SeatGeek. Is there any possibility that the team could train in Soldier Field? Because I remember the game in Miami, one of the players from Miami said the ball runs a little faster over there and also, SeatGeek Stadium, the conditions there, where will you train?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Our focus is on utilizing this training ground. It's an amazing training ground. The field is set up in the same dimensions as Soldier Field so you know we think we are in good shape there. I think, you

know, the particular Miami game, for example, you know with a little bit of wind it dries out pretty quickly. But I think it was actually a really slow field, and that had -- you know, some effect on the game.

But you know, the conditions and the field is what it is, right. Both teams have to play on it. And for us, it's really about applying ourselves and working together as a team and you know, really focusing on things we can control rather than what's outside of our control.

**Q. Question about the midfield for this week, Rominique has been in training and didn't see Kellyn. Curious about an update about him and what are your expectations for the midfield given Sergio was on the bench?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Kellyn picked up a little bit of a shoulder injury. We held him out of training purposely today. We think he will be back for the game potentially.

Romi, we have to go ahead an update from the medical department as to what his status is for the game but he has trained this week. So that would be great to have him back, and then yeah, everyone else is on board.

**Q. Obviously the focus is on Saturday but the team has a midweek game. Can you talk about the U.S. Open Cup and the significance of the Fire being back in after sending the Fire II last year and can you talk about the challenges of having to rotate the squad with three games in the space of eight days?**

GREGG BERHALTER: The reason why we build the team the way we do and why we train so intensely and give players opportunities is that when you come to these weeks, we should be able to handle it. There are teams throughout the world that play multiple weeks throughout the season, three games, and it's just part of it.

So we don't think there needs to be a massive squad rotation. We may need to retaste three or four players but overall, you know, we're looking forward to it, actually, a three-game week.

In terms of Open Cup, it's nice to be back playing in it, historic tournament. When you get to play teams, different divisions that you normally don't face, it is a fun challenge.

And for us, you know, we know, I think you're five games away from playing for a trophy and that's exciting. So we'd love to be able to compete. For some of the players, it will be their first opportunity in the Open Cup, it will be an interesting experience.



**Q. One more availability question. Some of the results have been tough since Leo went down injured. Wonder if you have an update on his availability and timeline for him coming back?**

GREGG BERHALTER: He's out for another couple weeks. Not months, weeks.

**Q. Do you think it's fair to say that some of the challenges have been in that area of the field?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think with center back injuries and fullback injuries, you know, I think it adds up, but again, I think it would be doing the guys who are playing a disservice but chalking it up to injuries. Guys have gotten opportunities, and I think we know that their performance can be improved.

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