

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Chicago Fire FC 4, Charlotte FC 1

Q. 4-1 win, four goals. How does it feel to get those goals and that kind of strong performance?

GREGG BERHALTER: We talked before the game about what it was going to take to win the game. We thought it was going to be a difficult game because they are coming off of a loss. They are playing at home, and we knew it was going to be a lot of energy.

For us it was about doing the hard stuff. You know, the first half to me was a really strong first half because we were able to keep control of the game, get the lead and go into halftime 1-0, and that was an important factor.

Q. What did you think of Guti's performance, not only the offensive stuff but that chest-down he had to Chris in the 17th minute. Is he becoming more of an all-around player?

GREGG BERHALTER: We challenge Guti every day because we know what quality he has in him, and we know he can do the defensive work as well. Offensively he speaks for himself. But defensively we keep working with him and keep challenging him. Today he rose to the challenge. Coach's Man of the Match.

Q. The balls over the top; that was going to be an emphasis to defend. Curious how you thought your guys did?

GREGG BERHALTER: I thought they did well. We got an early yard yellow card with that ball behind, and I thought Sam did well to manage himself after that. Agyemang is a talented striker, very physical, high quality, and I think we did a good job.

To me, it was more about the collective performance of the group from Chris all the way up to Hugo, a strong performance tonight.

Q. Back-to-back wins, four of your five wins in the League this season have been on the road. Any reason for that, or just a coincidence?

GREGG BERHALTER: It is a good question. We have been discussing our home form all season, and we haven't been pleased with it. Some of it has to do with factors that make soccer a really difficult game to predict, and some bad bounces that we didn't get more wins.

To me it's really about the mindset of the group when we go on the road. We are not timid. We are not scared. It's about just playing our game.

We made some adjustments today. We were a little bit -- or we were more solid defensively, and when you're solid defensively, it keeps you in games. We have a strong attack and we are able to score goals.

Q. It's been a roller coaster, hot start, a lull and now you guys are looking again like that team early in the season that beat Vancouver. Do you feel that you're on a path now that's leveled up or do you expect more ups and downs as the season goes on?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think every season has that roller coaster aspect to it. That's just how it is. The parity of MLS makes it extremely difficult to be dominant week in, week out.

You know, I think that for us, it's just really about staying focused on the present, not getting ahead of ourselves. I'm not going to -- you're not going to write any headlines today saying we are the greatest team in MLS.

For us it's just about get to go work and trying to improve and trying to get better each and every day, leading into each and every game. And if we do that, I think we'll be in a good spot.

Q. After what was a pretty bad loss, 7-2 a few weeks ago, the team has had four games where the only goal conceded was an own goal. Can you talk about what changed with the group and if you feel like you're finding the defensive stability you're looking for?

GREGG BERHALTER: Today wasn't an own goal, was? It.



Q. No, that was the only other one. Sorry.

GREGG BERHALTER: For us, it was a good moment for us to respond, obviously, after that big loss. I think we did that, which was important. But we're by no means a finished product. We are a work-in-progress, and for us, it's about finding the consistency, being hard to break down, and if we do that, week-in, week-out, we'll be okay.

Overall, happy with the group's performance today and certainly you can see the work that's being done.

Q. You touched upon it a little bit, but Sam Roger's performance today, very impressive with the early yellow, coming off the own goal last week. Give us a general reflection of his performance, and what were the conversations like with him from last game to today?

GREGG BERHALTER: Well, it's his birthday today. So he had a birthday performance. That's the first thing.

But he has been going through a lot this year, and he's had some performances that have been outstanding, some performances that he would like to change, and like the rest of the team, it's just about the consistency of your effort and how you're willing to keep getting better.

Today was a mature performance for him. He was able to deal with it, with getting an early yellow, put a lot of tackles in, win a lot of balls and win a lot of headers and build up. He was solid. For me, he had a very strong game today.

Q. You mentioned the breakdown, the other team, opponent. What was the difference between the first half and the second half? What do you have to tell your team for the second half that you come out with this result? And Hugo Cuypers didn't score, but always say he had a good performance.

GREGG BERHALTER: Listen, he had enough chances and that's what's important to us is he gets chances. Whether he scores or not, that depends on the week. But he had enough chances to score some goals today and we're happy with that.

In terms of the first half, we were leading in the first half and we didn't give up a goal in the first half. I was happy with the performance. We expect to have tight road games and it not to be easy, and it wasn't easy.

So for us, dealing with the first half, maybe tiring them down at times with keeping the ball and wearing them out had a big effect on what was going to happen later in the

game. They are coming off of a midweek game, a little fatigue in their legs, and we took advantage in the second half.

Q. Guti spoke earlier about the motivation of trying to get on to the National Team for the Gold Cup this summer. Do you think this performance, two goals and two assists, can help his confidence as he's trying to do that?

GREGG BERHALTER: When you have aspirations of playing for the National Team, you have to perform week-in and week-out at a high level.

So we thought last week he had a good, solid game. This week, again, an outstanding game. For Guti it's about keep building that and do a little hoping, because I know from my experience, it's difficult picking the rosters. You leave some great players out, and that's just part of it. But all you can do is let your play speak for itself.

Q. Doesn't really have to do with this game, but earlier today, a club that means a lot to you, Crystal Palace, gets an FA Cup win, first trophy. Two guys on that squad that you know very closely. Your buddy, Dougie Freedman, used to run the team. How do you feel, and did that help motivate the performance today?

GREGG BERHALTER: I'm feeling glad all over. Really happy for crystal palace. They did a great job. It's not easy to win a final, especially when you have never done that in the history of the club. The boys went out and performed really well and beat a strong Man City team.

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