

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Chicago Fire FC 3, New England Revolution 1

GREGG BERHALTER: Six new guys in there but it was a group that had the desire to win and we wanted to go out and have a good performance.

Q. What does the Cup mean --

GREGG BERHALTER: I think like all the teams that are competing in it, if you're in a tournament you want to try and win it, and for us it's no different.

You know, the club has the four Open Cup trophies already, and you know, why not try to make it five. So for us, any time we're on the field, we want to win. So the performance, I think, indicated that.

Q. What's it like to play against a younger lineup? Does it change anything?

GREGG BERHALTER: In the end when you see the lineup, the pressure goes up on you because you have to win. And for them, they have nothing to lose. You know, they are young players, a lot of them playing for the first time and I thought they did a great job. I thought they competed well and for us, the team, I thought it was a professional performance on our part. It wasn't easy. They were very compact, very low and was difficult to break down and eventually got enough goals to win the game.

Q. What was it like to play in a different venue playing at Providence College?

GREGG BERHALTER: It was interesting because the Revs fans get to see everyone up close. It's a nice, tight atmosphere. A lot of fans appreciated the views in the game. I think it was a nice venue.

Q. The bigger-name players in your squad contributed, Cuypers with a goal, and Bamba, with a shot that led to a goal. What kind of a spark do they

bring to the Chicago Fire team?

GREGG BERHALTER: They have been playing well all year and Hugo has been chipping in in League play, and Bamba has been a big asset in the group for his work rate and his ability to unbalance players.

For them, it was good to see them have another strong performance tonight and contribute on the score sheet.

Q. The back line there, lots of development for Christopher Cupps, what do you see for his future and how much he's grown?

GREGG BERHALTER: Any time you can get a 16-year-old on the field and playing, you know, center back, is an accomplishment. And he would have had his first shutout today but unfortunately we gave up a goal late. I thought he was good today. He's going to learn all the nuances, the art of defending as a center back over time, but he's well on his way.

Q. One of the big changes in the midfield from the strongest lineup where you rotated the full three. How would you evaluate the performance of Kellyn, Jay and Romi today?

GREGG BERHALTER: I won't get too much into specifics on the individual but what I would say is that he want those three midfielders to get their match fitness. We need them to get their match fitness. And this was a perfect game to do that, and I think all of them contributed in their own ways to help the team get the victory.

Q. Specifically with Kellyn, what have your conversations been like when he hasn't been playing the last several games?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, like every other player, you talk to him about what he can be doing better and to be patient and you try to help him gain his confidence in training sessions and you know, I know it's not easy for him.

But you know, it's something where we feel like the midfield has been doing well, and it's going to be, you know, for Kellyn, it's just about the mindset that he can still contribute to this group even if he's not on the field. I think that's what



Kellyn is focusing on. He wants to get on the field but knowing that he's still a huge part of this team, even though he's not out it.

Q. Curious, what was the message like at halftime, just considering that it was one of those halves where you guys had possession but there just wasn't anything really in front of goal other than the moment that let to the own goal before halftime?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, it was challenging at halftime. I think my tone was challenging the group. I wasn't happy with the performance. I asked them if they were happy with their performance and they said no.

So it was clearly, there were expectations that we could perform better. You know, but again, things happen, and I think as long as we recognize and take accountability for it, you know, there's a pathway forward, and that's what the guys did at halftime.

Q. One quick one and then a little bit longer one. How is hue go looking? Looked like he was having some ankle issues throughout the match?

GREGG BERHALTER: Got kicked that one time pretty badly. To me it was a poor challenge but things happen in the game. He's doing okay.

Q. If you can speak a little bit about the performance of Maren, he's been getting more minutes in the Cup, some more appearances in league matches, another assist today. What you saw from him?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, we see Maren as a guy that can be a starter on this team, and can certainly push for game time, and that's why it's important that he gets fit, and he gets his rhythm, and because we know he's an aggressive attacking player and can make things happen. You saw glimpse of that tonight. I think the first half for everyone was a little bit slow and lethargic and then we got into gear in the second half.

Q. First of all, congratulations on another great win. Looking ahead at the start of this month, it seems six to seven matches, depending on the performance in the cup, you've mentioned time and time again, playing twice in three or four days, not a problem for this team. But would you go so far as to say that the Open Cup has become kick started this return to form? Have these extra mid week matches provided an opportunity, a new life to this team given that it's now four state wins and if I'm not mistaken 13 goals scored?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, for us, it's a good rhythm. It's nice to be able to play mid week. Personally I love it. I love the preparation and playing competent competing part of it, and you know, I think this Open Cup is a great tournament, an historic tournament. You know, the alternative is we have two difficult sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday you know to get the same type of fitness that we got today. We get to do this with a real opponent, and I think it's great. The players are more than capable of playing three games that week, and you know, so that's the way we approach it.

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