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Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Q. Availability, just Mauricio's availability and any update on Sam Rogers.

GREGG BERHALTER: Sam has some back spasms. So he's TBD. We have to check on him. Normally that stuff loosens up pretty quickly but you know, is serious enough that he couldn't train fully today. And Mauricio is -- went through warmups and we are going to have to continue to assess him.

Q. And just can you talk about the midfield this week?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, we have options. So I think that's one position that we have good covering, and it will be an opportunity for someone. Guti is obviously suspended and it will be an opportunity for someone to step up and perform and we want competition for spots. So we're happy with that.

Q. We got news Chris Brady is joining the U.S. Men's National Team. What was your reaction and what does it mean that he's part of the group now?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's great news for the club and great news personally for Chris. Every person aspires to take part in their national team and this will be his first opportunity and it's a great moment for him. He's a great young goalkeeper. I think there's opportunity in that position in the player pool. And hopefully he'll make his Marc on the team.

Q. Presumably there's a good chance Chris could go to the final roster, and he would miss five games. What's the situation at goalkeeper and what would be the plan going forward knowing that Dowd can only get called up four times?

GREGG BERHALTER: No, I think from my understanding, Dowd is Available on the first team.

Q. If you have to go with backups, what's the thought on that?

GREGG BERHALTER: If Jeff get an opportunity to play, he's proven he can perform well when he gets called upon and the plan is for Brian and Jeff to be available, and if Chris gets called in, obviously won't be the most ideal situation for the club but it's something we'll deal with.

Q. You always talk about the up and down of the season of MLS and how on any given night any team can win. From your experience, when do you know when your team is good or what their ceiling might be or if it's a team that's going to struggle throughout the season, is there a point in the season you sort of see that or have that feeling of knowing what your team's potential is?

GREGG BERHALTER: That's a great question, and generally -- in general, I think that when we're in the process that we're in of trying to build a really strong team and not quite being there, you know, it's going to be -- it's going to be a struggle. Every game is competitive. The MLS, there's a lot of parity so you're going to be competing week-in and week-out. It's not going to be -- we can't look at the schedule and be like, okay, this is a WWW. You know, the games are challenging. What I think, and teams that I've been a part of that have been successful in Major League Soccer are teams that just continue to get better throughout the season, because of the format of the season, it really is about peaking at the right time. Peaking towards the end of the season, and you know, you want to put yourself in position to make the playoffs, obviously, and then if you're peaking at that time, given what we know about the parity in the League, and we're playing a top game at the end of the season, in theory, then you can beat anyone and go on for a nice playoff run. So with us, I believe in this group, I believe it is a good group. I think we still need to make a couple additions to put us you know, in better company, better standing, maybe a top team in the League but we have potential and we are a dangerous attacking team and we can unbalance teams and for us it's about the consistency and the performances and just continuing to build.

Q. Orlando coming into this game in kind of a similar pattern to you guys, they have been in a really good run since that draw at Soldier Field winning a bunch of games, and then they kind of had a game last night that just fell apart on them. So they are going to be

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without a couple guys, Oscar Ustari potentially suspended as well. How do you look at preparing for them given they are in a similar situation where they are trying to shake off a result they are probably not happy with?

GREGG BERHALTER: I watched the game, and I thought they were a little bit unlucky, what happened in the match. You know, it got a way from them and there was a red card that was, I think, questionable and maybe careless. They didn't -- I didn't see a great replay of it, yeah. But nonetheless, I think that they were in position to win a game. They didn't win it. They were disappointed. It was an emotional night. They are professional. I know Oscar really well. He's an experienced coach. He's got a ton of experience coaching teams in the League and doing well with teams.

So I know they are going to be ready to compete and our job is to do the same thing. We know that we can hurt teams. We know that we have ways to unbalance them, more ways than one, and we have to be focused on that. Defensively, it's going to be about limiting what they can do. They have some good attackers and we have to be aware of them.

Q. So a question about, we saw kind of the -- getting the red card rescinded, and we saw Leo Barroso make his return and we've seen what he can do on the ball but we also saw some of his limitations, right now leading to chances in goals in the last one. What's the key to getting those young but promising players to become more consistent contributors for the squad?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think Leo is a case of rust. He's been out for a while. He got thrust in a the game at a difficult time. When you watch the replay, he wasn't even fully on the field when we started the play, which is, in a way, I think the referee should have better control of that. He knows a right back. He knows you should give him time to get in position. On the second goal he got caught off-guard a little bit. For me it was more a case of him being a little rusty. I think he's a high-quality player and we're looking forward to him getting some more rhythm.

With Jay, you know, I think it was an issue of him getting caught up in the moment a little bit, maybe being a small field and him just, you know, making some needless fouls where he can be smarter in those situations, and we've talked to him about that. We've watched some video. You know, unfortunately, on the play that it got called the penalty and the red card, it wasn't -- it happened not to be a foul and not a penalty.

So unfortunately for us, because we were good in a good

moment in the game at that point and it took the momentum out and gave the on the victory. It's unfortunate but it's things that happen, and both of those players we are just focused on keep working with them and helping them improve.

Q. Seems like a good chance Kellyn will get some minutes in this game. He has not appeared since April in the MLS. What's it been like managing him when he's had five guys in front of him the last couple weeks?

GREGG BERHALTER: He's been frustrated, no question about it but I think he should be. He's a guy that has a ton of experience, played in the World Cup, been part of the National Team program for a long time, one of the leaders on the team and to not get your number called is not easy.

What I would say is he's been handling it well, and really, all players in that situation can do is make a case each and every day on the training field. And then you know, that's the only thing that's in their control and that's all we'd ask Kellyn, that's all we'd ask any player is just show it in playing and when you get the opportunity in games, prove that you should be playing.

And so when his opportunity comes, and I'm sure it will one day, you know, he needs to be ready.

Q. Looking at this being a second MLS Cup against Orlando and it being the frustrated result the first half where you had chances and go down to 10 men in the first half, and last weekend is a frustrating result, is there any way for both of these kind of results to be motivating factors this week for a team that has had a lot of highs recently but also these are two points in the last month or so of not great games?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think the Orlando game was a good game and the reason why I say that is because we obviously have not got many shutouts this year.

But to get a shutout against a very good attacking team with ten men, I think is an accomplishment. And I also think in the period that we didn't have ten men, I think we performed really well, and they set a good tone. And it's unfortunate that we didn't score.

So in my mind, I'm happy with that performance.

The New York City performance, is a strange one because again we went down to ten men and some strange circumstances around the game, but I thought the guys fought well.

For us, it's really not getting too emotional about these results because there are a lot of things, as we've seen, are under our control, and it's really about focusing on us, what we can control, trying to put in good performances and stack them up on top of each other. And if we can do that and play together, we'll have a good chance in Orlando.

Q. How hard is it to control those emotions and how does it work for you as a coach working with the locker room, understanding sometimes these have to be messages delivered by players where you go to Jack Elliott or your leadership council, where do you rely on the players and where is it you being the one that's saying we need to control our emotions or understand the emotions of the game?

GREGG BERHALTER: There's two sides of it. The players have their own world inside the locker room that they govern and work through. For example, Guti's red card, he apologized to the team and apologized to the group, and I think that was rightfully so. He let the team down in that situation.

You know, when it comes to the emotion of a match, you know, there's obviously emotion that goes -- for us, it's really tapping into the correct ones because things like referee decisions and cards that are given are things that are completely out of our control, you know, we need to respond to in a healthy way and not let that get us off-track.

And when we do that, we're in good shape. I think it's more about the professionalism of our performances.

Q. Obviously things will be scheduled to everybody has their space and whatnot but the National Team coming to down, when you build a center like you have, how can having that team in town next week, especially for the younger guys, how can that be a positive influence even if they are not interacting all that much, just being in the same orbit as the National Team?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, I was in the position that they are in, and it's very difficult to find top-class training grounds. You know, when you've set these camps and set these games, it doesn't always correspond to the training facilities. So when the National Team contacted us about potentially coming here, I was really open to it, we were really open to it because of that.

To have the opportunity to help them out, get their summer training period off to a good start with great training facilities in a great city with good weather hopefully, I think it will be the perfect recipe for what they need to have a

good summer.

For our guys to get to see these guys live, up close and in person, and really draw that connection between understanding that you're not too far away from that. And for guys like Guti, Chris Brady, now he's in, but anyone who has aspirations playing for the National Team, seeing what it entails, I think is great to have up close.

Q. Kind of the official end of the European season with the Champions League final happening on Saturday. So a lot of the guys that came in from Europe in the off-season, it means they have played, basically, a full year. Is there concern about having to limit their minutes a little bit or give them some actual time off so they can reset their bodies and minds a little, or is it just about making adjustments and seeing what you're seeing in training and in games and sort of making it case-by-case adjustments as necessary?

GREGG BERHALTER: That's a good point. You know, with Joe, obviously something we've been aware of and mindful of, and they will have some time in June to take off, and another period in August.

Phil fortunately was playing in Norway at the time and he had over a month and a half off. So he should be good to go.

Romi had a period that he was off in Spain, the second division. So that worked out for him.

I think the real pain point is potentially Joe Bamba, and we are aware of it and working hard to limit him when we can.

Q. I did this with Frank last year. Champions League final, who do you got and why?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think PSG they are just too strong, even though Inter is a fantastic team, fantastic team spirit.

But I think PSG has too many weapons, really good midfielders that can control the game. So I think the edge is going to go to PSG, 2-1.

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