

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference

Chicago 3, Orlando City 1

Q. What does it say about your squad that they had that kind of resolve, three goals in the first half?

GREGG BERHALTER: We have quality and for us it's about we knew coming into this game it was going to be difficult. The heat plays a factor. First game in real heat. And we knew it was going to be challenging. They went 12 games unbeaten before the Atlanta loss, and we knew it was going to be difficult.

The guys fought really hard and got a great lead in the game, and then basically held on for the second half. But I think that holding on was really important because it builds belief that you can do it, and that was a big step.

Q. What does it say that you can handle a 29-shot output from another team and maintain that one-goal conceded?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, it's a collective effort. We knew it was going to be a collective effort. The starters, the solutions who came in, everyone did their job and they put pressure on us, but we were able to withstand and get a good result.

Q. Going up so quickly in the first half, was there anything in particular you looked to exploit that worked perfectly?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah there were a couple things that we focused on that I thought we did a really good job in and a lot of had it to do with our midfielder and wingers. But I think it's part of the game plan was to open up space and get their back line out of position, and I think we did that well.

Q. In a game where it feels like all the players were excellent, is there anybody that you can say stood out to you?



GREGG BERHALTER: We're a team and that's the most important thing. It's really not about singling players out. I think by and large everyone had a solid game as you mentioned. The goal contributions were good. The defending was good. Goalkeeping was good. Overall, I think it was a good day for the guys, and more importantly good for the mentality to build that belief.

Q. It seems like Zink has been on such a tear scoring goals and setting guys up. Is he one of the more indispensable guys?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think he was good, and I think Bamba what was really good. Hugo played his role. The guys worked tirelessly, and that's an important aspect but Phil has quality and he with knew that when we brought him in that he has goals and assists in him. If you look at his track record, he scores and he makes assists. That's what he does. He's been good. I think he's been building his form and getting used to the guys and getting used to the League, but certainly a solid player.

Q. The solutions, this was one of the first times we've seen Leo Barroso come in on the left with Gutman subbed out. Can you talk about the thinking there? Freeman has a foot plus of height on him it felt like.

GREGG BERHALTER: The height was an issue a little bit but Leo is such a good 1v1 defender, and Pasalic was there at times Freeman was there. They brought the young boy in, 66 who came in. Andrew was getting a little fatigued and, we saw it and we wanted to make a change. And Leo is an outstanding defender. So it seemed like it made some sense.

Q. And just focusing on young guys again for a second, can you talk a little bit about what you saw from Chris Cupps in his second MLS start?

GREGG BERHALTER: I love it. I love it. I think when you watch the game, if you just watch and didn't know anyone's age or anything, you wouldn't believe that he just turned 17 years old and that's the incredible thing. I think he made a big step today. Was really good to see.

He's got a great attitude on the field and you know he just grinds, and you know I think he had a really impressive performance. Thank you for asking.



Q. Chris Brady's performance, heading into a big week for him, coming up big in a few key moments. Any particular thoughts on what you saw from Chris tonight??

GREGG BERHALTER: He was solid. That's how you want to move into a National Team camp, playing that type of performance. I'm really, really happy for him. The whole team was happy for him.

We actually gave the game ball to one player who gave it to Chris because he doesn't agree with the coaches' decision, and that was nice to see. In all seriousness, it is important to go into next week camp in good form. He knows he had as to compete for a spot and this is going to give him confidence.

Q. We haven't talked about Cuypers. Two goals, and All-Star voting is open. Do you think he could make that roster?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think all our guys should, right. I'm biased a little bit so my answer doesn't really matter. I think he's certainly a candidate. We have a number of guys that I feel are playing well and are top players, but you know, we'll see what the fans say.

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