

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference

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Q. Especially with the first half, the team wasn't able to break through. What do you think made it so difficult in that first 45 minutes?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think they have a good organized defense. We have to play a little bit quicker. Move them around more. Create spaces. I thought we did that pretty well in the second half.

But I think games like this, they are top of the table for a reason, right. It's not easy to score on them, especially here.

For us, it has to be about patience and hanging in there, wasting for the opportunities and then being clinical when we get them, understanding that's not going to be a ton of chances that we get in the game.

Q. What did you see on that first goal from Evander where it seemed like he was giving a lot of space. What was the miscommunication?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think the game plan was to get around him and close him down and not give him space, and unfortunately that play, we didn't do that. In the second goal, I think it's another gift that we gave them.

So overall, the message to the team is, like we have to get confidence from something like this. If we give them two goals, and lost the game away from home, we know this is a team that we can beat. We haven't beat them yet.

But you know we have to get confidence thinking, okay, the Eastern Conference leaders right now, we can push them hard in their place.

Q. The last 20 or 30 minutes, seemed like you had a lot more of the ball but just couldn't break through. Does it feel like a missed opportunity that you weren't able to get that second goal in a game where it felt like you



had opportunities to do that?

GREGG BERHALTER: Again, I think it's an example of late, late in the game, just losing momentum and the feeling was similar where the last ten minutes of the game, we have to be better. It's something we need to train, we need to work on. Everyone needs to know exactly what they need to do when we are going in desperation mode, getting the ball forward, moving first balls, second balls pinning them in. And, you know, we did lose a little bit of momentum late in the game.

Q. Throughout the 90 minutes, Gutman, curious what your instructions were to him going into this game where he was a lot more in the midfield.

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, part of it was trying to figure out what they are going to do with their wingbacks. Are they going to release or are they going to stay in their position? And Yedlin, last game he released, and then we could open up space in their back line. This game, he stayed. But then we had Andrew in good position to overload the midfield. I think he did a good job of that.

In the second half, we dropped Leo, instead of pushing him high and that opened up more space on their left-hand side.

Q. This is likely the last league match before we see the return of Chris Brady. Can you reflect on Jeff Gal's performance tonight and over the last few weeks?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, I think we are 3-3 with him playing, right. We had the wins in D.C., Atlanta and Charlotte -- Charlotte, home. We lost to Philly, Nashville and tonight.

I think Jeff has exceeded expectations in terms of his calmness. I think the Atlanta game was his first MLS game and you've seen how he's grown over the course of these five games and the one in Atlanta.

So, happy for him and you know, I think there's, you know, obviously Chris is coming back, but I think he acquitted himself well over this stretch.

Q. It's the first time we've seen Barroso in the starting lineup in a little bit of time. Can you talk about his

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performance, especially with switching roles as you noted with the tactical shift later on.

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, Leo's a very, very strong 1v1 defender. You see him going against a talented kid in Orellano, and he did a great job.

We have to get Leo fit and in form. You see he got tired a little bit towards the latter part of the second half, and we had to pull him out. But we know his quality and we need to continue to give him minutes.

Q. Yeah, one more, Mauricio Pineda, what did you like from him?

GREGG BERHALTER: I love the shots. He got into some good positions, top of the penalty box. I think those are good shooting positions and we've just got to get him not in the center of the goal and not over the goal. But he strikes a good ball -- I thought the next one was going to be a goal for him. But unfortunately, it didn't happen.

Q. One last thing from me. Celentano seemed strong coming off of his line. What did you see from him? Seemed like he prevented some --

GREGG BERHALTER: He's a good goalkeeper, a good MLS goalkeeper, and he showed it tonight.

Q. Last one. It's a very quick turnaround --

GREGG BERHALTER: How do you know it's the last one?

Q. She said --

GREGG BERHALTER: Okay. Alex is closing the conference up today? What if Joe wanted to have another one?

Q. I'm good.

GREGG BERHALTER: You can't have one if you wanted one. Alex called it. Okay. Seriously.

Q. The Open Cup game, how does that change things going into it given you only have one day of training for it instead of two?

GREGG BERHALTER: Great opportunity for us.

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