

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Atlanta United 2, Chicago Fire FC 2

Q. Just with both of those goals, the first one being one where the ball is not being -- coming down to that moment at the end, how frustrating is it considering you guys were that close?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, it's a point that feels like a loss, right, and for them, probably feels like a win. I think we played well enough to win a game. Created enough chances to win a game, and unfortunately didn't. But I think when I look at it, as angry as I am right now, I look angry; right?

I'm proud of the group. Proud of the effort. Third game in eight days and the guys have been grinding and you see the effort they put in today to come in here and dominate the game like that and deserved to win.

Q. What do you think the group can learn from something like that?

GREGG BERHALTER: Calmness. The last goal, it's injury time that's when you need guys to roll up their sleeves and prepare to battle and be calm. When you have two or three guys jumping off a wall, it comes off of us and they have a tap-in and he misses the ball, we miss the header. You win the jump, you win the header.

Proud of the group. I told them I feel really sad for them; sad for them because their performance merited three points.

Q. The Fire have never won an MLS in Atlanta.

GREGG BERHALTER: I don't care.

Q. Came close the last couple times. Anything mental about this?

GREGG BERHALTER: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. We played good enough to win. We created enough

chances to win. The game of soccer was 95 minutes today, and in the 94th minute, we missed an assignment.

Q. And Djé D'Avilla got his first MLS start. What have you seen from him?

GREGG BERHALTER: I talked to him before the game and I said he's earned this start. You know, that's the best kind; when you don't give it to someone. He's been training well and coming in playing well. He played well tonight. Good force in the middle, won a bunch of tackles and happy for him.

Q. Maren has not had a lot of minutes this season but comes off the bench, scores the goal, could have been the winner. Can you talk about the impact he's had and is he pushing for getting more start minutes?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's an important goal from Maren. We know he's a very clever soccer player, a good, clinical in the final third, and he showed it tonight. We hope that he pushes for more minutes because we need attacking options.

Q. After the Fire had the early goal, do you think the squad pushed enough for a second, or did they take the foot off the gas too much?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think it was one of those games where you potentially could have opened up a bigger lead but also you have to remember where we're at physically. You know, this is our third game, a lot of travel, and it takes a tremendous amount of effort. It's a big field. It's turf. So there's a lot of variables that go into it.

But the mindset to keep the ball was good. Really happy with the first half. And I think we still created enough throughout the game to score more than two goals.

Q. Every game there are mistakes being made, but seems the last couple games, the mistakes have cost goals. How do you narrow the gap from allowable mistakes to mistakes that cause goals and then take away from winning games and points, getting points?

GREGG BERHALTER: Today, I don't know if I classify the two goals that we gave up as, like, mistakes. The corner kick, it was, I think, a lucky bounce. And you know --

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you're referring to Phil losing the ball in the first goal as a mistake? Is that what we're talking about or not closing down?

Q. One, it didn't cost the team but the pass to Almirón on the back post, that was sort of a miscommunication, I guess, on the defense, too. But I'm guessing today, like you mentioned, that corner one, I guess maybe could have been marked better. I'm trying to see your perspective on it.

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, again, today, I'm proud of the group. I'm not so concerned -- obviously don't like that we conceded two goals.

But in terms of the effort and the work rate by the guys, and the way we played, quite frankly, I think we should be proud.

Q. Quick turnaround to Montréal. They had a good performance against Seattle, lost 2-1 to Philly --

GREGG BERHALTER: What game were you watching? Were you watching our game? What did it say, Montréal playing really well?

Q. Any thoughts on the quick turnaround?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's a tough opponent, and we all want the same thing. We want to win the game and we're going to go there with the mindset to win. And that's what we're about. Every time we travel, we get on a plane with a game plan to win the game. Today was no different and Saturday will be no different.

Q. Sebastian scored --

GREGG BERHALTER: There you go. I love it, thank you.

Q. I was going to ask a little bit about the Montréal game, do you think that the quick turnaround can be used to galvanize the team? You mentioned the number of games this team has had to play in the past couple weeks. Should we expect more rotation to get fresh legs in early against Montréal?

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, we'll look at that for sure. But for us, we talked about, a couple weeks ago, we said this is going to be a grueling stretch and we need to be prepared for it, and it is, and we're going through it. You know, the guys have been great and doing everything they can to recover and turn around and we'll get a team on the field for Saturday that's ready to compete.

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