

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



Q. Curious with the center back room this weekend with Sam Rogers leaving last week's match early and Christopher Cupps and Carlos Terán being back in training, what are your expectations for that group this weekend?

GREGG BERHALTER: Christopher Cupps is limited. He's training in a limited capacity. He will not be ready for the match on Saturday. Carlos is day to day. We'll see if he will be ready.

If not, it's about other people stepping up. That's what we've done all year in that position, so no different this weekend.

Q. Just a quick follow-up on that, if Carlos is indeed not available, would you consider bringing Diego Konincks or Olu Oyegunle up for that game?

GREGG BERHALTER: We won't be able to, no.

Q. Switching topics a little bit, it's officially today the opening of the summer transfer window. At this point you're able to sign two players right now in the transfer window for the senior roster. How do you feel about your targets right now at this point at the beginning of the window here?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's a work in progress. We've openly stated that we want to add players that we think can help the team and keep the team moving forward and progressing. There's a number of targets that we've been speaking to, and now it's about, I think, really honing in on a few of them and then pursuing the deal.

Q. As you're kind of looking through those sorts of targets, can you talk about the balance between trying to find players that may fit in the roster now versus trying to build longer term with a guy that could be here several years and help the team build towards kind of like a longer term foundation?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, that's a good point. I think there is a balance, and it also depends on availability. So if there's a player that is available and it's a short-term deal but we think can make a big impact in this short time, then we would do it, especially considering if one of our long-term targets, an agreement couldn't be reached.

So we have to remain fluid, but I think the goal is twofold: To bring players -- player/players in that can help us in the short and long term.

Q. With Red Bull this weekend, the reverse fixture was one of those 2-1 games where you guys had plenty of chances. I think after talking about that game it was one where there was kind of frustration just because that final chance wasn't turned into that goal. What are the expectations this weekend against a team that right at a similar spot in the table as you guys and will be desperately looking for 3 points, like you guys?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think it will be a competitive game. They have a good team. They have quality attacking players, we know that, a robust defense, we know that, and it won't be easy to break down.

For us it's really about focus and preparation and going out in a home game and trying to win. It's really, really simple. But we know, as simple as it is, we know there's an opponent that's also there and a good opponent at that, so it's going to be a good game.

Q. The team has been linked to Patrick Beck from Norway. He's a midfielder. I know you want to add more bites to this team. How true is that, if you've seen him play, and any take on him?

GREGG BERHALTER: I've learned a long time ago that the stock answer for this is we're not going to comment on anyone that's not currently on our roster. I think that's a safe way to answer that question.

Q. It's Kellyn Acosta's birthday today. I thought he had some good minutes against Montreal when he came on at the end. Where do you think he stands given he hasn't played a lot since April at all, and do you think he still has the potential to be a part of this team?



GREGG BERHALTER: The midfield is competitive, and as you get guys fit and playing well, it becomes more difficult. For Kellyn, all he can do is control his effort and his presence and his performance every day in training, and then when he gets an opportunity, to try to perform to the best of his ability, and that's what he's doing.

To be fair to him, he's been ultra-professional. Although I can imagine the frustration with not playing the role that he envisioned, he still can play a valuable role, especially considering coming in and trying to help the team at times, maybe starting at times.

Whatever that is, whenever anyone's asked, all we can ask of them is that they go on and try to execute their role, and Kellyn's been doing that.

Q. I know that you've said that the team tries to win every game, but it's getting to a point in the season where people are starting to count down the number of matches left. The team is currently outside of a postseason spot, and this weekend they're playing a team that is just on the other side of it. So a victory would assure that come Sunday morning the team will be in one of those postseason spots maybe as high as seventh. Does that create added pressure, and at what point does that sort of math start to get into your head, and do you think it can start to get into the players' heads?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think it's fair to say it's an important game, but they're all important games. Now is the exercise that you've described is what everyone's going to be doing for the rest of those 11 games, and I can understand that.

But for us, we can't get ahead of ourselves, and even if we win the game on Saturday, guess what happens next time we play, right? It's the same equation that we're going to be processing through that.

So for us it literally is prepare for one game at a time and put every ounce of energy into that one game, and that happens to be the Red Bull game on Saturday, and that's what we're going to do.

Q. On a slightly different note, last night with Philip Zinckernagel, 30 minutes into the All-Star Game, gets a goal contribution, gets out healthy. How was it seeing him thrive and nothing negative on your roster as well just through his 30 minutes?

GREGG BERHALTER: I guess you hold your breath a little bit making sure they come back healthy. Thankfully every player did in the All-Star Game. It is a big deal, I

think, to take part in it, and he mentioned how all the fanfare involved in the All-Star Game, and they do a great job of building that All-Star Game up.

We were happy to have Phil participate in it. It's a great honor for the club and for him individually, and nice for him to stick with his routine and got an assist, got a goal-scoring point in the match.

Q. We know you follow Fire II pretty closely. Obviously Robert was at the All-Star Game. Brody Williams and him have started training with the second team now in the last week or so. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about them as they're potentially getting Fire II minutes soon and going up against Michael Bradley on Sunday.

GREGG BERHALTER: I think first off we have to be patient with these players, and for us it's really about exposing them to challenges and then supporting them through these challenges. Whether that means the second team, first team, second team games, we want to expose our young players to challenges, and we want to see how they respond to it, and that's a huge part of development.

It's not always a smooth path, but for them it's important to get tested along the way.

Q. Back to the All-Star Game just for a second. You were watching Zinckernagel, but you were also watching somebody else, I'm sure, pretty closely. Seb was in the All-Star Game, first game selection. Can you tell us what that experience was like for you as a parent?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's nice. I think the best thing is that -- again, I said this when you asked about the national team call up -- is that with any player, particularly someone that's your son, it's nice to see when you put in that much effort, that you start to have success. Then the next part of it is that that success gets recognized and the effort gets recognized.

He's had a very good season so far, and it hasn't gone unnoticed with recognitions like getting called into the National Team, making the All-Star team. I think the best compliment that I can get about him is that he's a good kid and he's a hard worker. That's what he brings to the table, and he happens to be a good soccer player along with those two also.

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