

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Gregg Berhalter

Press Conference



**Q. Just having talked to Sergio we talked going back to the pre-season. LAFC was one of those games where you gave him a very long run out, gave him a start. He was talking about how that gave him a lot of confidence. What have you seen from him all year as you have continually challenged him to be a better player in his first full MLS season?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Just growth. The amount of progress he's made I think is potentially more than any other player on the roster. You think about where he was last year and where he is this year. He's played almost every game he was available for, and he's made a great contribution to the team.

But a lot has to do with him and the way he accepts challenges and the way he's continued to improve and grow and show his worth to the team.

**Q. Coach, we're more than halfway through the summer transfer window; deadline day is two weeks from today. You made some moves this week with Omari going out on loan and working on Andre Franco from Porto. Curious if you have any thoughts on those moves and where you stand at this point in the window?**

GREGG BERHALTER: We did move Omari, and everything else is TBD. We will continue to look at the players available and try to bring in people, players that can help this group.

We know as we get towards the end of the season it's important they hit the ground running, so I think now it's about both short- and long-term. If there is an opportunity to bring someone in we think can help us in the short-term and also for the next couple years, we'll do that as well.

**Q. Obviously you're not going to get every player you go for with De Bruyne. A guy like that it's difficult, but has it been challenging when maybe you haven't landed all your top targets at this point?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I don't think so. Everything happens for a reason. You know, I think in some cases it's a lifestyle choice or a choice to stay in the European league. In other cases it's we weren't willing to pay the asking price. We see a certain value in players. We're not going to act in a desperate way.

We are going to get players that we think can help us and that make sense. So we're still in a good position.

**Q. Staying with transfers, the team has a choice to either stick with the two DP path four U22 roster of instruction path and get some GAM, or go to three and three. How do you weigh that choice in terms the short- and long-term trade off, just given the teams' cap situation and needs?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, it's a good question because there are some nuances to it. If we chose to not add a DP in this year, we do get GAM which we can apply to a transfer fee and potentially land someone for the long-term that would help the club more with only ten games left in the season.

Whereas a DP, if you add them now, by the time you get papers and immigration clearance, if it's a foreigner, talking about maybe eight or seven games left in the season.

So those are all things we're discussing. Again, for us it's really about how we help this team both in the short- and long-term.

**Q. Hey, Coach, wanted to hear your thoughts on your opponents for this weekend. They made a monumental signing in getting Son on board. How do you feel that reflects for the league and an organization? As a technical director, how do you see a signing like that impacting not only the team, but also the league in that instance?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think it's an interesting move. You know, Son is obviously a player of great pedigree. He's been at the highest level for a number of years. Probably one of the most famous players from Asia in the history of the game. So it's a massive impact signing.

You know, LA has done a great job building their roster

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over the last years and have built a competitive team year over year. I think it's a great signing for the league.

**Q. Sergio mentioned the focus now on the run-in, chasing a playoff spot. Looking at the Eastern Conference table right now, it looks like one team in that group gets left out in the cold when it all gets settled. The win against the Red Bulls got you guys over that line for right now. How would you say you're feeling about where the team sits now as you look at the run-in here towards the end of the season?**

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, I'm not in the prediction business. I know we're focused on this week, right, and this week only. I think as long as we do our job hopefully we'll be there at the end. That's all we can control.

I don't think it makes much sense to start looking at matchups and who is around us. It's really right now about focusing on us and trying to win the game on Saturday. That's the most important thing right now.

I like tight races. I think it will be fun and exciting for the fans as you come down to it. Really for us it's about how we perform and get the team ready to play each game.

**Q. Curious with Steve Cherundolo's run at LAFC winding down, any thoughts you had on him and his impact on that franchise, especially as they've grown a wild amount since they've launched?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think he's done a great job. Delivered a championship to the team, to the club. Has a calm presence on the sideline.

I think has always been measured and very clear with what he wants his teams to do and how they play. I think very effective playing style.

And I think he'll be -- I know he'll be remembered finally for what he did for the club. You know, it's not always easy going into a team where the expectations are to win. But for him to deliver that to the city and the club shows that he's a great coach.

**Q. Earlier in the year you talked a little bit about the team's struggles against some top tier opponents. LAFC I think is very much in that category. Made the Club World Cup earlier this year; made a bunch of deep runs in a bunch of tournaments. Is there any extra sort of like emphasis on looking at this game as measuring stick where the team has progressed over the past weeks and months, or is it just we have to look at every potential the way they come to us and take a look at -- and just treat every game as an equally**

**important match?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Well, I mean, every game is important, but for us, we know we've made progress. That's the important thing. You know, the result of this game on the weekend won't validate that either way. We know we've grown as a group and team and we want to keep improving.

All this is is another opportunity to keep improving. Good opponent; they have some big threats in their team; difficult to break down; very dangerous in the counterattack; have produced goals from high press.

So a number of things that make them challenging. It's a fun challenge for our group, and we'll be ready for it.

**Q. Chicago Fire 2 have been lights out recently. 15 goals in two games. We saw Trip Fleming training with the first team today. Any thoughts on what they've done in the last couple games, and Trip specifically as well?**

GREGG BERHALTER: No, it's been great. It's been great to watch a lot of goals, wins, and climbing the table. I but I think most importantly for the players to understand there is an opportunity for them. Justin Reynolds trained with us again this week. Claudio Cassano trained with us again this week. For them to perform really well, they'll get rewarded with opportunities in the first team.

**Q. Obviously they're on the way to New York City as we speak. Given that Trip was with the first team in training is there a chance he would be with you this weekend?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Yes.

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