

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

Saturday, March 7, 2026  
Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Gregg Berhalter Press Conference



Columbus 0, Chicago Fire FC 0

**Q. Home opener for Columbus. Do you feel a little bit bad coming back here this year, first draw in a home opener since 2021?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I didn't know. What I would say is the fans showed up and they were amazing. We had a small session but when you look at the no deck and you see the massive fans and how loud it is, it's a really great atmosphere.

I remember from my time here, you know, it was building and it was building into something, and that something is what you see today. It's really special. Happy with the performance of the team. Happy to get another shutout, two shutouts in a row, and we had chances to score.

**Q. So one of the notable things was the presence of Chris Mueller, one of two players that went down with injury, can you just talk about Dylan's debut, really strong game?**

GREGG BERHALTER: Amazing. We never give games balls out and we gave him a game ball. We only give game balls for wins but I think he deserved it.

As of two days ago, he wasn't even involved in the first team and we needed him for training, and he came in and did well and today was an outstanding performance. Really strong performance from Dylan. Good confidence and it showed that he's been developing.

**Q. Is confidence the message to take from this match? You got key plays from key people, made it to the second half, started being more of the protagonist, no goal, but the team didn't break?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I wasn't pleased with the first half, how we were getting locked on to one side. We were asking the guys to switch field, not get into the side channels they wanted us to then trap us.

Second half we did a much better job of that. Our center midfielders performed much better and we started to control the match.

I think looking back on it, I think the guys were disappointed not to get the win. It shows the standards and expectations that this group has.

**Q. Curious, seemed like a lot changed when Robin came in in the 55th minute, obviously it looked a bit of a force change with Chris leaving with injury. But what does it do when you can have a guy like Robin who can fill so many roles in the attack and create chances while also winning back possession in those final areas?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think the most important thing is you see his quality. He's a very technical player, very good on the ball. Gives you the calm. Has a great understanding of the game, and you know, we're lucky to be able to bring him in and when he came in, he did a great job.

I also think D'Avilla did well when he came in and Dylan as we mentioned did a fantastic job.

**Q. And it seemed like Bamba and Zinckernagel were playing with a lot of fire behind them. To have your best players bring that out and have that kind of energy when it is a frustrating game, what does it do to raise the standard for your entire team in these tough moments?**

GREGG BERHALTER: You know, I think that what we're asking them to do in this game was difficult, right, because we want them to attack and create chances but they also have to tuck in and really connect to that midfield line and really block central passes, and you know, save for two or three times, I think they did a great job of that, and it was a really good tone that they set with the rest of the group.

We talked before the game that we were going to need hard work to -- on both ends of the ball to get something out of this game and they certainly delivered them.

**Q. Borso obviously showed why he is worthy of having a debut, but Victor hasn't made his debut. We**



**realize health has been an issue but at some point it has to be a question of when will he get his debut and what's holding him back?**

GREGG BERHALTER: So the only thing that was holding him back today was the clock. He's not ready to play more than 45 minutes. So when Leo went down at the time that he did, we couldn't put him in, where it was going to be a situation where we'd have to put him in and take him out.

We made a calculated risk and we went with Dylan, and fortunately it worked out, but it would have been nice to give him debut for sure.

**Q. So Hugo Cuypers, a little surprising that he wasn't available whatsoever. I think that turned some heads from people in the press box today. Is he expected to be back soon? Is it a long-term injury? What happened with Hugo?**

GREGG BERHALTER: He is expected to be back soon. He has a slight adductor strain, and it's unfortunate. It surprised us, as well. He wasn't able to train on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday he gave it a go and wasn't able to keep going. We had to rule him out, and disappointing, disappointing for the group.

Again, I think it speaks volumes of the squad that we are able to miss your top goal-scorer and still put on a strong performance.

**Q. Is that the big take away from this, coming back here, just a little bit over a year since you became in charge of the Fire. Is that progress from a year ago?**

GREGG BERHALTER: I think it is. I think that you can see just more maturity, right. Last year we were a bit naïve when we came here. I think we played great at times and he opened them up at times, but it wasn't a complete performance. And today was much more of a complete performance.

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