

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA



Gregg Berhalter Press Conference

Q. Is this games comes after an interesting time after a frustrating performance last weekend, and you always know this team is going to be motivated to face off against Philadelphia. Do you think this is a perfect confluence of events given how much you need to team to take it up a notch after last week's performance wasn't up to standard?

GREGG BERHALTER: I look at it as a good opponent to test ourselves against, and we know their strengths and they bring a lot of intensity to the match and speed and transition ask and it will be a good test for us.

For this group we look at how do we improve our performances, and I think there's no better opponent to test yourself against than Philadelphia away from home.

Q. When you finished the press conference Saturday, you mentioned that you were not happy with the performance and you are going to look at the video and see what happened. My question is: Are you going to change the play of this coming game this Saturday with Philadelphia but you're going to keep your mentality?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, after watching the video it's one of those games that the performance isn't as because as you originally think.

There were probably four situations where we were vulnerable from D.C.. and other than that, they had nothing in the game. For us we're a pass away from scoring multiple goals, if the pass is the right weight.

But we had some really good advantages inside the penalty box that we didn't capitalize on.

Having said that, the two goals we conceded were, you know, very poor defending and that's something that we need to look at, we've talked about all week. The first goal, the lack of team shape. The lack of compactness until the middle of the field hurt us.

And the second goal was a set piece in the midfield end up in a handball in the penalty box which you don't see very often. I think if we clean that stuff up we'll be much better off, and we could have had all three points in that game.

Q. Wanted to ask in the context of speaking to Joel Waterman before you, given the ups and downs of the defender group this year, how valuable is having a veteran like Joel as a guy that feels comfortable and settled in, as opposed to trying to keep up last year when he just showed up? How important has his leadership been?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, he's been important for us. We haven't had the stability on the back line that we would have liked this year and that's part of it. I think a lot of teams are dealing with things like that. And to have a constant in Joel who has been fit and performing well is nice, and Kazi has done a good job. We're piecing it together, and that's just part of the game.

Q. What is the health of the players that will be available for this coming weekend?

GREGG BERHALTER: Can you be more specific?

Q. If Jack Kelly will be available or any other players are injured?

GREGG BERHALTER: Jack Kelly is out. He has an illness that he's dealing with and he's going to be out of this game.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Chris Brady, Joel Waterman making the national team, their respective national teams. How does it feel as a coach to see your players make the cut, and also your son, Sebastian?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, I think this is an important window for the respective national teams all across the world as they prepare in the final window for the World Cup. We have Kazi going to South Africa and Joel to Canada, and potentially others at the senior level.

But for the group, those players we are proud of them. I think it's a culmination of hard work over a long period of



time to get the call-ups.

And for Sebastian, you know, on an individual level as a parent, it's amazing to be supporting him all this time and have him start the season so well, and then get called into camp; and you know, there's still a lot of work to be done but hopefully he continues to perform well.

Q. Philadelphia hasn't picked up a point yet this season. How do you make your the team doesn't overlook that?

GREGG BERHALTER: We've watched all the games and we have been preparing video and we communicated to the group that although they don't have points, they haven't been playing poorly, and they have still had their identity and their identity is defensive pressure. It's winning the ball and it's counterattacking, and they do that well.

Offensively they get a lot of balls into the penalty box and they do that well. There's a lot of things they continue to do well. When you look at the underlying data, you know, they haven't been underperforming too poorly.

Q. Joel just told us that you had a couple challenges for him, not only when he first came here but over this off-season as well to improve, as he is a veteran center back, but talked about wanting to learn and the value of still learning. Can you open up on the challenges you've given him as you want to see him take that next step in his career?

GREGG BERHALTER: I think he's done a good job of taking in information. For him it's figuring out sometimes in buildup, where the free man is, to then how to attract the opponent to find someone.

Defensively, I think there's moments where his timing is really good to go into duels, and then it's dealing with a duel but he reads the game very well. He breaks lines passing well, and you know, he's done a good job.

I think that you know, when you have three quality center backs and other guys that are around, you know, there's always going to be competition. And sometimes you choose for other players.

But he's a guy that has been in my opinion, very consistent this year.

Q. I wonder if you saw the game of the Chicago Fire II, your thoughts about the performance of the players?

GREGG BERHALTER: It's great that we can play guys and get them game rhythm. The second team is a younger

group. So it's nice when you bring experienced players to play and both our guys got on the score sheet which is great. And some good passes by Dylan Borso, and Sergio and the guys have been doing a good job.

For us, it's how do you keep everyone fit so that when they get their opportunity with the first team, they are able to take advantage of it.

Q. How encouraging was it for Radojevic get his first start?

GREGG BERHALTER: Yeah, we've got to get him up to speed. He's been out for a while and we want to be careful and make sure he comes back strong, comes back healthy and then put him in position to help the first team.

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