

Florida Cup: Charlotte FC vs. Chelsea FC

Wednesday, July 20, 2022
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA
Bank of America Stadium

Charlotte FC

Christian Lattanzio

Media Conference

Q. Just like you drew it up, Coach?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: (Off microphone) -- because they work very hard. They work very hard, and we have a game on Saturday. We had a difficult one last Saturday for a number of reasons.

We can say that Chelsea maybe are in the second week of preseason, but I can tell you that players of that quality it is difficult to play against them. It doesn't matter.

They couldn't play the football so fluidly because I think our guys were determined to work hard and to press for the whole game. I'm very proud for the way they played. Then after even getting the win, it was like the cherry on the cake.

Q. To have Romero come on and do what he did and Pablo, I mean, some pretty unsung guys.

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: Heroes. Brian is a very, very talented kid that we've been keeping an eye on for a while. We know what they can give. He already trained with us on a number of occasions, and you could see how happy the squad was when he came on and also when he did that great run.

He does that even with us in training. He score a couple of goals like that, so it's something that comes natural to him to be able to run past people. He glides through players, and he has this great confidence to do it against anybody. So I don't think he was phased that he was playing Chelsea. He was playing players, and he does that against players.

Q. Just Titi Ortíz wasn't on the squad today. What was the reasoning?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: I think that I prefer not to talk about that and the club, yeah.



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Q. Coach, how with so many changes -- obviously, a friendly is a completely different environment. With so many changes halftime through the second half, how were you able to keep the level of intensity up and the tactical organization fluid despite constant changes of personnel?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: Because we train like that. Because we train all together, and I'm not one of those coaches that I fix the starting 11. I mix the teams during the week because I think everybody can contribute, like we showed tonight.

So they are used to playing together. Whether we play two halves with two different 11, it didn't phase the boys because we are used to do that on a weekly basis.

Q. Can you talk about the timing of this win? You said it's coming off that difficult loss last week.

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: Yeah.

Q. The timing of it, does that kind of affect how you approach this game? Was it opportunity to get better, or was it something else?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: I think this shows a lot of character of the boys because we had a difficult game in Miami, and then to play at home against this unbelievable crowd against one of the best teams in the world. Only two years ago they won the Champions League, so that tells us the level that we were facing today.

So it takes a lot of heart. It takes a lot of courage. It takes a lot of resilience to go on the pitch and to try to play the way the boys did because, as you can see today, as soon as you make a mistake in your presence, they go. And it's Sterling going, Kenedy going, it's Havertz, it's Mount, or in the first half Batshuayi, Hudson-Odoi, Kovacic.

Whenever you make a mistake and to keep doing it for 90 minutes against them knowing that if you make a mistake, you're going to be punished, it takes a lot of courage, it takes a lot of character, and the boys showed that today.

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I hope they take a lot of confidence out of that because we have many important games to play in MLS, and we need to go and approach them with the same resilience that we did today.

Q. I'm sure you guys are going to celebrate this win. What do you tell your team to keep them focused and keep the same level of intensity going into the games that count?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: We work on certain things this week. It's taken us a little bit of time, just as I said in the past, to put a different way of playing football because, as I said, many, many times each coach has got his own flavor on how to do things.

And I think the expectation, of course, there are expectation about us, but you have to give the boys a little bit of time because they show that they are trying to assimilate what I and the staff ask them to do. They do it with a lot of enthusiasm every day, with a lot of energy. So now we have to enjoy tonight because it's right. They earned the right to really enjoy tonight, but then from tomorrow we have to be focused on the next game on Saturday, which is going to be a difficult game as well.

Q. Brian Romero, does he act 16 years old when he is playing?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: He plays with a lot of confidence. I don't know what act as a 16-year-old means because some guys are 16, and they were very mature.

But what I like about Brian is there's this great energy, smile, positivity. When he is on the pitch, I think he treats everybody the same, like play. He respect them. He is very respectful kid with the players and the staff as he should be, and he is, but when he has the ball, he's not so respectful in the sense that he wants to embarrass -- no, not embarrass, but he wants to play his game like with his ability, and he has a lot of abilities.

But now we have to not put too much pressure on him or expectations because he needs to be given the time to develop his talent, like his right. Like, he has the right to have this time to develop.

Q. Did you approach the game against Chelsea knowing, first of all, you're going to play two different groups in each half? Did you have a plan that they actually did exactly what you thought they were going to do? Was everything expected?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: Yeah, we had a play plan. We

had a plan. We had been working the week on certain things after Miami. As I said, I took it on me because I tried to protect the team in a certain way, and I think that we needed to do a certain kind of work, and we work on that this week.

I was so proud of the boys because we did one session on certain things, and they put it in practice against Chelsea. So they were magnificent about that, but we had a plan, yes, for sure. Each game we go we have a plan.

Q. Did they surprise you with anything? Were there changes or things that you had to adjust?

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: In a positive way I thought that they are capable of executing the plan, but they executed better than I expected because sometimes we don't have the time to repeat and repeat because this comes with repetition by doing things. And so certain things, certain details I had to show today even in the video that the session we did yesterday. And when you explain, it looks evident on the video, but to do it is a different thing. For them to be able to execute it like they did, I am so proud of them. Unbelievably proud.

Q. Can you talk about the penalty kicks, your approach, and kind of what we've said --

CHRISTIAN LATTANZIO: I think it's down to them, honestly. I just wanted to see who wanted a penalty. All of them wanted it, which is great to have, and so it was just a case of who is going first and second. And they tried to listen to them, to feel them, and then in the end make a decision who's going, but it comes from them really. I cannot take any credit apart from -- I have a role that I'm going to say first, second, third, or fourth and fifth, but all of them, they pretty much put me on the right track.

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