

# Florida Cup: Arsenal FC vs. Chelsea FC

Friday, July 22, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

Camping World Stadium

## Arsenal FC

### Mikel Arteta

### Martin Odegaard

### Gilberto Silva

#### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us at the Florida Cup Media Day at Universal Studios. I'm going to be joined here by three members of the Arsenal and the Chelsea team, who, of course, will be going head-to-head tomorrow at the big game in the Florida Cup at the Camping World Stadium, and they're going to be fighting it out for this trophy right here behind me.

Without further ado, I don't want to waste any more of your time, let's get on with it and invite the gunners on stage first. I would like to welcome on the stage the head coach, Mikel Arteta.

(Music).

Welcome, Mikel. Next up I want to welcome Martin Odegaard, Arsenal's skillful midfielder.

(Music).

Last but not least, club legend, Invincibles Arsenal legend Gilberto Silva. Welcome on the stage, man.

Thank you so much for joining us, guys. I want to start with you, Mikel. How are you enjoying your time so far at the U.S. and Orlando in particular?

MIKEL ARTETA: We are having a great time. We are getting a lot of support everywhere that we've been. I very much appreciate it, of course. And then the experience of coming back to the USA after a few years and enjoying the facilities, the people, and as well the games that we are playing, especially the game that we're going to play tomorrow against a huge amount of fans. So the boys are excited to be on the grass.



## FLORIDA CUP

THE MODERATOR: I've been told it's almost sold out. That's going to be a crazy atmosphere tomorrow, so really looking forward to that one.

Martin, welcome, man. How are you doing? I was at the game at Orlando a couple of days ago. Great game, great win. To see the amount of Arsenal fans there, I mean, and how great is it to see this level of support thousands of miles away from home?

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I think it's great to see. You know, when you travel like this, you can see how big the club is, and the support we have around the world. So, yeah, it's amazing to see. And as you said, I think the support has been brilliant in the last game and also the first one.

It's nice to be here and fun to play and prepare for the season.

THE MODERATOR: Love that. Gilberto Silva, an absolute honor to have you here as well today. I watched you play at the All Stars game yesterday. Still got it, got to say. Still going strong, man. Love that. Of course, your Arsenal team did something incredible that's never been done before. They went an entire season unbeaten in the 2003-2004 season.

Can you just give us a bit of insight into how you guys did it?

GILBERTO SILVA: Today it's very sore. I play yesterday. Pain everywhere. I think as an Arsenal, when you are here, it's such a big club, you want to do your best.

When I first came, it took me a little bit of time because I could not speak the language, but then you start to understand the mentality of people, and the mentality, you know, when it's right, you know what you do. You have to work hard.

This is how we did. The only things we had in the past, oh, the result, the good result, because we work hard as a team, as an individual because we have a goal to achieve as a group.



THE MODERATOR: Definitely. Cool. Back to you, Mikel. I just want to ask you. This is a question that get asked a lot. Obviously, what does it feel like to be head coach of Arsenal Football Club? There's not a lot of people in the world that will get to say that. Can you give us a couple of words of how that makes you feel?

MIKEL ARTETA: First of all, it's a huge honor and a privilege to be sitting on that table and having the opportunity to fulfill a dream of mine. And then it's just a fascinating journey, I would describe it. Every hour of the day, every day, it's something going on.

It's very challenging, but at the same time it's so fulfilling. And to try to implement your ideas, your vision in such a club with a history that we have and try to make it work and make people proud of what we are doing and the feeling they have towards the club is just my ultimate dream. That's what I'm trying to do.

THE MODERATOR: It's been a busy transfer window, of course, so far. Some really interesting arrivals. Gabriel Jesus, Marquinhos. There are a couple that are very close to being completed. How is it looking for the new season?

MIKEL ARTETA: Yeah, we keep moving, we keep evolving the squad. As Gilberto said, the key point is the mentality of the team, and that's what we're trying to build. Really young squad, which was the youngest in the league, but at the same time really ambitious with a lot of quality and hunger to fight for the top trophies because this club is all about that.

THE MODERATOR: Definitely. Martin, obviously, Gabriel Jesus, great high-profile entry. How has it been playing alongside him? Zinchenko is close to being confirmed as well --

MIKEL ARTETA: It has been confirmed.

THE MODERATOR: It has been confirmed. Fantastic. I'm a bit lagging behind then. Martin, how does it feel seeing all these arrivals come in and trying to improve on what you guys did last season?

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I think it's great. I think all the players we've signed have come in and done well in training, and they work hard. Also, some good personalities. So I think all of them are really, really good for the team. Yeah, when you talk about Gabriel, I think it's fun to play with strikers like him, so I'm looking forward to that. Yeah, I think it will be fun.

THE MODERATOR: Gilberto, I have one more question for you. I've never seen so many Brazilians in the States in

my life before. They're everywhere. I love it. I love the atmosphere that they generate.

What's it like to be surrounded by such an amazing atmosphere? I see someone with a Brazil T-shirt over there as well. Can you speak to that a little bit?

GILBERTO SILVA: Brazilians, they're everywhere. (Laughing). We are everywhere in the world. Anyplace in the world you go, you will find a Brazilian. It's great to know because I'm sure despite the fact that they have their own team in Brazil, but now having the Brazilian players here, they do support us. It's great to have them around, and we bring some good energy.

THE MODERATOR: I love that. Guys, I have two questions I want to ask you. They've been very frequently asked by the 433 fans. I just want to put those forward to you and see what you guys got. Mikel, if you never worked in football, if you didn't make it as a football player, football manager, what do you think you would have been in life? That's a tough one, so take your time.

MIKEL ARTETA: It's a really tough one. I think I would have been somehow involved in football if not the way. I decided to study physical therapist before I decided to be professional, and that's something that I really like, but it was always with intention to be involved in football.

I love learning different languages and being able to communicate with people, so if it wouldn't be that, probably would be somewhere in the communication world.

THE MODERATOR: Fair enough. Martin, Gilberto, can I put that question forward to you guys as well?

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I really don't know. I think it's always been football for me since I was really young. I just played football.

So I don't have a good answer to that. I think something within sport, but I'm just happy I can play football, to be honest.

THE MODERATOR: You guys are lucky.

GILBERTO SILVA: For me as a boy from a very small village, I didn't have much option when I was a kid, you know? I think the best option was play football. I grew up like Martin, Mikel, grow up I play football. Not only what we do, but it's part of our life, our soul, our blood.

It's difficult to see life without football, but, you know, I had other works in the past. I work in the factory. I work for a construction company. Life was not easy, and football was

the best way for me to help myself and build up something for me to help family. It's special. I think I always thank football for what happened in my life.

THE MODERATOR: Question number two. In your free time, Mikel, what do you like to get up to? Do you like to go up those crazy roller coasters? Are you a thrill seeker? Are you someone that likes to keep it chill at home?

MIKEL ARTETA: I have three young and very passionate boys about this one, so I have been in a few places. I haven't been here, but I have been in similar places, and they absolutely love it.

One of my hobbies is tennis, so when I have time, I like to do tennis. I spend time with my family, which in my case I don't have a lot to do, so this is it.

THE MODERATOR: Martin, can we expect to see you going up the VelociCoaster and up all these roller coasters, or is it not really your thing?

MARTIN ODEGAARD: No, sometimes I think it's good. For me, I don't have any kids at home, so it's more quiet. Just try to relax and watch TV, read, listen to music. I have a lot of family, friends visiting. So I think London is a nice city to live in, so there's always options. I don't do too much outside football, to be honest.

THE MODERATOR: Gilberto, if I can also ask you, what do you do on your average Sunday afternoon? There's no football on TV, nothing it is going on, what's happening at Gilberto Silva's house?

GILBERTO SILVA: When I'm not watching football, I like to enjoy the family now, friends, because as a player, I spent so much time away from home, and I want to chill with the family, friends, sometimes have some barbecue, play some guitar. Have some fun.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, just, finally, obviously, tomorrow is going to be the big game at the Camping World Stadium Arsenal versus Chelsea. More than 60,000 fans in attendance. I think there's a couple of tickets still left up for are sale, so if you haven't got your ticket yet, go for it. Mikel, what can you expect from that big London derby being played here in Orlando, Florida?

MIKEL ARTETA: Well, we'll try to put a good and intense match just to make sure the fans enjoy what they see. I'm sure it will be competitive because it's a big rivalry between the two teams. We are very close to starting the close season, and we feel that we want to be well-prepared for that. So I think they can expect a good match.

THE MODERATOR: Martin, are you looking forward to the game tomorrow?

MARTIN ODEGAARD: Yeah, I'm excited. It's going to be a nice game, playing as the big team, and, yeah, the season is coming closer now, so I think everyone is excited. And even though it's preseason, I think everyone just plays to win. And, yeah, I think we're all looking forward to that and hopefully can finish with a win here again.

THE MODERATOR: Gilberto, obviously it's a preseason game tomorrow, but seeing the atmosphere here, it feels a lot more serious than that. Everyone is taking it really seriously. I saw the passion at the Orlando-Arsenal game. How are you experiencing these matches from the sidelines?

GILBERTO SILVA: It's great. Despite the fact that it's a friendly game, the stadium will be full. I think nothing better than playing in a stadium with full capacity, and I think all of us are going to enjoy. Me especially from outside. For them, it's hard work, but I hope they enjoy also.

THE MODERATOR: All right, guys. I wish you guys the best of luck tomorrow. Thank you so much for joining me onstage. Mikel Arteta, Martin Odegaard, and Gilberto Silva, everyone.

#### **Q. (Indiscernible)?**

MIKEL ARTETA: It's been great. We were excited for the match because we heard that it's sold out, so it's going to be a great test for us. And then, yeah, the boys and some of the staff had the opportunity to enjoy a little bit of the theme parks in Orlando, which is great, so really happy.

#### **Q. Even though this is a preseason match, what are you expecting from your guys going into Saturday, and what are you looking forward to seeing?**

MIKEL ARTETA: Well, first, that the game is really competitive. It's one of our rivals. We're playing in front of a lot of fans, and the expectation will be high. We are in preseason, but we want to start to get and feel ready for the close season, and it's a great opportunity to do so.

#### **Q. As you said, it's a sold-out game, so to know you have so many fans from the U.S. who are excited about this game, what does that mean to you?**

MIKEL ARTETA: Well, I've been here, and as a player as well, so I know how big this club is, but obviously, every time you go abroad and you go to a different continent and you experience the support, the passion that is related to

this club, it's a privilege to be here and an honor.

And now is our time to represent the club in the right way, and those fans that are spending their money and the time to come and watch us, give them the right reasons to continue to do so.

**Q. How special is it to bring the London derby here to Orlando, Florida?**

MIKEL ARTETA: It's great. I think it's special. I don't think we've played against Chelsea in those conditions, so I think it's good. We will have a great game.

**Q. Mikel, this is your third full season as Arsenal manager. Where is the team in your whole picture of where you want them to be challenging for titles and back in the Champions League?**

MIKEL ARTETA: I'm getting much closer to what I want in terms of where the squad is, in terms of the club is, and in terms of the unity that we have within club, supporters, and the team.

The biggest steps have been made in the last few years. Last season it was a great example, but for some details and because of the depth of this squad that we have, we came a bit short of the final expectations.

**Q. We've been asking you during the week about Zinchenko. You couldn't say. Now the club has confirmed he is your new player. Any thoughts on him? What are you expecting from him?**

MIKEL ARTETA: A smile on my face. I know the player so well. I know what he can bring, what he will bring to this team, to this club. So I'm delighted to have him with us.

**Q. Is there any specific position you are going to play him in? He is primarily a left back, but you've mentioned and people have seen him play in various positions.**

MIKEL ARTETA: That's one of the good things with Alex. We have Kieran as well at that position. A player that can have that versatility is really important. He makes it more unpredictable as well using similar formations with the same players but having the possibility to adapt as well. I'm very happy.

**Q. I saw you at the All-Star game yesterday. Have you recovered from that effort yet?**

GILBERTO SILVA: I'm okay. I'm okay. I had my training session this morning just recovery. Because if you don't

train, it's even hard. But it was good. I had a good fun yesterday with the other guys. It's always nice to meet the ex-teammates you played with or against in a game like this.

I think all of us enjoy being together. I think this is important.

**Q. I was just with Mikel. This is going to be his third full season with the team. You were with a manager who won everything at the club basically. Where do you see him compared to what Arsène Wenger managed to achieve? Do you think he is getting closer, or what is your opinion on that?**

GILBERTO SILVA: I think they are quite different. Mikel has style, and he is a young manager. He is doing a great job at the club. It's important to keep doing the best way he can, but I know compare is always hard because it's not fair to any of them, and from outside the only thing I try to do is just encourage the guys at Arsenal, Mikel, everyone, the players to do well because the club deserves, the team, the players are there. They deserve the best that they can to get the result. And sometimes it doesn't work, but they work very hard to get it.

**Q. I know you said you don't like comparisons, but you were just on stage with Martin Odegaard. Who of the Invincibles team does he remind you of the most?**

GILBERTO SILVA: I think, listen, our time we didn't have a proper -- let's say a typical Brazilian No. 10. I think it's slightly more with Dennis because Dennis would be the guy. I think I have seen his style, some of old Brazilian No. 10 quite a lot, you know, who left foot like Alex, for example, could give the final pass. I think a lot of quality, you know, and I think he just keep enjoying because I'm sure he is going to have a very good season.

**Q. One more from me. What are your thoughts on Oleksandr Zinchenko? The club confirmed the signing.**

GILBERTO SILVA: Good signing for the club. Good addition. I hope he deliver what people expect from him. I'm sure by the way he come, Mikel knows him, everyone knows him, the ability and the capacity and what he can provide to the club.

I wish him the best of luck because I'm sure Arsenal, you know, everyone will welcome him and embrace him and give him all the support for him to provide good games for the club.

**Q. How is everything feeling now that you have been**



**in Orlando for a couple of days? What do you think of the experience?**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: It's been good. We're preparing well for the season. We had two good games, and, yeah, a lot of support over here as well, so I think it's been really nice to be here.

**Q. Your experience overall, though, now this is a sold-out game, and you know that you have these U.S. fans here who are excited to see you. What does that mean for you?**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I think it means a lot. As I said before here, I think when you travel like this, you see how big the club is, how big the fan base we have. And, yeah, it's nice to come to different places and see people supporting us from all over the world. Yeah, we're really grateful for the support we have and we enjoy it.

**Q. Martin, we just spoke to Gilberto, and I asked him who you reminded him -- who reminded him of you of the Invincibles, and he mentioned Dennis Bergkamp. He said he didn't like to make comparisons, but what does that mean to you to be compared to a player of that stature?**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: Obviously, it's nice to be mentioned in the same sentence as such a big player, but as he said, I don't like also the comparisons, and I don't like to compare myself to other players. I want to be myself, and that's it. But, of course, it's nice to hear. He was an amazing player, so that's good.

**Q. Do you have any welcome messages from your new teammate, Alex Zinchenko? Now it's official.**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I think I will do that in person, you know. I think I will speak to him, and I'm sure he will adapt well, and he will be a great addition to the team.

**Q. For all the Arsenal fans here and abroad watching this, do you dare give a prediction for the upcoming Premier League season?**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: No, I think the main thing for us is improve from last year. I think we were all really disappointed at the end of the season. Missing out of the top four.

I think we're going to come back really hungry and, yeah, we want to improve and get top four and fight for titles. That's what this club should do. Yeah, hopefully we can do that.

**Q. There's a new region player in the league, signed to one of the top rivals. Have you spoken to him? Do you have any friendly wagers who will do better next year?**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I've spoken to him, and, yeah, I wish him all the best, but I prefer to speak about our team and our players at the moment.

**Q. How important is it to bring a version of the London derby to Orlando, Florida?**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: I think it's going to be a really good game, playing against a strong team. Yeah, we're getting closer to the start of the season, so I think everyone is really excited and looking forward to the game. And even though it's preseason, I feel like everyone is taking it really seriously, and, yeah, we want to win the game. We're all excited.

**Q. The little that we could see on Wednesday between you and Gabriel Jesus, it seems like you guys are really getting well together.**

MARTIN ODEGAARD: Yeah, I think so. He is a great player. He is always moving, so for players like me and also the other midfielders, I think it's great to play with those kind of players. They're always on the move, always looking to hurt the opponent.

So, yeah, I'm looking forward to play more with him. Thank you.

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