

Florida Cup: Arsenal FC vs. Chelsea FC

Friday, July 22, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

Camping World Stadium

Chelsea FC

Thomas Tuchel

Jorginho

Roberto Di Matteo

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, guys. Thanks for coming. Again, we're back here for the Florida Cup Media Day here at Universal Studios. We've had the Arsenal guys. It's time to welcome the Blues from South London. All right, all right, all right.

Without further ado, I would like to invite the Blues onstage, and I want to start with Chelsea head coach Thomas Tuchel.

(Music).

Next up we have the ice cold penalty king, Jorginho.

(Music).

Last but not least we have a legend both on and off the pitch, Roberto Di Matteo.

(Music).

Thank you, guys, for your fantastic support. Thank you, Chelsea guys, for joining us here at Universal Studios. It's an absolute honor to have you here. I would like to start with you, Thomas, head coach. It's so good to have you here, man. How are you enjoying your time in the U.S. and here in Orlando?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Well, there's so much to enjoy, so besides the hard training and the humidity that makes training a bit hard for the guys --

THE MODERATOR: I can imagine.

THOMAS TUCHEL: -- it's a good time in the U.S. Friendly people, lots of opportunity to enjoy our spare time. Top



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organization, and that's why we have a good time.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Great. So it's been a busy transfer window, obviously, for you guys. Some really big signings, Kalidou Koulibaly, some guy called Raheem Sterling, I heard he is quite good, apparently. What's it like being a manager in the transfer window? Do you get any rest, or is your phone just going on every second? What's it like?

THOMAS TUCHEL: As we have a change of ownership as well, it's maybe the most busiest time I've ever experienced. To be very honest, I don't like it that much. I like it a bit more calm. But transfer period is always a bit crazy time, so I'm happy when it's the 1st of September. Then you know what your team is. You know exactly on whom you can focus and rely on, and that makes time much more enjoyable.

THE MODERATOR: Just a bit of stability, a bit of calm, and just focusing on the football.

THOMAS TUCHEL: Yes, but, of course, it's necessary that we are smart and active on the transfer market. We need to bring quality to our team to maintain the level, and that's what it is.

THE MODERATOR: Jorginho, the Italian midfielder, it's great to have you here as well, man. How have you enjoyed your time here in Orlando and enjoying the energetic U.S. atmosphere that these guys generate?

JORGINHO: I'm enjoying it. It's my first time here, and it's been great. A new experience for me. I'm just enjoying this time. The weather is a little hot for us to train, especially, but it's been a nice time.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Roberto Di Matteo, so good to have you here as well. Absolutely killed it at the All-Stars Game yesterday. I kept a close eye on you.

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: Nearly killed me, the game.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously, you have done so much for Chelsea both on and off the pitch, but how are you

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enjoying the U.S. atmosphere here as well, and just being out here for the FC Series?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: It's been very enjoyable. I did a U.S. tour back in the days when I was coaching, so it's great to be back. I've been able to engage with a lot of the fans and supporters, and it looks like there is so many fans now that are following the team, which is great to see.

And also, the game on Saturday I think will be a really good game because apparently it's sold out as well, and two big London clubs. Looking forward to see this game and our team on Saturday.

THE MODERATOR: It's going to be really special seeing a London derby being played out here in Orlando. It's going to be an amazing atmosphere. Really can't wait to see this one.

I don't know if you guys noticed, but these three guys have something in common. They've all helped Chelsea win the Champions League. I just quickly want to go back to you, Roberto. How does it feel to be able to say that you were the first manager to bring the Champions League trophy to Chelsea?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: Well, it was just a great experience for everybody involved. For the club, for the players, for the fans it was good, but it doesn't really matter if it's the first one, and Thomas got the next one. It's just part of the history, and it's such a difficult competition to win. At least it was from my perspective. It was very difficult. So it's being part of an elite group of people that are able to achieve that kind of trophy.

I think it looks very good on the CV, doesn't it, Thomas?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Of course, he is humble enough to not mention it, but if you win the first one for a club, it makes you a legend, and that's what he is.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. So, Thomas, nine years later you said, you know what, I'm going to bring that Champions League trophy back to Stamford Bridge. It's been a long wait. It's time to end it. How incredible was it to win that in your first season in charge at Chelsea?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Yeah, half a season. We came as underdogs, but I found an excellent team with a brilliant spirit, and, you know, once you enter the knockout for me it's always the same in Champions League. I find it very, very difficult to escape in the group, to make it through group stage because it's -- everybody expects it from you. You're in the middle of your season.

So for me it's very, very demanding to go through in the group because anything can happen because the quality is so high. But once you go into knockout, every team has a chance to win. You need a bit of luck. You need good form. You need a bit of luck with the drawings that maybe the opponent suits you. That's what we had, and we made the most of it.

We went in this competition as underdogs, but with high ambitions, and then it's down to the team spirit and bit of luck and everything came together. It's pretty unbelievable experience.

THE MODERATOR: I can only imagine. That guy over there, Jorginho, he played a crucial role in that. Played the full game in the final, of course. How special was it for you to not only win the Champions League and then be called UEFA Player of the Year that same season as well? What was that like?

JORGINHO: It was crazy. Thank you. Thank you. It was crazy because it happened so fast, everything, and then you need to prepare for that, and then you need to have a little bit of luck, as the coach said. Everything happening in a couple of months. It was just an amazing year, an amazing season. Something that will stay with me for my whole life in my history and the history of the club, the national team. It was just great and unbelievable. That's the word I can could say.

THE MODERATOR: I can only imagine, man. All right. I have a couple of questions that have been submitted by some of the 423 fans, the fans over here. I want to put those forward to you guys and see if you can answer them.

Jorginho, who is the funniest person in the Chelsea dressing room? Can you give me an insight?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Himself.

THE MODERATOR: Himself? Can you confirm that, Jorginho?

JORGINHO: I think I need to agree. (Laughing).

THE MODERATOR: You're the one that's always pulling the pranks, or is that someone else? Mason maybe?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Sure.

JORGINHO: I can't answer this question.

THE MODERATOR: Thomas, I want to ask you this, and I asked this to the guys earlier as well. If you never went into football, what do you think you would have been in life,

football aside?

THOMAS TUCHEL: In life?

THE MODERATOR: Yes.

THOMAS TUCHEL: It would be hard to find something with the same passion. Maybe I would have tried in architecture or something because it's something that kind of interests me and distracts me until now when it's, like, too much about football.

But, yeah, it's a privilege, and it's very grateful to have the chance to work with football. If I don't have to -- if I would not have the possibility to work and earn my money with it, I would for sure, like, train some junior teams for free in the evenings and follow that passion.

Yeah, I needed -- I would have been a struggle to find something to earn my money with.

THE MODERATOR: That's what you call passion. I love that. Roberto, I want to ask you a bit of a tricky question maybe, but if you could take a couple of seconds, if you had to make a five-a-side Chelsea all-time team, who would you put in there? Five players.

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: I will put Petr Cech in goal, probably John Terry center half, Magic Box AK Gianfranco Zola up front. Probably I put on one side Jorginho and the other side Mason Mount. Yeah. Good five-a-side?

THE MODERATOR: That's a very good team. No room for Roberto Di Matteo in there?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: Maybe my next life again.

THE MODERATOR: So, finally, Thomas, huge game tomorrow at the Camping World Stadium. We're all here to watch you guys compete for that trophy that's right next to you. Sold out, as we've just been told. How is it to experience a game of this magnitude here in Orlando to play it in front of these energetic U.S. fans? It must be a whole different experience than playing at Stamford Bridge at the Emirates?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Very different. Very different for preseason match. Always nice if you have a full stadium, if you have excited crowd. It will be quite challenging, of course, in terms of quality on the other side, challenging because we have -- of temperatures, challenging because of the amount of work we put into preseason, so the players will be not fully fresh.

But I hope that people here can experience the amount --

the amount of intensity and the level of intensity that these guys can provide together with Arsenal. It is a match on highest level, and it will be tomorrow. Not maybe on the fitness level with the freshness of a Premier League match, but I expect it pretty close because it's a rivalry, and it will always get tense between these teams. So should be nice to watch.

THE MODERATOR: Of course. Of course, Jorginho, I don't think there's any such thing as a friendly game between Arsenal and Chelsea. There's always going to be a bit of spice in that one, and you have played in several London derbies, but what's it like for you to have the chance to play this game here in Orlando tomorrow?

JORGINHO: It's really nice. It's going to be different because it's not in England. But against Arsenal, it's never a friendly match. It's always nice to play this game. So we can't wait to be on the pitch, and we just hope we can put up a nice game to watch for entertainment, and we hope we win because it's what we do.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Roberto, you're going to be supporting the team from the sidelines tomorrow. Are you guys bringing back that trophy to Stamford Bridge? You got a score prediction for us or something?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: Well, I really hope and think that we are going to bring the trophy home. No pressure, Thomas. But I'm going to be probably in the stand up and cheering on for the team. Let's hope it's going to be a good game and we win.

THE MODERATOR: I think I speak on behalf of everyone here when I say we're really looking forward to the game tomorrow. Thank you so much for joining me on stage here, guys.

Q. Can you start with telling us about your experience here in Orlando so far? What have you guys been up to? What have you guys been able to do since you've been here?

JORGINHO: Training. Oh, we can't do much, to be honest. We had the opportunity to come here to Universal, and it was like a great time. It was really amazing. It was my first time and for sure not the last. I'll come back with more time to enjoy. It was really, really nice.

Apart from that, we just really went for training. And the little time we had we just tried to rest a little bit because it's been kind of hard to train in this weather. It's really different for us. We stayed a lot in the hotel, in the rooms resting, and we just came here once. We had the opportunity, and it was, like, really, really nice.

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Q. This is a sold-out game. To know you have so many U.S. fans here who are so excited for this game, what does that mean for you as a player?

JORGINHO: It means a lot, and playing in front of, like, many, many, many people, it means a lot to us. It's beautiful. What we try to do is give them back a good game to watch, a nice entertainment to be there. It's going to be nice. I hope we can win. (Laughing).

Q. A lot of fans are very excited to see you guys, and a lot of fans are excited to see Kalidou. Have you seen him, and what have you been able to tell him for the club?

JORGINHO: I've been speaking a lot with him. He is a very, very good friend of mine outside the pitch, so we spoke a lot even before he came here, and now we spend more time together.

I was explaining to him how things work as well to try to help him out. And I know he's just going to do really, really well because of the player he is, because he is an amazing player, and especially because of the person he is.

Q. You said that you were speaking to him for a little bit before. Did you have a little bit of an agent role bringing him to the club?

JORGINHO: I pushed a little bit. I did. Where are you going? Come here with us. Let's play together again, and that was it.

Q. Real quick. You see the fans. They've been cheering for you guys. What kind of game can they expect on Saturday? It's a preseason game.

JORGINHO: As I said, it's going to be hard because of the weather. Maybe for the (inaudible) and everything. This is a big game for us. Chelsea-Arsenal is always a big game, and no one wants to lose. They can expect that we're going to give it our all to try to win this game. It's what we always try to do, and we always do it.

Q. Roberto, welcome to the U.S. How have you been enjoying your time in the U.S. and the U.S. fan base?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: It's been pretty impressive the amount of supporters that are following the team. It's increased a lot from my first experience here in 2012 when we were over here with the team.

So it's great to see, and you can see how the English Premier League is developing around the world as well and

especially probably until North America.

Q. You're nothing short of an expert on the Italian football and the Premier League. What do you think Kalidou Koulibaly --

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: That's a big word, "expert," aye yai yai.

Q. What do you think Kalidou Koulibaly will bring to the team that they didn't have before signing him?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: It's a big signing. He is a top-class player. I follow Italian football, so I know him very well. He is the sort of player that brings physicality, which you need in the English Premier League, but he has the technical ability, and also he has the tactical development that he received in Italy.

I think it will be a big hit for us.

Q. And the few players that -- some members of the media, maybe some fans, have said he is 31. Maybe he is a little too old. What do you have to say to those comments?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: Well, there has been a little bit of a change in the players' retiring age, hasn't there? Because the players look take care of themselves much better now than maybe 10 or 15 years ago. The life span of a football player goes much longer. So if before the prime age of a career was around 26, 27, 28, I think it's gone up now to probably 30, 31. That's when you are at your prime.

So personally, I believe we're getting a top player in the prime age of his career.

Q. I was going to ask you about your experience here in Orlando. What's it been like? What have you been able to accomplish or done, and just how is it for you to be here?

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: Well, for me personally it's been very, very good. It's been a great experience. It's awakened a lot of good, positive memories, and also some nice emotions to be with the team again, also, in the background and engage with the fans and do some media work. It's been very good. I've really enjoyed it.

Q. As a former player, how was the experience yesterday playing with --

ROBERTO DI MATTEO: It was good. It was good. There were so many ex-players from back in the day that I used



to play against and so on. It's funny how it's all a friendly game for the first probably ten seconds, and then that goes out of the window, and then the competitive instinct comes out, and everyone starts running around like crazy and tackling. It was good fun.

Q. Talk to me a little bit about your experience here in Orlando so far.

THOMAS TUCHEL: Orlando? Sweating. Constantly sweating. It's very hot, very humid. Quite tough for the players to train, but we push them. We push them to the limit. We push training to the late evening. It's an excellent organization. Everybody is friendly.

So there are no excuses, and we are making the best of it when they have time off. The players are happy and enjoy the easy life in Florida. That makes it a good package.

Q. To see all these fans here, your U.S. fans, and it's a sold-out game, it's got to be a great feeling as a coach to see that love and support.

THOMAS TUCHEL: It's nice. It's also nice for the players when we arrived in Las Vegas to play, arrived in Charlotte to play, and see everybody excited for tomorrow. It's nice because it gives you a certain edge to a friendly match, and we wanted and we need that.

Q. I know it's just a preseason game, but for your American fans who are here, what can they expect?

THOMAS TUCHEL: I think it's a close match, and it's never really a friendly match between Arsenal and Chelsea. There will be some spice in it for sure. And it always matters to send some messages.

I don't know what the result will be, but in the details and in the challenges and in the approach of the game we will try everything to win, and I think we will see a pretty close game. Arsenal is a very good squad. Stayed with the coaching team, so it will be a tough challenge.

Q. Thomas, what were your first opinions on Koulibaly and Sterling, and when do you think we might be seeing Koulibaly?

THOMAS TUCHEL: Maybe tomorrow. We're not sure yet actually. We need to decide from training to training. He is lacking some aerobic work to be in full fitness, and we don't want to put him into matches without being prepared. That would not help nobody.

The decision will be made tomorrow or later today after the training, and we will not rush things. Even if we want him

as soon as possible on the pitch, it makes no sense to rush it.

Q. What about Raheem? How does he fit into the group?

THOMAS TUCHEL: With Raheem it's easy. First of all, he has the quality. You know, it's Premier League. He knows a lot of players from us, so I think this goes pretty quick.

But still with him, he joined the group very late and is not on the same fitness level at the moment, but he will have some minutes tomorrow for sure.

Q. Just one last one. We hear a lot of rumors here, players that you might sign, that you might not sign. Is it true that in any moment do you guys consider to have Cristiano Ronaldo with you because we heard that, okay, this is a possibility, but Chelsea doesn't want.

THOMAS TUCHEL: Very tough last question. Very, very easy to answer because I will not comment, as you know. I don't comment on other players and on other players from other clubs because I don't like when other coaches speak about my players. We'll leave it there.

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