

# St. Louis CITY SC Media Conference

Saturday, May 31, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

**David Critchley**

Postgame Press Conference



St. Louis 2, San Jose 1

**Q. Thoughts on your first game as interim head coach?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Fantastic. I obviously tried to enjoy the moment. I've talked to the players about in day one, it was having more smiles around here, enjoying our job, enjoying our work.

So obviously going into a stadium and a packed stadium with great fans, the emotion can get carried away. But I took a moment before kickoff to just enjoy it, and then for me, once the ball started and the game started it was about, how do I get three points today. All my focus shifted.

Fully enjoyed it. The fans were out as always. The players performance was for me fantastic. So I'm a super proud coach today.

**Q. What's the feeling after the 83rd minute?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: "Belief" is one word we're going to have around here. I just had a feeling. I believed in the team, and I knew everything we talked about, we accepted nothing today but three points as a team. So the mentality was super, super important for us.

Yes, they equalized, gave us a little bit of adversity. It's okay. We're changing things around here. We don't sit back in them moments. We go and try and win a football game, and that's what we done and that's what was deserving of the three points today.

**Q. Just the value of having Löwen back?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Fantastic value. Obviously we know his skills on the field. Obviously so composed, so calm in that moment where a lot of players can get carried away. But I had no doubt he was going to score that penalty at the end. It was written for him. So to have him back on

the team has been fantastic.

**Q. He plays 90 minutes for you last week at City II. Was having him in the leadup to this week helpful, since you had firsthand experience with how he plays?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Any time I get the chance to have Edu in a lineup, it will help.

To familiarize myself with him, understand how he plays, what we're looking for, obviously we had a little runway with City II. To build now, two weeks with him, build three days with all the rest of the team, has been fantastic.

Yeah, it's been good to have him.

**Q. To come into this game, short runway with everything that happened this week, but from the start, the energy and to jump up, seemed improved from recent weeks, how important was the start in the first five minutes?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Massively important. I think we get a corner kick in 20 seconds, and you can already feel fans on the edge of their seats ready for this place to explode.

We talked about the first ten minutes, what did we want to look like and how did we want to engage the fans and how did we want to bring them into the game with us.

This for me is the best stadium in the country at home. Why not utilize our fans and support, get them on the edge of their seat, and we done that from 30 seconds into the game all the way to 96 minutes.

**Q. How are Cedric and Chris Durkin, and any issues with Klauss?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I haven't obviously got the chance to talk to the medical team yet to see where they are at with their status. Obviously both in a situation where they had to come off with an injury.

To my knowledge right now, Klauss is okay, but until I hear



from the medical team, I'm sorry, I don't have an update.

**Q. Talk about Jay Reid and Joey Zalinsky, what did you see from them in training this week that gave you the confidence that they were your first choice fullbacks?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Obviously the quality for them as players is important, but they were able to bring great energy into the training environment, and we knew we had to get out there right away and create energy.

Two individuals that can cover a lot of space, cover a lot of ground, we knew San Jose was going to play out of obviously a pressing 3-2-5. There was going to be space in them areas and we needed players that could cover the ground, be really aggressive and meet the physical demands of the game, and they were able to do that for us today.

**Q. You mentioned you want to see more smiles around here. Is that something that had to be spoken to the guys? Obviously you weren't in the room prior to, but did you get a sense that was an issue up until Wednesday?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Not really, I don't want to say an issue, but we have to enjoy what we do. We have to enjoy our work. We have to be out there and enjoy it.

Sure, when you're not winning games and you go on a long losing streak, it's almost really difficult to come in and smile in them moments.

So my kind of idea there was to get them to enjoy training and work hard in training because I know that directly correlates with three points on the weekends. And winning games and getting three points will automatically bring smiles back there.

So they have to enjoy being intense in training to go out there in front of our fans and be intense on the field. Again, when you win the game and get three points, you're going to have smiles on your faces.

**Q. Löwen spoke post-game on the screen and talked about how your post-game [pregame] speech got the guys fired up.**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: We always talk about especially at home how we can set the tempo, how we can control the game. The first ten minutes were crucial for us, the message to the team was very, very clear that we have a 12th man here. We better utilize them and for us going out there and showing ways to do that, getting the crowd

engaged with us and us being engaged with the crowd was super important.

Also, they are also a group that they don't need a ton of motivation. They are motivated internally themselves. They are in a position now where they know they need to go out there and get three points every single week. That gets all the motivation.

**Q. Is Chris Durkin at center back something you could see happening more often or is it a one-time deal?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: If he keeps putting performances in like that, he'll make me think about it. But for Chris, we know his qualities on the ball. I hope one thing we saw today is we all tried to enjoy the ball and keep control of the game. Chris was able to bring some good qualities on the back line for that.

But we were also talking about moving a couple of those guys in and out of positions with some players returning, also. Something I expect from these players is to have the versatility to play in numerous positions. Chris is a really, really talented midfielder. He will see some time there.

**Q. Was the idea all along to bring in Kessler at the half?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: To bring in Kessler, yes. We were just going to wait for the right moment and the right time. We felt obviously as the game went on that was a moment we could utilize.

Obviously it's difficult conditions out there. It's hot. Utilizing one of our moments at halftime that don't count in games is sometimes a strategy standpoint from a coach as well.

**Q. Is there any concern, that was a back line that has not played together at all, any apprehension about making big a change to the back line?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: No. I trust every player I'm working with right now.

**Q. After the final whistle, you're embraced by almost every player on the bench, you have Lutz by your side. What's going through your mind, first three points as interim head coach. What's going through your mind?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: A lot. I tried to soak it all in. I got guys, I'm obviously a smaller guy, and guys are dragging me all over the place, and I'm trying to soak it in and I'm trying to enjoy it. I'm trying to be thankful for the moment.

Obviously a lot of kind words from the staff, the players, from everybody involved in the organization. I think I sat here and told you guys, I felt tremendous support right now from the community, from the fans, from the players, from the staff.

So I had to give everything for these three days and today, and I've tried to do that.

But I just try to embrace it and I try to enjoy it.

**Q. The strikers today had a pretty big impact, Klauss getting the goal and Simon Becher winning the PK. There's been criticism of scoring goals. How important was it to have the strikers so involved from day one?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, that's their job, right. They want to score goals. They want to create attacking plays, whether that's Simon drawing a penalty kick, and also a lot of the stuff I talked to those two about this weekend in training was how we score goals and how we create chances and how we move off the box.

Klauss, he had a few moments early in the game as well where we had some decent balls in the box, trying to lose a defender. For him to score a goal, I was so, so happy for him.

And the work rate of Sam, and you see him come in, obviously you see the team mentality, right. He's in a position where he hasn't started the game but he comes in. His numbers shot through the roof. He's working so hard for the team and his work rate and pure determination was what drew the penalty.

And then the composure for Edu to finish it, and that's what we spoke about all week, how do we have massive intensity. So you think about that with Sam and Klauss, and then how do we get composed, as well. You think about Edu's penalty; it's perfect way to end the game, because it's everything we spoke about this week.

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