

# St. Louis CITY SC Media Conference

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

**David Critchley**

Postgame Press Conference



LA Galaxy 3, St. Louis City SC 3

**Q. The last few minutes of that game, when they go ahead, it looked like you were on the sideline, looked pretty dejected at that point. What was that game like for you?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: It was an exciting game. Obviously 3-3 is a game that can, you know, I said that in week one, entertain our supporters and entertain our fans. That's what we're going for. But we also know we need to pick up results in these situations.

Yeah, the last two goals, disappointing situation because it's kind of gone against some of the stuff -- so a little bit too expansive in our attacking shape. Obviously turning the ball over in vulnerable areas.

But yeah it's an opportunity for those guys to learn and we keep moving forward. In regards to how we finished the game, I was very, very happy. We go ahead and lead the game twice, and then we go down late for the first time in the game. So these guys have to then flip that mindset of we have to go and get a goal now, we have to chase a goal. I was very happy for João; the first club hat trick of obviously its existence. So I'm very proud for him and I'm very happy for him.

But we know we need to go and get three points today.

**Q. On Tuesday you said you were going to talk to Klauss about finishing. What did you say to him? It obviously worked very well?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Obviously all the credit goes to him. I just tried to help him in his positioning and put himself into moments where he can score goals. He's a very good holdup player and he's very good on the ball as well.

But we want our No. 9 scoring goals. The first hook from him was obviously right before the water break. I promised him by the movements he was making, he was going to

find the first goal. So for it to happen five minutes later, I was super, super happy for him.

Again he gets all the credit. He's come in this week with a great growth mindset. We talked about many moments where he can position himself good enough and score goals and today we showed it.

**Q. The last two goals were very impressive goals. This has to be great for his confidence, the way he took those and put them in.**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, good individual performance by him and good individual performance by several guys. Look, there were mistakes that cost three points today, but I can see the growth of this team. Was glad we had a very entertaining game going into the break here.

But like I said, we wanted to pick up three points today. So a little disappointed there.

**Q. Can you talk about Roman and what his leadership has meant and the growth that you've seen from him at the end of a game playing back and grabbing a result out of it?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: As we saw today Roman is our first piece in how we attack. He was utilized many moments today with the ball, and he allows us to get into positions where other players can get higher up the field, and you know, it's late in the game when we have a more direct set piece opportunity. And then moments, you have to grab ahold of them and take them.

For his leadership, it's infectious. He's come into training every week now, he's very intense and he's very competitive and he's a great example on the young pros on this team of how to apply yourself every single day on the field. When you talk about the leadership, he's unbelievable.

**Q. Any update on Conrad?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, where before, we had 45



minutes with his calf muscle, obviously he got himself into a good warmup. He's fully prepared. He was training towards the end of the week very well. But you can never replicate the pace of a game.

So obviously he's come in, he's tried for, I think it was around 20, 25 minutes but it's the same calf muscle so we have to get that evaluated and see how he does now.

**Q. I noticed Roman directionally told some of the players where to go, Baumgartl in particular. Roman was telling him where to be in position to receive that header, and he was able to place it perfectly to where he was instructing. Have you ever had a goalkeeper that you've coached who has had this command of the field, and also, what does that say to you about the freedom that Roman Bürki has to direct players on the field?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, he's obviously the captain and the leader. So he has the autonomy to help on the field and make the right decisions and move the guys in the right moments.

In a 90-minute soccer game, we are looking at guys making 300, 400 decisions every single game and Roman is able to calm himself in those moments. It's emotion in that it's very high energy out there and we are trying to chase a goal and what we need in them moments is a player like Roman to settle it down and recognize, hey, that's the space I'm going to put the ball. So that's his leadership and his game awareness and then obviously his technique, he can put the ball in any single position.

So we try to utilize his strengths by being the free player, building up ground-up passes and then finding a nice ball in behind because he's so accurate with his passing abilities.

**Q. You mentioned your team gave up a couple leads. In the last few games, there have been 15 minutes where you held three different leads. What do you need to do to get your team on track to keep a lead?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: This was something we brought up next week this gaming and pregame and halftime is trying to flip this mentality of these young lads out there that when you go ahead and score a goal that you actually use that momentum to go ahead and get a second goal and be relentless and kill the game.

Some of the behaviors right now is to get the goal and it's almost like we'll sit into our shell and invite pressure. We're slowly but surely changing that. Today I don't think we sat back and was defending the lead. There was just some

mistakes on the field. These guys are going to make mistakes all the time. I'm going to make mistakes as a coach. Unfortunately the last two goals were errors on our end, absolutely.

But yeah, we'll move onwards and upwards with it, yeah.

**Q. When L.A. is able to find quick answers for the two goals, that can be deflating but how was the group able to flip the script in the end?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, I was speaking, chose the mentality from the positive side. We are in a position where we lead the game twice; they responded. Then they go ahead and take the lead. So in them moments, we have to get these guys ready to go on and find a goal somehow.

One of the things I said on day one is I'll create more chances as a coach. For this team, I'll create more goal-scoring opportunities. So we've scored three, four, five, six goals in three games. Unfortunately we conceded three this game which was kind of -- bit us in the back side inevitably, yeah.

**Q. That first goal seems like the one that could have been more preventable. They were able to attack you guys on your defensive left side and pull you apart. Seemed like you had shifted Baum over. What was the chess match you were playing on the left side?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: They had very good late runs. Obviously they were doing a good job with Pec, with Paintsil in dragging our defensive line off ball. Then Marco Reus is running in behind and other players of that quality. One of our adjustments at halftime was to defend in a 4-1-4-1 making sure that we knew absolutely in them moments, Akil would track all the runners coming off shoulders.

We were able to shut them moments down and eliminate opportunities. Again, with the exception of the two goals we conceded from some maybe mistakes again, we limited them to two on our goal and I was proud of the team for the day.

**Q. Totten, not a lot of touches in the first half, how do you solve that?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: One of his roles was to get on to the last line and utilize a three-back system with the ball, so moving Totten into higher position to pin their left back back, was something from a chess match or from a structural standpoint we worked through.

We need to find ways to utilize him as an attacking threat. He has great service and quality on the ball. I remember two long switches to him where he was able to knock it into space for the first time where we should have accelerated the attack a bit more. A couple of good actions from him but we would like to find ways to get him more crossing the ball, also.

**Q. With Klauss, I wondered for you, you talked about his positioning but how much if at all has confidence or just mentality been something that you've noticed or that you've tried to instill in him?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: That was a big part of our conversation this week, as well, was showing clips, and talked to him about positioning and the technical and tactical and listening to him as well and trying to build his confidence.

Against Portland, as you remember, he put himself in many good opportunities to score. Knew that he should be scoring those goals. Seven days later, to come back, six days later, to come back and have that mindset that you can see why he's a professional and why he's got a good mentality about himself.

So to come back and have that mindset, you can see why he's a professional and why he's got a good mentality about himself. So again, he's just growing as a player every day in training and I was super happy for his hat trick today.

**Q. I know it's exacerbated, but was it a mistake for you guys to be playing the ball backwards in a 2-2 game in the 90th minute? A mistake that leads to a goal, maximizes it but is that a situation where you guys should be playing back like that in such a long 40-yard pass like that?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: In a 40-yard pass, no. In a moment of, can we continue to play football to attract pressure to get him behind, which we showed with our first two goals, yes, that's exactly -- I can't be a coach and say, all right, guys, let's just panic in this moment to play the ball down the line. I need them to be brave and I need them to play. The problem is we were too expansive in that moment. We need to read the moments as players and maybe get control of the ball, draw a foul, some of these situations where you see very experienced players doing.

But that's the only way they are going to grow and get better. These guys are holding themselves accountable for the mistakes but again, I can't be contradictory in what I'm asking. I'm going to ask them to attract pressure, to open up space behind them and then we can play very fast.

Unfortunately that didn't work for us.

**Q. You've worked with young guys a lot, and Joey and Jayden are two of the youngest guys you've got. Talking about learning moment, is that a painful but needed moment?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yes. You won't see an experienced pro that hasn't made a hundred mistakes in their career. They have just got to continue to grow and learn from their moments. And again, they are kind of beating themselves up in the locker room a little bit right now.

But yeah, every player in the world once you get to this level, you're going to have mistakes. It's about how do you minimize them week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year.

**Q. You have the break coming up now. Are you going to give the guys five days off, is it?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah.

**Q. What do you look for, everybody getting a breather, and probably yourself, too?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Obviously finding the time to get away. I told them today, like it's okay to hold yourself accountable. It's okay to be disappointed because again we wanted a better result than what we got today but we do have a break for these guys where they can go and enjoy time with family and friends.

These guys are working seven days a week, putting in the effort. So to get a break and spend time with family I think is a good time as a team right now, and then it's all about getting back into this next week. We'll have an open training session at the stadium where I'm sure lots of our supporters will come out. It's a great reintroduitory to the second half of the season for us.

These guys are consistently showing up every day knowing that we can improve and we can develop and get better. So a little break right now for five days and then right back at it once we get back.

**Q. Is there a chance you get some of these injured guys back?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Trying to think off the top of my head right now if any will be short term coming in, but just gives them an extra five days to get themselves away and recovered. I think within the next few weeks we'll have a good squad back ready to use.

**Q. Is this a confidence builder off this one? The last game, even though you lost, was confidence, but this one, can you extract good things out of this going forward?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, obviously, scoring three goals, I know that all came from the individual in Klauss, but it was really good build-up goals as well. We can definitely build on this and we can definitely find opportunities that we've done well and we'll continue to do so but we also want to find opportunities where we can improve and get better.

From a confidence standpoint, these guys, again, are in a situation where I think they have embraced the new style of play. They have embraced the new change that's happening. And we'll absolutely continue to come in with a good amount of confidence for the second half of the season.

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