

# St. Louis CITY SC

## Media Conference

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

**David Critchley**

Postgame Press Conference



Orlando City 4, St. Louis City SC 2

**Q. Two goals in the first nine minutes. What went into that and how you guys came out?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: The first 10 minutes, 15 minutes all I can do is probably apologize to the fans. It wasn't good enough from us. It wasn't good enough from an individual basis on the field.

I felt as though we were prepared for the game but when we let quality teams get into a game quickly with no pressure on the ball and a lack of maybe adjusting to them, they beat our pressure, it's something that we have to improve on. So a pretty disappointing opening 15, 20 minutes.

**Q. The third goal looks like that interchange between Timo and Akil doesn't need to happen, or needs to sort of happen with more precision?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: More precision. That goal is interesting because that is moments that's going to create a lot more headers at the season goes on.

It's something I've asked these guys to do is be brave and play in these types of moments with composure. The fact that we are 2-0 down and still trying to live out the game plan we had early in the week, I was glad for that moment. Unfortunately we conceded a goal today.

**Q. With the temperature, tough to get anything going in the second half?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Both teams put in a massive amount of energy and intensity into the first 45 minutes of the game. I think, obviously, when you look at five goals being scored, conceded, the game's being played at a blistering pace, sometimes that was hard to get from 45 to 90.

We knew the game was going to be at a slower pace for us. The next goal as you know was crucial. It was going

to be 3-3 or 4-2, I knew there was going to be one goal in this half of football, and we have to make sure we defend those moments better.

**Q. Seemed like especially early that there was a lot of space for Orlando to operate. Can you talk about what you hoped to see with the team and what you saw after that hydration break where things started to go a little better for you?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I was just trying to help the lads know you're either going to be putting immediate pressure on the ball or protect the goal and protect the space. There was too many moments in this game where we were just in dead space and not applying pressure on the ball, and we were not protecting and the space was too big.

The first goal is a great example where we exceed with just an expansive shape. I told the lads at halftime we have to read these moments better as a team. We have the structure and we have a game plan, but we have to make good decisions on the field as well.

For us defending-wise, it was either we have to put effective pressure on the ball or we have to protect the space and the goal, and we were kind of caught in between moments way too often.

**Q. Morales comes in for Watts. What were you hoping he would give, that double pivot coming into the game?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: More chances, more creation, more goals. We know we're down. I'm not going to sit down on a 3-2 lead and try to hold shop at that point. I'm trying to score a third goal, get a fourth goal.

Alfie, we felt like he would give us moments on the ball which he did today, composure, connecting some forward passes which he did so. We just didn't capitalize on them moments.

**Q. What were you hoping to see with Marcel and Watts in that midfield goal, and ultimately what did you not**

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**see that you wanted to?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: We gave Marcel a freer role to advance into the attacking third when he feels like he can. Against a good transition team, we have to pick moments better collectively as a team. Maybe he's advancing it into positions higher up the field to score a goal, and all we know is 15 seconds later, we are defending our own box.

We have to have better balance in those moments. Akil knew he was going to be a long six at times, as well, and when we are in a position where we have a long six we can't turn the ball over in moments we turn the ball over. We were out of shape when we turned it over. We just have to be better in them moments.

**Q. What was your evaluation of the field tilt in the first half of the early phases where you conceded, and then as you made your comeback at the especially of the first half?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: At halftime we looked the at statistics and it was 11 shots equal apiece. I think we got 1.4 to 1.0 in favor of Orlando. I don't know the field tilt percentage but we create chances.

I told the guys before the game we're going to create chances, but we have to capitalize, and we have created chances in the four games while I've been sitting here, and we have to find the back of the net a little bit more effectively in those moments. We went down 2-0 early but could almost have been 2-2 in the 20th minute. We have to execute them moments.

**Q. The second half, what went wrong in the first 30 minutes that put you guys behind the 8-ball to where you had such a small period of time to come back still?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: A lot of our service in the box was from way too much of wide areas, which we talked about that as it's very difficult to score from moments when the ball is being played in a box when your numbers are down and it's from a big distance. Trying to find the extra pass there I think is important, and then when we found the extra pass today. Sometimes we had to just take a little more focus.

Maybe it was like a little trick or something that didn't pan out for us. In them moments, we just have to find ways to find the extra pass inside the box and try to create better chances for ourselves.

**Q. First time this season City has gone two games without being called offside. Can you speak on the**

**intentionality that your squad needs to have or has had with the ball, and especially off the ball, in the past couple matches?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Not running offside is a stat that I'm okay with. Obviously we need guys to run in behind, but what I would say is we probably timed ours better in them moments, and the way we've controlled more the the game is we found more combination play and more central passes. That's going to give and take something. That's going to give and take longer runs in behind running offside.

So it's just, again, we have to find a better balance of stretching the opponent, but if we're not offside, that's okay. I'm all right with that.

**Q. After winning the ball, it seemed like the buildup was a bit delayed today. How are you looking to encourage quicker decisions making faster transitions in those moments?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: We've talked a couple of times about we want to be attacking slow or fast. Today we talked we want to attack fast or slow. So we tried to change the verbiage around.

We have to have more moments of faster rhythm on the ball. So you see moments if we attack pressure, obviously with some slower play, and we switch it, those moments to release and accelerate wasn't there with us today.

We can blame the conditions; we can blame all that, but two teams are paying in the same conditions for me. Those just happened to affect.

**Q. We saw some sharp one-touch sequences from players like Marcel, and he showed great composure and vision. Do you see potential for the team to build around that quick, connective style of play?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: That goes to the previous question. That's one way we're attacking well in is we are finding better combination play. We're finding better moments to increase our field tilt, all of these numbers.

But the bottom line is, we all do that to score goals. We scored two again today. So I think I'm averaging two goals a game. It's not a bad stat to have honestly, but the giving up goals, that we have to fix pretty quickly here.

**Q. You're attacking four seem to be settling into a groove as far as who you are favoring or rating high. You've got Célio, Klauss, Simon, and Marcel, but I'm curious about how you saw Cede fitting into that**

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**group, obviously Marcel in the midfield, looked a little bit more to move up and down. What is your evaluation of how Cede performed with those other prayers?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, he had some good moments. For him, he's a strong player in front of goal. He's a very good finisher for us. When he came in obviously coming back from injury, came in off the right side a little bit more.

I wanted him central today to find moments of cut backs and moments of trying to create some chances for himself because he's a good ball striker and good finisher. He's done a good job.

I didn't give Orlando credit, they did really good making problems inside the box and making it compact on us today. I don't know the number.

But we maybe beat our record in blocked shots today. So that's something we're going to have to be a little bit sharper in for us, but at the same time Orlando were compact and organized defensively which made it difficult for Cede in the middle of the field today.

**Q. Was spacing an issue in the central areas between Simon pressing higher in the attack ahead of Klauss, and then Cede and Klauss still occupying some of those spaces? Is that something you're looking to improve upon and help some of these players finding spacing better?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: On the defensive side?

**Q. Either way, when Simon moving from the right to the top and seemed like Cede and Klauss were both occupying similar spaces at times. What is your evaluation of that and how do you look to correct?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: One of those moments for us was to try and put Simon higher to put Klauss between the lines, but with Célio coming higher today, there was that extra body in there. So he was in a hybrid movement in behind him between lines, and then to try and get Tots to be the free pair, obviously had two assists today as a right back which is pretty good. I think structurally it was very good. Again we messed up today in the individual areas on the defending side.

**Q. Where would you have been without Roman tonight who came up many, many times?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, Roman, he had several saves, but two of them that come to mind right away were not many goalies in the League are making those saves. So

he kept us in the game, absolutely, and his individual performance was very good.

But he also would be very annoyed with himself that four goals have gone in today. But for Roman's individual performance, I was very, very happy with him. He made some big time saves for the team today and kept us in the game quite a lot. So I was happy with his performance.

**Q. Is it nice just to see Simon get a goal? Because he has not had one in a long time.**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, it was nice to see him -- he's had a couple of moments this last four games, early chances in the games is what I've called it with him. And today I was happy to see him capitalize on one.

**Q. You like the progress this team has made but today looked like not a lot of progress out there. Is today a step back?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I wouldn't say a step back. For us it wasn't a step in the right direction. We had a good week of training and we felt prepared, and felt like we can prepare well.

Again, we are coming up against a very talented Orlando team that is probably going to make a good run into the playoffs if I make a prediction.

The structure is there for the guys. I did encourage them today within -- you guys have heard some of my structure concepts and shapes and all that. But players have to make decisions and feel free on the field to make decisions, as well, and that was something I felt like we missed today.

**Q. Is Timo okay?**

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Timo is okay. He was able to get through it. I haven't spoke to the medical team yet but he's able to get up 15, 20 minutes after the initial going down, so one hopes he's okay for this weekend.

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