

St. Louis CITY SC Media Conference

Saturday, July 26, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

David Critchley

Postgame Press Conference



Minnesota 2, St. Louis 1

Q. Has to be a crushing way for it to end.

DAVID CRITCHLEY: It is. It is. It was definitely, felt like two completely different games. First half, I thought the guys were fantastic. They were brilliant on both sides of the ball. I know we had a lot of it in the first half, but even the little moments, like the counter-pressing and the being aggressive to get it back very quickly was what put us in a really good position to keep pinning them back and creating a goal eventually with Edu with the penalty. So great first half.

We do have to be more ruthless. We do have to score more goals in them moments and really put this team to bed. They came out a little passive in the first half, and we had such high field tilt, such high possession, such high XGs, so all the data was in our favor. But we know when you leave good teams hanging around like that, they can hurt you in small moments, and we saw that in the second half.

Q. Did you guys just not react well to their increased pressure in the second half?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I think so. You know, I just encourage these guys to try and be braver in these moments. We score a goal and we take the lead. And again, I think I sat with you guys and said on week one, and then it's about going to get a second goal and killing a game.

We've still not been able to find our ruthlessness right now in these games with these guys. They adjusted well. They got high pressure on us. We anticipated that with the subs that he made at halftime. And then these guys just need to continue to just grind through these moments. It was a difficult one because the first half was so good, and then we clearly didn't perform in the second half, it was clear.

Q. Did you think the red card was warranted?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I'm still trying to figure that one out. I was under the assumption that sometimes the penalty outweighs the red card. I've still probably got to clear it up on the rules why he was given the red card. Because you see many offenses that the penalty just takes the priority and he scores and we move on.

It was definitely a foul inside the box. But that was one of the key moments for us tonight that changed the game.

Q. Not to dwell on that moment, but Durkin comes in gets the red card. What is that conversation like? He's distraught in that moment, but how he's feeling with what transpired?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Knowing Chris, he's going to feel extremely disappointed and guilty. But again, I said this last week, it wasn't Chris's fault. It was actually a moment higher up the field where one of our forwards missed the pressing moments. He shouldn't have pressed the moment. He did. They played around too easy, and all of a sudden, they are in our box.

Yes, Chris made an error today but there was three or four errors before that in that phase of the game that other players made. And that was disappointing for me because I was very clear with the moments we should press and the moments we shouldn't, and we chose the wrong moment to press when we clearly shouldn't have.

Q. Moving on, Sang-bin plays pretty well from the start. Padelford plays pretty well from the start. Giving those two their start tonight, what did that moment mean for them against their former team and how do you think they did?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I thought they were fantastic. I thought the entire team was fantastic in the first half. If you guys asked me a question about the first half, I'll have a smile on my face. But the second half comes up, I won't.

It was good to get them both debuts, good starts. Sang-bin getting behind them on one and almost misses by a few



yards. So that would have took the roof off the stadium if he puts that in the back of the net.

Devin was good. He found a lot of good moments. He had the cross, I think it was back post to Klauss, maybe, for the header. Saved off the line. Massive defensive play by them. They are very good on the defensive side of the ball so give them credit. I think, was it Boxall? I don't even remember if it was Boxall. Yeah, so Boxall plays off the line, we know his appearances and quality as a center back.

So Devin had a couple of good moments. Sang-bin has a couple of good moments, as well. I was very happy with them but yeah we had to get them off and get some fresh legs on the field.

Q. You were having trouble getting the ball central, Ostrák, as a possession, he was really the only factor centrally. Klauss with only 22 touches. What's stopping you from getting the ball centrally?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Over the last two games we faced, I would say, a very compact 5-4-1, a compact 5-2-3, so very, very tight defenses in FC Dallas and Minnesota. So we knew them central areas was actually going to be areas we couldn't play today.

But in them moments, you try to encourage Klauss or Célio or Edu, hey, maybe, in these game, the tactics in the best moments is to go around the structure and find balls into the box which I was very, very happy with in the first half.

But they put more pressure on us in the wide areas in the second half so that does open up space in the midfield, and that's where we couldn't just flip that trigger really quick and go more central. So it was a design to go around their structure quite a lot today. We had great success the first half. Just didn't execute in the second half tonight.

Q. You talk about the abundance of chances and how good that first half was. What steps need to be taken to be able to replicate that first half to be able to kill a game in the second half and continue the dominance throughout past halftime?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, I know it's difficult conditions out there but we definitely need to maintain a higher level of like counter-pressure and pressure on the ball and on the ball it's all about keeping the rhythm high, and to do that, you need to be in tiptop shape.

I thought Minnesota was a very physically gifted group of players tonight, and I think you saw that probably around the 70th minute. They just hit another level.

For us, yeah, it's a little bit of everything to be honest. It's the mentality to go out and continue to be brave. I think every time we score a goal, we have this reservedness about ourself like we've got something to lose. We don't have anything to lose. Where we are in the standings right now, we can only think about trying to go and get three points.

So just our behaviors need to change when we get a goal leading. We put all this together in the first half and put a performance like this together. We have to find ways to score more goals and kill games off.

Q. With 63 percent of ball possession at the end of the first half and lots of chances early on, what do you think was missing in the final third, and how do you bounce back from a game like this?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: What was missing was just executing in the big moments. We had several in the first half. I think on top of the possession, our field tilt was 81 percent in the final third and XG was 1.5. What really good teams in world football do when they have an XG of 1.5, they are actually scoring two or three goals in them moments, and they overexceed their XG.

We are always underachieving on the XG. So it shows we are creating moments but we just don't finish the plays off. So too many moments today. Too many big moments missed by us. Because you don't create chances like that throughout 90 minutes. So when you do create them, you have to execute them and make sure we finish them off.

Q. You were pushing pretty aggressively, six guys consistently up and it was a pretty big change in the formations. You win the open play XG game but just the big moments hurt you. What were you guys doing better covering yourself on the defensive side of the ball?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: I thought there was a lot of good moments with the hybrid fullbacks like tucking inside but also providing width at times. So against the ball we knew the center of the field, we wanted to eliminate the space there.

So having the fullbacks, even though Conrad as a normal six, he was comfortable. I think he won two or three balls in the first half stepping into that midfield space and picking it up there.

And same with Devin. He put on good counter pressure from the middle areas of the field which is not natural as a fab but it was designed for this game specifically. So we



just need to make sure that when we had the ball, we had a little bit different build-out shape today based on the opponent. Again it was designed very well, in the first half, we had so many opportunities, but we didn't finish the plays off today.

Q. You didn't start Totland today, who is usually out there. Was it because of what you were saying of what you were looking for out of the attack today?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: Yeah, that was just a coaching decision based on the tactics of the game. We knew Conrad is a more natural center midfielder that could play the fullback but also step into that central area quite a lot for us, which I thought he did so very well in the first half. So it was a system decision.

Q. And we're using Chris as a center back, obviously instead of in the midfield. What went into that decision?

DAVID CRITCHLEY: In that moment, Devin needed to come off and I think he was cramping up pretty bad. So moving Hassy out to the left side filled the space with needing a center back. We have had Chris in them moments in a couple of times in them positions, and he does pretty well.

We felt like in that game at that moment we needed more of a ball-playing player in there because they were going to consistently sit in that mid to low block. But he gets caught in that one moment and goes off. So sympathy for him because he'll feel terrible about this tonight.

Games are not won and lost on one or two mistakes, even if they are big moments, it's a collective and it should be. I just I feel like we needed to be better as a team in the second half.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...