

POST GAME QUOTES
2024 U.S. Open Cup Final
Wednesday, September 25
LAFC vs. Sporting Kansas City



STEVE CHERUNDOLO
LAFC HEAD COACH

RE: On how important it was to win this final:

“There’s a winner and a loser every final. Before every final it’s a coin toss if teams are of equal quality, healthy, fresh and have similar players on the field. There’s only two outcomes so that’s how you have to see these, sometimes you win, sometimes you don’t. There are things you can do before, during and with your substitutions that can put odds in your favor. The first half was very controlled, high tempo and we knew that would open things up later and that’s exactly what happened.”

“We’re happy to win. I think we were due, the boys really wanted it. They made it difficult on themselves. A theme the past couple weeks is that we’ve been hurting ourselves, we had a stint of this earlier in the season where teams were not beating us, we were beating ourselves. That is troublesome and frustrating, but it’s a good problem to have because it means we’re in control of our own destiny and this team understands that.”

RE: On returning to 3 center backs for this match & on Campos

“They changed their attack a little bit. Attacking with four clear attackers, starting in a flat line then one coming underneath, one going trying to stretch defenses so we felt adding another player in that area of the field could keep the game close and allows us to assert more pressure on their attackers, but at the same time keeping it plus one in the back. We felt that is what we needed to keep a clean sheet. The goal we conceded was totally avoidable, but other than that there weren’t a lot of good shots from distance, so I was quite happy with the way we defended.”

“Omar came on fantastically. He is someone who is technically very good in possession and can beat you one v. one. These are the things we show him weekly, ask him to do daily and when he does he’s really good. I’d lie if I say he listens to me all the time, so I don’t know who he was listening to tonight, but whoever it was it’s probably a good idea to speak with them again on Saturday. Great night for him and defensively really solid down the stretch too.”

RE: On making finals as a non-possession focused team

“I wouldn't consider us a transition team only. There are phases in the season where it looks that way, but we are actively trying to possess the ball too. For me it's always about trying to find the right balance. I don't care for labels. I'm constantly as a coach searching for the balance of this team to be able to control games. You can control the game with the ball and without the ball, but being in control of tempo, spaces, chances is what this is about for me, it's my own personal philosophy and I feel we have been in control for a pretty long time. There's been a few bad games of course, but when we have control, we are successful and that to me, keeping the balance, is allowing us to be successful over a long period of time.”

RE: On Giroud & Kamara

“We talked about it yesterday with Kei that it's been a while, but it's time again. It's a new set of players, a new set of relationships, new team and new colors, so it's time to be successful with us. I was really happy for him, happy for Olivier as well. As long as he's getting chances, we know he will be fine because his records over the past however many years he's played are incredible and there's no reason for them not to be the same here and it will and hopefully tonight gave him a little confidence moving into this weekend and finish the season strong because a prolific Olivier is something that LAFC needs.”

RE: On how Steve is feeling after win - joy or relief?

“I thought it would be more relief, but it really is just joy. I think I'm at peace with both outcomes. As coaches you do what you can during the week, you prepare the group. We felt very good about this match during the training and preparation coming into this game, only two. I felt good about where the players were mentally.”

“I'm ecstatic for the players, they put in the hard work, they have to listen to me, I wouldn't say complain, but criticize a lot in a way that hopefully they learn, and they did and they are learning and this will only make us stronger down the stretch of the season, I'm convinced of that.”

RE: On celebrating Kei's goal with the players & Palencia being so versatile

“Sergei is incredible, his intelligence in defending, understanding moments when to pressure and when to cover.