

Post-Match Quote Sheet

Bethlehem Steel FC vs. Memphis 901 FC | March 24, 2019 – Talen Energy Stadium, Chester, Pa.

Bethlehem Steel FC

Head Coach Brendan Burke

On his thoughts of the game . . .

Disappointing, we gift them a goal, they probably didn't earn a goal. Based on the run of play, hit the post twice, but I feel like we didn't create enough danger for them again for the second week in a row, that's frustrating. I felt like in general we defended well enough to come out of there with a clean sheet, those things happen over the course of the season, so I'm not as worried about that moment, as I am that we're not generating the volume of chances that we did certainly last year, even in Birmingham in week one.

On Faris and Michee Ngalina's performance . . .

I think they were each in two or three moments in the first half where there would be normally a lot sharper but that's their first game of the season so I'm not too worried about how they'll progress as the season wears on. I do think they need to be sharper in the middle third in terms of connecting the game when the ball originally arrives at their feet to connect with the line below them, and then they can do their running off the ball, but also just the mentality to be aggressive and isolate people and break them down on their own. They both had the ability to do that but they didn't really show it tonight.

On his adjustments at the half . . .

We talked about stepping in more with the center backs and trying to go with some urgency from back to front, that was there in the first half in a different way, we wanted the center backs to be way more aggressive in the second half. Ultimately it didn't break them down, but we ended up on top of them for almost 45 straight minutes in the second half.

On his team's roster selection . . .

Two of our attacking subs were academy players and I think I would expect more from the group that we put on the field. I don't think the effort was poor, I don't think the concentration level was poor, I just think the urgency wasn't there to go and get a result. I think we played the game; we didn't approach it like there was no way we were walking away without a result. Unfortunately, it's because we were such a disconnected group from week to week, we have to approach it with that sort of urgency down to a man, each individual, and we didn't all have that tonight.

On changes that will be made this week . . .

That's just a matter of individual meetings, sit down with individual guys and say that there's more to give, if there's more urgency in your next performance, then you'll get more out of the game and you'll get more opportunity from the first team, or you'll get recognized to progress through, whether you're an academy player or personal player.

Defender Mark McKenzie

On his thoughts on the game . . .

I thought it was a good overall team performance, we were solid throughout, didn't give up too many chances. One defensive error and you get punished for it and that's the hard part about the game, but at

the same time it brings something to build on. I thought we could have sped the ball up more, the ball was a bit slow at times, but when it comes to playing together, we have new pieces coming in, some more cohesion throughout the group, but it's something positive about the loss, but I think it's something we can build on for sure.

On getting playing time . . .

It was a solid game, a few decisions I could have made a little bit better, carry the ball into the midfield a little more, some of my longer passes could have been a little more accurate, but overall I think It was a pretty good first 90 back to the season, now I'm just looking forward to building off of it and go on from there.

On positive takeaways from tonight . . .

I think I played through the lines well, I found some of those pockets into the nines and 10s. Defensively I thought my position was pretty good, intercepted a couple passes at the top of our 18. It could have been a little bit sharper my first touch at times in those transition moments, but that comes with playing consecutive 90's so again, solid game, but now something to build on and go from there.

On if his team had any frustration . . .

Yeah, of course losing at home is never a good feeling, but at the same time you can't get to down on ourselves, it's a long year and it's just one game. Ultimately down the road we don't want these to be recurrent errors, but we just need to build off and look forward to training this week and sharpen it up.

Midfielder Michee Ngalina

On his first start of the season . . .

It was kind of hard for me, but I think the team did well, we worked together. Even though we lost 1-0, we just need to move forward and see what we must do for the next game.

On playing with Faris up top . . .

It was nice to play with Faris up top. We have a new formation, it's hard for us but we need to keep practicing it and keep trying and hope next game we do better.

On positive takeaways from tonight . . .

The defense was playing the long ball, and it was hard for us because we were asking to play our feet and they were trying to play the long ball was the most difficult for us. I think if we talk about that to our teammates we will try to do our best for the next game.

On getting his first 90 minutes . . .

I feel okay, since the preseason I didn't play the 90 minutes like this so during the first half I was feeling tired, but the second half I tried to just push myself and I felt okay.

Memphis 901 FC

Head Coach Tim Mulqueen

Opening statement . . .

I think the game was difficult for us. Bethlehem [Steel FC] is a very talented team, they put a very strong roster together with the injuries and international call ups for us and we had a very thin team tonight. We knew we were going to have to take some pressure from them and stay organized and see if we could breakout on the counter, maybe nick a goal. I thought we did a pretty good job of limiting clear chances. I realize they had plenty of the ball and that goes with going on the road sometimes. I am really excited for our players, to come to such a good opponent and to get a shutout and get the first win on the road, I think shows their character.

On what the win means to his club and the fans . . .

We have had two great crowds at our home games and unfortunately we haven't been able to get over the hump there, we have a draw and a loss. Both games we came from behind, we fell behind early. So, we were excited, but it was also more of a relief. We were saying that you know you're going to get a win, but sometimes you don't know when that's going to happen. So, the guys were excited, we have tremendous respect for Bethlehem [Steel FC], another playoff team, so to get that as our first win is outstanding.

On keeping the momentum into the game against New York Red Bulls . . .

Well we have to recover. We will get some guys back from injury, hopefully. We will get Adam Najem back from international duty early in the week. So hopefully we will get guys a little bit healthier so that we can field a team that's closer to our starting 11 than we were able to do tonight. What we need to do is continue to get better on the ball, have longer stretches of possession against Red Bull. We know they are going to be very direct, and they press and they work very hard so we are going to have to match that.

Forward Rashawn Dally

On what this first win means to the club and to him . . .

To me and the club it means a lot. We've been working all week and since preseason for this moment. To finally get the first win it is definitely a good first step in the right direction for the club.

On the game-winning goal . . .

I was just taking my chances and anticipating the play. Then the ball popped out in the right spot and I was there to take advantage of the opportunity.

On what training will be like this upcoming week . . .

We're just going to continue to build on what we've been working on. Staying tight defensively and continue to finish our chances when we get them to finish off games.

Goalkeeper Jeff Caldwell

On what this first win means to his team . . .

The response from the fans the first two weeks at home has been tremendous. I think we got over 15,000 combined attendance in the first two games. To come here, to work our asses off, and to give them something to come back for, and really believe in, I don't think you can really put a value on that. It's something we needed to do; we needed to get this first win. We're three games in and it's a monkey off our back. Now we just can settle into being who we are as a team, we don't have to worry about first win this, first clean sheet that. We come out, week in week out, we know our qualities, we know our strengths,

and we play to them. I think we showed tonight that we might bend a hair, but we don't break. We showed in the first two games that even when things go unfortunately wrong, we don't break. Really good teams forge and identity and know who they are, and I think you can already see that in us. That we have real trust, real confidence in who we are and what our strengths are. We're going to make teams hurt, whether it be at home or on the road this year.

On the performance of his backline in getting the clean sheet . . .

They were incredible tonight. We gave up no real chances. The first half they had a couple shots from distance, guys took well, but at the end of the day, that's on me to help them out. Its professional soccer, a couple of chances are going to pop loose. I mean, we scored, the winner in the 58th, 59th minute. That's a long time on the road to make sure were disciplined and switched on. It's a hard, hard thing to do. It's not just so simple sitting back. We possessed in their half, that back line was just money, switched on the whole night, and we gave them nothing.

On what his team will look to build on defensively . . .

Again, I think it goes back to identity. We started to forge an identity, like I said where we don't give anything away. We don't give chances, we don't give openings in the game, we don't give them time. So now we have that as our foundation and going forward, we have really good footballers too. We're going to create more chances. This is the infancy of this team. To be where we're at and laying down that sturdy, sturdy base, we're just going to continue to build on that. We're going to create chances and we're going to be able to play. Like I said, were not just going to be able to make teams hurt in our shape and our press. We're going to make teams hurt when we have the ball, were going to be chasing. So I think every week we have to keep our eye on that target of getting a little better at creating a few more chances and eliminating a few more errors in our organization. I think if you tell us three weeks in, we're four points and we've given up two goals, I think we'd all be happy with that and prideful that we've taken care of the hard things.