

## **Bethlehem Steel FC Pre-Match Quote Sheet**

### **Head Coach Brendan Burke**

*On his team winning last weekend and having to prepare for a tough test against North Carolina FC . . .*

“It’s kind of back to the drawing board. You get to enjoy it for a day or so and then back to the drawing board. Then try to prepare for a North Carolina team that showed great commitment on the defensive side of the ball last week and a real cutting edge when they got out in transition, but also when they established possession against Louisville [City FC].”

*On the impact of Dave Sarachan on North Carolina FC . . .*

“You can see the energy level in the group and how committed they are defending. I’d say that’s number one. There’s a good tempo on the ball to them, I think he’s just added a real element of excitement to that club. He’s one of the best coaches in the country, no one would question that, and I certainly have a great respect for everything that he’s accomplished in the game at so many different levels and so many different roles. You can see that in his team, his experience shows in his team.”

*On what his team needs to do defensively against North Carolina FC . . .*

“I think just remaining compact. What North Carolina did so well against Louisville [City FC] was stay compact and get all their bodies behind the ball. One, we have to make them run effectively and not be back to front so quickly. When we are back to front, we need to commit numbers to the areas where we anticipate playing in to when we’re a little more direct and really making sure we win those little individual battles or numbers-battles from a positional standpoint. Ultimately defending is about being organized and energetic. They showed that they were very good in that way last weekend. Hopefully we can be just as good as they were last weekend, this weekend.”

### **Defender Ben Ofeimu**

*On how his squad prepares for North Carolina FC following a win last weekend . . .*

“Yeah, it was a good result last week, but we have to move on. North Carolina had a good result also against a good team in Louisville [City FC], so we’re going to do a lot of video and prepare for the game and have a game plan.”

*On how his team prepares defensively against North Carolina FC . . .*

“We haven’t done video yet, but later in the week we’ll go in on each guy and see their tendencies.”

*On how his side can score against North Carolina’s offense . . .*

“We just have to keep firing, keep going. They let up a goal late, so maybe it’ll be in the 90<sup>th</sup> minute or something. We just have to keep pushing, get one and stay tight in the back and hopefully not let up one again.”

### **Midfielder Issa Rayyan**

*On how his side can prepare for a tough North Carolina FC team . . .*

“Last week was my first full-professional game, first start, first 90 minutes, so it was for sure an experience and a challenge. We had a game plan; we fought through it and got the result that we wanted. Same thing for North Carolina; we’re just going to do everything we can to know a lot about North Carolina. Just go in there, get a game plan and do everything we can to stick to the plan and hopefully we get the result.”

*On how his squad can nullify the North Carolina attack . . .*

“We’re going to find out what their strongest attack is, stay compact and communicate. We’re going to do everything that we can to stick together, talk about it and make sure that we all have each other’s backs to fight.”

*On if there is an opportunity to score late goals against North Carolina . . .*

“With our new system we have lots of speed up top, just putting it to the flanks and our midfielders coming to support them. We’re going to try and utilize that and our speed up top and hopefully we get some goals.”