

# St. Louis City SC Looks To Find Their Beast Again At FC Dallas

by Nathan Tucker  
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ST. LOUIS - St. Louis City SC begins a road trip of sorts in Dallas this weekend, the first of three straight matches away from home for the first time in their short history. City takes on FC Dallas Saturday night, a matchup of early leaders of MLS's Western Conference.

After winning five straight games to open their account in Major League Soccer, St. Louis City has come back down to earth a bit. City has won just one of their last five in MLS action, but head coach Bradley Carnell doesn't look at it as a "skid" for his team.

"If you look at the 10-game sequence," Carnell said Thursday in his pre-match media availability. "And where everyone thought we would be... We already have six wins, some people didn't think we'd get past three or four. We're here, where we are, and we've created this beast ourselves."

The beast that is City took Major League Soccer by storm. High-scoring, high-tempo, high-intensity soccer. A style head coach Bradley Carnell and Sporting Director Lutz Pfannenstiel have taken pride in instilling in St. Louis.

"We don't want to play like this in front of our fans" was the message from Carnell following last week's 1-0 loss in front of a sold-out CITYPARK. The beast in City was declawed last week against a stubborn Portland Timbers team that offered them little chance to break out and play their game.

Energy was lacking. Forward enthusiasm was missing until second-half substitutions. It was also a City team that was missing Joao Klauss, not that he scores all their goals, but he provides a direction, an emphasis to the City attack that was lacking Saturday.

Klauss was said to be "day by day" according to Bradley Carnell Thursday. Likely doubtful to feature this weekend, still nursing a quad injury suffered in Colorado in a 1-1 draw against the Rapids.

City took a hit on the injury front this week when midfielder Rasmus Alm pulled up during practice on Wednesday and is currently listed as questionable for the trip to Dallas along with Klauss.

On a positive note, also listed as questionable is midfielder Njabulo Blom. Blom suffered a groin injury in a substitute appearance in the 3-0 loss on the road visiting the Seattle Sounders, and could potentially see his first appearance in nearly a month.

"There's a chance (for Blom to play Saturday)," Carnell stated. "He's just polishing up, brushing up on a few final things and we'll revert back to our medical department."

Also inching closer towards recovery is yet-to-debut City defender Joakim Nilsson. The Swedish International center back had knee surgery in January.

“Nilsson’s coming along great,” Bradley Carnell noted Thursday. “He’s on the ball now doing a couple of things, working hard on and off the field. It’s great to see him progressing technically as well, getting comfortable on the ball again.”

There’s no timetable for Nilsson’s return just yet, and as we’ve seen with other players recovering from knocks and injuries, Carnell will likely gently ease Nilsson into regular playing time.

“We’re getting the numbers back just at the right time,” Carnell said.

“We know where the schedule is taking us over the next couple of months, and it’s good to have good competition. It’s good to have great players all on board, it’s nice as a coach to have to plan accordingly.”

One man City and Carnell will have to plan for is FC Dallas striker and US International Jesus Ferreira. Ferreira made the US World Cup roster in 2022, starting in the Round of 16 match against the Netherlands.

Ferreira leads FC Dallas with five goals in the MLS season to date. Dallas only has 12 total goals this season, so a majority of their offense comes from the cultured feet of Jesus Ferreira. When he isn’t firing, it’s likely that Dallas isn’t as a whole, and that was the result in their 0-0 draw with Minnesota last weekend.

Both teams will come into Saturday’s contest looking to score goals after not finding the back of the net last weekend. Bradley Carnell is confident that City can stay creative offensively, and reclaim some of that “beast” that City became known for.

“It’s good to pose questions of yourself when it doesn’t go your way,” Carnell said Thursday.

“But if you look at the ‘goals scored’ column, we’re still #1 in the league. So we’re just trying to do what we like to do. We have to get the team to a certain point to then create, against a tired back line maybe, or against a certain opponent or certain opposition player.”

“You need to have a game plan,” Carnell continued.

“I thought the guys that came in (as late substitutes last week) really impacted the game in a big way. It was good to see them get rewarded, because nobody works harder than those guys that don’t really get their names in the paper.”

City looks to put that plan and hard work to good use Saturday night in Dallas. Kickoff is set for 7:30 pm, with the televised broadcast available via streaming on Apple TV, and local radio broadcasts on KYKY Y98.1 FM in English and KXOK 102.9 FM in Spanish.