



REFEREE: Hilario Grajeda.

SAR (bench): Thomas Supple; JAR (opposite): Rob Fereday; 4th: Abbey Okulaja

INJURY REPORT: COLORADO RAPIDS – OUT: FW Luchi Gonzalez (groin) ... FC DALLAS – OUT: GK Jeff Cassar (R hip), QUESTIONABLE: GK Dario Sala (calf); FW Roberto Mina (L knee)
SUSPENDED: COL: DF Mike Petke (through Oct. 22)
WARNINGS: none

WESTERN CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS - 1L

COLORADO RAPIDS v FC DALLAS

Sat., Oct. 21, Invesco Field at Mile High (7 p.m. MT; FSC/E)

LEAGUE HEAD-TO-HEAD: COL 14 wins, 51 GF; DAL 20 wins, 70 GF; 7 ties

2006 HEAD-TO-HEAD: DAL 3 win, 9 GF; COL 0 wins, 3 GF; 1 tie

AT INVESCO FIELD AT MILE HIGH:

4/15: COL 2, DAL 2 (Kirovski 39; own goal 45 – Vanney 5; Mina 25)

8/30: COL 0, DAL 2 (Nunez 25; Mulrooney 56)

MLS CUP PLAYOFFS: COL 3 wins, 10 GF; DAL 1 win, 8 GF; 3 draws



The Rapids will have a major absence in central defense as Mike Petke will be suspended. He received a red card following the completion of the Oct. 7 draw with New York, after already receiving a yellow card in that game that put him over the limit and banned for the season finale. That means Pablo Mastroeni could return to partner Aitor Karanka as he did in Houston last weekend, with Hunter Freeman or Matt Crawford and Dan Gargan on the flanks, but Fernando Clavijo has been known to give his lineup a shakeup entering the playoffs. "I would not be surprised to see some changes," Clavijo said to The Denver Post. ... Another problem for Clavijo coming down the stretch as been on the left side of midfield, where he has searched for a regular replacement since Dedi Ben-Dayan left for his native Israel at the start of August. Jacob Peterson is the most likely candidate, having started 10 of the 13 games since. "It's a revolving door right now," Clavijo said. ... Coming into the season finale -- where they needed a point to secure their playoff lives -- the Rapids hadn't won in four games and hadn't scored more than a goal in a game since mid-July. But three times they came back from a goal down for the vital draw against Houston and clinched fourth place in the West. "The way we end the season makes you really think things can work," Clavijo said. ... And so, for the second year running, the Rapids will face FC Dallas in the first round, playing host to the first leg in Denver and traveling to Frisco for the return match. A year ago, the scoreless draw in the first leg set the stage for a dramatic 2-2 draw through extra time -- and subsequent penalty kick shootout victory to move into the conference championship. Clavijo says last year's experience will give his team an advantage. "We have a little bit of an edge," he said. "It's going to be a war, but I like it and I like our chances."

The last two times Dallas reached the MLS Cup Playoffs, they were eliminated by ... the Colorado Rapids -- including in last season's conference semifinals. Just as last year, FC Dallas held home-field advantage, but were defeated on penalty kicks after being held to a 2-2 draw by a 10-man Rapids in the second leg. "They remember what happened and weren't very happy about it. It will definitely add an extra edge to the series," said Colin Clarke. "You never get over those. It's always in your mind. We felt we were the better team last year and deserved to get through, but it didn't happen. We've got to put that right. The good thing is that we have got an opportunity to put it right." ... The Hoops feel they are a better team a year later. "I've said it since day one -- this team is a stronger squad and we have more depth," Simo Valakari said. "We have been together one more year and that has helped us with the team concept. We play better with one another because we know everyone better. It's a different team this year." ... There will likely be no changes to the 10 field players for Saturday's first leg, which means Abe Thompson will partner Carlos Ruiz in attack and Kenny Cooper will play a wide midfield role. "Kenny (Cooper) has had a great year and it's been well-documented. ... For a player to come in his first year back, he's done remarkable," Clarke said. "Abe in the last six or seven games he's played, has made a big difference for our team and to the way we play. It was great for him to get a goal over the weekend (against Los Angeles) and great for his confidence. Big games for some young kids, but I think they'll be able to cope with it." ... The only question could be in goal, where Dario Sala returned to full training after missing the final four games of the regular season to a calf injury. Shaka Hislop has been in goal as the Hoops have conceded 10 goals in that stretch.



COLORADO RAPIDS

SUBSTITUTES FROM

3	Denton	DF
7	Kirovski	FW
9	Mathis	MF
13	Tarley	FW
14	Noel	FW
16	Wingert	DF
21	Crawford	MF
22	Jordan	GK
23	Clark	FW
24	Coundoul	GK
26	Harvey	DF
27	Keel	DF
31	Gotsmanov	FW
32	King	FW
33	Wasson	DF

FC DALLAS

SUBSTITUTES FROM

5	Saragosa	MF
9	Mina	FW
10	Nunez	MF
11	Goodson	DF
12	Alvarez	MF
13	McCarty	MF
16	Wagenfuhr	DF
18	Smith	MF
21	Yi	DF
22	Dello-Russo	DF
23	Wagner	DF
24	Moore	MF
25	Oduro	FW
27	Pitchkolan	MF
30	Burse	GK
48	Sala	GK