

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks Honoring the 2023 National Women's Soccer League Champion New Jersey-New York's Gotham F.C.

September 23, 2024

[The President addressed some children positioned near the podium.]

The President. Hey, guys. How are you doing? *[Laughter]* Holy mackerel. I like your ties. *[Laughter]*

Audience member. Can you guys say thank you?

The President. "Dad, you didn't tell me the President was going to talk to me."

Please, have a seat.

Well, good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. For the first time—for the first time in National Women's Soccer League history, welcome to the White House to the 2023 championships [champions; White House correction] the Gotham F.C.

It's so good to be joined by so many friends from New York and New Jersey—team owners, the Tisch family——

Audience member. Yes!

The President. There you go. God love you. We go back a long way. *[Laughter]* And led by Carolyn.

And the team—the fellow team governors and investors, Ed, as well as the great Sue Bird—*[applause]*—who was here a few years ago to celebrate the Seattle Storm's WNBA championship, and she's simply incredible. No, you are. *[Laughter]* I tell you what, man.

I also want to thank the founding team owners, and good friends of mine, the Murphys and, particularly, Tammy, to continue the—to be the champions for women's sports. They couldn't be here today because they are representing the great State of New Jersey on a trade mission abroad.

But I also want to thank New Jersey's newest United States Senator, George Helmy. Where is—where are you, George? There you are, George. George, you don't get to take the trophy home. *[Laughter]*

And of course, a special thanks to the incredible players. You know—*[applause]*—one thing is clear: This organization is no stranger to adversity. In 2022, Gotham placed last in the entire league. There were doubts about turning things around. But you never gave up. You never gave up. And you kept the faith, as my mother would say. You retooled the roster, hired a new coach. Something clicked.

And, after a tough season, you were in—the final team to make the playoffs. But, as the saying goes, winners simply win. Back-to-back playoff wins holding North Carolina and Portland scoreless and then beating Seattle to win it all. The new Tiffany trophy is one at—new home now in Gotham.

Look, just yesterday you clinched the playoff spot, so maybe you'll be back here next year. Now, if you are, I won't be President, but ask if I can come and listen. *[Laughter]*

What's really important is, your championship win also set an attendance record. I think it's fair to say everyone—everyone—watches women's sports. It's about time.

I've got some All-State soccer players as well as—a goalie as well as lacrosse champions in my family. And by the way, in my family, we have a—an advantage: All the women are smarter than all the men—[*laughter*—including me.

Look, and when fans watch you play, they also see the power of the example off the field as well. It matters. And I really mean it. You lead the way in providing sports medicine and health care focused on women. My wife is deeply involved in trying to make sure there's enough attention paid and research done on women's diseases as men. As a matter of fact, we're going to the United Nations after this to make that very case.

You helped establish the Players Association fighting for the dignity of work all across the league. And most powerful—I'm—you know, I get—I get categorized as the most pro-union President in American history. I am, and I approve of what you're doing, man. [*Laughter*]

You know, and your teammate Midge came to the White House with the U.S. Women's National Team to highlight the campaign and equal—for equal pay. That's happening too. Matter of fact, it's going to get unequal here; you're going to be paid a hell of a lot more, I think, the way it's going. [*Laughter*]

But let's be clear. And I mean this sincerely. I was raised by my best friend in the world, who is my sister. She—anyway. I won't get into all that, but—[*laughter*—you know, I mean this sincerely: A woman can do anything a man can do—anything a man can do, including being President of the United States.

Let me close by thanking you all. You really represent our Nation with such dignity. You inspire all of us—and you really do; you're an inspiration. Think—I'll bet you when—you can't walk down the street in your hometown without some young girl coming up to you just wanting to talk to you, just wanting to touch you, just wanting to hold your hand. It's amazing.

And congratulations to the Bats of Gotham. You like being called the "Bats of Gotham"? [*Laughter*]

Players. Batties. Batties.

Forward Margaret "Midge" Purce. The Batties.

The President. [*Inaudible*]

Club ambassador and 2023 team captain Ali Krieger. Batties.

Ms. Purce. The Batties.

The President. I like that. [*Laughter*]

Look, I'm going to turn it over to the top Bat—no, the top—[*laughter*—to Ali, last year's team captain, who, by the way, I watched in 2015 win the World Cup in—when I was Vice President—in Canada. Ali, it's great to see you again, kiddo. [*Laughter*] The floor is yours.

Ms. Krieger. Thank you.

The President. I like your kicks.

Ms. Krieger. Thank you. They're—I wore them for you, so—[*laughter*]. Yes.

Mr. President and esteemed guests, thank you for hosting Gotham F.C., the reigning NWSL champions. We are deeply honored to be the first NWSL team to receive this recognition, marking a pivotal moment for women's sports.

Firstly, I have to thank my teammates for their grit and perseverance to enable us to be the champions standing here today. Starting the 2023 season, coming off of the last place finish—from worst to first—[*laughter*—nobody backed this team to do what we did.

Reflecting on my career, I recall times when women's soccer lacked coverage and support. Our progress since those days have been remarkable, from our humble beginnings to becoming champions. Both Gotham and the NWSL have seen tremendous growth with more fans, greater engagement, and increased recognition.

Yet, despite these strides, we are reminded that our work is far from over. Every time we step on the field, we think of young girls who dream the future in sports. This moment is not just about titles or trophies, it's about paving the way for them. Being the first is historic, but it's even more important that we ensure we are not the last. We all know that we are committed to build on this momentum for future generations.

As a token of our appreciation and commitment to advancing women's sports, we are delighted to present you with a Gotham F.C. jersey.

We expect you to be wearing that under the suit soon, okay? [*Laughter*]

The President. I'll wear it over it.

Ms. Krieger. Yes, great. [*Laughter*]

On behalf of my exceptional teammates and the entire organization, thank you again for this incredible honor, for—and for supporting the growth of women's sports.

The President. All right.

Ms. Krieger. Thank you.

The President. You know, I thought when I got to be President, I'd get to do things that I wanted to do, but my staff tells me what I can't do. [*Laughter*] But I'm going to do it anyway. All the young women—young kids out there—that are out there, come on up and do this when we—stand behind me when we do this. Come on.

Audience members. Aww.

The President. And the guys. Come on.

[*At this point, the President greeted children gathering behind the podium.*]

The President. All right.

Ms. Krieger. So our head coach, Juan Carlos Amorós, and the championship 2023 MVP, Midge Purce.

[*The President was presented with a Gotham F.C. jersey.*]

The President. Thank you. Well, I'll tell you what. Your moms and dads are going to come and see you guys—[*inaudible*—championship. All right? [*Laughter*]

[*The President continued speaking to the children gathered.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to operating owners Carolyn Tisch Blodgett and Ed Nalbandian, members of the board of governors, Sue Bird, strategic investor, and Gov. Philip D. Murphy of New Jersey and his wife Tammy, in their capacity as founding owners, New Jersey-New York's Gotham F.C. He also referred to his sister Valerie Biden Owens. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : 2023 Women's Soccer League champion New Jersey-New York's Gotham F.C.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden Owens, Valerie; Biden, Jill T.; Bird, Sue; Blodgett, Carolyn Tisch; Helmy, George; Krieger, Ali; Murphy, Philip D.; Murphy, Tammy; Nalbandian, Ed; Purce, Margaret "Midge".

Subjects: New Jersey, Governor; Pay equality, improvement efforts; Soccer; Women's health issues.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400810.