

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Francisco Calvo Press Conference

Q. At least in the first few days of camp, I know that Johan Kappelhof is healthy again and participating in training. If he's healthy and he's part of the team, what could he mean for this group in 2021, because obviously he was supposed to be a big part of 2020 but injuries kind of made that not happen. What could Johan mean for this team in 2021 if he's healthy?

FRANCISCO CALVO: I think Johan has been a really important player for this club in the past years, and of course now that he's healthy we are really glad. We are really glad he's back on the field, having him training full-time with us, and I think he's going to just put his quality into the team, his leadership into the team, and the team is going to get improved if all the guys are healthy and training with us every day.

Q. As both a veteran guy and a guy who's the team captain, of course, how do you take it upon yourself to help new guys to get acclimated to the team and the league and even living in Chicago?

FRANCISCO CALVO: It's easy. I mean, this city just helps a lot. I think really it's one of the best cities around the world, and all the guys are going to get used to the city really well. And in the locker room and the club, I think like me when I came here, everybody was really -- a lot of good persons, a lot of good people around, and in my case I just try to be anytime, any hour available for them. When they need me, I'm going to be there.

Q. Speaking about your role as a leader on the team, we spoke with Mauricio Pineda earlier and he talked about how you've come in, how much you've helped him, how much he's talked to you on the back line and how you've helped guide him. Can you talk a little bit about how you have helped Mauricio, especially now when he's facing a potential Olympic qualifying call-up?

FRANCISCO CALVO: On his own, he has a great quality. He's a great player. I wish nothing but the best for him.

On the back line we understood each other very well. He gave him a hand, he gave me a hand. We played together well and we understood what we were doing, so while he does play against Costa Rica so I'm not sure if I want him to qualify or not, but I do wish him the very best in this tournament.

Q. There were glimpses last year of really quality play but it was always set back by mistakes or errors. How are you guys going to improve upon last season and fix some of those errors, and if you can fix those, how good can this team be this year?

FRANCISCO CALVO: I think we were a pretty new team last year. I think it's not an excuse, but we just bring a lot of good new players, so we needed a lot of time to get to know each other day by day, and we demonstrated a lot of good times in the field. Yeah, we made a lot of mistakes, individually and collectively.

But I'm pretty sure with these seven weeks of preseason that things are going to be in the best shape as possible, and if we combine all the good things that we did last year with few, few trainings because remember that we did at least three preseasons last year. It was a really, really tough year. This year we're in a normal position, and facing that, the regular season, I think Chicago Fire is going to achieve really good things.

I'm really positive, and I believe in this group this year.

Q. I want to ask you a little bit about some of the rumors that were floating around about the possibility of you returning to your country. What helped you make the decision to stay in Chicago? And the second question is about the national team; is it something that's non-negotiable if you're called up or is it something maybe you can negotiate some dates here or there, keeping in mind the complicated season that you have ahead of you?

FRANCISCO CALVO: At no time did I think about going back to Costa Rica. Chicago is my home. It's like my home here. I love it here, and I hope to spend many more years here in Chicago. It was just a journalist who said something and I came out to negate the rumors because they weren't true. So I want to spend many more years here in Chicago.

The national team, well, I know that if it's a FIFA date for the national team, it's not negotiable. But if it's a date that maybe isn't a FIFA date, playing with the national team is a privilege, so I always want to keep in mind being able to go in with the team, and it's something that maybe we could talk about if it's not a FIFA date.

Q. Shifting gears a little bit, this is about the one-year mark of the pandemic, but what do you remember most about March 2020?

FRANCISCO CALVO: What do I remember about March 2020?

Q. Yeah, with the pandemic starting and all of that.

FRANCISCO CALVO: I mean, I don't really remember -- just that we played against Seattle and New England, and then I spent like two months without leaving my apartment, one day. But I can't say that I had a bad time because I'm lying, because I have the privilege to live well, and other persons have bad situations, you know, in their lives, losing their jobs and stuff. But just being in my apartment, just training in my apartment, and that's what I remember from March 2020.

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