

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

Tuesday, March 2, 2021  
Chicago, Illinois, USA



## Jonathan Bornstein Press Conference

**Q. As a veteran guy and someone who's been in this game a long time, what was it like to have to go through another round of CBA negotiations after the league invoked the force majeure clause, and did that trigger any thoughts in you thinking how many more years you want to be playing?**

JONATHAN BORNSTEIN: Yeah, to go through that process at this stage of my career was actually beneficial for me. I wanted to try and help as best I could my teammates and everyone who will be coming after us. Obviously it wasn't easy with the negotiations, but I think in general we were able to come to an agreement and keep moving forward. I think everyone wanted to play this next season, especially with my agent and the amount of seasons I have left. I wanted to get that deal done in the best way possible so we could get playing.

But you know, I think just like in any league, we're going to have those negotiations. We want to try and get the best we can for the players, and the league is going to look out for their best benefit, also.

To answer your second question, definitely thought about my time left in the league. I'm hoping to play until I'm at least 40. That's my new goal. If I keep myself fit, keep myself going, hopefully that can come to fruition. But yeah, definitely hoping to play a few more years.

**Q. How was the off-season?**

JONATHAN BORNSTEIN: It was long but nice. I was able to spend time with the family, extended time with the family, so it was a good thing, but definitely excited to be back here in the team and getting things going here.

**Q. You're at a club that's very clearly in the middle of a youth movement, and then there's Jonny Bornstein still holding on to a spot. What's it like being around all these young guys, and does it make you feel old or does it make you feel young? What kind of feelings does it give you?**

JONATHAN BORNSTEIN: I mean, both. You know, both. It makes me feel old just because when guys are asking, oh, what preseason is this for you and I'm telling them it's my 16th preseason, even more because in México we have two preseasons a year, so when you think about that, it makes you feel a little old.

But at the same time to be still competing with those young guys, it makes me feel young, and I don't feel like they're stepping over me. I feel like I'm always competing with them, if not helping them to just raise their level. I try to be that experienced older player who can lead by example. I like to tell them if I can do all the running, if I can be competing every day, trying to get better every day, then there's no excuses for them that they shouldn't be able to do the same thing.

It's good, though. I enjoy the camaraderie with the young guys more than anything, locker room. We have a great team and hopefully we can put something together this season that will be very special come the end of the year.

**Q. We don't know when or if this is going to happen this year, but it might, but how much would it help you guys to have some fans at Soldier Field this year? And then sort of in that same vein, the pandemic, I can't believe I'm saying this is hitting a year right now. What do you remember about March 2020? What are some things that you'll remember from March 2020 that you'll never forget?**

JONATHAN BORNSTEIN: To start with your first question, I think the fans are the reason we play. Obviously playing in a stadium with nobody there, it's an atmosphere that is very weird. Obviously we want to compete at the highest level always. Last season was a huge learning experience for everybody.

But the reason anybody in the world, any sport, plays is for the fans. They're the ones who come, come to see us play at a good level, come support their team. People have been fans for generations, and it's something we've missed extremely -- well, a lot over this last season.

The quicker we can get fans into the stands, the better, and I think it'll be a great experience once again to have them there. Soldier Field is a great venue, and when it has



fans, it's even more spectacular. I played in the Gold Cup final in 2007 there against México and the stadium was rocking. It was just phenomenal. Hopefully we can get some taste of that in the near future.

March 2020, yeah, we played our last game against New England in New England. I actually scored in that game, a pretty good, nice goal for myself, and then to have the season just completely stop, life kind of stopped, we weren't able to leave our apartments, everything on lockdown. The thing I'll remember most to be honest is the time I got to spend with my family in those months after March. It really brought us together as a tight-knit group. We were making videos for the team, and my daughters were just doing crazy stuff. It was amazing to see them blossom within just a few months.

More than anything I'll remember that, as well as just the time away from the club. We were still very integrated with one another. We were constantly doing Zoom calls, doing Zoom workouts, yoga sessions, video sessions about who we would have played. It was a huge learning experience, and all of those things I will remember for the rest of my life.

**Q. I'm just wondering, consistency among the roster has certainly been a theme so far from the early preseason. So many of your teammates are entering their second season in the league. That includes the coaching staff, as well. I'm just wondering with the benefit of a year together behind you now, how is that informing your personal expectations for the 2021 season and your expectations for what the club can and should achieve together?**

JONATHAN BORNSTEIN: Yeah, I think last season a big theme was everything was so new. We had new ownership, new upper management, new coaching staff, new players. So the fact that they kept a big part of that base together I think is very beneficial for the team this season.

Obviously they've added a few new players and new coaching staff members, but I think the base is there, and I think that's so integral when you're trying to build something special. I think if we look at how and why we lost games last season, we were always just so close to being able to bring out results in games, but I think this season, because we have that base, a little bit more experience than some of the newer guys last season, I think the culmination of all those details will lead us to have more opportunity to do better this season and have better results.

So I'm really looking forward to it. Excited about the group

we've built, and just excited to see how we progress through preseason and into the start of the season.

**Q. I have to ask, 16 seasons now. You've seen and done a lot of crazy stuff, I'm sure. I was thinking last year had to be the strangest year of your career with the pandemic, but then I remember you played with Ronaldinho in México. Where did last year rank as far as the strangest season you've had in your career?**

JONATHAN BORNSTEIN: I mean, it was probably top three for sure, if not the top number one spot. There were so many challenges we were dealing with not only on the field in terms of soccer but life in general. So many people were going through hardships, the pandemic. Definitely told us a lot about ourselves as a community, as a society, and so when you couple that with the fact that we were still after those first few months now playing in a bubble, then playing with no fans, I think all of those things together make for a season that will be hard to forget, and more than anything I think we grew as a society, as a league and as players. We grew so much over that last season.

This season should be much easier to deal with all of those problems and having to do all the testing and the mask wearing. All those things will have become almost second nature. We've grown by leaps and bounds, and it will be a season that I will never forget, like I said earlier.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

