

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Johan Kappelhof

Press Conference



Q. You had a rough year last year with injuries; just when you thought you were back, you were injured again. How are you feeling right now, and what do you think you'll be able to accomplish this year?

JOHAN KAPPELHOF: I feel great. I feel fresh. I've been working out the whole off-season. I feel good to go, and I'm available for the coach wherever he needs me, and I think I can contribute my experience, my qualities on the ball defensively. I'm ready for the season, and I'm excited.

Q. Entering the off-season, were you expecting to be back for the 2021 season? And what was your reaction to being left unprotected for the expansion draft, and in light of that, how do you feel about still being with the Fire?

JOHAN KAPPELHOF: After the end of the season I had a meeting with Rapha, and he didn't tell me that they were planning to trade me or whatever, so they just wanted to help me for this year, so I expected to be here this year.

The fact that I was not protected for the draft, I think it's pretty understandable. I was injured the whole season. I don't think there was a big chance that Austin would trade me or wanted me. It's completely understandable, and this is for me a season to show myself again and to prove myself, show myself what I did in the past to have a good year again, and I'm looking forward to it.

Q. After having such a long layoff last year with injury, how important is having a full preseason for you not only in terms of just getting back up to speed and getting reacclimated with the team but also trying to prove yourself to work for a starting spot?

JOHAN KAPPELHOF: Yeah, I think it's very important. I mean, for every player. I was injured last year, but I think every player starts at zero this year. The past doesn't count. It starts from the preseason now, and everyone needs to prove themselves, and that's how it works in football. I'm just really looking forward to showing myself

and earning my spot on the team.

Q. I'm curious, Rapha said the other day that it almost feels like you're coming in as a new player given the fact he wasn't able to work with you as much last season. I'm curious over the course of the past year what were you able to watch and learn and pick up about Rapha's preferred style of play and how you see yourself and your style of play then fitting back into it this season?

JOHAN KAPPELHOF: Yeah, I think it fits my style of play. He likes to have like good football, build it from the back where it's possible, and he likes energetic football, like runs without the ball and a lot of like energy. You have to put a lot of energy in your game. You have to press and be ready for duels. I think that fits my style of play.

Yeah, excited to show myself this year and to help the team.

Q. You're one of the players with the Fire that has seen more time with the club right now, and is it helpful to the new people that come to the club to give them a buy to how the club moves or how it works on the Chicago Fire?

JOHAN KAPPELHOF: Yeah, if you look at, I think, I'm the last guy left from like two, three years ago. But a lot of things have changed in the club. It's not like it hasn't been before. But of course I can help the new players with adjusting to the league, to the team, to the city, a lot of moving parts for the new players, a lot of new players are young, so yeah, I will be there for them to talk, and whenever they need something I'll be there and show my experience and help them wherever I can.

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