

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Friday, March 5, 2021

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bobby Shuttleworth

Press Conference



Q. As a veteran guy, what was it like to have to go through another round of CBA negotiations, especially coming off such a difficult year for everyone because of COVID?

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: Yeah, I mean, it wasn't an easy process. I was a part of the phone calls and it was a lot of work for those guys that were involved, and the guys at the union, they did a great job. It was a bit exhausting. It was not an easy process but I think all of us are happy to be back playing and can focus on that.

Q. What was it like last year playing generally in front of no fans, have you been following the Cubs and Sox, they will be getting some fans and maybe the Fire at some point. How much are you looking forward to finally playing a game at Soldier Field in front of fans instead of 60,000 empty blue seats?

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: Very excited. It was a very weird process starting the season, having no fans, and then throughout the year. You could start to kind of get used to it, but it never really feels correct or like it's supposed to be. So I think -- I know me personally, I'm very, very excited to play in front of fans regardless of the amount and hopefully as the season goes on, we can get more and more fans in there safely.

Q. Wondering what your early impressions are, obviously it's been less than a week, but the defensive unit and thousand things are progressing? Looking at Carlos's integration as well as the Espinoza Saturday.

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: Yeah, it's like you said, it's a little bit early. We're just kind of starting to get acclimated back in and get the group together and people are still feeling each other out and everything. We're returning a lot of players throughout the entire squad and adding different pieces. But those guys have looked sharp and I think it's just going to add to competition within the team and push guys to put better performances on and hopefully can translate into more wins.

Q. You talked about this a few times but there were games where you guys looked good and a simple mistake or mental error cost you the game or cost you a result. And I wonder, how much does being together another year as a defensive unit take care of those, and are you hopeful this year it's going to be a lot tighter and cleaner back there?

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: Yeah, like you said, I think it helps a ton that we have a group that is returning so many players. Comfort is such a big thing amongst us when a guy needs to have a go another guy or when he needs a Pat on the back, just the familiarity that you have with those players and what pushes guys and what guys respond to and all kind of all those things, like you said, I don't think there was a ton of bad performances last year. I think we were making, you know, individual mistakes at inopportune times which was costing us points and I think familiarity amongst ourselves and just having a comfort level of playing together now with each other for an entire year, you know, last season, so many new players, it was almost like an expansion team. So the familiarity, like I said, I think is going to be very important for us this year.

Q. I know there wasn't one right now as long as Kenneth is not 100 percent training right now, but how do you feel about a goalie competition when he gets back, and do you think that you have staked a pretty good claim to the No. 1 spot even when he does come back, considering how well you played last season?

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: To be honest with you, it's not something that I think about too much or concern myself about. I'm trying to play as well as I can every time I step on to the field. And we have a good group here, good group of goalkeepers, very talented younger guys, and Kenny is working back. I think we are just trying to push each other as much as we can and then the guy that's playing is obviously trying to put on a strong performance. For me personally, I'm focused on myself and pushing the group, and also you know, trying to play as best as I can and make a decision as hard for Rafa as possible. You know, at the end of the day, these are not decisions that I make. All I can do is worry about my play and try to stake my claim that I should be playing and those decisions are left to him.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the two young guys behind you in Gabriel Slonina and Chris Brady. What do you see in them as young goalkeepers, and how are you as a veteran helping them along in their development?

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: Yeah, I think both of them are very, very talented, way beyond their years and I think Adin has done a terrific job with them, the progress that they have made in just a small amount of time is pretty remarkable.

As a veteran, I'm just trying to help when I see fit things that have worked for me, and you know, sometimes things that don't. They can take those things on board or not. I mean, I was lucky enough to have that when I was a younger goalkeeper, so like I said, I think both of them are very talented and have a bright future in front of them.

Q. Curious when teams were pumping in artificial crowd noise, did that actually make a difference or was that just something that you guys just didn't really care about?

BOBBY SHUTTLEWORTH: Yeah, I don't like it. I mean, it doesn't seem to really affect it one way or the other. It's just very artificial, and it's not anything that prevents you from being heard or hearing other people. So me personally, I didn't like it. But yeah, I don't make those decisions.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...