

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Raphael Wicky

Press Conference



Q. I'm hoping you can give us an update on the injury status of everybody who is currently hurt.

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, there's not much update. I mean, they are still not training with our team. They are progressing well, some quite fast but I cannot give a day or when they will be back, and it's day-by-day, they will be working Saturday, Sunday and we'll see if one or the other can be back reintegrated next week. But I can't quite a few you an answer on that, we'll see.

Q. With one more week to go before the season opener, how good of an indication do you have of what your best 11 is, excluding injuries?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I have a pretty clear picture of our lineup with my staff together. But yeah, the facility is there for everyone. Like you saw we have a few injuries and that's always an opportunity for other players to step in and to grab the opportunity and the chance to go into the starting 11.

So that's still there and that will also be there after this game against Vancouver, the possibility to go into the starting 11 will be there next week for players.

But yeah, I have 70, 80 percent obviously right now in my head and we will see what will happen.

Q. Nacho didn't feature Wednesday and he didn't feature in the previous friendly. Why was he not used in the last two games? Is he hurt? Is there another issue? What's his status right now?

RAPHAEL WICKY: No, there's no other issue. He's a little bit hurt. He has a little bit of problem on his leg and he will not feature tomorrow neither. But he's resting well and he's one of the guys that we are hopeful to have him back with the team pretty soon but again, I cannot give -- I don't want to put pressure. I cannot give a day or a, date but there's no others with Nacho.

Q. Just to follow up, you guys of course, we talk about a lot of injuries in this training camp. Why? Do you have an idea why? Is it luck? Why do you think there's been so many injuries before the season has started?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, we're talking about five players, which is a lot, five players. But we have to see, three of those players are accidents. Yeah, that happens in football.

Again, I repeat myself: Fabian Herbers went into a challenge in a game and hurt his knee. Elliot Collier sprained his ankle on the play Philadelphia (ph) from lands on his ankle. Stanislav had the knock and hurt his meniscus. That's not something you can control.

But of course these questions, we also ask ourselves, does it have a relation with three and a half months, four-months break and suddenly you start training and your body is not used to certain moments. Even they had a program and they came back in a good shape, I cannot give you the answer on that. Those are questions, we also obviously talk but we don't have the answers and I don't think anyone will give us the answers.

You can look at stats, you can see last season in the EPL there was a moment they made a comparison of one or two or three months of season they compared to a year of injuries in the EPL than the year before prior to COVID. But I don't know, we don't have this study yet I think.

So I can't give you the answer and at the end of the day, it's unfortunate, it's unlucky. Injuries happen. It's part of our sport. We don't wish them to anyone. We cannot lose energy in complaining or overthinking things. I have a roster and I told you guys four or five weeks ago, I'm very happy with this roster and that's still the case. And I work with the players I have, and I'm confident that the other guys comeback quickly. But the reason why these things happen, I don't have an answer.

Q. We now know that you need to finish in the top eight through the first three games of the season to qualify for U.S. Open Cup. How important is it to you to get a spot in that tournament?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, first, we always go into the

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games to win the games. So probably we want to go into these three games as well and get as many points as possible and then it will be nice to be part of another competition. That's the reason.

Again, it's usually a competition that everyone is in. This is a bit different this year. There's teams who have more away games than home games and teams that don't have home games at all. Only three games play a role and it is what it is, and we want to go into these three games making as many points as possible and if we do that we will be qualified.

But yeah, other than that, it will be nice to be in a competition for sure.

Q. One player who has looked pretty sharp at times in the preseason has been Frankowski. What has your assessment been of him so far and what are you expecting out of him this year?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, I agree. I agree. He has a good preseason. My expectation of him is that he continues like that and he continues like he ended last year. Frankie had a very good start last season and had a lot of, a lot of opportunities the first two games and then in the Orlando tournament and after. He had a lot of tournaments to score goals or give assists or be decisive in the final third. Now it just didn't click. It just didn't lick and then he got a little injury in the middle of the season I think and then he ended very strong.

So there was never a doubt about Frankie and there isn't a doubt about Frankie. Frankie with his qualities will always have opportunities and always have chances to give assists because he is a very good player and he is very speedy and fast.

So I expect him to keep working hard. That's what he does, being very focused and then the opportunities will come. Never give up. Never stop believing. That's something we spoke about, even if you miss a few chances, there is always a next one coming. You always have to focus on the next one, and then he will score.

Q. On Wednesday, you played Ofor with Beric together. What's the thought process behind that and is that something you might be interested in doing during the regular season to play two guys known more as strikers together the field?

RAPHAEL WICKY: First of all, we have with Nacho, with Herbers, with Elliott, with Stanislav, four offensive guys not here right now, so we were thinking how can we put them together on the field, preseason, they have to try different

things. We tried Chino in multiple positions as a nine but also tried him a little inside, and that's what we did on Wednesday and we can see what he does on these positions against the ball and we will see if that will be a possibility in the season. We think that it is a possibility to put them together on the field and there may be games where we say, okay, we want both of them on the field. But that's just the season, and yeah, we are confident that we can have them both together on the field, as well.

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