

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Raphael Wicky

Press Conference



Q. My weekly question, with the injury updates right now, where are Aliseda, Navarro, Herbers and Collier right now, and were there any other concerns after the Atlanta game?

RAPHAEL WICKY: So Aliseda and Navarro are still in the recovery process. They're not with the team. Herbers is neither with the team. He's progressing well. He had partial exercises, slow exercises with the team, like passing drills and stuff, but he's still obviously a little bit away. But it's looking positive.

Elliot Collier is back in full team training. We have already integrated him last week, but we decided not to take him to Atlanta because we think they need a little bit of time. So he's in team training, and we'll see day by day how he reacts to that, but it's looking promising.

Yeah, Carlos had a little bit of a problem with his hamstring again, so we will see then day by day. Otherwise Kenny obviously and Stanislav.

Q. I guess in general, how much of a challenge is it for you right now to manage this team and to keep this team competitive right now with all those injury issues that you're going through right now?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I mean, look, it's not what you want. It's not what you wish, obviously. I told you from the beginning I'm very happy with the roster when everyone is there. We have a very good and very competitive roster. With all these injuries obviously that hurts a bit, but it doesn't make sense if I complain every day or think about it every day. I try to work with the players that we have. I hope the other guys come back as soon as possible so that the competition and team gets more and more again.

It is what it is, so I'm trying not to lose too much energy on thinking about that.

And look, I see other teams, as well, they have injured players. There are some teams who it looks like their

roster is pretty full, but there are other teams, as well, with injuries. It is what it is. It happens to a lot of teams. We just have to keep going and work with the players we have.

Obviously it hurts us because it was a lot of offensive players, and again, it's out of our control, and we try to find solutions otherwise.

Q. This winless streak for the club predates even your time here. Is that something that you think the players think about or it weighs on them or it's just something that's eventually going to end?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I cannot speak for the players. I don't really talk about that with the players. It's something which will end at one point. We are trying not to make this the big topic.

It's also not that we lose every single game away since I'm here. I cannot really talk about what was before. We had a lot of ties last year, which in general you go and say, okay, in certain places, especially fly in, fly out, if you have a tie away, you're not mad, but we had games last season where we were 2-0 up away and we didn't win, so obviously that hurts.

But in general this will end at one point, and we're just going to keep working and go to away games, and we always go into a game with the mentality of winning as you saw in a lot of games because we're not bunkering, we're actually trying to play our game, we're actually creating, we are actually trying to press. So we just need to keep doing that, and we will be rewarded. I believe in that. But we're trying not to talk about it with the team. It doesn't make sense for me.

I am a person that doesn't really follow much social media. I don't really follow much what's written. I've just heard some rumors that things were said, but that's out of my control, and I'm trying not to react on that. I'm trying to focus on what I can control, and that's the daily training and my team.

Q. You mentioned daily training and then being up 2-0, especially the first week of the season. Having had a chance to review those first two matches this season, what has been the cause of some of the goals you guys have conceded, and what have you guys been

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working on to prevent that from happening in the future?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I think especially the first two games at home in Soldier Field is probably concentration at certain moments to switch off, especially as both goals come out of a throw-in. The corner kick which we take where Brooks actually scores comes out of a throw-in.

So we show video, we talk with the players, and yeah, you have to be switched on all the time. I think in Atlanta in that point we have done a better job, a good job. The team has been switched on. We were actually defending the set pieces much better.

You can lose a hand against Brooks. We talked about that and we spoke with the team. So it's focus, it's concentration. It's in these moments not to relax, but the players aren't doing that on purpose. It's just things we try to speak with them and tell them you've got to be switched on all the time on the field.

In Atlanta, I think immediately after the game we spoke, and obviously there was emotions and we were disappointed because what can we do, the first game. Yes, we can talk about it. Was it a foul we need to do before the free kick? Look, you cannot dissect every single play in a football game and you will always afterwards find a solution for every single play, but that's not how we do. The free kick, the 1-0, it's okay, he shoots it the ball and the second ball bounces to him and he hits it in the top corner. What can we do then? There's obviously not much to do. The second goal is a goal, like we said, it was a mistake. It happens. It happens, and we have to clean up these mistakes.

We spoke with the team. We were in this game for a long, long time. We were creating chances. We were there. We were making life difficult for Atlanta. It wasn't an easy game for them, and we had our chances. We hit three times the post. That's not trying to look for excuses, but we were in that game.

Again, I'm going to repeat myself. We have to keep going and trying to clean up these little mistakes like with the 2-1, okay, in these moments away in a big stadium on a turf against a good team, you can't do these mistakes, otherwise you get punished, and we were punished for that. But we were still in the game. We still hit the post after that and we were almost able to come back.

We have to keep going, not panicking, keep working, refreshing all the time, but of course it is frustrating. But that's also the game, and you see that all over the world all the time. It's just not an excuse but it's the reality. We

need to keep going.

Q. New York Red Bulls and Chicago Fire have combined one point in four games all together. Do you expect more aggressiveness from both teams? I don't want to say desperation, but they might be a little bit more desperate since they are playing at home. What do you expect from the simple fact that both teams are hungry for points?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Look, I think every team is hungry for points, and we said it. This league is so balanced, and we have seen that -- we have proved we can actually win against any team, but you can also have a difficult time against any team. That's this league it makes it very hard, very difficult, very, very interesting. We know what to expect in this game. This is going to be again, another physical game against an opponent who has a clear philosophy, how they play, they prepare for that. We know what we will face in New York, so I don't think they change anything because they have two losses. They will keep playing the way they play. That's my conviction. That's what they have shown in the past, and I expect that they will do the same.

But again, that's not in my control. I don't know what they will do. I can just prepare for what we have seen in the past, and we will do what we always have done, as well. We will try to play our football and try to play with our principles and get the points there.

Q. I know that Frankowski will be here in some time, but I have a question connected directly to him. How important is it for the Fire team and how do you rate his best qualities? What are his best qualities which make him an important part of this team?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, Franky is a very important player for us. He's a player who always creates chances, who through his work rate and through his speed and through his verticality and the runs behind always creates chances, either for himself or for the others. He's a very important player, and I mentioned that a lot last year, as well.

I believe in him, and I tell him all the time, you've got to keep going, keep going, your next chance will be there, and at one point they will go in again like they went in at the end of the season. That's what I tell the player. I believe in him.

Q. Watching him play now for two full games after missing pretty much the entire year last year, what has stood out to you about Luka Stojanovic and just his knack for being in the right place?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I mean, I'm not surprised what I see because I know the player, and I'm not surprised about the offensive quality he has. He's a very, very technical player who can play, what can set plays up and goals and who can score goals.

In the last 35, 40 yards, meters, he is very clinical. He's very, very calm and very good, and I know that, and that's what he's showed.

He's come a long way. I think we have to manage him well in this season, coming from a long injury out since last July, not having team trainings from July until we started in March is a long time. He has done a very good preseason. We're very happy with that. He's done a good start of the season, but we have to be careful with him. We have to manage him over these next two, three months because, yeah, he's coming a long way. But he has quality, and I never doubted that he will help our team to create chances and score goals.

Q. It looks like your friend and old teammate Jesse Marsch is about to get a big promotion to manage Leipzig in the Bundesliga. I wonder what your thoughts were on that and if you had any advice for him to manage in your old league?

RAPHAEL WICKY: No, I don't think Jesse needs advice. He was there as an assistant. He knows the league. He has a lot of experience.

I'm following him. I'm in touch with Jesse since I've played with him in Chivas, so we have regular contact and we talk.

Look, if he gets his chance, then I will be very, very happy for him, and if he gets this chance it's because he deserves it. All these top leagues all over the world they're not going to give you a job just because you're a good guy or because you know someone. If he gets this job and it's a big job it's because he deserves it and he's done a tremendous job in all the clubs he's been. I cross fingers for him, and I really hope he can get the job.

Q. I know you're not necessarily involved in these discussions, but it's been reported the club is looking for the potential to build a training facility in the city. From a coach's perspective, what does a club need for sort of a state-of-the-art facility? What would be something that you as a coach speaking generally, what would you be looking for in such a facility?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, that's a difficult question in a short time.

No, look, obviously it would be great to have a nice facility,

a big facility with a lot of fields, with multiple fields where the academy is there, too, so when you look at these facilities, either in America where their clubs have amazing facilities or university amazing facilities or the top ones in Europe, it's like -- it's a home -- it's basically a home away from your home. So you come in the morning and everything is there, everything you need to work on the field, off the field, to work in the office spaces, video rooms, everything.

Obviously I think this would be -- when that happens it's going to be great for the club. It's going to bring the club to even another level. I think there's a lot of things rolling here since Joe Mansueto took over and all these changes and back to Soldier Field and a facility I think is a big step for a club, for the daily work for the players and for the coaches, but also I think to attract young players, to attract other players, to bring young players into the academy. When you can show them that you have a great facility I think it makes things much easier.

I think when that will be done, it will be a great step forward for the club.

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