

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Raphael Wicky

Press Conference



Q. Just wondering if there's any update on the status of Aliseda, Pineda, and how is Stanislav coming along, because it's starting to hit the four months that it was announced when he had the surgery.

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, so Nacho is back in training. Yeah, he started training again with the team. It seems to be okay. Same with Mauricio. He also trained all week.

And Stani is actually training with the team more and more. Today he did actually the full team training, so he's getting closer and closer. I think we always have to see whether there is a reaction or not. So far he's been good. He's looking good.

So I think we're very close of reintegrating him full-time in team training and then hopefully as soon as possible as well on the bench again.

Q. There's couple of weeks remaining in the MLS secondary transfer window, I believe it's August 4th or 5th or whenever it closes, but do you anticipate any players coming in or possibly any players leaving?

RAPHAEL WICKY: As I mentioned, I think earlier in our conference, is that we are obviously always looking, the club is watching and looking for players, but right now we are not immediately looking for a short-term transfer or anything. But we are always looking. I can't say we won't have anything but I also cannot say we are like targeting someone.

You never know in football. You never know. The transfer window, obviously in Europe opening now and clubs starting to buy and sell again in Europe, as well, after the Euro, and obviously here in the States, as well, things are open again. You never know what happens. So we've just got to be flexible and ready if something happens.

Q. Voting for the MLS All-Star Game opened up today. Is there a player or two on the Fire who you think are most deserving to go to that game?

RAPHAEL WICKY: If you look at the recent -- the last month, I think there are a few players who had really good performances. As a team, we played well. If you look at the first nine or ten games, we didn't have the results and it's difficult for individuals to shine, as well.

I don't think I can pinpoint one or two players out. I think there's guys who have done really good games, but yeah, it's not my job now to say this or this player should be in an All-Star Game. I think that's the job of other people.

But I was happy with the performances of a lot of players in the last three or four weeks.

Q. Have you noticed a different mood during the training sessions, maybe a little bit more of a pep in the guys' step because of the winning and playing better of late?

RAPHAEL WICKY: I mean, obviously when you win and have results, the mood is always better around the club and in the team and in the locker rooms and everywhere. That's normal. People are happier when they win. We don't want to lose. And obviously the quality and training or the competition in training, is getting more and more. But that is more to do with players coming back from injuries with players getting rhythm again.

Now Gastón is back. Stanislav is in training. Elliot is back and Fabi and all these that guys were injured, so it makes the team more competitive. When you have six or seven guys not here like we had for a long, long time -- and no one wants to hear that but that's just the truth and reality. When you have six or seven guys that are not there, the competition in training is not there as well.

Right now the team is working hard and there is a natural competition there, and obviously winning always makes it easier to have a good mood. But for us it's very, very important to be in a good spirit, in a good momentum but not to relax, and the guys actually work hard.

Q. We're going to be talking to Johan Kappelhof in a few minutes. What does a healthy and informed Johan mean to this team?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Look, Johan is a very good defender,

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very good mentality. He is a quiet guy but when there is something to say in the team and in the locker room, he actually stands up. He is here, I think the player who is here at the club the longest. So he has a lot of experience, he knows this league and he knows the club.

And he had a very tough year last year where obviously he started the season well in Seattle and New England and he was injured for a long time with COVID hitting and other issues and these other injuries. So he had a tough year.

But I'm very happy with where he is now. It was important for him to have the full preseason with us, which he had, and now getting rhythm. So I'm happy where he is and I just hope he stays healthy and he's an important player for this team.

Q. You always say you take every game -- I wonder if in Nashville you are going to have the same initial 11 as you've had the past three games? Will we see changes since its visiting game? I know you don't want to give the initial 11 now, but I want to see your starts if you're planning to have the same formation or you're planning to have different tactics to play with Nashville.

RAPHAEL WICKY: Well, you already gave your answer. I'm not going to tell you if we're going to start with the same 11. But obviously when you have three games, seven points and the team played well, you know we are not going to make six or seven changes unless something big happens the next two or three days.

So there may be changes. There may be a change or two. There's always thoughts in where we talk as a staff about certain different options and we have competition on the team, and I'm happy about that; that's a good problem to have.

But obviously I'm not going to tell on Wednesday how we will play, and there is still three days left and we're only in half of the week. But yes, we will probably more forward with a similar style as we had in the last three games, but we are obviously able to switch formations, as well. But right now I think we are in a good moment and we will see what this game needs in terms of personnel for Saturday.

Q. It was a long time between games before we saw Jonathan Bornstein and he was reintroduced to the side. How would you assess his play at the left center back role that he's taken up now and from a leadership perspective with Cavo on international duty?

RAPHAEL WICKY: Yeah, it suits him well. Johnny can play this position very well. It's a mix between a left back

position and a left center back position, and obviously that post suits him really well when we have the ball and also against the ball; and sometimes when we don't have the ball and he has to be almost a left back because obviously Miguel pushes up, and when we have the ball, he's more like a half-full back, half-center back. So he does well.

And in terms of leadership, Johnny is doing what he has done all year. He is a guy who talks. He is a guy who is very responsible and takes ownership and I think that is really good to have in the team. I think he had good performances, and we all know that we can count on Johnny and that's very, very important.

Q. Do you call the formation that you use a three in the back or a five in the back? Just what would you call it just for accuracy purposes?

RAPHAEL WICKY: When we have the ball, it's a 3-4-3, 3-5-2, and when we don't have the ball it's probably a 5-4-1 depending on where you defend. If you defend in your own half, you defend with the back five. If you go and press higher, you normally defend the back three or back four. So call it whatever you want. If you want to think very offensive, it's a 3-4-3. If you think defensive, it's a 5-4-1.

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