

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Kacper Przybylko

Press Conference



**Fire, what was the vision that Georg Heitz told you about this team? What was his vision for this team and just what was your reaction to that vision?**

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to get started. We'll jump right in. Thank you, everyone, for joining us. We have forward Kacper Przybylko from the Chicago Fire.

**Q. Hi, Kacper. Thank you for your time. Welcome to Chicago. I'm curious to know what was the driving force to you going from Philadelphia, a team that has been the playoff contender, to the Fire, a team that has struggled in recent seasons?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: It's like a new chapter for me. I'm not looking at what happened in the past with this team. I'm just coming here to help the team, to improve the team with my abilities.

My challenge is now to help the team like as most as I can, and that's why I'm here. I know that I have a very good quality in finishing, so that's going to be my part for this team this season.

**Q. Good to talk to you. To kind of piggy-back off Jeremy's question, what did you see in this Fire team and this Fire organization that made you want to come here?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: Obviously, it was very nice to get even the offer. There was like a big offer, like that's a huge meaning for someone who is almost like 29, getting to their 30s. So the people just to reach out to my agent, like we want him. So it shows like how valued you are. That was one of the things why I decided to continue consider that.

But at the end of the day, it's just a new chapter, like I said. It's nice to be here finally. I see a lot of talents. I see a lot of young guys. So my challenge, I'm really looking just forward to work with the guys. So I'm just really being happy being here. We'll see what we're going to do. Like in the preseason, it's just the beginning, but we have plenty of time just to improve ourselves.

**Q. Thank you for making some time for us this afternoon. During this process before you joined the**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: We didn't have so much time to speak to each other, but it was nice just to hear that -- like not just complaining about last season, but like I was missing some crosses, I was missing a little bit more like balls getting into the box or just like looking out for me, just feeding me with balls because I knew that I can finish it off. We did such a good job like in Philly with the pressing and everything, but enough that it was all about just the midfielders, like they're going to do the difference.

Here when he called me, he was like, I want to build a team around you. Obviously around all the strikers, but we want to be a team that's like connected, like it doesn't matter who's going to score and everyone has to do their jobs. It was nice to hear that he came with that great offer and also the vision that, hey, Kacper, you're going to be in front. We want you to feed you with so many balls as we can, and then from there you're just going to have to do your job and just finish it off. It was nice to hear that. It's like a huge value to me.

And about anything else, I can't really just tell you very much right now because it's just the beginning. It's my third or fourth day here. I'm just trying to get everyone, like get a little bit closer to them, get to know each other a bit more. Right now, I'm just happy, that, yeah, I got the chance already in a friendly game to score.

**Q. I know you spoke just there a little bit about your conversations with the club and what your role will be on the pitch. I'm interested if you've thought about your role as a potential leader on this team. I know you're one of the new guys, but you are an MLS veteran and certainly at the Fire the most decorated MLS scorer on the team. Have you thought about your role as a potential leader heading into 2022 for this club?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: Not potential, I think I have to be a leader with what I've already accomplished in this league. I'm one of the guys who's with so much experience here. I know it was only three years in the MLS, but I also bring a lot of experience from my past years that I had also in Germany.



So I want to be a leader. I want to help the young kids here. Like I said, I want to help the team as much as I can. Yeah, I think that's something about leadership. I just want to help everyone, especially the young kids. So I'm going to do all my best to my biggest and most ability to improve everything that this teams wants to accomplish this season.

**Q. I know that you've talked about this a little bit, but I wanted to see if you could kind of expand on your exit from Philly, why you were so keen on making this move to Chicago and what those talks went like with the club on a midyear exit.**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: So you want to know more about the details that I said already? Like I said, I don't hold a grudge to anyone in Philly.

I had a good conversation with everyone. It's a beautiful city. Obviously, like big Polish population here. But I'm good with everyone here. In Chicago they welcomed me so nice. Other than that, I'm just happy being here.

I don't hold a grudge to anyone. I had good conversation with everyone in Philly. They all said very nicely good-bye, and here everyone welcomed me so nice. It's a new chapter for me, and I'm just really happy being here right now.

**Q. Kacper, congratulations on the move. It was great working with you over here. I'm sure we'll cross paths again down the road. You were recruited here in what was a very specific tactical system that Ernst has wanted to play for all this time. Obviously, there was some variance over the time, whether because of in games or all the injuries and COVID or whatnot down the stretch last year. Do you think the way, stylistically, tactically, the way that you play is going to change with a new club?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: Obviously, it will change. It's a new coach here. It's a new coach also for me. It's a new team. All my former teammates, they have so much quality, but here there's also so much quality. It's all about working out the new team and to get to know each other, to have that connection.

Obviously, it's going to change here, but my job is just being the one up in front, finishing it off, holding the balls, making some space for my teammates. Tactically anything else is going to change. So it's up to me now to adjust and just to accept it and just do my best to help the team.

Yeah, like I said, it's been three nice years in Philly, but I'm

looking forward to have a great time here in Chicago.

**Q. Thinking back to the circumstances when you got to Philadelphia, the long term injury absence that you'd been on, how the Union went and found you and all that other stuff, could you have imagined back then that you really might just make a long term go of playing football in America?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: Questions all the time about my past and my injuries, like so long ago. I'm just happy now being healthy for the past three years. So I'm really just looking like forward now. I'm not looking at the past.

Yeah, it was nice. I was always hungry. I was always trying my best to get back on the pitch because it's something that I really love to do. It's like playing soccer.

I really appreciate what I have, and I was happy being healthy enough for the past three years, and I hope it's going to stay like that so I can just put everything here on the field in Chicago.

**Q. We all know that you're a classical No. 9, correct? You spoke about the conversations with the Fire staff about feeding you and your role as a finisher. Did those conversations include that maybe you will have a line of three behind you to feed you on the ball so maybe another forward on your side to have a line of two forwards with you?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: I can't give you the answer to that. Right now we just started preseason with everything. I'm just coming here and just doing my job. That's it. For right now we just started preseason. We'll see what will happen because obviously the coach has some philosophy, some ideas that he's going to bring to the team. We'll see what we're just going to do here in the preseason.

It's just like very early to say now how it's going to look like. We have so much and plenty of time to still do and train together. So we will see.

**Q. I was just curious, thinking about your arrival this week, how was the reception from your teammates and coaching staff? How did they welcome you? What were the introductions like the first couple of days?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: It was amazing. It went very quick. Like I did a lot of calls. I got to meet a lot of new faces, a lot of new names. So I just apologized in advance if I just say hello to someone three times a day. I just don't remember the name.

But everyone welcomed me so nicely. It's been so easy to adjust and to do everything with the team here right now. It's a great atmosphere here with the team. So I can't complain about anything. It's beautiful.

**Q. Kacper, I was wondering if you could kind of go into details about when did you first learn about the Fire's interest in you and your reaction and discussion with Philadelphia when that happened?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: Like I said, everything went very, very quick. I just got a call from my agent. They've been interested. I was like, well, that's cool. It shows that I did a good job in Philly. It went very quick. It was within like a couple of days I got some calls after everything was approved and officially done. So I could just talk to everyone here from Chicago.

Just very good conversations, and that's why I didn't just consider it. That's why I took this move here.

**Q. When did you first learn of the interest? Was it a couple weeks ago? How long was the process with that?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: The process was like within a couple of days. Like I said, within a week everything was done, and I just came here to Chicago.

**Q. Kacper, you're no doubt aware of the fact that you're moving to probably the most Polish city in America. Does that mean anything to you to live in a city where there's going to be thousands and thousands of Polish fans cheering you on?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: When I came to America, I didn't care about like the languages and all the coaches because that's what I love about soccer. That's what I love the most about soccer is everything is connected. It connects so many people, so many different cultures, and I love to meet new people and new cultures, new languages. I was always interested in the English language. I was always interested in Spanish. That's why I took like so many lessons in school. I've learned Spanish, English.

That's also like a nice part now to see that I'm moving to Chicago. I'm here in America, but there's so many Polish people. Obviously, it's nice because I want to teach my son also Polish so he probably can go to like maybe a daycare where he can speak both languages. That's like very important to me and my wife. So I'm very excited to meet all the people there.

But it's not just about the Polish people. It's about everyone in Chicago. I'm looking forward to meet

everyone there. That's so beautiful about my job. I can travel, and I can meet so many different people, different cultures. So I'm really excited for it.

**Q. Just a couple different unrelated questions. First, what's the status of contract talks between you and the Fire for a new deal?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: I've mentioned it already, like I got a great deal here obviously, like a three years guaranteed contract. It shows how they value me here. That's most important. I don't want to go into the details about my contract and everything. I'm happy here now. I'm looking forward to the future with Chicago. So I'm being just focused on my work here and my role on the team.

**Q. Something unrelated. Your new coach, Ezra Hendrickson, been around the league for a long time, if you had any thoughts about him before, like when you were with Philly, what's your perception of him? Now that you've worked with him just for a couple of days, what are your early thoughts on working with Ezra?**

KACPER PRZYBYLKO: He's obviously a great coach. I just realized that already in just these couple of days. I had already great conversations with him. I like his philosophy of how he wants to play, keep the possession. That's like something I really like.

Obviously, I'm a huge, like a big striker. For most coaches it's more about like hit the ball long. I have to go and fight for it. But I'm also very good with the ball like on the field, like very good footwork. So I'm happy that we're going to try to be a team who's trying to be in the possession.

Still it's early stage, so we don't know like what exactly he's planning for us. But I had a great conversation with him. He was a good soccer player. I talked to him already. I think he played also with L.A. Galaxy with Chris Albright. So it's really nice. I can learn so much from him. Yeah, I'm really excited.

THE MODERATOR: With that, we will end today's media availability. Thank you very much. Have a great day.