

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Rafael Czichos

Press Conference



Q. You are making a lot of appearances in the Bundesliga what made you want to come and join MLS?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: I had the feeling in the last month that I want to do something else, and then I got the opportunity to make a big move and a big change in my life, and yeah, that is what I wanted to do. Now I am here. It's a complete different project for me. I'm here to bring all my experience into the team, and to help to be successful this season.

I think the last years were pretty hard for this association, and, yeah, I just want to help to play a better season than the last ones.

Q. You had to wait quite a few weeks to join your Fire teammates because of a visa delay. How frustrating was that period while you were waiting and how happy are you now to be joined up with your teammates?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: Yeah, I'm really happy to be here now. It was an amazing feeling to be back on the pitch after such a long time for me. I thought my break would be like two weeks, but then it was four weeks, so it was way too long for me.

Yeah, to run alone in the forest or to work alone in the gym was, yeah, really frustrating. That's why I'm really happy to be here.

Q. Just wondering if you had ever played against Shaqiri, and either way, if you have or haven't, what does that mean to the team to get a player like that with his stature and ability?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: It's a big transfer for us. He comes with a lot of experience on a high level. We can all be happy to have him on our team for the future or to this season.

Yeah, I didn't play or I haven't played against him and I'm really happy that I don't have to do it and that he's going to

be on my team.

Q. Ezra from day one has preached the importance of leadership within this team, and just, you know, five or ten minutes ago, the first thing out of his mouth when he referenced you is that you're a leader. What does that say to you that Ezra places that much faith you in as a leader, and what's your opinion of that statement and how will you assert yourself as a leader even though this is your first season with the club?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: Yeah, before I signed the contract, I talked to the coach and he told me that he needs a leader, and we had a really good talk about it. After, we both had a good feeling, and I'm here now to lead the group with Johnny Bornstein, and, yeah, the first days went really well. And I saw that we have a really young team, so we immediate mentality on the pitch. We need leadership, and yeah, that's going to be one of my, how do you say, task, right.

That's what I'm here for. With my experience, I have to be a leader and, yeah, that's what I'm going to try to bring into the team.

Q. I just wanted to follow on about the leadership. As you've been a player for a long time, have there been players that you've looked up to as leaders, and who do you model yourself after as a leader in terms of players you've played with?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: I played with a lot of great players but I would say I've never had an idol or something or a guy ever really liked up. I always wanted to make my own experience.

Yeah, I think I'm 12 years now in this business and so I've got a little bit of experience, I guess, and yeah, even Johnny Bornstein I know now for like three days, shows me how to be a leader in this team.

So, yeah, I'm going to try to be helpful to the young players here.

Q. Just want to ask you, if you had taken the time to study the other teams in this league, and if any other team had impressed you?

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RAFAEL CZICHOS: In the MLS right now, I haven't -- I haven't seen so many games, actually. But I think I will watch more games this season for sure.

Q. You're going to be playing next to Carlos Terán, a pretty young center back; Miguel Navarro is a young left back and playing in front of a very young goalie in Slonina. Do you have to speak up a little bit more, take more control of the back line, or is that something that evolves as everybody plays together?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: Of course, these guys are really young and I want to help them. I want to show them how they can be more successful in their career. Of course, I want to be the guy that has to control on the defense. For example, if I say we have to -- we have to step up a little bit, then they have to follow, and these are only small things but they are really important at the end in the game.

So, yeah, I think they want to learn, and my task is to organize the defense this year.

Q. For your game and what you see of the team, are you better suited and the roster is better suited to play a line of four in the back or a line of three is a possibility you feel good for your style?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: For now I think the coach want to play with four in the back line, and for me, I don't care, really. If we play with three or with four, at the end, we want to win the game. The coach will have a good plan for every game, so we are going to see how we want to play.

Q. Just one more on the leadership. What kind of leader are you? Are you a blood and thunder, very vocal leader, or are you more quiet and lead by example?

RAFAEL CZICHOS: Next to the pitch, I am not the guy who is really, how do you say, noisy or something, loud. But on the pitch, yeah, I'm vocal. I want to help these young players and yeah, they have to follow at the end. And I think what I have seen in the first two practices, like I said already, they want to learn and that's important.

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