

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Ezra Hendrickson Press Conference

Inter Miami 0, Chicago Fire FC 0

Q. Ezra, just wondered your overall thoughts on the game tonight.

EZRA HENDRICKSON: I thought we came out and played really well the first ten, 15 minutes of the first half. We were moving the ball. The speed of play was the way we want to play. In the middle of the first half, I thought they got a hold of the game and got the better of the game for about 15 minutes but towards the end of the half, we regained control of the game. First half was really, really good.

Second half we got a little gassed towards the end but the guys put in the effort. It's a point on the road. We'll take it. But we know that there's some stuff we need to work on. I thought the speed of play at times got us in trouble and we didn't move the ball quickly and they could turn us over and counterattack against us. So we have to clean up some of that stuff.

Q. Just a couple unrelated, what did it feel like for you personally to be a head coach in an MLS game after the long waits, and then unrelated, what did you see from Shaqiri tonight?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: For me, I've worked hard to get to this position but I'm not satisfied. I want to be very good at my job. I've always been someone who stresses success and who wanted to put in the work to be successful. So I'm happy to be here. I'm excited but I know that there's a lot of work that I need to do still to make sure that this is sustainable.

As far as Shaq, it's good to have a special player like that on your team. You know, as a coach that always brings joy to you. I thought he played well today. First time playing with the team. He's still learning his teammates and his teammates are still learning him. Overall I thought he played some good set pieces, played some good through balls, played -- in the first half, one-to-one for the



keeper and those are the things you expect from him. He's a special player and happy to have him on the team.

Q. Gaga, how do you think he played tonight? I don't know if you saw but he was wearing a no war in Ukraine shirt. When you see a 17-year-old kid with that kind of thought about the world and that kind of poise what does that say to you?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Gaga, he is a 17-year-old, but he's got the mind of a 30-year-old. He's a very conscious individual. I didn't see his shirt or the writing, but I expect stuff like that from him. He's very conscious about world events and what's going on around him in society. Very, very, very mature 17-year-old. He played very good tonight and he's a very good goalkeeper and when he got called upon tonight he came up big for us. We're happy to him because he's one of the bright young goalkeepers in the League.

Q. How much are guys talking about the events of the world right now and what's happening in Ukraine, and just how conscious are guys of what's going on? Obviously soccer is such an international game.

EZRA HENDRICKSON: The guys are very conscious about it. In this day and age with all the media outlets, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, what-have-you, that stuff is out there. It not something that goes unseen or unnoticed, you know, so they are very aware of the situation. You know, they are humans. So they feel for people who are -- who finds themselves innocently in war situations.

I myself I'm very conscious about what's going on in the world and how things are sometimes unfortunate to people who have no bearings or who have -- innocent people, innocent civilians and stuff like that. But we have a job to do and we have to continue to do our jobs and just hope and pray that things get better over there.

Q. I wonder if the first half was totally different than the second half? Inter Miami had a lot of opportunity to score. Shaqiri was asking for the ball several times in the first half and second half Miami had more possessions and opportunities to score. I want to know your opinion about it.

EZRA HENDRICKSON: What I was saying is it's the first



time he played a game with us, so the players are still trying to learn him and know his movements, where he's going to show up, the different little pockets, the little spaces that he like to show up in, and that will come. I think a lot of times even in the first half, even we had the possession, we missed him on some of those. He missed some very, very good runs out of midfield behind the defense but we didn't find him or we were too late with the pass.

In the second half, on the whole, they had more possessions because maybe we turned the ball over a lot. I think we got a little fatigued midway through the second half and that's something we have to work on because it's just the first game of the season. All in all, Shaqiri, he's always going to ask for the ball. I demand that from him. We're a team that wants to possess the ball, and him being on the field and getting us the ball is going to help us do that and help us control games, so it's just going to be a matter of his players, teammates learning him and him learning his teammates until we correct that and we're better at finding him the ball.

Q. What's the status of Carlos Teran right now, do you expect him to be able to play next week? And going back to shake, he got fouled a lot and took a lot of contact. Are you concerned about keeping him upright, because I think a lot of teams are probably going to do similar to what Miami did tonight?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, Teran, he's got an injury right now with his hamstring. I don't know when he'll be back but hopefully sooner rather than later. As far as shake, if it's a foul, it's a foul. Doesn't matter who the player is. So them being fouled -- fouling him a lot or teams playing against us try to foul him a lot is something referee has control. I could be on the sideline and scream all I want but I'm not the guy with the whistle in the middle of the pitch.

But I think some of it was unnecessary tonight. Some of it was late and some was calls and some were not. That's something that the refs have to look for because teams are going to use that as a way of slowing us down. Whenever he gets him the ball, it's a foul and makes the game choppy and makes the game not entertaining and that's not what the fans show up to the stadium to see, a bunch of unless fouls. It's soccer so there are going to be fouls but I thought at times they were a little excessive tonight and they were able to get away with it.

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