

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Ezra Hendrickson

Press Conference



You know, focusing on what we do when we're in the front half. Because it's not like we are not getting into the front half.

But I think what we've seen from the films and the past two games is, for instance, in Miami, we got in the front half, created opportunities but just didn't put them away. Against Orlando, we created a couple opportunities but not as many as we did in Miami.

So we have to make sure that we maintain that in the sense of, we're creating chances but now we're putting them away also.

And you know, it's been two games, it's been zero goals, so they have to come at some point. What better time to come than in D.C.?

So I think looking at the films, looking at the games, we kind of pinpoint what it is that we need to change and maybe help put the players in better position to score. But it's not a lack of creating chances. It's more of not executing. It's the execution part in the final third that we need to really, really focus ongoing forward.

Q. I wanted to ask you about your initial impressions of Shaqiri's first few weeks with the team here, how is his integration with the group and chemistry coming along, and what are some things that you want to kind of work on going forward to maximize the impact that he'll have on the games?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, I think the chemistry has been great. Shaqiri is a very, very friendly person. He's a very good player, which always makes it easy to integrate with a new team, and he gets along with everyone off the pitch, on the pitch.

Now, as far as putting him in better positions, we just need to make sure that when he makes his runs or he finds open space that the guy on the ball has got his head up and is able to find him because, you know, he's a big part of what we do getting into the attack.

So we need to make sure that, you know, when he finds those little spaces, those little half-spaces that we get him the ball. Sometimes a ball to Shaqiri with two guys around him is a good ball still because he's so clever, he's so good

Q. There were a lot of Fire alumni at the game Saturday and after the match against Orlando, you said you talked to the players about the ethos of tradition, honor and passion. How much of the club's legacy has played a part into how you want to build and shape the team?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, I think the premise is to get back to where this club once was. You know, that's a club that, you know, won a championship in its inaugural season; a club who has went on and won some Cup trophies. So we want to get back to that level and even better.

I think if we hold those things with value, the tradition, the honor and the passion and stuff, I think that sets a good foundation for us and for the players to, you know, to aspire to, to get back to those glory days, so to speak.

Those are things that the organization, as well as the supportive groups hold sacred, so it's something I wanted to share with the players before the home opener to let them know, hey, guys, this is what it's all about, this is what this club is about. And if we can hold these values sacred, we'll be fine.

Q. Wondering if there's any update on Carlos Terán, and if there's any other health concerns heading into this weekend?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Terán is almost fully back, not quite there yet but we expect to see him relatively soon. No other updates as far as injuries or anything like that, no.

Q. You were saying Saturday you're sure the goals are going to come, and you've had a couple days to look at film and a couple training sessions under your belt since Saturday. How confident are you this team is going to score goals against D.C. United?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, you know, we've spent the last couple days focusing on the attacking part of things.



at getting out of those tight spaces. I think sometimes our guys are not used to playing above a guy or maybe two guys on him, but he's a guy who welcomes those passes and we just need to trust him, and when he asks for the ball, make sure we get it to him.

I think the more we can get him the ball, especially in the front half, the better it's going to be for us and the more chances we're going to create because he's so clever on the ball and he's so good at making the final pass.

It's just a matter of getting him more touches in the front half, especially in the final third.

Q. Coming up against a D.C. United team that has not only not lost, but has not given up a goal, what have you seen from them that has, for lack of a better term, kept you up at night, and without revealing the game plan, how do you think you can best exploit their weaknesses?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: I think they are a very aggressive team, and I'm sure being at home, they are going to come out just as aggressive as they did in their last home game.

So we expect that, and to our players, we just basically have been focused the past couple days of playing quicker, moving the ball, because they are so aggressive, they are going to come and they are going to come in waves, so if you can now play quickly and move out of the -- switch the point of attack, I think we'll be -- it will be very beneficial for us as far as, you know how we attack against them.

Defensively, they like to counter and they like to get forward. They like to go at you. So we just have to be very mindful of, you know, when we receive balls, we know they are going to come, that we have support; the guy on the ball has support, has options.

You know, and then defensively, just be ready for that wave of attack that they are at home and they are going to be feeling good about themselves and we expect them to come at us. We've just got to move the ball quickly and get it from one point to the next because they are so aggressive. If we can lure them into one side of the field and switch the point of attack, I think we'll have some success.

Q. You bought up Gastón Giménez in the postgame Saturday. Just how do you envision his role and contributions this season? What for you would make a successful season for him?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: I think just being a leader on the team, being a leader on the field, as one of our most senior

player and one of our more -- you know, he's a DP, he's one of the guys that we look to to help carry this team along with the Shaqs and the Kacpers and stuff like that.

Just a lot of production from him. And it might not be in the numbers because sometimes we are going to expect him to sit a little deeper, so you might not get the ten goals, eight assists, as someone who is playing a little higher up on the field.

But when I look at Saturday's game, the amount of tackles that he made, the amount of timely tackles he made, the amount passes that he had intercepted and stuff like that, that's good to see, and those things can really give you momentum throughout a game.

One of the things I mentioned is when you see your DP that hard to win the ball back whenever we lose it, it can help, but inspire the rest of the players to even work harder.

His leadership on the field is something that we expect because of, you know, who he is to the team and hopefully guys follow that lead. But I thought Saturday was a really, really good indication of some of the things that he can do for us this year.

Q. On a similar-ish note, you talked about Mauricio Pineda playing in midfield, which he has the last two games. What has been your impression of him the first two weeks?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, I think, you know, he's a very steady player. He doesn't cause a lot of turnovers as far as he doesn't turn the ball over a lot. He helps us get the ball from the back half to the front half, and he also makes some timely runs coming out of the midfield, which we like.

But you know, it's going to be a very competitive situation in the middle of the park, especially now that Freddie Navarro is back. So it's good to have capable guys and it's good to have to make hard decision when it comes to things like that.

But I thought Pineda has filled in really, really well, along with Gastón in the midfield, you know. It's going to be a very competitive situation but it's good to have. It's a good situation to have, and I like the way he's played the past couple games. FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...