

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA



Ezra Hendrickson Press Conference

Chicago Fire FC 2, D. C. United 0

Q. How are you feeling, Coach?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Cold.

Q. Glad you're getting warmer. What was your impression of the team performance tonight to do what they did, and as you alluded to, in some challenging conditions this evening.

EZRA HENDRICKSON: One of the things we talked to them about before the game started, there were some elements such that you have to roll up your sleeves and just battle. We may not be able to get the opportunity to play the football that we like to play, you know, keeping the ball on the ground, nice, passing, possession-type of football because of the wind and the cold, but if we have to battle, we have to battle. I thought the guys battled from the first whistle till the last.

It was good to see that we are a team that can battle when we need to, and we're not just a nice, pretty soccer-playing team. We're a team that if it calls for it, we can fight. So that was good to see from the guys tonight.

Q. Congrats on your first win as a head coach. Big-time there. Admittedly when you made the substitution to put Bornstein out there, and you played him in a more advanced role than he normally is in, I did find it interesting to say the least but honestly it worked out. He got a goal.

Is that -- I'm just wondering, is that something that you and Jonathan have talked about in the preseason leading up to this season, an opportunity he may have in a more midfield winger type of role? Is that something that you have prepared him to do this season?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: No, not at all. He's going to be playing center back or left back. You know, I don't think at his age he's a winger.

But I thought at the moment at the time of the game being up 1-0 on the road, it was the right move for the team because they were starting to get control of the game, especially coming down our left side, their right side.

I know Jonathan is a very good defender, and I thought he would come in and help shore it up on that side for a little bit. And he got the opportunity to get forward, and he put it away and, you know, basically put the game out of reach. It was good to see that he could come in and help us like that.

He's still a big part of this team. He's not a week-in, week-out starter, but as you see tonight, he's going to have very, very important minutes on this team.

Q. If you didn't plan for him to be in that more advanced role now, is that something to reconsider? That was quite the strike.

EZRA HENDRICKSON: It's going to be a game-to-game basis. There will be games where he'll start for us at least back or centre back. Like I said he's a very important part of this team still. He's a veteran player and he's still a good soccer player. He'll be used accordingly as the season goes on.

Q. Just to piggyback off that question about Bornstein, is that the sort of -- not just with Jonathan but with any player, is that something that you're preaching to the guys, hey, you might have to play in a position that you're maybe not expecting? How do you kind of get the guys prepared and ready for having to play roles they are maybe not generally used to?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, just, you know, we always preach that this is going to be a team effort with this team. Every man, from man 1 to man 30 is going to be very important. Even the guys who don't make the trip what they do in training to get us ready to play the game is very important. So from game-to-game, your role might change and it's good to have players who are flexible, players who are versatile who could come in and do a job like JB did for us tonight.

As a coach, as the game is going along, you kind of assess the situation and see what is it that you need and you look



on your bench and you say, okay, what can give me the best boost right now. At times, we were down and we need someone to come off -- come on and get forward and help us in the attack. Jonathan, even though he did score tonight, he was put into the game more to help shore us up defensively on the left side. But from game-to-game, player to player, you get called upon to do a certain tasks, and I'm very confident in these players that whatever task you ask of them, they will come in and do.

Q. There were one or two plays from Gastón Gimenez there was an apparent lack of effort not hustling back in the defensive end, but in the second half, I thought Gastón had an excellent second half. He obviously got the assist but he seemed to be everywhere. I'm just wondering if that's something that you saw from him in the first half and if so, was there maybe a talking to him at halftime because he certainly seemed to kick it into another gear in the last 45?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, we spoke about that at halftime, not just Gastón. I thought a lot of the players -- we're a team that we like to possess but when we lose it, we have to have that immediate chase and we felt like a lot of times in the first half, we lost the ball and we just didn't put in the effort to win it back right away, which gives them momentum going forward and puts us out of position.

So we talked about that at halftime and we addressed it. I thought, you know, we did well with that in the second half where we may have lost a ball but we fought right away to get it back. That immediate chase is so important because when we play and when we possess it, we are so opened up and if we don't try to win it back right away, it could be a difficult next 30 seconds or stuff for us as far as our recovery. That immediate chase is something that we adjust at halftime and it was good to see the guys went out and really put in the effort for that last 45.

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