

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Xherdan Shaqiri

Press Conference



Q. Xherdan, thanks for making some time for us this afternoon. I guess the first question is how's your calf? How are you feeling physically heading into this weekend?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: I'm feeling good, to be honest. We are all the same way, we are in a good way. It's day by day. So, yeah, I'm feeling good.

Q. Do you expect to play Saturday night?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: We will see. We are day to day, like I said before, but there is a possibility, yeah, to be on the pitch.

Q. Two from me, if I may. Just to start, you've played, what, six games now in the MLS, and you've played in lots of leagues around the world. How is it comparing so far?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, I was not really surprised how good the league is because I knew how the league is growing, how the players are growing, the young players progressing too.

Yeah, a lot of players going now to Europe from MLS, young players. So there you can see that the quality is getting better and better every year. The teams, they are buying, investing in players, and they want to win trophies. Yeah, the league is getting better. Every team is getting better. So the league is very competitive.

Yeah, I'm really happy to play here, and yeah, I'm enjoying also the league to play in.

Q. And your former team Liverpool are playing tonight. They've also got quite a big game in the Premier League against Man United. Do you have a favorite moment from that fixture? Obviously, it's such a huge fixture in English football.

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, of course. I hope they can do

it this year. They are pretty much with a lot of competition still in. As you know, Premier League is very hard and very competitive. This year we'll be probably with City, two teams that are going to go for it, and we will see in the end.

As I see now, the fixture of Liverpool has a more difficult one than City, but there is no really simple games in the Premier League. So they're going to be tough until the end. Yeah, it's also good to see an interesting end this year to the Premier League, but I hope they can do it.

Q. Xherdan, the Fire have been very, very good defensively this year but haven't scored many goals. What's it going to take to improve the team's attack?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, there is always positive and negatives. Obviously in our games, in general when you start the season, obviously we start defensively very good. But on the other side, we have to create more, we have to score more, and this is part of the football game.

Yeah, we are training every day hard to improve ourself and still also defensively and offensively. So we try in the next games, obviously, to create, first of all, more chances and then also to try to finish off the chances and to score more goals because goals decide games, goals decide titles, and so on. We need to start scoring goals too. This is part of the game and very important to win games.

Q. Yeah, just still wondering how do you feel like you're transitioning and adjusting to this role with the Fire where you're the main man, you're the guy that everyone is focusing on? And in general, how do you feel like you're adjusting to Chicago, the United States, North America, another country for you to live and play in?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: I'm enjoying the time here every day, and I'm not coming here as a tourist, I'm coming to work and I'm coming to bring the club again to glory. This is my goal here to work every day hard and to help this team to grow. Yeah, to try to compete with the best teams in the league and trying to win trophies.

I think this is my goal, and this is the goal of the club to go forward. Yeah, my first goal is to go to the playoffs with this team, and then we'll see. But, of course we need improvement, we need to get better. This is pretty normal.

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But I'm enjoying every day here. We have a very, very nice group. Everybody at the club is happy to work every day here, and you can see the excitement of every people who is working for the club.

Yeah, I'm really excited to be here. I'm looking forward really to play a lot of games and to help this club and for this team to go forward and trying to win trophies, what is for me very important.

Q. I'm just wondering how you're approaching this weekend's matchup against the Galaxy. What have you seen from them so far this season, and what do you think of playing in front of -- it will be a packed house at Soldier Field. What are your thoughts on the matchup?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Galaxy, as everybody know, they have very good players. They have a lot of luck in players who played with Chicharito, with Douglas Costa. And with Douglas Costa, new player in also, but Chicharito is already on two years there. They have also pressure to win things, and they want to win trophies.

I know the players that come with a lot of experience to this club and want to win trophies. So it's a big competitive team for us too, and we try -- we play at home, so we try to win games, and this is the most important thing for me.

Q. Now that you have a couple games under your belt at Soldier Field, do you have anything to say about your experience in those games in front of the fans here in Chicago?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, I love it every time I play Soldier Field. Especially the first game, I always remember because a lot of people came to watch me and the team. So I'm really enjoying every time to be on the pitch at Soldier Field.

Yeah, I hope the weather is getting better so many more people coming. This is also what I want to bring here, that more people coming to watch our games. But, of course you need success, you need to win games.

Yeah, we start the season very well, what a big start, a good start for us, the best start since nine years. So it's a good step, but I want more, the club wants more. This is good first step, but I want trophies, and I'm sure if you get more success, then a lot of people are going to come more to the games.

Q. Do you think the Fire's problems with scoring, do you think it's more creating chances or finishing

chances or maybe a little bit of both?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: No, I think we create it a few times, but we have to finish it off better. It's not that we don't create chances. We just have to be more clinical in front of the goal. Yeah, in some games, you don't have maybe a lot of chances, but you have to score. There's one or two chances you get.

So we have to be more ruthless in front of the goal and against the opponents. This is only the thing that I'm thinking we are maybe too nice at the moment in front of the opponents. We have to be ruthless. We have to train more shooting. We have to have more this mentality to score in every chance you got. Yeah, but I'm sure it will come, and we're going to have a lot of goals this season.

Q. Gabriel Slonina has quickly become a fan favorite in goal as a young player. I'm just curious, what has it been like seeing him come along since you've come to town, and what is it like seeing him as a young player play with such confidence in the net?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, he's 17 years old, so I remember when I was 17 really. Yeah, I'm really happy that we have him. He's progressing. He's very young. He's very talented. Yeah, but he can also improve. So he's very young, he can be better, but he's in a very good way to be in the future very, very good goalkeeper who can play on every team in the world.

He's very professional, and that's what I was really surprised because the 17-year-olds are sometimes at the moment different sometimes, but he is very professional, very mature for his age. Yeah, he's progressing. He can improve a lot too, and he wants to learn a lot. Yeah, he's in very good way to be a very, very good goalkeeper in the world of football for sure.

But he needs to improve too, and yeah, he needs a lot of games to play to learn also from the mistakes. This is pretty normal as a young goalkeeper. You make sometimes mistakes and you learn from them. But so far he's doing very well, and we hope he can keep going like this.

Q. Just wondering, you were brought in as a designated player with a lot of hype and anticipation. How do you view your responsibilities to the club and frankly even to MLS as a whole beyond just being a soccer player?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: I know how it is to come to Chicago as a designated player. I came here to -- yeah, for the success, for the plan for this club, and this is the most

important thing for me to have success in football. I know how it is to be successful. I played in many clubs where they were very successful. So I know how it is to lift trophies.

Yeah, I want to bring this here, that this club needs to lift trophies. This is our main goal with this club, to go forward and to be successful. So, yeah, I'm really excited to make this step and to go forward, to work hard, and to try to reach our goals. I think it is most beautiful in this game if you reach your goals with your club, and I think everybody's going to be very happy. And even the fans here, who we have really, really nice fans, they deserve it to have trophies in their bags.

Q. Have you seen some of the city buses in Chicago with your likeness on it, and what was your reaction if you've seen that?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: What to see?

Q. There are some city buses with you on it. What's your reaction? Have you seen that? What's your reaction to seeing that?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, one guy from our club showed me this this morning. I was surprised (laughter), and I was happy to see it because, yeah, you can see how the excitement is here, how big.

Yeah, I think you can see all the trophies there, so I hope I can bring this American trophies here too to this club, and we can do pictures together with these American trophies too.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Shaq. Appreciate the time this afternoon.

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