

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Ezra Hendrickson

Press Conference



Q. Just what's the current health situation for Jairo Torres, Gastón Jimenez and some other players who might have some bruises and knocks?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, Jairo was able to train on the side today. So we are hoping to have him back at least for some minutes on Saturday. Gastón is back in. Kacper, we are still waiting to see what's doing to happen with that.

But we have some guys, maybe two-out-of-three might be in on Saturday but we are not sure, and I don't want to speculate on their return until we are for sure about that. But we expect one, at least, of the three, possibly two, to be involved in the game on Saturday.

Q. With the three game road trip looming with the two New York teams and Toronto, how important do you think it is for the guys to take all three points this weekend?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, we are not going to look past this game this weekend. So for that, I just want to say this is a very important game for us. We have taken a skid. We have been on a bit of a skid recently, and we just need to get back to our way of playing where we are difficult to break down, we are difficult to score, and then continue to improve on the attacking side of things because the last three or four games or so have not been really good for us.

There's no panic, we know that we can turn this thing around and the plan is to start that on Saturday. We are back home. It's been awhile but we are back home and we want to continue to be good at home.

Q. Over the last couple weeks since the results have not exactly been going your way, have you sensed any changes in the vibe in training or in general around the team?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: No, it's a confident group. And you know, we do reflection after every game, and of course they are back in on Tuesdays. We watch the film and we

talk about things and we see and we know we are just right there. It's a matter of just being a little bit more clinical on some passes. It's making better decisions in the final third, and then you know give ourselves opportunity to at least get shots off on goal.

I think a lot of times what we have seen from our films is that we defend really well, we win the ball, and then within two or three passes, we are giving those balls away again and it becomes difficult over the course of 90 minutes. That's something we have been working on in training.

That's basically improving our transition from defense to offense. I think that will help us, one, keep the ball more and give us more opportunities, because we need to score but you can only score if you create the opportunities, and we need to find a way to be more efficient, more effective once we win that ball and we are on the attack.

Q. I know it's really early yet, but what have your early impressions been of Chris Mueller and what kind of addition he could be to this team?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Chris is a very good player. He's another player that we are going to want to get on the ball because of the things they can and on and off the ball, his runs off the ball, his timing, getting behind defenses is very good. That's someone that will help Shaq as far as having someone else to get on the end of things, because we all know what Shaq can do with the ball and now we are starting to push the issue more about getting beyond defense which is will open up our game a lot more.

So Chris brings that opportunity for us to -- you know, his 1v1 abilities as well as his ability to get behind defenses and get some of these passes from Shaq and Gastón and the guys in the midfield. We are happy to have him and he's a very good addition to the team.

Q. One of the big things that stood out to a lot of us on Saturday was the not having Czichos and what that meant to the back line. Obviously there will be a game in the future you can't play him; maybe he's going to have to miss another game. How do you make sure that you still have his leadership and calm and confidence out there when he can't play?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, you know, if you look at

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Carlos Terán, he's a young player, not very much experienced. Wyatt has been playing a lot this year but before this year he didn't really may much. We still have some experience inexperience there and sometimes when you're inexperienced, you're not comfortable communicating or talking, and this is something these guys have to learn from.

I thought without Rafa we were a bit stretched defensively on Saturday, and then we are able to take advantage of that and was able to play around us. We were basically late to everything because we are so stretched apart and they had a lot of space to play. We all know when you are on the road you can't play like that. It has to be compact and you have to communicate and earn has to be on the same page. I thought we started the game a little loose and not compacted enough and we paid for it.

I thought the guys responded very well to get the tying goal, but after that we weren't all on the same page and it caused us to be stretched and it gave them the play of the game and it made for a hard, difficult game for us.

At halftime we were able to sort some things out defensively and we got a lot better, but still, when we would win the ball, you know, within two or three pass, we would give it away again. So that's something that we've been working on and hopefully we'll improve on that on Saturday.

Q. What is the key for you when you have guys like Jairo and Chris come into the club, what are the keys to working them in and building their chemistry with teammates? How do you do that when you have players join in midseason?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: These are the type of players we bring in to help lift the training which in terms list our performance on Saturday nights or whenever we are playing league games.

So we expect them to come in and be, you know, those dynamic type of players that we recruited and that we looked at on film and we thought would help the team and be good additions to the team.

I think they will bring -- help improve our attacking, which we all know has been lacking, and we need to get better at. But also, these guys work off the ball very, very good, too. We don't ask much of our wingers as far as defensively. They have specific, defined roles. But these guys are willing to put in the work off the ball also.

They just bring a lot of quality to the team, which is going to help us in training, making trainings more intense and then

which in turn helps us on game days.

Q. Over a four-game period, you had four players sent off with two yellows. Are you concerned about the discipline, and is this something you've discussed with the players about how to play with one yellow card, and just the discipline in general?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, we generally have addressed the discipline, lack of discipline issue that was creeping in.

I'm never going to make excuses for my players, but some of these yellows were iffy. But as a staff, our message to them was, it doesn't matter what that second yellow, if it was harsh or not. It's the first yellow. It's standing in front of a ball. It's kicking a ball away. It's standing over a player and yell and taunting the player. That first yellow is what really derailed us in those games.

That's something that we've talked about, we watched every one of those on film, our attitude after a call, whether or not we agree with the ref. I tell them, the message is, guys, I've never seen a ref change his call because you yell and you curse and you kick the wall away. It doesn't happen. So just move on, get set and be ready to get organized to defend the free kick or whatever it is that's been given. Because just standing there and yelling and kicking the ball away, all it does is puts you in a position where you have to play the rest of the game on a yellow.

Hopefully we have eradicated that from the group but we'll see. We do have a lot of young, inexperienced players who they are learning on-the-job so to speak. So a lot of these things, we said there would be growing pains, and we are seeing some of these things.

We have to make sure as a staff we keep these guys focused and get back to the way we were playing the first four or five games where we were just really, really hard to break down, we played as a team and we took our chances and we got them. The discipline and playing better football is something we've been talking about the past two weeks.

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