

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Ezra Hendrickson

Press Conference



to play; it's against the defending champions; it's the third of game of the week.

Yes, they had the better of the play probably and had chances to score, but we had opportunities to tie the game, also, and barring a questionable call from the ref, we still come out of there 0-0.

It's really, really close and it's just about us remaining confident right now rather than doing anything drastic as far as tactically or lineup and stuff like that. But there will be some changes going forward, maybe just more of the intensity and how we get back to defending the way we were earlier in the season.

It's something that we slacked off on. We've lost our compactness and stuff like that. So we'll change certain things within the way we play, but as far as an overall tactical change or lineup change, formation change, we don't see the need for that yet.

**Q. We haven't seen Jairo Torres start a match yet this season, but he did get a good chunk of minutes last game. When will he be cleared to start?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, he's another one that hopefully this weekend we can start him from the start of the match. Because of his injury, we're trying to bring him along slowly, so we gave him 30 minutes first game, then 45, and we think now he's ready for 45 plus, 60 plus. Our plan is to start him from the start on Saturday because we all see what he brings to the team when he's on the pitch.

There's a reason why we got him here. We just haven't been able to get him on the pitch for an extended period of time. But that will change. Hopefully after this game we've got a couple weeks to get him fully healthy where he's playing every game for 90 minutes.

**Q. I'm wondering what you're expecting from Toronto; like your team, they have not had the results they wanted recently, but also like your team, the record perhaps is not indicative of the talent they have. What are you expecting from Toronto?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, they're a team, like you said, that's in a position like us that's trying to get points. They're at home, and I expect them to come out fighting for

**Q. I'm wondering if there's any sort of updates health-wise on Rafael Czichos and Spencer Richey?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, so Spencer, he's still going through the concussion protocol, so he's got a few days left in that, and Rafa, he's day-to-day. We're trying to bring him along slowly but making sure that we do the right things to make sure he's ready to go, and hopefully we have him on Saturday. So we're expecting him to be ready on Saturday.

**Q. Just moving on from the injuries, with the team going through this winless streak, what kind of formation or lineup changes or tactical changes are you considering to kind of stem the tide here?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, I think tactically we were going to stay with a 4-2-3-1. There would be some personnel change, which is necessary.

But we're just trying to get the team together, to be on the pitch for an extended period of time and for an extended period of games. We haven't had a chance to sort of put the same lineup out on a consistent basis, and I think once we do that, we'll have the final pieces that we just added, we'll be better, because if you look at the games, we were really close. We're not getting beat 4-0, 5-0 every game. We're very, very close.

If you just look at last week, the Cincy game at home, it's us giving up a lone goal in the first half, fighting our way back in and then giving up a game-winning goal late in the game.

If you look at New York, the Red Bulls are a very, very tough place to play, and we take the lead in the 89th minute, take the lead twice actually, and they were able to come back. In an 89th minute on the road like that, we should finish those games out.

So we're right there. We're very close. Even the NYCFC game, it's a pitch that's not conducive to the way we want

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those three points. We are going to into into there just like we did with the Red Bulls and against NYCFC, trying to get three points. Typically getting a point on the road is satisfactory, but we're at a point now where we need to start stealing points from teams because we feel like we've let some teams come into our place and get maximum points, which they didn't deserve.

I expect them to come out defending their turf, so to speak. We're going to go there looking for three points, so it'll be a good game, even though it's two teams that find themselves at the bottom of the eastern table right now. Like you said, it's not a team that -- we're not that far off. Us, for instance, we're five, six points out of the playoff drop zone. So we're right there, but we need to start picking up points, and we're going to go to Toronto looking to do just that.

**Q. Stanislav Ivanov hasn't played in the last three matches, I believe. What's the plan for him moving forward? What have you seen from him? What's his outlook and potential role on this team with some of the additions made on the wing?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, well, with the additions, it's become a little difficult for not just him but some of our other guys who are playing a lot to get back on the pitch. But it's a long season, and there will be moments, there will be times where he has to step up and step on the field.

Right now we're in a situation where we feel like we're putting the best players that we have on the pitch. He had a bad run of form right before we got the additions, so that didn't help his cause, but we want to play the guys who are performing, and that goes from what they do in training, also from what they do when they get their opportunities in games.

But he'll get minutes because it's a long season, and we have to make sure that we're rotating guys and getting guys some rest. But he's still in the mix.

**Q. We're scheduled to talk to Wyatt Omsberg up next. What have you seen from Wyatt from the time you took over in preseason until now where he's started I think every match this season?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, Wyatt has been really good for us. I think he's probably the one guy that's played every minute so far this year. He's been consistent for us, and he's taken the job. He took it in preseason, and he's kept it. He's been someone that we could rely on game in and game out.

Now, he's not used to playing this much in his career so

far, so that's something that physically he has to deal with because it's a different beast when you're a spot player to now being an every-day, every-week starter. We have to be careful that we don't run him into the ground and find ways to give him rest, but as long as he keeps playing the way he's playing, he'll continue to play because we're happy with what he's been doing, how he's been playing.

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