

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Ezra Hendrickson

Press Conference



Houston Dynamo 2, Chicago Fire FC 0

Q. First of all, when did Shaq's situation change? When did he start feeling sick and when was the decision made for him to, I believe, stay home?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, he came in to training on Friday morning. Was nauseated and stuff. Was able to take some medication and train on Friday. But then after that on his way to the airport, he became nauseated again. We just thought it wasn't a good idea to bring him. You know, make sure he's healthy.

He tested negative for COVID, so it wasn't that. But just in case, not knowing, we thought it was best to keep him at home rather than bring him on plane with the team.

Q. And just jog my memory, with Miguel out and health and safety and Mauricio, as well, how much of a concern is it to try mitigate whatever's going on with two guys out in the protocols?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, it's a big problem. It's something we talked about even back in preseason that if we're able to keep guys COVID-free, it becomes an advantage for us. Because last year, a lot of teams who were affected a lot by COVID, some of them didn't make the playoffs.

But it happens. You know, this thing, you could go to the supermarket and get it. But we try to be as cautious and as vigilant as we can to prevent it, but happens. And unfortunately it's happened a couple times to us now.

Q. Before the break there were a couple of games that felt like the performances were improving but the results weren't necessarily there, and then you got that win last week and it felt like the tide was turning. Does it feel like you lost that progress with the loss tonight in a pretty crushing way against hues?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: No. Because you know, we have

to keep staying positive and remaining confident. I think what I told the boys at the end, if we're honest with ourselves, that was not a very good performance by us. And it was sad that after such a great performance last weekend, we came here and just didn't really show up.

The first ten, 15 minutes, we had some good moments, a couple of chances, half-chances in the box. But overall, it was not Fire soccer, and that's not the way we want to play. That's not the kind of discipline we want to show when we step on the pitch.

We are very disappointed but that but you know, we're not going to panic. We have a game -- good thing we have a game on Wednesday, so we have three days to come out and show that this tonight was not us.

But if we're honest, that's not a good performance, and you're not going to win too many games when you perform like that overall.

We talked about consistency and being consistent, and can we now add to that performance from last week, and tonight, we didn't. I'm being honest; we did not.

But we'll bounce back and we'll come again on Wednesday. But we have to play better football than we did tonight, all across the board, every player.

Q. The first goal to my eye was flukey, a couple bad bounces, things like that happen. But the second goal, how did you guys allow that goal to happen?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, again, on a cross that we don't clear and get to them, but still we have an opportunity to make a tackle and we don't.

It's just, you know, a couple really, really poor goals. And that's the thing, you're not playing well, but if you don't give up those poor goals, especially that second one right before the half then maybe you stand a chance.

But once we give up that second goal, on the road like that, it's really hard because now they can sit back and not really push the game and it becomes even harder. We struggled with that tonight. We struggled with that tonight. The second half, we didn't create many chances at all.



Q. So Gaga tonight, obviously not the result that the team wanted but yet a couple good saves. What do you think about how he's been able to turn his form around since the break?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Gaga is a very good goalkeeper, but when you're a young player, sometimes you make mistakes. He had a couple games where he mistakes in Cincinnati and Red Bull, but we never thought once or our evaluation of him had changed. He did tonight what he's been doing all year, and that's when being called upon, stepping up and making some saves.

But we can't put our goalkeeper under that kind of pressure in the game. But luckily he was able to keep a couple of them out of the net or it could have been worse tonight.

From a team standpoint, I want to stress that we'll be better come Wednesday because we know and we talked about it after the game that it's not us. That's not how we play. And we want to keep improving and we want to be consistent, but consistently good, not one good game and one bad, one good, one bad. Especially in the position that we're in right now, we need to start getting points. This was a good opportunity to come in tonight and we just didn't take it.

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