

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Sunday, July 3, 2022

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Ezra Hendrickson

Press Conference



San Jose Sharks 2, Chicago Fire FC 1

Q. What's the status of Shaqiri?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: He's fine. He just had a little hip injury but nothing -- I don't think anything major. Still has to be seen, but I don't think anything major. We just wanted to make sure that it didn't get worse, whatever it is, that was bothering his hip.

Q. And just a general game question, just what's your takeaway from that match?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, it's disappointment. When you are on the road and you create chances like we did in the first half, some clear chances like that, a couple of them alone with the keeper, you've got to put those away. When you don't, stuff like this happens because we definitely gave ourselves opportunities to put this game out of reach in the first half and we just didn't take them.

That's something that has been plaguing us all season. We have just 16 goals so far this season. But this game was lost in the first half, not putting them away when we had the chance to.

Q. After the last match against Philadelphia Union, you talked about how that result was great and now you needed to find consistency. Now that's four games: Win, loss, win, loss. What was lacking, and how can you try to find that consistency from game-to-game that has been missing?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: What was missing is just our finishing. We created good chances, especially in the first half to put the game out of reach, and we did not, like I said previously to Brian.

When you are the road like that and you get those opportunities, you don't know when the next one is going to be and so you have to make use of them. We are just not efficient in the box right now. We are getting there. I think

out buildup in the first half, our play was good, we were moving the ball, breaking lines, getting in the box and we just didn't finish our chances. They had their chances and they finished the two that they needed and they come out victorious.

But when I say consistency, it's issues like this that we have to deal with. When we win a game like that, a big game like that at home against Philly, and then we come here and have an opportunity to really put the game out of reach and we don't, that's the stuff we need to improve on, being more consistent at winning games.

Q. Would you, for Saturday's match have any consideration of starting Duran stead of Przybylko up top?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: I'll sit down with the coaches and we'll definitely talk about going forward what we with need to do, especially in the immediate, this game coming up this weekend. That's something we'll discuss among other things.

But we need to get some wins. We need to put guys on the pitch who are going to help us get those wins. We'll decide that in the next few days, how we're going to come out next weekend.

Q. Brian Gutiérrez got his first MLS goal. Do you have anything to say about that? And second of all, between Gaga making some big saves, Chris Brady winning the Gold Glove at the CONCACAF Championship, what does that say about what's being done with Chicago with young players and developing the youth?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: It's been great. Brian Gutiérrez is someone that has big potential. His ceiling is very high, and he's nowhere close to hitting his ceiling right now and it's good to see the way he's improved and developing. He's just a good footballer.

I think we all know Gaga is just a very good goalkeeper. He showed that again tonight because when he had to come up big, he did. There were some times we got broke down in the counterattack and he came up big for us. And Chris is also a good young keeper that's in the ranks.

So it's good to have those two keepers in the ranks, and then a player like Guti and even a Jhon Duran who came on, I thought played well in the 15 minutes or so he got.

So that's good for the future of the Fire to see that these guys are stepping up and playing well. But it's something that this club is really trying to do as far as developing our young talent. We have a number of home grown guys signed that we are trying to develop and get better and that's something that we'll continue to do.

Q. On the Gutiérrez topic, what was the thought process starting Herbers, especially considering San Jose's defensive issues?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: I think being on the road, we think Herbers is right now maybe a little more disciplined defender than Guti. So we wanted to make sure that we were secured on the wings as far as being able to get up and back.

But that's just a decision that we thought, you know, on Wednesday, Fabi played well and we thought we would go back with a similar lineup, and we just made that one change with Bornstein coming in for Andre (ph) on the left back. Other than that, we wanted to go with a similar team than we started with on Wednesday.

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