

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA



## Ezra Hendrickson Press Conference

**Q. The news came out today about Gastón's surgery being successful but obviously you're without him for the rest of the season. What does that mean for the team and do you think you guys might try to sign someone to help out with his absence?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, if the opportunity presents itself to sign someone, then yeah. But with the MLS rules and stuff, it's going to be tough. It's going to be difficult to do that. But going forward, it's going to be a big miss for us. I think that was evident on Sunday in the game against Montréal. Just what he brings to the team as far as fluidity, ability to move the ball from back to front, switching the point of attack and stuff like that.

It's going to be a big miss, but you know, we have capable guys that can do the job, that have done the job while Gastón has been out earlier in the season but it's definitely going to be a big miss for us.

**Q. Wondering what the status is of Carlos Terán, because it looked like he was hurt or injured before he was subbed out on Sunday.**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, I think just a little muscle fatigue from being out a couple weeks, so he was just cramping up. We wanted to get him out there before it became anything more severe but he's trained today and he's fine. He's good to go on Saturday.

**Q. With Giménez being out, what's the plan in the midfield? Will it be Pineda and Herbers filling in alongside Fede or is there possibly a formation change? What's the plan going forward?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Possibly Jairo Torres is someone we are thinking about maybe can play inside. We have not discussed a formation change because the team was built a certain way. Really for the last eight games, we put certain guys out of position.

But Jairo has played in the middle and has shown that he

can play there and there's also Pineda and Herbers to play with Fede. But Fede is our mainstay and Fede is our ball winner. He'll be on the pitch and we'll have to pick the best match up for him to replace Gastón going forward for these next eight games.

We have capable players on the pitch, on the team that can do the job.

**Q. What are you expecting from this Montréal side on Saturday and how do you guys think you can get three points?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, we are in a situation where we have to go out and get the three points. There's no one or two ways about it. We have to go out and win this game. As far as tactically what they are about, they are a very fast team. Depending who they play up top of the three, last time, last time, they had Kei, they had Quioto. They have pace up top and we have to be careful about that. We have matched up well against teams with three in the back. When we played against Toronto or Columbus in the first half, our defensive scheme to combat that has been very good. We are very confident defensively going in as far as dealing with their pace up top because of how we defend as a team.

Offensively we have to get back to playing the way we played three or five weeks ago where there's a lot of ball movement, breaking of lines, switching the point of attack, stuff that we didn't see on Sunday. And one of the things, you know, that we were lacking was our technique. Technically we were very poor on Sunday. And when you don't have technique that or when your technique is lacking, it affects you tactically what you want to do, and that I think was a combination of why we were so sluggish. There was no fluidity to our game at all on Sunday and this was across the board. We have shown some resilience this year when things have gone bad where we come out the next game and we come back and really play Chicago Fire football. I'm expecting that this weekend. But as far as facing them, we think, you know, we are ready for them and what they bring and we are very aware of the lethal pace that they have with their front guys.

**Q. This season in the Eastern Conference, it seems with the exception of D.C., there's a lot of teams still within touching distance of the playoffs. What is sort**

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**of the pressure like and the mood among the team knowing that pretty much for the last eight games, whatever you guys have, that anything that's not three points can be really crucial to making the playoffs or not?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: We see it as a 24-point season right now. Just getting as much as you can get.

We think anywhere from 15 to 18 will do it but you know, it's still left to be seen because you have to figure in what happens with the other games.

But we think, you know, we have four more home games. Definitely we want to win those games. We knew coming into these three games, the past two and now this Montréal game it wasn't going to be easy but we were really hoping and really wanting to get six out of the nine, at least; that obviously is not going to happen now but we certainly have to get three, and that means we win in Montréal.

Then you just see what happens with the other teams. It's still within striking distance. Even D.C. is not mathematically out of it because they could turn around and win eight games. You never know with this league, and that's something that keeps us confident, as well as our resilience, especially after the Columbus game or especially after that ten games where we didn't get many points. You know, we were able to find the confidence and be able to come up with some points and put ourselves to even be in a conversation.

Most people would think that we would be out of playoff talk right now but we are still in it. Just five points out. You know, you win on Saturday, and again, based on what happens this weekend, you could be two points out of it going in with seven games left. You know, it's a really tight race, and we are going to remain confident. But we just know that we cannot put out another game like we did on Sunday. It was very embarrassing if I'm being honest at home. I've been around this league since '97 and as a player, as an assistant coach and now as a head coach, there's always one game and every team I've been on where the team just doesn't show up. For whatever reason, it just doesn't happen on that day. But normally you see that on the road and it was very surprising to me that being at home we showed up like that and as a coach, I take responsibility for that because it's my job to get these guys ready to play and ready to be inspired to play, and ready to go out there and perform like we do in training and that didn't happen on Sunday, and I take responsibility for that.

Going forward, like I said, starting Saturday we have to get our three points and the following three games we have left

at home we have to make sure we get all nine of those points and pick up a couple wins on the road. Maybe some ties or you know, somehow we need to get to about 46, 47 points, and I think we'll be fine, and it's possible to do, with eight games left.

**Q. I have two very different questions, so I'll ask one and get the answer and ask the second if that's okay. Wondering if there's any update on Wyatt Omsberg first of all.**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: No update. No specifics as far as return. We are hoping by the end of the season he'll be able to do some stuff but no official specific date yet as far as when he can return.

**Q. And then shifting gears completely, you'll be opposing Wilfried Nancy with Montréal, and I believe this is the first game this season with two black head coaches. What does that mean to you that you'll be -- that there's only three -- still three black head coaches in the League and that it took this long into a season before two black head coaches faced off in a game?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Neither he nor I are going to be on the pitch on Saturday but it's something to recognize.

It doesn't matter to me who is on the other sideline at this point. It's about getting three points on Saturday and that's going to be the focus. The main focus is really going to be on the team, my team and how I prepare my team and this team and how can we rebound from what happened last weekend. Doesn't matter if you're black, white, whatever as a coach, when your team plays like that, it really hurts. I was very disappointed in what transpired at home in that game on Sunday.

As far as this game and Wilfried and everything, it's about getting three points for us. I'm sure we'll talk before the game but the focus is going to be on the Chicago Fire and getting three points out of this two-game home stand, making sure we finish out with three points here.

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