

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, August 31, 2022
Chicago, Illinois, USA



Ezra Hendrickson Press Conference

New England 0, Chicago Fire FC 0

Q. Just first of all, do you view that as like a point gained or two points lost?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Definitely two points lost. Just for the fact that we had the PK, which is an opportunity to go up 1-0 there. But I thought it was a hard-fought game, and we're in a position now that we need to get maximum points when we have the opportunity.

So we put ourselves in a situation to get maximum points. We expect that. So we see it as two points lost.

Q. Just in general tonight, just some of the stuff with the timeline, when did Jairo Torres suffer his injury, and with Shaq, what went into the decision to play him tonight and put him on the game day roster? What did you see from him this evening?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, with Jairo, that happened a few weeks back in training. He took a knock to the leg and he played through it. He want to be on the pitch, so he was playing through some issues but he got to a point where he needed a break, you know.

As far as Shaq, he felt a little tightness in the last game, and you know, we have some great guys, some trainers and High Performance people that did really well to get him in a position to give us some minutes tonight. We wanted to keep him on the bench because we knew he could play some minutes but we were able to use him if needed and we felt like that last ten, 15 minutes he was needed and we tried to go for the three points because like I said, getting maximum points is what our focus is right now.

But he's a guy that we want him on the pitch as much as we can get him on the pitch, taking into account how he is as far as fitness-wise. So that was the decision behind putting him on the pitch trying to get the three points.

Q. And just to follow up with Shaq, he's obviously

such an important part of the team when he's healthy. How difficult is it to manage Shaqiri, knowing how important he is, and you balancing that he does have a history of missing some time and being injured? How difficult is it to manage something like that?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, it's not very difficult at all because he's the type of player that if he can go at all he wants to be on the pitch and we want him on the pitch. Tonight we tested him up to about 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. today to see how many minutes he could get, and the decision was made that it wouldn't be more than 45. What we didn't want to do was start him and have to bring him off before 45 minutes, use a moment. Because when he had three moments -- we felt the decision was to keep him on the bench and if needed we'll bring him on. We were hoping we would be up 2-0, 3-0 for the game. We saved him for Saturday, give him a couple of days rest but that wasn't the case.

At about the 75th minute, I thought this was time to bring him in, give him 15 minutes to see maybe he can spring Duran in on a through pass or a free kick in the corner or something. He's a special type of the player, and you want guys like that on the pitch in crucial moments in the game like that.

Where we are right now, three points is what we need. We weren't just going to settle. Had this game been back in May or April, Shaq would not have played tonight. It's a situation that we need to get our best players on the pitch, if it's possible. If it's physically possible.

Q. Chris Mueller has been a little bit quiet the last couple games, and missed the penalty tonight. What have you seen from him and is there a concern that he's maybe tiring a little bit considering that he did play over the MLS off-season?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: We're monitoring that. He has logged a lot of minutes for us but we've tried in games to get him out when we see that he's tired to avoid injury.

But I think tonight, you know, Chris, he wears his heart on his sleeve. He's a guy that's going to go out and fight for you and put in the effort game-in and game-out.

I think what happened tonight, after missing the penalty, he

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looked a little deflated. He never got back into the game. You know, he never was into the game again after that. And that's something I know that you know he's going to be upset about. But you know, we win as a team and we lose as a team. We didn't draw this game tonight because of Chris. Chris is a very important player for us.

But I sense that, you know, he was just a little deflated by missing the PK. Gave him some minutes. You know, my intention at about 15 minutes was maybe it's just not going to be the day for him because he seemed mentally out of it. He's a special player and he was hoping he could give us something, you never know. Maybe he gets on a 1v1. He's very special and he's scored some big goals for us. After awhile, it didn't look like he was going to snap out of it, and he seemed to start to get a little tired and that's why we made the switch when we did.

But he's a big part of our team, and you know, we do have to be careful that, like you said, playing two seasons, basically that, we don't cause injuries there because we've lost a lot of key players now and we have to be careful we have enough players to finish the season.

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