

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

Tuesday, September 13, 2022  
Chicago, Illinois, USA



## Ezra Hendrickson Press Conference

Montreal 3, Chicago Fire FC 2

**Q. Just wondering, tonight just what were your thoughts on the performance considering how shorthanded you guys were?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, you know, the effort I thought was there. But when you play against a team that strong and that good as Montréal, you have to really limit your miscues, really limit your mistakes.

And I thought we lost the game in the first half because all three goals, I mean, I think the first one might have been off-sides, if that guy is not in Gaga's path, maybe he saves that. But the other two goals is just mistakes that led directly to goals. We turn the ball over and they go down and punish us.

When you play against good teams like that, like I said, you have to limit those mistakes because you get punished and I think that's what happened to us tonight. Even up 2-1, if we play out the first half, keep it at 2-1, we give ourselves a better chance. But not -- giving that up third goal in the first half really, really hurt, and then you know we had an opportunity late in the game across from Andre, Guti sliding in in the back post just didn't connect to tie it up.

But beyond that, the first half is really where we let the game slip away from us.

**Q. The team had a good game but didn't get the tie in the second half. What was missing?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, they are a good team, and they had the lead at home and did what they had to do to protect that.

Like I said we had a pretty good chance on a cross with Guti in the back post that didn't connect. Some of the opportunities, half-chances that we lost in the final third, but they did what they had to do to protect the lead.

But we, like I said, lost the game in the first half and that's where it got away from us. We were climbing uphill the rest of the way. We tried. The guys put in the effort. We did what we had to do. We tried to make the subs that we could to try to spark something but we just didn't have enough tonight. It wasn't from lack of effort. Just some bad mistakes that cost us tonight but those things happen in the game and tonight unfortunately it happened to us against a really good team.

**Q. Hope you're doing well. So Jonathan Bornstein got the start in central midfield tonight. What went into that decision, given that Javi Casas and Sergio Oregel were rested from the Fire 2 game this weekend, and would you consider giving some of those younger homegrowns more substantial minutes in the last couple games of the season?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, going into this game on the road, to a possible Eastern Conference regular season winner, we felt that Bornstein had give us the most experience, the better opportunity to solidify that in the middle of the park.

You know, beyond the mistakes, I thought he did well, and Javi Casas, you have a guy that played limited minutes in the league so far, and Sergio who has never played. So it's difficult to put them in that situation like this that we faced ourselves with, we thought going with experience would be beneficial to us.

Hindsight is 20/20. I think if we had to do it all over again, we would still go with Bornstein because, like I said, the experience that we felt was needed. We were just very shorthanded today because we're missing some key players, maybe four or five starters.

And it's difficult to come into a place like that and come out with a result, which we almost did. We really put in the effort. We had a good game plan. And barring the mistakes, maybe we come out of here with at least a point.

But it wasn't to be tonight and we move on. We still have three games to play and we'll do the best we can to get full points in those and see what happens because we're still in the playoff running based on what happens tonight with the rest of the games and tomorrow.

All is not lost but it would have been good to at least get a point tonight.

**Q. Going back to all the injuries, how concerned are you about all the injuries and also is there any worry about the performance of the training staff and the -- I guess the performance staff about the jobs they are doing considering all the injuries you guys are experiencing?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, you know, injuries happen. We have had some unfortunate ones. I think we have a very good training staff, High Performance people are very knowledgeable staff that we have.

You know, most of the injuries are chronic injuries that guys had coming in to the season that, you know, in the case of Kacper with the back flaring up, those were old injuries. So I don't think it's so much the fault of the training staff or anyone's fault.

Just unfortunate that these injuries that we come up with has resurfaced so to speak on guys who be maybe previously had those injuries and it's a reoccurrence of the injury.

We do our best we can as a staff as a club to protect our players. Sometimes maybe guys play a little longer than maybe they should or we don't -- we didn't rotate some games and that maybe we should have but all in all I thought we did what we can to make sure that guys are available because for a coach, the most important thing, doesn't matter how good player is, if he's not available to play, it's very difficult, and so we try to do our best as a complete staff to make sure we limit those injuries.

But they have happened, and we have to deal with them and move on. We can't really point fingers right now because we are all in this together and we are all trying to make this club a successful club, and it's going to take everyone with that kind of mentality and that kind of focus for it to happen.

We'll get this thing sorted out, get guys back on the pitch as quickly as we can and moving forward we just make sure we do what we can as a club to have -- to make sure that player availability is something that's front and foremost because that's what it takes to win games in this league. You have to have the players to do it but every team has some injuries. We just have to manage it better and deal with our injuries the best we can. I think that's what we've been trying to do.

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