

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Xherdan Shaqiri

Press Conference



Q. Ezra brought it up just at the end of his teleconference that the expectations outside are pretty low for this team this season. What's your reaction to that, and is that something that the team uses as motivation or bulletin board material to try to prove people wrong?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: No, I think we have always expectation, also, as a team, and especially after the last season, we didn't make the playoff; we have even more hunger this season to make the playoffs and to be successful.

Yeah, finally, as the coach say, he's the boss, and he sets some goals and we try to reach them.

Q. Looking back at last season, I think we both agree, it did not live up to your expectations for the team in terms of results and maybe some individual production. What do you think is different for yourself and the team that will lead the team to be more successful come the end of the season?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: I think we are longer together, of course. We have some new players who are a very good addition to our team, and they are going to help us.

So yeah, I'm really looking forward to have them in our team, and to try to win more points, and more games, to score more goals, and yeah, I'm really looking forward and finally start the season this weekend.

Q. What do you expect from this match against New York City?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: I'm expecting a good game from both teams. I think we know New York FC, they are also experienced. They won the league like two years ago, so they are going to come here and try to grab some points.

But we know they lost the first game and they are also a bit under pressure, so they want to come here and to win the

game. But we know our qualities and we are going to go in this game with confidence and trying to win this game, the first game, is always important to go positive in the season.

Yeah, we are confident. We are trying to win this game and I'm pretty sure the team is going to be ready to go for it.

Q. Hope you don't mind if I ask you a question about your former team, Liverpool, who is struggling this season. I would like to know your feelings and view from a distance, if you think they can turn things around, and why that could happen?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: You know, this is football. This is all normal process in football. You can't be always at the top for many years, and of course, Liverpool, they are on the top all the time. This is normal. This is a normal process in football that can happen, and especially this season, you can see that, yeah, Liverpool is maybe not their best form. They are struggling a bit with performances.

But I'm pretty sure Jürgen is going to turn this around, and they know what they are doing and I'm pretty sure as soon as possible they are going to be back at the top.

Q. I noticed Jürgen Klopp recently said something about the club needs to change and obviously he was referring to the side itself, but following up on that, what do you think the changes are; that they need to be made?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: You know I'm a bit far now, so it's a bit difficult to have an opinion from this far. But I see just maybe they are playing the same -- maybe the same football many years, and the other teams are getting better, too.

You know, Premiere League is tough every game. The other teams are getting better, too, so they analyze the team and probably they -- yeah, they need maybe to change also their formation sometimes, because I think Liverpool didn't change many -- or didn't play many, many formations, and they played a long time with the same formation.

Yeah, maybe they know now how to play against Liverpool, and this was the same in Barcelona with the tiki-taka, every



football at one time, you know, they know how to play against. So maybe there they have to change a bit.

But I am too far, like I said before, to say my opinion because I am now gone from there and I don't know what really happened there at the moment.

But I am pretty sure Jürgen, he knows what he's doing, and they have the right people there to turn this around.

Q. You're coming off the most games you've played since your final season in Stoke last season. Curious how your body is feeling, and if there are any preparation changes that you have knowing that this year you will not have the oddity of a World Cup after the MLS season?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Of course, we had this year the World Cup and I didn't have a lot of holidays like the other guys had from the MLS. So I think it's positive for me that, yeah, I can go again and start now the season and play the whole season.

I'm feeling good, and yeah, I'm really hungry for success this year with this team. We are trying to reach our goals, which is the playoffs, and I will give everything, and the team, I'm pretty sure they are going to follow me.

So yeah, I'm really looking forward to this season, and yeah, we try to reach our goals. That's the most important thing.

Q. You mentioned team goals. What are your goals for this upcoming season? And how do you feel, now that you know the league, now your second season, do you just feel a lot more comfortable playing in the MLS?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: My goals I don't like to speak always big and with -- or give to -- to a lot of people my goals because I keep them to myself.

But for me, first of all, it's most important the team is successful. This is in every team the same. If it's a very good player, a top player in the team, they need their teammates, too. So we need to be first of all as a team successful, and then I'm pretty sure every player can be more successful.

So this is my first goal to -- to, yeah, to go forward and to try to make good performances and the team will follow me and then I'm pretty sure if you give 100 percent, then everything -- everybody goes through their limit and we win games and we can go to the playoffs and then everything, you know, can happen.

So this is my goal first, to have success with the team and then we know if the team is successful, everyone as a player individual can be also even more successful.

Q. Just for the record, I would like to see MLS All-Stars Game with Liverpool. You mentioned the new guys and the chemistry that you have and the new rapport that the Chicago Fire has. You did preseason with these new players. How do they look like? You mentioned, do you have a whole preseason to work it out and to have more improvement with the Fire team?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Of course, I'm confident, and I'm looking forward. That's why we bring some new players to help, first of all, the team, for performance. We got Arnaud Souquet; we got Kei coming on with a lot of experience. They are a good addition to the team who can help us a lot, who can produce more goals, defensive strength, and yeah, I'm pretty sure they are going to help us.

So I'm really looking forward with these guys to have on our team and yeah, to strengthen the team, I think we have to grow and we have to be successful in the near future, and this is our goal.

Q. One of the questions I wanted to ask you is: What is the message that you have for the fans that are going to be behind you for this 2023 season?

XHERDAN SHAQIRI: Yeah, just thank you for supporting me and my team all the time. I think in Chicago, we have very nice fans and I hope a lot of people are going to come to watch us, especially this Saturday to support us, because we need them. We know in every club, the fans are very important, and they push us every time, every player told me, when away.

I just want to say thank you to them and keep pushing us, and we try to give our best on the pitch to make you proud and happy.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...