

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Fabian Herbers

Press Conference



Q. We just were told that Jairo Torres and Fede are out for a little bit of time now. I know you guys had a bit of a preview without playing with both of them last week but now how does that change things moving forward knowing that you'll be without both of them for at least this week and potentially more?

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, to be fair, I thought it might be maybe a couple weeks for them based on how they went down. Usually if it's a muscular injury, you have to be careful. You cannot really start to assume.

But again I think yeah, we have to adjust as a team. Going forward, we still have a lot of depth that we have showed in the past game, as well. You know, we had guys that come in and then played a position to the best of their abilities, as well, and we got a goal back with the new players in. I think we adjusted well and we have to keep, you know, compensating those losses as a team in order to move forward and then try to get results.

Q. This week you get to go back to Philadelphia, as a former union player, you've been back a couple times since you came to the Fire. What are you expecting from the opposition this weekend looking forward to them?

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, since I left, it's now, I think, almost a little bit more than four years ago. Obviously they have evolved a lot under Jim. When I was there, they didn't play that high-pressing, 4-4-2 and a diamond in the midfield yet but they are in really good at that. They are really used to that system and they kind of perfected it last season as well, where they actually deserved to win the MLS Cup.

Obviously they press high and they are a very physical team and direct with the ball. They go up, find the forwards quick and try to find the second ball and find the runners behind real quick.

So I think we have to be aware of that because those are

weapons, you know, that they have. But I do think that they are also beatable. You know, we have shown it last year, and Miami showed it now, when they won 2-0 against Philly. They are still trying to find-groove as well but no team in MLS is unbeatable. You can still go there and get a result.

Q. Your goal on Saturday came from creating a chance in contested spaces and it was really the only shot on goal for the team in the evening. How can you ensure that while you're creating chances for yourself, you're also going to be creating chances for the team and creating more goal-scoring chances throughout the match especially as you're probably going to see a bigger role.

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, just because you didn't hit the target as much doesn't mean you didn't have quality chances. I remember that off-sides goal that was really close. I think a couple blocked shots where Shaqiri had one later in the game after cross, if those kind of things don't get blocked, they are on target. So we can't just see it as a shot on target.

But I do agree that we still can create more. I think the flow of the game was still a little bit too slow, especially in the first half against NYC FC. But I think if we move the ball a little bit quicker from side-to-side, you know, if it was the first game for us, so all the other teams already had a game played in MLS.

It was still a bit rusty in the first half but in the second half we got a little bit more of a groove and a flow to the game and we moved the ball a little bit quicker and if we can continue to do that, moving the ball from side-to-side, find spaces in between, find our best players on the ball like Shaqiri that can turn forward and then find the runners off the ball, then we can be more successful going forward and have more shots on target.

Q. My question is the people, almost 20,000 people hearing that goal that you scored. What do you think about it that they came out in raining situations, and what do you say to the fans after the tie 1-1?

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, of course, I was sitting on the bench and I was talking to Kei Kamara; saying that people actually showed up because honestly it's really tough to

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come out to these games in March, April weather where it's super cold, especially if you have family and kids, it's not really a fun environment to be in because it's just super cold and if you're just standing there or sitting there, it's even colder than if you were running on the pitch.

So yeah, huge credit to the fans that came out, supported us. I think you can really feel the energy, especially in the second half. I felt it with the goal. I think it's probably the best crowd that I've had scoring a goal in front of the home fans.

So I'm really grateful for the atmosphere, for the people that came out and really support us and pushing us to the last second. Almost we came away with a win but hopefully, yeah, we can do that in the future and celebrate many more together.

Q. Since you've been here and especially under Rafa Wicky and now Ezra, you've carved out a nice roll as a super utility guy. You can play on the wing, centrally and deeper, how have you done that and how do you feel about the role that you have carved out with the fire the last few seasons?

FABIAN HERBERS: Right, I think a strength of mine is always that I'm a very flexible guy. I'm versatile in my positioning. I started out in Philadelphia as a number nine when they drafted me. I think coming to Chicago, I was still sort of a 9 and made my transition and they used me as a 6 and as a 7. I think overall I have a good understanding for the game and know what each position requires and try to do it to the best of my abilities and try to help the team obviously put everything out on the pitch.

Obviously I would love to have that one position and play 30, 40 games, 90 minutes, but at the same time, it is what the situation requires, and if I'm that super guy that always comes into that position, and to help out the team, I'm happy to do so.

Yeah, grateful for every minute that I get to play on the pitch, and I want to give back, also, because the coaches trust me and I want to give back with my performance.

Q. I'm just wondering, how hard is it to have to play effectively probably four positions, five, actually, if you count both wings, so what kind of preparation does that take for you both mentally and physically?

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, I mean, each, like I said, each position requires a little bit of different skill set, if you are out on the wing, you have more high-speed runs, you have more, you know, high acceleration lows where you try to press, you know, you go with running behind, whereas as

the No. 6 or 8, you have the same pace where you are kind of jogging and trying to look more around left and right because it's more 360 the game.

When you're out on the wing, you have the whole field in front of you but when you're in the middle you have to know who is in the back of you and the side and where the pressure is coming from.

Yeah, it requires you to zone in mentally, obviously, to be prepared, visualize what the position you are going to play in requires and then the physical load, I explained from the beginning. Just be ready for that and if you are on the wing, you know you have to spread a little bit more and when you are on the 6 or the 8 inside, you have a more steady pace but you have to make more runs up and down. Kind of preparing for that, visualizing.

Q. You were talking about giving back and understanding all these rules that you have in the team. Do the younger players around you seem to come to you, seeing that you have that experience moving from position starting as a 9 and then coming to Chicago and then really evolving your game as you were going up and down between Bethlehem and Philadelphia and now in Chicago, really solidifying yourself in the MLS roster? Did the young guys on the team understand that and are they coming to you in practice?

FABIAN HERBERS: Not necessarily coming up to me but sometimes it happens organically. Sometimes the guys that have to play with the second team, they are not happy about it -- obviously they would prefer to play with the first team. I don't want to say they are not happy about. It obviously they want to give everything for the second team as well but if you were to choose you would rather play for the first team than the second team.

Just try to -- sometimes it happens organically saying that, you know, hey, keep at it and keep doing well in these games with the second team and they will give you a chance because that's how it happened for me sometimes when I played with Bethlehem back in fill deal five a, I would have good performances. Jim was a really good coach and regarding that and I appreciate the effort I put in.

I think if we can put in a similar performance and e here where guys get rewarded for good performances on the second team and see it as an opportunity rather than a punishment to go down to the second team then it can really work. I have the experience of that and sometimes I tell the guys, hey, that's how my situation was and look how far I've come. So don't be so caught up in that

situation. Rather zoom out and see the bigger part of your career, and you have so many years ahead, so use it as an opportunity.

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