

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Ezra Hendrickson Press Conference



**Q. Just wondering what the status right now is of Fede, Jordan and Jairo Torres?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Jairo and Fede, for sure, out this weekend again, and possibly Shaq. But Jairo Torres and Fede for sure will be out and Shaq is also still nursing his injury and he's not fully back yet so we might be without all three of them again this weekend.

**Q. And then with Giorgio, what's his status right now?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: His status is with U19 National Team and once he's done with that, he'll join us here in Chicago.

**Q. With the extreme weather, did you consider postponing the game, and do you see it as home-field advantage?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, well, I think whether we play at home now or we play at home in 105-degree humid Chicago weather, there's going to be some problems. There's going to be some issues.

So either way. But the issue with pushing, you know, our home games for later date is, you know, we have a conflict, we're not the only tenants of that stadium so there's a conflict with starting games then and due to that we don't want to have to push all our games into the summer when it could be hot and humid where we're having a bunch of 3 and 7 and 3 and 8 games. That's also not conducive to safety.

It's a Catch 22. It was cold for them and cold for us, so we can't make that as an excuse. It's just the nature of the city that we live in and how it is and how the schedule works out from the league. So we are fine to play our home games in March or play them in July, September, what have you but they are just conflicts, why, you know, it happens this way.

**Q. After the frustration of Saturday night, are you**

**seeing what you need to from your guys to bounce back in productive way?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Definitely. We had a long talk. We usually have a reflection meeting every Tuesday morning and go over what took place in the game, what we can do differently what we did poorly what we need to do better etc., etc.

But we extended it to a talk, a sitdown where we just discuss what took place on Saturday and you know, we didn't like it. It's the third time now, this time we didn't lose the game but it felt like a loss to us. We put a positive spin on it; and if anyone knows me, I'm a positive guy, and I'm going to find the silver lining, so to speak, on every bad situation. My point to them is we played a very, very good game for the majority of our games but we just let ourselves down late in the game and that's something we can't do especially at home. ,But if you look at the three teams that we've played, before the season started, everyone thought we would lose all three games, and badly.

But you know, barring one man down in Philly, so there's a lot of positives to take out of the three games we played and that's the spin I put on to them. It's easy to get down on yourself when stuff like that happens, but what I wanted to assure them is that we have in all three games against very, very good opponent; opponents who most say will be in the top five come October, come playoff time, have showed well for ourselves. We've been in all three games ,and apart from that being a man down in Philly we probably don't lose that game and we still are an undefeated team.

Progress is there, so basically just trust the process, shut out the noise that's coming from outside, believe in yourself and know that what we have and what we are building is going in the right direction because those were not three easy teams to play, and I thought we did fairly well in all three games. Should have won the last.

**Q. You had the back four on opening weekend and you went to a back three against Philadelphia and went to being back four this weekend. Is the plan to stick to the back four for the foreseeable future or will you change it up week-to-week?**

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EZRA HENDRICKSON: It will be based on the opposition, we thought going into Philly, having a back three but we thought two forwards was a better option for us because we wanted to put some pressure on their back four for the defenders because we know how they like to play, get the ball into your half and press you.

We felt like if we could put pressure on their back four, then maybe we keep the game in their half of the field which we want to play in our front half. It will be week-to-week. It's all tactical adjustments based on who we are playing but we do have a preference of a back four but sometimes, you know, to give yourself a chance, especially on the road we need to tweak some things and we'll decide that based on who we are playing and how they play and what kind of threats they present to us.

**Q. A lot of reflection what happened with Cincinnati and last year with the 2-0 lead. What are some things you feel like you could have done better to make sure that those leads turned into victories?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, I think especially this last one, you know, midway through the second half, they went to three forwards, so they had Santos, Brenner and they had Vazquez on the pitch and we talked about maybe we should go into a back five, but it was still early in the game. We didn't want to just sit back and absorb pressure for 30 minutes or so. So we decided, I decided we'll wait for a little longer before we just drop back if at all.

But then once they brought Acosta and they took Vazquez off; so now it's just Brenner and Santos, so we thought, okay, let's just -- we're still in control of the game, let's just stay in our back four, our 4-3-1 because now the third forward is off.

So that was a decision that I decided to make based on the changes that they make. It was kind of cat-and-mouse thing par but if you look at how the goals were scored, doesn't matter if you're in a 5-4-1 or 4-2-3-1, whatever formation you have, it's a set piece where you just have to clear that ball. That ball was cleared right to an open man on the top of the box, so you have to mark in your box, especially the 89th minute and you have could clear the ball out of the box, not across the face of the goal.

And then the second goal, it's just a bad turnover. We have guys making run down in the channel, it the 85th, 86th minute we need to play that ball long because we have options to go long, you know, maybe take 30 seconds off in the corner and we don't do that. We try to play through them and we know about their press, we have talked about their press, how they score their goals, we show them how they scored against Seattle the week prior;

and yet we still try to force that pass in, they pick it off and they go down.

So it's just, you know, formation change was something that we talked about and something I decided not to do once they took that third forward off but mentality has to be different. We have worked on that the past couple days, just compete. You're a man up, you're a goal up, two goals up, five, six minutes to go. We are not just going to get beat. We are not going to get beat on this free kick and we are not going to get beat on this set piece. We are going to grab and pull and do whatever we can to make sure we secure this lead. That's something that, you know, going forward, we hope to be better at, and from the sidelines, just, you know, continue to try to make the right decision based on what's going on in the game.

**Q. Is everything all right with Chris Brady? I didn't see him in training in that initial portion.**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Yeah, he just took a knock yesterday in the lower leg. But nothing -- he'll be back in training tomorrow. We just wanted to be cautious with that. He just took a dead leg to the lower leg. He'll be fine.

**Q. On a different note, looking a little more long term going back to last year, what growth have you seen from Carlos Terán as a person and player since you've started working with him?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, he's matured a lot. He's a guy that, you know, we need to be focused at all times. I think at some times last year in training, he could be a little lackadaisical. We've worked on that and he's more focused and he's a very, very big part of our team. He's someone that we feel comfortable, Rafa very, very well with his ability to keep pace and make tackles and stuff like that.

Overall as a player he's grown and as a person he's a little bit more mature, a little bit more professional and he's taking things a little more serious. But he has -- he's also one of those younger guy, I think he's 22 now that has that potential that could be really, really good in this league but it's upon him to, you know, bring it so to speak every day and just not wait until Saturday night at 7:30 to show professionalism about his craft. What we've seen of him last year to this year we have seen an improvement and it's showed in his play.

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