

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Kei Kamara

Press Conference



**Q. How are you feeling? Ezra just said that you were in concussion protocol. How are you feeling right now?**

KEI KAMARA: I'm good. I'm good. I was able to see my kids in the past couple of days. They gave me lots of hugs and kisses, and you know, spent some quality time. I'm good. I did some work today obviously. Got on the treadmill and went to protocol.

It's just really good that the League is doing this and the teams are doing this, making sure that they are checking on us when something does happen with head collision because it's not just about today but about years from now.

So I'm respecting the protocol, but you know, I feel good and hopefully, you know, it's not like, you know, in the past.

**Q. Moving on to another topic, another two-goal lead didn't end up with three points last week. How do you guys kind of let that -- stop that from becoming a mental thing where it's like, oh, you guys are up 2-0, here we go again. How do you guys stop that from happening?**

KEI KAMARA: Yeah, it's going to be a roller coaster of a season, really. But again, you just said there, just mental strength and mental readiness through most of these things is what we have to do as players.

We have been tested, obviously, early on in the season and into maybe three games being in a really good, comfortable lead, and not being able to fin tissue out.

But again, in soccer, as I always say, a two-goal lead is the most dangerous lead you can take. But for us, really, we are just going to learn through all these things, and I know with the coaching staff, they are not so happy. And even for us as players, we are not so happy in not being able to maximize the points that we could get at home.

But we can't dwell on it because we still have a pretty good

record here at home and even in the season, yes, we are not in the best position where we would like to be, but we don't want to dwell on it. We want to build and learn from those mistakes which we have watched videos this morning, coming back to training, and hopefully we can learn to move forward.

**Q. I know you enjoyed your time in Montréal from speaking to you last year. How did the trade go down from your perspective? And how do you enjoy Chicago, the tenth MLS city you've played in what it's been like there so far? And just in terms of the record, you're getting close to that all-time mark. I know you want to focus on the team, rather than an individual goal, but what would it mean to you to be the all-time leading scorer in MLS history? Thanks so much.**

KEI KAMARA: Thanks, I think that's three and a half questions, but I'll let you slide.

I'm happy being here in Chicago, really. I'm happy being here. I know -- I remember before going over to Montréal, I did have my agent reach out to Chicago last year and ask if there was an interest. Obviously there wasn't.

So I'm happy to be here now. Everything happens for a reason, really, and just coming here now and seeing the younger players and being part of this locker room and being able to help on and off the field, it's really something I'm going to focus on to doing that.

Montréal is in the past. Love the city. Love the people. The fans are amazing. Love the players I was able to share the locker room with, and some of the ones that left and went overseas.

But to -- really, be here in Chicago, right, for example, right when I got traded or moved here to Chicago, I remember getting a text message from Djordje Mihailovic just telling me that, hey, you're going to love Chicago, or even his father reaching out to me saying, hey, this is going to be a great city for you, so that's the best thing about it.

But I'm not going to dwell about it. I'm just going to focus on playing. And I'm not going to count on how many teams I've played on. It's fun for other people and the guys around me to say, "Hey, how many teams? You going to play for the whole league?" I'm not going to count that. I'm

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just happy to be playing and continue playing.

And hopefully I'm still in the quest for an MLS Cup. That hasn't reached me yet. I'm driven every day.

**Q. And just in terms of the record, you probably forgot because yeah, that was one -- the last of my three questions.**

KEI KAMARA: I'm a striker. I have a short memory. But it's not the concussion. When you say goals and records, it just comes and goes.

I'm honored to be able to do what I love doing and be able to be up there with those guys. It's a lot of respect and it's a lot of hard work. It's not just about the goals, but the teams and the guys that pass me these balls to score these goals.

I'm focused. I'm really not focused on that. Again, it's not a far reach for being next in line. It's not a far reach for me. But like I said, my bigger goal is not just to score goals, but it's also to win games.

**Q. Heading into the game against Atlanta, what do you think the team has learned the past couple of games given the results have not gone the way the team has learned a lot?**

KEI KAMARA: I think we've learned a lot. We've learned a lot. We've learned -- obviously we got our first win on the road and got a tough result in Philadelphia. It wasn't easy going out there and being a player down. We.

Learned a lot, and even the way we played at home to close out games, still under ten games in the season and these are the things you learn the first ten games of the season.

So hopefully we are able to translate that and go into Atlanta, which it's a tough place to play. It's artificial turf, and the stadium, everything is going to be different playing in Atlanta, and the team at the same time, they do have a lot of firepower.

But again, it's up to us to continue to play our game and believe in ourselves and that's what we are working on over here. We do have our style of play and hopefully with we can just continue to work on our style of play and close out the games, then it's going to be good for us.

**Q. What's the thing you enjoy most about being a leader, and what are the lessons you want to give to younger players, not only for longevity in the League but to help the team find success here and rise to the**

**top of MLS?**

KEI KAMARA: It's been an honor, really, to have played most of my career here in MLS; and knowing the system about the different season in which we play: Winter, spring, fall, every summer, and just being able to tell the guys to be ready for this and prepare for this. Or just the travels, how we travel, which is so much better now. We all have charters and transition to games or altitudes or different time zones.

But at the same time, I think most important message I always pass to some of the guys around me is consistency. Everybody always says, how do you keep doing this year after year? I say, consistency. It's always been my key is how can you stay consistent in everything you are doing.

And it's not just on the weekends, games, after games, whether it's every day when I come to training. When I'm here at training and I'm working the same as I did yesterday with a smile on my face; it's just showing that, you know, you've got to be consistent in what you're doing.

It's not taking days off, because being a pro, it's easy -- easy -- sorry. Easy is not the word, to it's easy to be a pro. But a lot of guys are going to get opportunity to get drafted from college or homegrown or from academies to be signing to professional contracts. But now, it's what are you going to do with that. You know how consistent are you going to be to make sure that you know how to be a pro. And hopefully I'm able to pass that along to some of these guys because it's not about being a pro, but knowing how to be a pro.

THE MODERATOR: That was a fantastic message to end the press conference. Thanks for taking the time.

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