

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Ezra Hendrickson

### Press Conference

Atlanta 1, Chicago Fire 1

EZRA HENDRICKSON: The one key question I have, I have to go back and look at the game, how nine minutes -- just one goal being scored in the second half, somehow the ref comes World Cup nine extra minutes and they score, eight and a half minutes, 30 seconds to go in the game.

That's something that I have to go back and look and see where those minutes came from but the boys fought hard, we didn't take our chances and that came back and hurt us in the end because at the end of the day that could be a 4 or 3-2 game. We have to execute better in the box and take our chances, especially on the road. We didn't do that. I thought that game, those extra minutes really wore us down.

#### **Q. Keeping pinned in the second half -- can you share tactics how you were able to do that?**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: We have a very good organized press as a team and we try to push it to one side and keep it down that side, make it predictable for the guys in the back so everyone in the room has to do their job to make it easier for the team to defend like that. That's something that we train and that's something that was able to give us 12 shutouts last year and we need to get back to do that more often.

But all in all, I thought the guys played really well. I'm very happy about the way they played. The result is not what we wanted but the effort was there and you can't fault them for that.

#### **Q. The team has continued to drop points, wins turning into draws and now today a draw turning into a loss. How do you keep the team from expecting bad things to happen late in matches? How do you keep the optimism up when things like this just keep happening?**



EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, it's easy when you know that deep down you're playing good football, and I think the guys are playing well. They are putting a lot of effort in, and we're just getting some bad breaks. That last goal hits our guy in the back and goes in the goal. Because of the way we are playing and the results that we have gotten, have not always been what we expected but the football is good.

We're making good progress, so the guys continue to fight. As long as I'm the coach here, I'm going to keep them positive and keep the confidence high. One of the things we tell them is like when you get in pressure situations like this, think of an egg and a potato. Same boiling water, the egg becomes harden and the potato comes soft. What are you going to be, the egg or the potato?

We have to take the positive egg side of things and be hard when things get rough, and especially on the road like this, can we find a way to come out with that point tonight. Tonight we were not able to but we're getting better, and that's something that I am happy to see that the players are grasping what we are trying to do and they are doing what we are trying to teach them in training.

The finishing part of things is still something that we are lacking because tonight we had really, really good chances in the box to score and we didn't take them and I think that came back to haunt us tonight. But confidence-wise, it's not easy to keep them upbeat because they know that they are playing good football. We are just not quite there yet.

#### **Q. In your opinion --**

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Certainly, with the crowd, and the atmosphere that they have here, it's a difficult place to play, and they are a good team, too. Them being good, and the crowd behind them, it's difficult to play but I thought the guys put in a really good effort tonight. I thought we played really, really good, and should probably deserve a point tonight. Didn't happen that way for obvious reasons. Considering how difficult it is to play here and how much the crowd get behind them, I was happy to see that effort that we played with tonight.

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