

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Ezra Hendrickson

Press Conference



Nashville 3, Chicago Fire FC 0

Q. Wondering if there's an update on Raphael Czichos, and the thought process behind the lineup tonight and the exclusion of Chris Mueller.

EZRA HENDRICKSON: All right. Rafa, we are not sure what is going to happen there. We have to check him tomorrow and get a better idea of what that is as far as Tuesday, his availability for Tuesday.

Chris had an injury that he couldn't make it tonight, so that's why he didn't come.

As far as the lineup, the changes, with two games in three days like this, we wanted to make some changes, rest some guys. You know, we have been running some guys out a lot of minutes throughout the year, and we wanted to give them some rest. You know, Guti had a little tightness in his groin. Souquet is an older player that we felt he needed some rest tonight.

Same thing with Kei; 38-year-old guy, to play tonight and then have to come out again and have to play two days later, we felt that would affect him.

So we are trying to -- but you have a squad, you know, and it doesn't matter who is on the pitch. We have to go out and play the way that we have been playing this year.

Tonight we don't show that. We didn't show up. I have to take the blame on that, because when your team don't show up and when you're a team that's based on possession, lost possession so many times in such easy situations, just unforced errors, and then the way we played, we opened up when we have the ball, and when we lose it like that, just our rest defense was not there, and so we got countered on and we just couldn't catch up to guys.

The changes were just based on, you know, having three games in two days, and trying to make sure that we have

some fresh legs and we have guys available for both games. But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter who is on the pitch. That was not indicative of our football and what we have been doing here, and that falls on me.

I have to give the guys, even the ones who have not been playing much, I have to make sure ready to play when they step on the pitch.

Q. I just have to ask, because last season there was a ten-game winless run, now it's only four games rebound not quite ten yet, but does it feel like pressure is growing to get a result to get a win in the midst of this part of the season?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, yeah, there's always pressure. In this sport there's pre in. My position, there's pressure. There's always going to be pressure. But we can't worry about the pressure. We have to go out and play football and believe in what it is that we are doing.

The nine games before this, we played some very good football at times, and we need to just have confidence, being courageous, remember those things and continue to do those things and then shore up some things that we were not very good at like set pieces. We have to remain confident.

Like I told the guys tonight, every year, there's always one game that you just couldn't get ahold of anything. You know, tonight we just couldn't get ahold of a game, and they capitalized on every mistake that we made.

So we've got to -- it's a quick turnaround. We have to shake it off and get ready to play again on Tuesday.

Q. You said it wasn't -- a lot of things weren't going right, and that was the first half where the Fire were unable to get a shot in general. I'm curious, from your perspective, if you thought that was something that Nashville was doing particularly well on defense, or if it was simply the team not connecting in the final third and unable to find that quality chance?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: Well, it's a combination of both. It's a very good team and they are a very good team at home, and if you come here and you turn the ball over as much as we did, you're going to pay for it because they are

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a very good counterattacking team, and so they did that a lot to us tonight.

We were on the back foot from the start of the game. Even when we got into the final third and we had a couple of crosses, just kind of went across the face of the goal we didn't connect on and they picked it up and they were off to the races on the other end. We got counterattacked a lot tonight, and that stems from us not keeping the ball, not possessing the ball like we normally do.

I don't know what the exact percentage as far as possession but it wasn't much. There was a lot of unforced errors, a lot of turnovers that you don't normally see from us, and tonight we paid. Every time we turned the ball over, we paid. They went on the other end and either got a corner out of it, or they got a PK or they got a goal. We have to get better at that.

But the main thing for us is to shake it off, and know that that's not Fire football and know that's not the way we've been playing all year because that's not indicative of what's been happening with us for the previous nine games.

So we have to get back to playing like that for Tuesday. It's a quick turnaround. We have no time to sulk or be depressed. We've got to just turn around, shake it off and be ready to play on Tuesday.

Q. Wondering for Tuesday now, two things. First of all, how do you get the team up for that game with such a short turnaround after what happened tonight, and then just what kind of lineup, pending health, of course, are you planning on putting out Tuesday night?

EZRA HENDRICKSON: We'll put the strongest lineup we have available, barring injury and fatigue. We'll get a team out there that's the strongest that we have available. Sometimes that might not be the 11 best players. It might be the 11 best cohesion; the 11 best cohesive players because that's what it's going to take.

This is a Cup game. This is something we talked to them about at the beginning of this tournament that this is a way for us to reconnect with our fans and get our fans back behind us. You know, because for too long now, they have nothing to show for their support for us, and winning a trophy is something that can do that. It would go a long way of doing that.

So we want to make sure that we put the best team that we have available out there on the pitch on Tuesday, and so we can continue in that tournament.

And then we get ready for St. Louis again on the weekend, because the games of coming, and we don't really have time to relax or to sulk on what transpired tonight. We have to go out and make sure that we have the strongest team possible on the pitch on Tuesday, so we can do a better showing than we did tonight.

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