

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Mauricio Pineda Press Conference



Q. You've been having an impressive couple of months playing as a right center back. How does feel to be consistently getting those minutes in in a position where you've been at your best over the last couple years in general?

MAURICIO PINEDA: It feels good. Yeah, I think the best part of that little stretch, I guess, is winning games. I think for any player, you're having the most fun if you're playing and if the team is winning. I think the combination of both has been good for me. We've been enjoying it.

So yeah, hopefully we can keep that same momentum going in the Leagues Cup, and then to finish off the MLS season strong, as well.

Q. Looking at this tournament, does this feel like awkward timing given that you have been having that good form over the last couple weeks and now you don't have any MLS game for four or five weeks and now have to play this tournament, or does this feel natural?

MAURICIO PINEDA: No, I think it was good to have a little bit of a break, get away and recover physically as a group. I think it's good to get away for a little bit and then come back straight into training and focus again on what we've been doing well and hopefully just keep improving and use this as just more games to continue to get better as a team, and then like I said, use that to help us get through the rest of the season.

Q. I'm curious if you can give me an idea what it's been like in training the past few weeks with you guys having more success in the MLS games? Is there a major difference, and do you feel more confidence going into the Leagues Cup knowing what you've been able to do on the field the last few weeks?

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, I think in general, obviously all of us love to win, so I think the spirits are a little bit higher, a little bit more exciting in training. It's hard when you put

in all the work and not getting the results that we want.

But yeah, I think it's all worth it in the end, getting those results. It makes it that much better knowing that we've worked hard for it, and now it's paying off.

But at the same time, I think the message has been clear in training to keep doing what we're doing, keep training the way we have been training, and to keep preparing the same way we have been for the past few games and keep doing that moving forward.

Q. What most intrigues you about this tournament, especially since it's in a new format and comes at kind of a unique time?

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, I think it's good to play in this tournament, and I think the pause from MLS is good, just to focus solely on this tournament and put everything we can do to get as far as possible in the tournament.

I think that's the good thing about being off from MLS for so long. I don't think we would want to have that much of a break, but I think it's also good to be able to focus on these games specifically and not worry about having league games intertwined with the tournament.

So it's good. It's an exciting tournament. We're looking forward to it and approaching it in the right way, prepare for it and get the best results we can.

Q. You've had the opportunity to train over the last week with the new signing of Ousmane Doumbia. Frank mentioned that he's likely to get his debut in this tournament. I'm curious if you could give us some insight on what you've seen from this new teammate of yours as a person and as a player.

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, it's good. It's good to have him here. First of all, as a person I think that's the most important thing. He seems really genuine, down to earth, wants to come here and work. You can tell he wants to put the team first in everything he does. It's great to have a person like that on the team.

Then on the field he's a nice guy, but on the field he's all over the place, putting in tackles, working hard, good on the ball. Yeah, it's a great addition to the team, and there's



no complaints when you have a teammate like that that's a good person and gives everything for the team on the field.

Q. As you mentioned, you guys are looking forward to playing in this tournament. I'm sure you're seen some of the highlights or maybe watched some of the games. As one of the last teams to get started in this tournament, seeing the highlights, seeing the games, what Messi has done, just some of the exciting penalty shootouts, is there even more of an excitement or an anticipation building within the club to finally be able to participate and get started in this tournament?

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, it's great. It's great. You can see the excitement in all the games. You can see the intensity that all the teams are putting into this tournament. So yeah, it's exciting for us to finally get our moment and our chance to play in the tournament and do the exact same thing, approach it just like the rest of the teams are approaching it, with the right mentality, with the right intensity, and yeah, hopefully go out, give a good game, have an exciting game and come out with the result that we want.

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