

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Mauricio Pineda Press Conference

Q. What is it about the first game and your thoughts about FC Cincinnati?

MAURICIO PINEDA: I thought the first game was a good first step for us, a good challenge. I think the game was really intense for 90 minutes. I think both teams put a lot of energy into the game, but I think -- especially us -- that's something that we pride ourselves in and that's what we want to base our season off of.

So I think it's really important to have that early on and have that performance where we were forced to put in a lot of energy, a lot of intensity if you want to stay in the game. And I think that's something that we want to keep moving forward as a base for our team.

For Cincinnati, we're expecting the same type of game. And going into the season, we're going to have to have that same intensity, that same personality every single game. Obviously get better on the football side of things. But, yeah, I think we're happy with the intensity we put into the game, and hopefully we can continue that for this weekend and the rest of the season.

Q. As a Chicago guy, local guy, you never had a chance to wear the red shirt in an MLS game before. Saturday night that's going to change. What will that mean to you to put that red kit on after the last four years in blue?

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, it's exciting. Ever since I joined the club I was wearing a red jersey. It was new to me when I came in and started wearing blue. But, yeah, now it's exciting to be back in red, back in the color that we were always used to playing in the academy. So, yeah, we're excited for that and even better that it's at home.

Q. The red, I know it's just a kit color, but can the red have sort of a galvanizing effect? Can it change the identity of the team and the club and just how the players view their part of the club?

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, I think the red is an important part of the club's history. For me, for all the guys that have been around the club for a while we know that. So we're going to take that into account when we're wearing the red and really trying to represent the right way.

That goes for everyone and the rest of the team, not just the guys that have been around. I think everyone's excited for the red and we know the history that this club has in that color.

Q. After that game in Philly, of course, you're at center back -- we're always talking about your positional versatility -- looking back to playing against FC Cincinnati you were largely in that central, defensive midfield role in the 3-3 game. I'm just curious how you take in all the info of always looking at it from both the center back and central defensive midfield spot, and just adjusting to a different position year over year, game over game sometimes.

MAURICIO PINEDA: I think for me it's all about perspective now. I think that's what I've started to learn having played in the midfield and at center back, like you said.

When I'm in the midfield, I know what I expect and what I want from the center back. I try to do the same thing when I'm playing center back. That's something I've kind of tried to learn to do, to notice little things that could help me and help my teammates, not only in the game because I have played in both positions so I know what is expected.

But, yeah, it's been good. This offseason I've been playing center back for the most part. So I've gotten to learn that position a lot and improve there with the new coaching staff.

Yeah, it's been exciting the whole season, the whole preseason. So, yeah, I just try to adapt and learn different ways to improve in whatever position I'm playing.

Q. You mentioned playing at the center back, working with the coaching staff. Sounds like you're going to be playing center back this season more than the midfield. How has Carlos Garcia coming in as assistant coach as a center back, how has that help you improve as well?

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MAURICIO PINEDA: I think him and Paulo have done a great job with not only me but the entire back line, just making it clear for us since day one what they expect from us. And I think the clarity is what makes it easiest for the players -- just to go out and do exactly what the coaches expect us to do.

We trust that what they're saying is good. Obviously it helps that he played in the position. So I know that he's giving me advice that he's done as a player and has learned as a coach as well.

But, yeah, I think the clarity has been the best part, just knowing what they expect from us and going out and doing that.

Q. Mauricio, dwelling more on this being the home opener, you guys had only six wins at home last year. Among the players, how high would you say a priority is of the things you guys want to accomplish this season to be better at Soldier Field than you were last year?

MAURICIO PINEDA: Yeah, I think one of the things we talk about this year is just trying to win every game. I think that's our priority, approaching every game knowing that we can't win every game. Obviously having played away this weekend we wanted to win the game. We thought maybe we could have come away with that with three points.

But, yeah, that's the approach to every game this year -- being aggressive, looking for those results in away games and home games. But I think definitely it's more important for us and we should be having a better record than what you mentioned at home.

So, yeah, it's something that we're focusing on and working hard to get good results at home, make our fans proud, work hard, like I said before, put good intensity into the game, and, most importantly, come out with three points at every home match.

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