

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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## Fabian Herbers Press Conference



**your thoughts on the Euros with you and the boys in the locker room?**

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, I'm a big Dortmund fan. I group up in that area. As a kid I went to the stadium with my dad. So I'm a huge Dortmund guy. Excited to see them win yesterday at PSG.

Today, I think as a German, I think internationally we always root for the German team. So I hope Bayern makes it through and we can have like a makeover of the 2013 final where Dortmund lost against Bayern at Wembley, as well. So have Bayern vs. Dortmund again at Wembley as the Champions League final that would be nice but hopefully Dortmund as the winner this time.

So I'm rooting for Bayern today. Yeah, with the Euros coming up, probably Shaq is going, right. I don't know who else might be going.

I mean, you talk about it here and there. It's not a topic of conversation on a daily basis because I guess as it comes closer, it's probably going to be more of a topic. It's exciting for Shaq. It's exciting, I think the tournament is taking place in Germany, as well. I have friends and family that might be going to the games, as well.

In Europe it's huge. Here, sometimes a little bit different with the time change and when you can actually watch the games. The atmosphere and the feeling is not quite there when you are living on this side of the earth. But it's exciting. It's a big summer. You know, probably with the Copa America, too, but yeah, that's just being said.

**Q. St. Louis, they like to play really fast football, quick on the counter, long balls over the top. You've been playing mostly in the defensive midfield this year. How do you get involved in the play defensively, especially against a team that likes to play that direct?**

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, I mean, oftentimes what happens is the ball goes over your head, and then you try to recover and then win second balls.

Obviously we have to do a good job of that, you know, winning the second balls, and once you get them, I think there are spaces to play. We still have to try to impose our game on to them. We can't just adapt to them and just

**Q. This weekend, you're going against a St. Louis team that last year you beat twice and you scored in the Open Cup against them. The league is trying to get a rivalry out of this game. For us locals, we like to have it against St. Louis. Curious how you're expecting a team to come out against you guys when they are likely looking for a win that's going to hurt after last year.**

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, we did some analysis on them. I think they are pretty aggressive. They are probably one of the best teams in the League in terms of, yeah, pressing, and then, you know, when they lose the ball, repress. So we have to be mindful of that.

And then obviously, yeah, try to exploit the places that they do give. When there's a people on one side, you know, we have to switch the ball to the other side as quickly as possible.

Yeah, in terms of the rivalry, I think it's probably the closest city to us, I want to say geographically. I think it's nice for to us have a real rivalry with them. You know, we beat them twice so they are going to be hungry to beat us. I think the team is excited to go there because we haven't been there. It's a new stadium. Heard the atmosphere is pretty good.

I think it's an exciting game for the fans, and for us, you know, another good opportunity to steal points there as well.

**Q. This is a big summer for your home country with the Euros and potentially a Champions League final with all-German teams. Curious, do you have an interest today with Bayern versus Real Madrid, and curious in the locker room, a lot of you guys are from Europe and will be at the Euros, probably Shaq and who else might be doing, but do you guys talk about the upcoming summer? It's a month away that the tournament is coming, and curious about that, too. Who do you got today for Champions League, and**



play long balls like on our side, as well.

But I think we are not really the team that strives just playing long balls and tries to win second balls. So once we have the ball at our feet, you know, even though they are pressing, we still have to try to find the spaces and try to play through the lines because I feel like that's our strength more than just hitting long balls and trying to win second balls.

**Q. In a few games, Fire has not been able to create opportunities for Cuypers or Koutsias or whoever is in the front. What do you think the Fire would need to do this Saturday to create more chances? Because I know you're the captain, and if Shaq is not on the field, somebody else has to create the chances and opportunities of a goal. What do you think the team has to improve for this Saturday?**

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, I feel like a lot comes down to decision-making and execution in the final third. I think that we do get there. It's not like we don't even get forward and we are just playing in our own half the whole game.

I think especially in the game against New England, especially if you look at the first half, the first 25 minutes or so where we were on top of them and had good opportunities to goal or like to at least get towards the box, but then either it's the decision-making, we shoot when we should still find a pass or the cross is just not right. It's trying cross and really find a guy, not just cross to cross, just to put the ball in.

Yeah, it's the decision-making. Then when we get there, having the composure, seeing the open guy, making extra pass to then extra clear chance on goal.

And I do think we did have some quality chances, just not the quantity that we would like, you know, that you might need in a game like that to maybe score one or two. But I do think we get there. It's just then, you know, about composure, execution and decision-making.

**Q. With the results not really going the team's way lately, how do you stay positive? How has the group been doing? You've been doing things but just not actually getting balls in the back of the net.**

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, it's not easy. The team is in a tough spot right now. If you don't win one out of three games at home, it's tough. It's not something that we want or that we hope for, especially with the expectations of the fans, and your own expectations are, yeah, different.

That said, nobody is going to feel sorry for ourselves.

Nobody is going to feel sorry for us. There's only one way to get through it, and that's keep going and try to do better next time. That's the thing, you know, to just go, look ahead, and play the next game and see what you can do better and try to be better as a whole team.

So you know, putting our heads in the sand is not going to help anybody. So you know, we try to keep working. Try to stay positive in training. You know, have a good training week and then, you know, we go again and hopefully we can get a result there in St. Louis.

**Q. One more, talking about corner kicks this year, it's just not been the success you guys have wanted to have, bringing in a new coach. Curious at this point what you've seen and what can be improved on your guys' end to make sure you're getting a couple goals out of those opportunities that you guys have been getting in abundance recently?**

FABIAN HERBERS: Yeah, one is about the discipline to make the runs that we actually train and should be doing. Yeah, I think we do certain reps during the week, and then just seeing the signal, if it's one hand, two hands or something else, a trick play here or there, where we actually, yeah, you know, try to do it and everybody find their spots.

It's also about execution. If we have to hit the corner kicks then to the spot that they are supposed to go. Let's say we have a signal that we go to the second post; and then the ball comes first post, and we are outnumbered there, and then we are not going to win the ball and the first ball.

I think it comes down to discipline to make the runs, and then trust that the taker is also, you know, getting the service there. I feel like either/or has not been always right this season.

And I think set pieces are very important, hugely important, where you can sneak away with results. I think Cincinnati did it to us early in the season where they had a couple corner kicks to the near post, and we couldn't defend, and sneak away with three points. I think it's a very important part of the game, and obviously we are not good enough at that, either, this year. So I feel like we have a lot of areas to improve still.

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