

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Hugo Cuypers

Press Conference



Q. You've been in Chicago a couple months now. I think it's about five months. I wonder if general, now you're scoring goals, now the team is starting to click; how are you personally and how are you enjoying life in Chicago?

HUGO CUYPERS: I mean, much better now that the results are better and the performances, as well. I think the last -- especially the last three performances were good, that we fought our way into the system, and hopefully it can continue that way. And for the rest, the weather is unbelievable right now. When family and friends are over, we really enjoy the city.

Q. Coming over from Europe to America, one of the weird things is that the calendar is different so you might essentially have 18 months of soccer or 16 months of soccer in a row. How are you dealing with that physically or are you anticipating that?

HUGO CUYPERS: I mean, I talked with the physical department here, and we are monitoring everything and making sure that I get every help I need if necessary, but for right now, I mean, the season just ended in Belgium, so I'm still in a rhythm. Maybe in a couple months I will have some fatigue coming up, but I don't expect it to be too much. I feel good.

Q. Just the recent results, it's turning around, you're getting to where you wanted to be after we talked last month before these things turned around. How close do you think this offense is and you are to hitting the stride you want to be and at the level of goal scoring and goal creation that you want to be?

HUGO CUYPERS: It's difficult to say or to put a measurable goal to it. But the goal is to continue creating and scoring goals that we have done the last games and doing so consistently. It starts with now the upcoming Toronto away game and knowing we have three away games in a row, which will be challenging with the position we are in now, and the position we put ourselves in doesn't

give us any other choice than taking points on the road, so it starts on Saturday.

Q. Playing away games is always difficult, but perhaps especially in Major League Soccer given the travel that has to be done. How have you found being on the road in MLS, and in addition to the difficulties, have you enjoyed seeing North America in doing so?

HUGO CUYPERS: Personally, I don't find it that challenging because I've been in Greece where I played for a team that was located on an island, so every two weeks we had to take the plane. I was on loan to a team in France which was, again, on the island Corsica, so every two weeks we took the plane.

Last 18 months in Belgium we were playing in Europe, so because of the World Cup the first season and all the qualification games we had this season, we played basically away every second Thursday. Those away trips were much further from Belgium.

I've been used to it. I'm capable of dealing with it. I think that's a personal issue; maybe other players manage it differently. But personally I'm perfectly fine with it.

I mean, yeah, we travel to different states and cities in the U.S., but we don't see much. We arrive on Friday, we rest from the trip, and Saturday is game day, and we travel right away back to Chicago. Can't say we see a lot.

Q. Half a season into your time in MLS, how have you found the level of play? How does it compare to what you expect? Has there been anything surprising about the level in North America?

HUGO CUYPERS: No, I wouldn't say there's anything surprising. I think like every league, it has its specificities, but I think there is more transition than what I was used to, and a lot of games open up during the second half. But it's how you prepare as a team and how you are able to cope with it.

Q. A lot of fans have been asking, what does #MM means?

HUGO CUYPERS: Mastering mindset.



Q. So when did that become something you needed to do professionally, mastering that mindset?

HUGO CUYPERS: I don't know. I always have the right mindset in doing things and just doing the best I can, but then I got a little bit deeper into it reading some stuff, speaking to people with more experiences, some coaches, and I formed my own identity into it, I would say. It's coping with challenges in struggles professionally and accepting them and accepting every challenge that comes your way and trying just to do your best to overcome them and be as successful as you can be and be the best version of yourself.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports