

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Andrew Gutman Press Conference

Q. Have you talked about just the importance of getting three points against conference rivals in each and every one of these and what's the mentality of the group like right now?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I think even before this game, the last couple games, we now how important it is to pick up points every single game, and now we have a little bit of a home stretch right now.

Unfortunately we didn't get points the last game but especially playing at home it's very crucial for us to get three points and basically every game the rest of the season is important for three points. You know, the guys know that. The coaching staff really implements that on us every single day so we are all motivated to believe that we can push for playoffs. You know, we've just got to go out there and get three points every single game.

Q. Obviously you're playing more minutes; are you getting back into the rhythm?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah in, Leagues Cup, it was important for me to get minutes and get a feel for being out there again, and then these last two games, obviously I've played more and more minutes. I think in New York, I was still kind of getting my bearings and kind of getting my fitness back up. I felt a bit more tired in that game.

But last weekend against Miami felt really good. I was able to get up and down the field like I normally do, and I think every game, I can build up my fitness and I can get back my sharpness that I had before these injuries.

Q. You were subbed for Ariel the past game. Did Coach mention that you guys might be filling in for each other?

ANDREW GUTMAN: He didn't say anything to me about that. You know, I've known Ari; I've played against him many times throughout the league and he can play in multiple positions. I think in any situation where you can

put a guy out there that has speed that, has quality that can get up and down, that's always a good thing. Whether he plays my position or he plays a little bit higher up the field, he's been a great addition for us and when he gets back from the national team, hopefully he'll contribute more for us.

Q. So D.C., they have been playing high-press, lots of direct attacks. How do you defend against a time like that?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I'm just you've got to be strong in your duels. You've got to be soup area aware of the balls into the channels. You've always got to be on the front foot and eliminate the chances of them getting their head up and able to play behind.

I think when we played them in D.C., we had a really good game plan against them and I thought we should have honestly come away with more from that game. You know, but for us playing at home, we want to dictate the tempo. We want to be on the front foot. We want to control the game but you know, then on the other side of it, we do have to be aware of their attacking with the counterattacking and the directness that they play with.

Q. The way you look at the 1v1s --

ANDREW GUTMAN: Whoever plays out there, last time out, they did a really good job handling them. Obviously Benteke is a fantastic player. He is ahead in duels in the League by a crazy amount.

For us it's understanding that you have to understand that's going to win duels and you have to be in good position, whether he flicks it off or tries to go in behind. It's us being aware of their style of play and being in the right positions to shut it down.

Q. After the Leagues Cup, and again now playing in SeatGeak, have you thought about the history of just when you personally and your history with the team?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I think it will be a really cool experience for me. This is a stadium that I grew up watching the Fire play in. I played in it in the academy when I was training with the first team we trained on the pitch. I still remember it at Toyota Park, when people

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asked me where I'm playing, I forget that it's called SeatGeek now.

It will be a cool experience to play in the stadium for sure. But at the end of the day, Soldier Field is our home field. I think that's the place where the Fire want to be moving forward, and so yeah, it's a cool opportunity to play in SeatGeek this weekend.

Q. The playing surface, obviously SeatGeek has more of a soccer design. Have you noticed the dimensions and the field itself compared to the regular home field?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, we played there in Leagues Cup. I got a couple minutes there when we played Toluca. I'm familiar with. It every once in a while we'll go out and train on that field as well.

But it is more of a soccer-specific stadium so it does have a little bit different feel to it. Even the fans are a little bit closer to you. But this is a stadium that is like a lot of the stadiums around the league. So it's nothing new for any of us. I'm sure some guys have played on this field before but for the guys like me who haven't played on it much, it's just like playing in another soccer-specific stadium.

Q. How the grass is comparable or different?

ANDREW GUTMAN: To be honest, I don't really know too much. I'll probably go out there this week and check it out. I think a lot of the way the grass is depends on how it's cut and how wet it is. I noticed the ball moved quicker than Soldier Field. Depends on the day. Toluca was raining on and off and that did create a different surface for us.

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