

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Press Conference



Q. Curious, three weeks into the season, you guys have had three very different types of games. What do you think this group has learned the most about itself with that culminating in a win last weekend?

JONATHAN DEAN: I would say to start, being resilient. If you've seen each of the games, we started off, Columbus, really hot, and then kind of got a little cold throughout the rest of the game; vice versa D.C.: We started a little slower and then we kind of got hot; and then in Dallas, I think was probably more of our complete performance overall.

I think it's just growing and becoming used to one another because it is a different team.

Q. So this team, there's been a lot more players know their roles and stuff like that. Curious how you feel that's benefited the team with the leaders in the group, as well?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, I think personally, everyone knows their role and kind of direction, but it also helps when you know other players roles as well. Especially it helps playing on the field. As you can see, there's more continuity in one another playing off the ball. Things like that.

And you know, with the leadership group, we all see each other as leaders, not just people that wear the armbands. But I think it takes it upon ourselves to become leaders and that's ultimately how you have great teams is everyone steps up.

Q. Obviously you're in a situation where you're, in effect, competing for time with another player who is much younger than you, who is a guy that doesn't speak English very much at this point and still getting used to the team, the environment. As a defender, and specifically the right backs on the roster, how do you build a relationship with a guy where there are those limitations, and you're trying your best, even with a

language barrier, an experience gap and those sorts of things?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, obviously we're all here to compete at the highest level but at the end of the day we're a team. So we're there for each other no matter what. Sometimes it will be me, and sometimes it will be him. That's our role within that is to support and push each other to where we get the best out of everybody. That raises the ceiling.

The language barrier, like you said, it's tough, especially a young kid coming over but for us it's trying to make him feel like home. You know just smiling, saying hey, things like that. Little things go a long way. Credit to him for taking that challenge and doing that at such a young age.

Q. You mentioned about the progress you've been doing through these three games but what was the difference between the last game where you guys got a result previous to the other two games?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, I think we talked about it with the D.C. game, being more composed later in the game when we have a lead, right. Where kind of towards the end, we kind of got, you know, I wouldn't say panicky, but we were just defending a lot more rather than keeping the ball like we had been, say, with the Dallas game. You could tell later in the game, we were a little more composed towards the end trying to keep the ball and have the ball which ultimately limits their opportunities of attacking.

Q. Curious, going back, you talk about personal accountability within the locker room. What is that like when you have a group that doesn't necessarily need to hear it from everybody else, but is committed to bringing up the standard, even if they don't have to hear it from a coach?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, I think that ultimately comes from us being here the last year, the last two years, we want to win here and we want to win for City of Chicago and the fans that we have and the ownership that we have, as well, with Joe. I think we want to be successful and kind of be that team that brings that back.

Q. You mentioned consistency. One of those pieces

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of consistency so far has been you've had three straight starts. Can you talk about what you think about the role that you've been asked to play so far this season, and how you think your game has changed under the new system with Gregg?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, I think, you know, obviously you never know what may happen with injuries, things happening. I think at that point with Gregg, he's made it clear within each position what he wants game by game, and it's just going out there and trying to execute the game plan as best as possible, you know, going out there and having the confidence in doing that. Hopefully we'll continue to do so.

Q. I spoke to Gregg about playing from the back, and he mentioned also about it taking time for you guys to just gel and kind of figure it out. Is that something you guys figure out individually or as a group, or is this something that just kind of clicks one day, or it's like a gradual learning thing where it just becomes easier and easier every week?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, that's a great question. I'd say it's probably more a gradual week by week.

Sometimes you're playing with a center back pairing or an outside mid pairing, and then the the next week it could be someone else.

It's kind of just starting to learn and grow with your teammates, and knowing their strengths and weaknesses, as well, and working together. And just over time, the more you play together, you can kind of start to see unfold out there on the pitch.

Q. This game is the first game between an American team and a Canadian MLS team happening in Canada this year. When an American team has visited lately, there's been a strong response to the National Anthem. I don't know if this is something you've discussed or not. I don't want you to touch on the politics of it at all, but the impact of a crowd that can get so into it and kind of hostile early, have you talked about to mitigate the way that feels? We know Toronto normally has big crowds regardless of the situation,

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, I mean, that hasn't been something that we've touched on yet. But yeah, for us, we'll be respectful no matter what.

Q. You're in year three in Chicago, and it was a bit different those first two years, getting comfortable and understanding your role in MLS. In year three, do you have that comfort, or is there still that feeling that you

need to still prove yourself week-in and week-out?

JONATHAN DEAN: No, I'd say there's definitely a comfort within it, playing -- you know, this is my third year. Obviously for me personally, continue to grow as a player, I think there's always room to improve and get better.

And I think that's the next thing, right, is challenging myself to get better in certain aspects on the field and ultimately see what happens from there.

Q. With the situation you're in right now, guys beat up and a lot of guys going in and out of injury and working to get back in fitness, as one of the more experienced and veteran guys on this group, what does that ask of you as a team leader in terms of keeping morale high in a situation where it feels like every few days or every week, somebody else is going down?

JONATHAN DEAN: Yeah, it's a good question. That's also, you know, why we need depth and why we have players. That's the thing, you tell people, you never know when your name might be called. You could not play eight games, and the next week you're supposed to be starting. It's up to you, if you're in that position, vice versa, to be prepared. And also, knowing injuries are part of it, and knowing how to take your of your body the best you can and do the little things right.

And sometimes you still might be injured. It's also to be there for those guys who are out because they play a huge part, as well.

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