

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Andrew Gutman

Press Conference



Q. Curious as we near the halfway point of the fire season, what are some of your overall takeaways from what this team has done so far? And what does it need to do to get to that next step where you guys aren't floating around the playoff line?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I think the first half of the season has been, you, for me, kind of expected, you, some up, some downs. But overall, like a lot of positives. I think the team we are now compared to a couple months ago is completely different.

So for me, I think we're definitely a playoff team and we just need to continue on this upward path of getting better every single day and understanding what Gregg and the staff want us to do, and just continuing to execute it.

Q. Twelve months ago at this point in the season, it was not exactly going according to plan for you. Now you're playing great soccer, you're playing week-in, week-out. How is that for you emotionally now that you're able to be able to find that rhythm in consistency?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, it's been amazing. You know, I think I've said it before in a couple of other interviews. You know, I have, like, a newfound love and understanding for what I do professionally so for me. It's not only what I do on the field. It's what I do off the field in the afternoons, every single day recovering, making sure my body's right.

I feel like this year I'm really able to express what my skill set is. Hopefully I can continue to do that for the rest of the year.

Q. So my favorite advanced stat is American Soccer analysis. They have, like, goals added, which looks at everything that happens basically, and adds, like, says how much that contributes to a team getting goals. At a fullback, you are the second in their ranking, but that's behind Christian Espinoza, who plays as a winger. So what's been the key for you being so

successful this year, in your opinion?

ANDREW GUTMAN: I think it's what the coaching stuff has told me to do. You know, I had a lot of meetings with Gregg in preseason, and then I've had a lot of meetings with Felipe. Like, during the season, weekend and week out, just constantly finding ways to improve my game constantly. Showing me different things that maybe I don't see one week, but then they show me and the next week, I'm starting to see it.

You know, and then also just, I think collectively as a group, we're really complementing each other I get to play with some really good wingers, some really good tens, an amazing striker. So for me to be able to chip in offensively is just a positive.

Q. Hey, as a player, what does it to be part of this double header, especially knowing how important it for the soccer fans right here in Chicago?

ANDREW GUTMAN: You said the double header? Yes, yes for me, I think it's amazing for the city. You know, soccer's definitely on the horizon in America. You know, and a point that I feel like maybe goes under the rug a little bit is us as role models for men's professional soccer is one thing.

But then to have a women's professional team, I think that creates a whole different type of role models for younger girls in the younger generation. And then to be able to collaborate that and see both the men and women play on the same day is an amazing experience for all the young kids in Chicago.

Q. I want to ask you about the difference between the last year where you guys didn't have any training facility and now you have a new stadium. You have a new coach. What was being the difference between last year for you guys and the team to this year?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I think when you look at our facility last year and then you look at the facility we're at this year, it's night and day. You know, the facility that Joe and you know, some of the guys he works with to be able to develop something like this is amazing.

And just as a professional player, coming into a facility like

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this, it just makes you want to be here more every single day. You know, we have every recovery tool, we have everything that any professional could ask for and so it's been an amazing transition for the club.

You know, I've been in and around the club since I was 15 years old, and to see the development of the club the last you know, ever since kind of Joe took over and then kind of his plans till now has been unbelievable. And then now with this new stadium coming in, it's me, as a kid, I could never imagine what this club is now, and it's just, it's awesome to see.

Q. The last time you guys met up with Nashville, it was a lopsided victory. Obviously, an ugly score. Is there some extra energy behind taking on Nashville this Saturday at home in front of your fans to maybe get like a payback on them?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I mean, what happened last time is unacceptable, and the guys know that, and we definitely want to kind of flip the script on that whole situation and this weekend's a perfect time for us to do it. You know, I think the team we were then and the team we were in now is completely different, and hopefully this Saturday, we can go out in front of our home fans and get a win.

Q. Kind of going from that Nashville game to seeing what the team has done since then, culminating in that result last weekend. What do you think has been the biggest takeaways from what you guys have been doing day-in, day-out on the training pitch to kind of respond to such a result in such a way that's put you guys in more of a position of success.

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, I think it's every single day we're understanding what the coaches want to do for us, the system they want to play. And it's it's one of those systems that like, it's not overnight. You know, there's going to be bumps; there's going to be highs and lows.

I think now we're starting to get in a place where we have more highs and lows. And I think that's just a combination of the coaches constantly implementing that, and also the players responding super well, and everyone's studying to really understand their individual roles and how it plays to the team's success.

Q. We've seen Chase Gasper get back on the field at the second team. What's that like having another guy who's a natural in your position where maybe you don't have to carry the load of playing 90 minutes every game?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah for me, I always want to play, I always want to be out there, but to have someone like Chase back as a huge positive for the club. We all know what Chase can bring on the field. Unfortunately, the last year has been pretty rough for him.

But it's good to see him back and hopefully he can come in and contribute to the first team and help us get some more lines. After a strong stretch, I'm motivated the team, to keep the momentum going back home. Super motivated. You know, something for me is we've been very good on the road, but personally, I haven't really liked how we played at home. You know, for me, I feel like you should never lose a game at home, or even Ty.

So that's something that I want to see us as a group kind of flip the switch and start getting more consistent home wins and dominating more at home.

Q. So obviously, we know what happened last time with Nashville. You talked about it, but specifically with you, your role in the back line, I know you also go forward, but how important is it to really tighten down the defense and what do you think the key is to make that happen?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Whether Chris is in goal, Jeff is in goal, whoever's in goal, I don't really have a different viewpoint on the game. Like Jeff in preseason was amazing, and he showed it every single day.

And then obviously, Chris comes in and he's played most of the minutes, but even in training every single day, when Jeff wasn't playing, he was very good very calm on the ball.

So I don't have a don't have a different viewpoint of when Jeff's . I think we just continue to do what we do, and hopefully this weekend, we can get a win.

Q. You've been statistically the best all round left back in MLS. How do you feel about potentially being in the conversation to make the All-Star Team?

ANDREW GUTMAN: Yeah, it's always cool to be in consideration and people kind of put your name up for that. You know, for me those awards are a little tricky, right, because it's sometimes maybe not the best players in the position, but maybe more of the most popular players.

So I look at it as it's super nice to be in the conversation that means you're doing things right, but for me, I just focus on getting better every single day, and then on the weekends being the best version I can of myself.

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