

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Sergio Oregel

Press Conference



Q. You're playing LAFC of this weekend. Looking back to pre-season, that was one of the games where you got a whole a lot of minutes in California against them; since then, you've gotten a whole lot of minutes in MLS. Can you reflect on that game and how it set you up for the successes you've had this year?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, obviously LAFC of is a great team, so being able to play in the early stages of pre-season showed me what it's about, you know, them being one of the better teams.

Yeah, throughout the season I've been working hard and getting a little bit better. Yeah, I'm excited to see how this game turns out.

Q. You played ten MLS minutes before this season; two thirds of the way through the year and you've played nearly every game this year. Overall how does it feel to have had this experience when it came out of nowhere?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, it's crazy to think that my life can change just like that. I've been taking it all in. This is a dream come true to be able to play in front of all my fans, my family and friends at Soldier Field. Yeah, especially being from Chicago it feels that much more.

Yeah, I am just grateful for the opportunity I've been giving and take it day by day.

Q. I don't think in December or January you would've expected to play this much this season, especially in the first team. Does that change how you evaluate your goals?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, just gave me a big confidence booster seeing that I can do anything I put my mind to. Obviously last year I wasn't playing as much, but came into this year with a good mindset and all the hard work has paid off.

Q. You talked about getting minutes, talked about playing at Soldier Field in front of family and friends. This is the first game in MLS league play this year back in SeatGeek Stadium. It's a venue you know well, that you train in, played is that played some MLS Next Pro minutes. What's it like getting back there?

SERGIO OREGEL: It's great. Like you said, I played a lot of second team games there, so I know the stadium pretty well. Yeah, I'm excited to see the fans there. That's where I made my debut. Yeah, good venue.

Q. What have you found to be the most challenging part of this year, particularly as a midfielder where you've had so much movement alongside guys you know really well like Maurey and Gutty?

SERGIO OREGEL: I would say challenges is just consistency, because obviously it's my first year, so being able to do it on a daily basis. But like you said, I know them very well so being able to play with them made it a lot easier to get used to it, yeah.

Q. Obviously spoken a lot this year about how big the gap is between Next Pro and MLS. Given you went from playing exclusively Next Pro to exclusively first team, how has the adjustment been for you physically and the workload?

SERGIO OREGEL: I would say it's a lot in the workload. It's way more difficult playing games on the week and having -- well, like I said, two games every week. But it's something I've been getting a little bit more used to. Having great teammates around you helps a lot.

The coaching staff helps me with my mental. Yeah, it's been light.

Q. So entering the final stretch of the regular season you talked about playing with guys like Gutty and Maurey that you have known for a large part of your life. There is also a lot of new people in the midfield group and throughout the roster. Can you talk about how integrated you feel as a group with guys that are new this year?

SERGIO OREGEL: They're all great additions. Being able to see -- they come from different cultures as well. What



they bring to the team, it's great to have that diversity and. You know, just seeing how they play, they played in Europe and it's a different style, so I learned a lot of things from them. They're great people off the field, so just having them on the team is great.

Q. I know Alex asked about the physicality challenge. Curious, how do you think you've grown as a pro this year? Obviously you're still pretty young, but to go from being a guy who only got a couple minutes here to somebody who is starting every game, how would you say you matured as a soccer player over the last three or four months?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, I would say I just became more professional in the sense that gym every day now, seeing that midfielders in this league are a lot more physical than I am. Just trying to keep up and be in the best shape I can so when I go on the field I'm able to perform.

Q. Coming into this season and knowing that you had a new coaching staff and what sort of was ahead for you playing a full season and being so involved, how would you grade in it a sense to this point, your own season, and that includes learning the new system and your play on the field? Was it something that exceeded your expectations? Lived up to your expectation? Maybe somehow underwhelmed? How do you feel about where you are right now?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, for sure. I think everybody that came in exceeded my expectations. Being with the national team it made it a little bit easier to adjust to the style or the format they were trying to give us, so that helped a lot.

But just seeing how they came in with a positive attitude and everything, trying to change to make the Fire a lot better, yeah, been grateful to experience this. I'm excited for what's to come.

Q. (Question in Spanish.)

SERGIO OREGEL: They teach you discipline and hard work and how to play together as a team. I think having those talented kids come in, I think it's great for their future. Anybody can go do it as long as you put your work to it.

Like I said, they're all great players. Being able to play with the homegrowns, it's amazing to see how we all grew up obviously in different times but the same pathway.

Q. I think in the last three, four years U.S. Soccer has shown a lot of faith in you even when you haven't been playing for the first team here in Chicago. How do you

feel about the upcoming U20 World Cup and your chances to make that team, even though it's a good midfield group?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, like I said, I'm grateful for all the opportunities they been giving me too. Yeah, not playing with the first team and them still calling me up just shows that they believe in me. I am thankful for that.

Yeah, we got the U20 World Cup coming up this year, that's something I love to be a part of. Yeah, we have great midfielders. Yeah, I'm just excited to see what happens. You never know. We're all making a playoff run, so I have that in the back of my mind.

Q. You've been coached a lot in U.S. Soccer by Marco who you were familiar with in Chicago and had him with the U19s and now U20s. What's it like playing under him, and what would it mean to play at a World Cup if the opportunity arises?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, Marco is a great coach, very passionate and wants the best for the team always and always pushes us to be the best every day in training, never settles for less.

And, yeah, like I said, the World Cup is a dream of mine. Being able to represent the U.S. is something I would be very proud to do.

Q. Soccer question for you. In the past last couple years I know we felt strongly about your abilities on set pieces, on corner kicks. Now in MLS that hasn't necessarily been your role. You've had that outside role trying to recover half clearances. What has it been like adjusting to not being the guys immediately on the ball all the time as you were maybe the last few years?

SERGIO OREGEL: I think it's been fine. Like I said I'm here to do my job. If that's clearing the ball, if that's tracking runners, I'm here to do whatever I can to help the team out.

Q. So with LAFC coming up they like to play really quick, quick counter game. I think midfield has been the Fire's quiet strengths this season. Do you look at that as an advantage? Are you thinking your role as part of that group is going to try to have an outsized influence on the outcome of the game?

SERGIO OREGEL: Yeah, we obviously know how LAFC likes to play, so them keeping their forwards up gives the midfielders more time to be on the ball. We also have to keep in mind they're dangerous on Conner (?)



So yeah, like I said, it will be exciting to play against a team like that. But, yeah, I think we'll have a lot of drills on keeping the ball, possessing, and trying to work our way through it.

Q. Doesn't look like he'll be playing, but Son Heung-Min going to LAFC, what do you think about that Premier signing?

SERGIO OREGEL: It's great to see a bunch of talents from Europe are coming down to MLS. It makes it even more competitive, and if he plays that will be great to see him.

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