

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Andre Franco

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are here with Andre Franco, and we will take questions, please.

Q. Gregg Berhalter said you wanted to be here, you reached out to the team. I'm curious if that is true, and why you wanted to be here at this time of your career?

ANDRE FRANCO: I had worked with Assistant Coach Filipe Çelikkaya in the past, and when he came here like in January/February, we had been in touch. He had said, like, Hey, would you be interested? Are you in or not? I always had been kind of open to something like that.

Then we were in touch again constantly throughout the year. Now with the summer window, there was another opportunity, and I was very interested. The club said that they were very interested in me, as well.

I always wished to have the opportunity to play in the United States and in MLS, so it was a very good opportunity for me. The club also showed a lot of interest.

There was also other offers from other places, but I thought it wasn't maybe time to go to those other leagues. This is the one that was really the most tempting for me, and I'm really happy to be here.

Q. You're coming in with eight games on a loan where you have an option to buy, so you really want to prove yourself to get that option taken up. You haven't had a preseason with the team. How do you feel about integrating so quickly midseason?

ANDRE FRANCO: Like you said, it's eight games. I'm certain that we will be in playoffs, but it's eight games where I have to prove to myself. It's a challenge for myself and to show the people here at the Fire that they can bet on me.

I don't want to be here just until December. I want to be here for a long time representing the club. I'm really happy to be in Chicago.

As far as integrating with the teammates, it's been really easy because everyone from players to staff has been really great, and it's only been a week, but I feel like I've been here for a really long time.

Q. You were able to watch the game last Saturday, so you experienced the weather that sometimes happens in this league. Then you've had a week of training with the team. Can you tell me, coming from playing in a Club World Cup, FC Porto, one of the top clubs in the world, what your impressions were of the league, seeing it in person, and then the first week of training with the Fire?

ANDRE FRANCO: In Europe it's true that you often hear that they think that maybe here there aren't players with as much quality, but ever since I've been here, I've seen that that's not the case. Players here have a lot of quality, and I think that this league is quickly growing and showing that it can soon be one of the top leagues.

Here what I notice is the game is a lot faster, a lot of counterattack, where in Europe it's a little more positional. That's really the only changes. I'm sure I will be able to adapt quickly.

Q. I wanted to ask you what sort of a player the Fire are getting in you? What are some of your strengths and things you can offer right away to the team and things that, you know, maybe from watching the team, that you notice that they might not have that are your strengths?

ANDRE FRANCO: Going a little bit from the previous question, I think I'm a player that can maybe help with the positioning a little bit, make things a little bit more stable, to help with the timings of things, to know when we need to attack, to know when we need to defend.

Other than that, I also need to speak with the coaching staff to see what they need from me. To see I'm also a player that can break into the lines, but also provide stability in the midfield.

Q. I'm wondering who during training have you been talking to? Who have you found yourself working with throughout this first week? Who have you found



yourself going towards trying to learn this within the roster, within the locker room?

ANDRE FRANCO: Leo, for obvious reasons, but also I've been talking to Bamba and Hugo, basically everyone in the midfield, Kellyn Acosta. D'Avilla has also helped me understand more quickly what they want from me and what we need in the middle of the field. Mostly them.

Q. As I'm sure you know, this year the Fire have been linked with many big players like Neymar and Kevin De Bruyne, and I think the fans are very excited for you because you're the big signing this summer with the No. 10. How do you feel about being that big summer signing and taking on that jersey number as well?

ANDRE FRANCO: They compare me to Neymar (laughing). It's a big responsibility, but a good responsibility. I think that it's a challenge for myself to be able to go out there. I'm ready to give the best of myself to be able to help the team, and I think that together we're going to be able to reach all the goals that the team has set for itself.

Q. On that note, your first game against the Philadelphia Union. You mentioned the teams in MLS play transition, quick counterattack. The Union are one of the top teams doing that, and they beat the Fire 1-0 earlier this season. What are your expectations for the match both from Philadelphia and from yourself?

ANDRE FRANCO: From what I've seen and what I know about Philadelphia, they are, like you said, a team that plays in the transition, likes to attack. They're very aggressive, and we have to go in and match their aggressiveness.

We know what to expect from them, and I think that if we match their aggressiveness, we're prepared to go in and get the three points in Philadelphia.

Q. Andre, what about Chicago excites you, just the city in itself it, like maybe food that you want to try or something you want to see that you have heard about the city in itself? Is there anything that you are really looking forward to experiencing, exploring out here?

ANDRE FRANCO: First of all, I'm focused on trying to get to my best form, physical form, so that I can get ready to be here for a while, but I know that Chicago is a great city, and especially they have a rich sporting culture. So one of the things I'm most looking forward to is to watch the Bulls at the United Center when they're in season.

Being here just a few days, it's been training and home and

home and training. I haven't really been able to go out, but I hope to get a few days to be able to go out and see things in the city. I know that it's a great city.

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