

# Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Jack Elliott

Press Conference



**Q. Curious, how important was it to get the proof of concept of that win last weekend, particularly after going a man down and then scoring twice? What did that do for the group in terms of galvanizing you after a first tough week?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, that's huge. The first half was good from us on the front. Had more chances to score even then, and when you go to ten men, obviously it's a worry that you're going to have to just hold on and cling to it.

Even with ten men I felt like we created another three or four chances that were really good and managed to score, too. It's definitely a big confidence boost to start the season at home with a win, and a convincing win even with ten men.

**Q. So switching to Columbus, home opener or season opener last year you guys came out flying against them. Couldn't hold on to it. Two leads; ended up losing. Does it feel like unfinished business going back there?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, I think there is similar parallels to last year at the start of the season, but we are in a different place and have a whole year under our belts playing together and understanding each other.

So it will be a good test for us.

**Q. After securing a clean sheet last week and considering the defensive struggles from last season, what aspects of that performance do you think the team needs to carry forward to maintain consistency throughout this year?**

JACK ELLIOTT: I think it was a good day for us in terms of limiting their opportunities, shots on goal, and any sort of really high scoring opportunities for them.

I think it's a good confidence boost, again, for us to be able

to lock it down with ten men and not concede. Defending set pieces very well.

So just move on from there. Keep doing the same sort of things this weekend.

**Q. I know it's early in the year, but does it feel different this year at the start of the season? Whether in the dressing room or on the field, is there maybe a sense of ease or relaxation with a lot of the same guys? Had a lot coming in new last year. Is there just a different aura about the team on the pitch and off?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, I feel like there is. Obviously we been together. A lot of guys have been here for last year and really started to gel last year, found a rhythm, and this season it feel like that in pre-season and training. Just being around the facility and the locker room, I think everyone is gelling really well.

Yeah, it does feel different to last year in the best way possible.

**Q. Curious, from your position as a center back, I know obviously you guys have had to work both in a three back and four back early in the season. Curious how as a center back playing behind more of a double pivot than a single pivot this season particularly the integration of Anton Saletros, how that wrinkle impacts you guys as center backs and what changes or benefits you've noticed from tactical adjustments and what Anton has brought to that role?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, I think those sort of things bring everyone a lot more stability. Obviously Anton can get around and runs a lot and does a lot of running off the ball defensively, which is huge for a team. For him to cover the space and for a center back, that's a dream that the people in front of you can make your job a lot easier.

Yeah, I think it's good for our defensive shape and going forward, it also helps to be able to play him in with both of midfielders, too.

**Q. One of the changes for Columbus since you last faced them. New coach, Henrik Rydstrom came in. It looks like the team is playing with some similar principles to what they did under Wilfried Nancy last**

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**year, but also some have changed. Does that make the preparation for this game a little bit harder in terms of new manager, not knowing as much about what to expect because the squad is getting situated and learning the principles that he wants the team to play with?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, I think it does bring certain challenges, but at the same time, we want to focus on ourselves, how we want to play.

You know, finding weaknesses in a team's system that we can exploit, obviously there is not a lot of game data to go from with two games in the season and few pre-season games.

I think it's that point where we just have to focus on our game and focus on what we're trying to do well.

**Q. Jack, you lineup alongside two really young guys in Mbokazi and Barroso on your right. What have they done to show they're really up to playing in MLS and significant minutes in MLS?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, obviously both extremely athletic and that's extremely helpful, a huge base for them to go off. They really are open to learning and understanding the game, which is great, too.

So be exciting to see how they progress and move on.

**Q. Speaking about the defensive partners that you got on the back line, on the left side there has been some changes obviously Gutman got hurt; Maren starting there for a game and Dean who won't be available for this one in a game. Does that challenge things with communication on the back line especially with two younger partners still learning about the league as they go?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, it does bring a few challenges when the lineup changes. I think everyone has the capabilities to be able to communicate with each other, first and foremost under their role and positioning in the sense. From there, being able to communicate with others around them.

**Q. Obviously this is looking ahead, but right now they just announced Leagues Cup schedule. Any thoughts on the Fire coming back to this tournament and the teams that you're playing against?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, it's super exciting. Obviously it's great to matchup against international competition, three very good teams, and playing against players that I know,

have played with will be fun and interesting. Looking forward to Leagues Cup.

**Q. Jack, just a quick question. First game you were out for concussion. The second game you also have a hit in the head. What was the -- how you feel healthy today and how was those...**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, I feel good. I feel healthy. I didn't have any affects after the game. That was good.

I think I knew a bit more about the ball in this game which helps, so, yeah, I feel fine.

**Q. I want to ask you about an old teammate of yours you will be going against in Daniel Gazdag. You've had a front row seat to seeing him, especially in Philadelphia come into the league and take over in a lot of ways. What do you think has made him such a strong player in Major League Soccer?**

JACK ELLIOTT: Yeah, it's just I think a very intelligent footballer, knows how to find space, knows how to score goals from any position, will pick up plenty of goals this season. Obviously add to a team and he's just an intelligent footballer that knows the game really well.

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