

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Dje D'Avila

Press Conference



This game is an opportunity to show how we grow as a team. Then I think we have this game in our hand, and we're just going to -- I don't know to beat them, but we are going to do a great job.

Q. It's been about a year since you've come to Chicago. April 1st was the anniversary of the deal being announced. I'm curious looking back on this year, what have you done and what have you reflected on your successes over this first year of your time in Chicago?

DJE D'AVILA: I think it's been maybe one year now I'm here. Like personally, I think I grew a lot, in my game improving a lot of things. We keep pushing because we know we can improve a lot also. Like I said before, we do the playoff before, like we are worried, but I don't think now we are worried about that. When you look at the team, you are not worried about that. Something is clear now.

Q. In that year you had to adapt to a new league, a new continent, a lot of new things in addition to all the new challenges of working to play and perform on the pitch and perform with the team. This year it seems like you've developed a friendship with some of the new arrivals including Mbekezeli Mbokazi. What have you done to help them adapt to their path in MLS and the United States and all of that easier?

DJE D'AVILA: I think with Mbokazi, he's more like feeling, even when he was not here, like just watching the game when I was at home, but I know we're going to have connection.

Then when I met him, taking him to go outside also to show him the city, don't leave him alone because when I come, I was like, okay, little bit alone without my family here. I know it's a little bit hard. Then stay more closer to him and.

Q. Do you see Nashville as the team to beat in the east, seeing as they are unbeaten and well, they recently knocked out Inter Miami in the Concacaf Cup?

DJE D'AVILA: Yeah, I think it's not an easy game, but I think we can do it because we have revenge also because last year we played against them two times and we lost.

Q. Dje, I'm curious in the way we've seen you play this season, especially alongside Anton, for somebody in your position, how does it build confidence for you to get a lot of touches on the ball, to complete a lot of those short passes early in games, and how would you say you're more comfortable at the start of this season than you were when you first joined the team last year?

DJE D'AVILA: I think this is different because last year I just come in and I don't have the preseason with the team, and it's more difficult. When you already play like maybe 30 games in Europe and come one month without training, after starting to play MLS is easy -- it's tough, and now it's different.

I already started the preseason with the boys and I know everybody, and it's more easier to build this season than last year.

With Anton, I think also we are good. Same like Andre. We're trying to understand each other just now. I think we will be fine.

Q. I wanted to ask more about working with Anton because he has so many qualities that allow you to drop in more defensively when he's playing those longer balls and maybe gives you more space to run. What do you think he's done to challenge you as a player this year to be better as he is trying to also elevate this team?

DJE D'AVILA: I think you work hard because before I was thinking I don't learn a lot, but I learn a lot, and I have to follow him. That's really difficult. He's hard work player, working hard. That's it, I think.

Q. Another change we've seen this year, the team has played more out of a 4-2-3-1 in addition to the 4-3-3 they played last year. Can you describe how that changes the job you're being asked to do in the midfield and your comfort level playing in that partnership with Anton or whoever is out there with

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you in a 4-2-3-1?

DJE D'AVILA: I think like last year we have different kind of players, like maybe Guti and André Franco, more creative player. Then this year we have lost. For me it's always the same thing in my position, trying to be more aggressive like I can be with the ball, without the ball also, protect my position, but just do the same thing.

Q. Did you see Mbokazi's goal during the international window, and what was your reaction because I think the world was a bit shocked by it?

DJE D'AVILA: No, I think Mbokazi is a special guy. Special. Special. When I saw the goal, I was like, crazy. I hope he can bring this energy here, start to do his thing also in Chicago to help the team. Then he will be fine.

Q. This was the last major window before teams are really getting ready for the World Cup. Côte d'Ivoire had two pretty good wins against Scotland and South Korea in the window. Are you starting to feel excited about there being a World Cup happening here in the United States with Côte d'Ivoire one of the participants in that tournament?

DJE D'AVILA: Yeah, I followed the two games, and right now I think we have great, great team and good players, also. Always following, supporting my national team. I hope one day I can be there with them. Just need to do the hard work and good job. For sure they have space to be midfielder, so...

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