

Chicago Fire Media Conference

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Chris Brady

Press Conference



Q. What are some reflections lacking at last weekend's result, Philadelphia result, where you guys have really overcome a lot, now having over 72 hours to reflect on some of these really positive results that this team has been able to grind out over the last few weeks?

CHRIS BRADY: Yeah, they're positive results, but for us, they were some ultra defensive games, and I think one thing going into this week is we've had a main focus on possessing and valuing the ball a little more because I think there are some areas we feel like we can hurt Atlanta. In those last weeks, the results are obviously positive, and the way we've battled out the results were positive, but we continue to set a higher standard for ourselves, and we know with the ball we can do a lot more.

Q. Something I didn't realize when we talked to you after the game on Saturday, that was your 100th MLS start between regular season and playoffs. Obviously there's more league games in there, which 98 regular season --

CHRIS BRADY: I didn't know that was the 100th or -- cool.

Q. Despite your age, being one of the younger starting goalies in the league, you are a very experienced goalie, as well. What's one piece of advice you would have given yourself in 2020 or 2021 starting out your pro career, starting out with the Fire, and anything else that you think you've learned or picked up in that time that you think is valuable?

CHRIS BRADY: Yeah, I would say continue to remain positive no matter what. I think early on, we faced a lot of results that didn't necessarily go our way, and me being so young in the goal for those games was difficult. I think sometimes I lost my head a little bit in those first few years.

But knowing what I know now, just remaining positive and continuing to work hard is the biggest thing that I think would have helped me back then. Yeah, that's kind of it. It's crazy, it's like night and day.

Q. While you're in a great moment in your career, I wanted to ask you, who are your role models in your position? Which goalkeepers do you look up to, whether active or retired?

CHRIS BRADY: Yeah, I've always said one of the guys I worked with closely in my youth was someone I always worked to be similar to is Damian Las. To me he embodied the hard work it takes to be a goalkeeper at the professional level, and he really pushed the limit with speed, power, those type of attributes in the position. For me, it's always been him, and I've been lucky I've been able to work closely with him.

On a bigger stage, the world scale, guys that have been around, Neuer, Courtois, Alisson, these guys. They've got a lot of very clean ways they play the position, and that's stuff we look at every week. That's stuff we discuss. If it's someone who made a big save or a nice play, we talk about these things.

In that way, we would look up to any of those guys. But yeah.

Q. Touching on the discussions so far, you're probably now one of the longer tenured guys that's been with the Fire, with the team, even though you're at a young age. What are the personal goals you have as sort of a guy that's coming into leadership, that's been taking leadership roles? Is getting the captain's arm band in the future part of your personal goals with this club in particular? What sort of leadership and maturity things that you think you can still reach and evolve to with this club?

CHRIS BRADY: Yeah, one of the first things which I didn't realize I hit was that 100-game milestone. That to me was important because it shows dedication and commitment to the position, to remain healthy as long as I have and to continue playing at a high level. So that to me was a very important one.

But things like attaining the captain's arm band, that's always been something that for me has always been a coach's decision. It's obviously something you can put yourself in a better position for, but at the end of the day, it comes down to who the coach views as that guy, the

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captain, and to me I think the guys who have worn it this season so far have done a great job at embodying a great job of what it means to captain our team. For me, it's not really a specific personal goal.

Then just in terms of leadership, I think in the locker room, making sure that I'm being as welcoming as I can to new incoming players and helping relay the tactics and different things we work on to guys who are new to that kind of soccer. That to me is something that maybe doesn't stand out as an actual goal, but for me it's very important.

Q. Has dealing with multiple changes to the back line early this season helped you grow as a leader, and what positives have come from having to adapt to different combinations?

CHRIS BRADY: I wouldn't say it helps me grow as a leader. That's just something we're expected to deal with. As many changes as we've had and as unfortunate as some of those circumstances have been, like I said, it's just something we're expected to know how to handle. Sometimes it's a game-time decision, sometimes something happens in the warmup, sometimes it's the day before the game. But oftentimes it's short notice, and these are the things that unfortunately happen.

But for us, it's a matter of understanding the chemistry we've built with all the guys in the back line throughout weeks and weeks and weeks of work and understanding the tendencies of the guys, for me, playing in front of me is the biggest thing that helps with something like a shifting back line.

But I wouldn't necessarily say that it's helped me grow as a leader. It's more so just a part of the game.

Q. What do you expect from the game Saturday against Atlanta? You mentioned that you made some mistakes in the last game; what are the things to correct for this game?

CHRIS BRADY: On a personal note, I would say continuing to value the ball a little more. I think the game against Nashville dictated a lot of longer possession, which in an environment like that with the wind, not as an excuse, but with that as a component, is a little more difficult and didn't make for a lot of clean soccer.

So I think this week especially we've been focusing on making sure that possession is of the utmost importance going into this game, so I think you can expect a big emphasis on that.

Then yeah, as a team, just continuing to build off of the

battling mentality, the passionate mentality that you saw defensively. Those are all things that will contribute to getting a result this Saturday.

Q. I wanted to ask you, moving forward for the upcoming match, Atlanta had a tough last match, where probably the first half they had a hard time building up, second half couldn't execute their game plan, but they still managed to score a goal. How do you organize your back line against a team that can be very unpredictable?

CHRIS BRADY: That's a good question. It's about staying switched on for every moment of the game because they do have some dangerous components with Almirón, Miranchuk and Latte Lath. They've also got good quality service coming in from the wings.

For us, it's about making sure that even if we do find ourselves in a position where we're dominating the game, dominating possession or even dominating the scoreboard, we know that they do have those dangerous pieces, so making sure that we're not taking any plays off, making sure that alarm bells are always ringing in our heads to heighten focus throughout the game. That's pretty much the key.

But it's going to be whoever wants it more, essentially, this weekend. That's what we know.

Q. You just touched on it, but Atlanta has a number of really dangerous players up front. In a way it's almost paradoxically harder to prepare for a team where things haven't quite been clicking for them because you know they're going to be trying new things as opposed to a team that has maybe found a rhythm and is trying to stick in the groove rather than a team trying to find one?

CHRIS BRADY: Yeah, instead of focusing on things that might be changing, I think we do a pretty good job of focusing on the things we know and the things we know for sure. This is when the insight that Josh Cohen brings really helps because he obviously spent a year with a lot of these guys so he knows a lot of their tendencies, and having someone like that in the goalkeeper room is helping a lot at the moment.

But we also go back and do our homework every day on the team we're going to be facing that Saturday, focusing on tendencies of where they attack, how they attack, individual player tendencies, obviously simple things, right foot, left foot, if it's a bigger guy, smaller guy, quicker guy, whatever. Those are the things that are known, and we do focus on those a little more than trying to pinpoint what

they might change, because at the end of the day, like I said, it's going to come down to who wants it more, and if we play our soccer the way we want to, to our standard, we'll come out on top.

Q. Chris, after the game you talked about changing up your routine going into the second half. What made you decide to do that, and what insights can you provide on what's changed in 2026?

CHRIS BRADY: There was a lot of -- I'm trying to think. We went over the goals that we wanted to set for ourselves this year, and there was a big emphasis on the amount of goals we conceded in the first five, last five, first five and last five of each game. So to us, that felt like a moment that we could really change because to us, those moments are more about mentality than anything. You either haven't built yourself into the game yet or are thinking about getting into halftime with that given result or getting out of the game with that given result.

The things that I considered personally were am I getting myself going enough, going into a second half after a long first half, and then sitting for the halftime amount of time, am I getting myself ready enough for what I might see in the second half, because what we found was a lot of the games last year we actually dominated a ton in the first half and came into halftime with a clean sheet, and then going into the second half, I don't know what had changed, but we ended up conceding one or two or however many amount of goals, which in those really important moments, the first five and the last five of each half, we felt like we could alter the mentality, and to me, I think that was where Zach and I and Joe, we discussed what we could change with getting myself going more.

Q. Moving besides the game plan and style of play, there's also another factor that takes a role in each game, and the question is do you see Atlanta as a team you could mentally pressure early based on what they showed last match?

CHRIS BRADY: Yeah, I think what we can do with our pressure and especially ball possession will force those emotions on them. Speaking about the psychological state that that team is in or that locker room is in, we don't know because we're not in there every day, but based on their past results, we do think we've identified areas where we can get after them.

That'll all be determined by the intensity you see, especially at the beginning of the game.

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