

## **MLS POST-GAME QUOTES**

Portland Timbers vs. Vancouver Whitecaps FC  
April 4, 2026 – BC Place (Vancouver, BC)  
Final: Vancouver Whitecaps 3, Portland Timbers 2

### **Portland Timbers Head Coach Phil Neville**

#### ***Overall thoughts on the match...***

“We were 2-1 up in the 85th minute and the decision doesn't go our way. Ultimately that's what cost us the game. That decision. Super proud of the players. I think we had to dig in for the first 15 minutes. I didn't think we played the way that I wanted us to play. And then I thought we gained some momentum, some composure, some control. Two really, really special goals. I knew second half was going to be another difficult game on the road, and we dug in, we defended well, we blocked shots, we counter-attacked. I think we should have kept the ball better. If you don't keep the ball then you're just going to be under the cosh the whole second half. But ultimately, the referee's decision cost us the game. You look last week, the last time we played against LA Galaxy, the referee's decision cost us the game. So I feel frustrated, I feel frustrated for my players, I feel frustrated for the organization. I think there was a lot of outstanding quality shown by my players tonight, and things that we're not in control of, I felt cost us the game. How many bookings were there tonight? One? Diego Chara, first tackle? I think that Joe Dickerson knows that there should have been at least one more player booked on the pitch tonight. But anyway, we've lost the game. We've got to keep going. We've got to keep believing in ourselves. I've got every confidence in everyone that's working towards that goal. The last two games have shown a small glimpse of who we are and what we're about. We saw some outstanding debuts tonight, and like I say, 85th minute, a decision cost us the game.”

#### ***On the character within this team fighting back in games...***

“Well, we went down to 10 men against LA Galaxy, and the players on the pitch were incredible. They were fighting. There's incredible spirit. I believe in them. They believe in themselves. They believe in everything that we're doing. And we've had to show those qualities tonight. I felt again the Galaxy game, we had to show those qualities because of a really poor decision. And today, we had to show those qualities — and we didn't get our rewards — because of another poor decision. So I think in life, the tight turns you eventually get the rub of the green. At this moment in time, we had four or five decisions this season that we think have been really, really poor. But [the Professional Referee Organization] pats themselves on the back and they'll go home happy, and they'll get their autographs, and we've just got to keep going. I believe in my players. We've got some outstanding young players that want to play the right way. In the second half, we need more courage to play. We can talk about the decision, but we needed more courage to play in the second half. Keep the ball, and we didn't do that. That's something that we got to work on this week.”

#### ***On if he's concerned about his job security...***

“Who's calling to my head? Fans? Are they? Okay, well, you know that I work for a club that's got the best fans in the business. They're passionate, and they want success. And I want success as well. I think what we're building here is something really special with this young team. We've got a vision to build the best young team in MLS, and I think along that path is going to be peaks and troughs, and they're going to be with us all the way. I fully support that. The one thing I would say is that as long as they are criticizing me, I'm fine. As long as they get behind the players, I'm even better with that, because those players are giving absolutely everything, and they will get their rewards because of their quality, because of their work, because of their endeavor, because of their commitment. I said to them in [the locker room] sometimes you think that the world is against you, and it feels like that with the decisions that are being

made, without a shadow of a doubt. [Jimer] Fory shouldn't have been sent off in Colorado. Kamal [Miller] shouldn't have been sent off against LA Galaxy, and there shouldn't have been a handball tonight. But that will change. That will change. Once it changes, then we're going to be a really good team.

***On the positives to take away from this game...***

“[José] Caicedo, Joao Ortiz, David Da Costa, [Kristoffer] Velde, [Alex] Bonetig, Finn Surman, Juan Mosquera, Antony, Fory, I think they're all playing to a really good level. Honestly, I think our young players are really good. We all know we need to keep stepping up. We all know we need to keep being better. We all know that the results have to start coming. But I am incredibly confident, incredibly confident in this group of players. I'm incredibly confident in the work that we are doing and we just need to keep neutral in our thoughts. I know that there is obviously a lot of noise, but the noise will help us get better. The noise will help us spear us on. We've got a passionate set of supporters who are the best, and we will deliver for them.”

**Portland Timbers defender Finn Surman**

***On his defensive partnership with Alex Bonetig tonight...***

“For 40-45 minutes of that second half, we did a good job of defending the box. I think that we're starting to learn where each other is going to be and where we need to be to help the other one, as well as the whole team. Yes, we're two center backs defending the box, but it does come down to the whole team. We're slowly building chemistry, him and I with that. A big thing today was to defend Brian White in and around the box. I thought we did that well. And then a few other moments let us down as a team.

***On if the team would benefit from a coaching change...***

“No, I don't think that's an appropriate question. And I don't think that's something that we need to happen. I think it's down to us players. We know in that [locker room] that we have not been good enough and we can't be conceding these late goals. We need to, first of all, play better in the second half, we need to keep the ball better, and we need to manage the game slightly better. Especially when you do get to those last 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes where, if you are holding on to the lead for whatever reason or holding on to a draw, whatever the situation is, we need to be better.”

***On the positives of coming from a goal down to take the lead heading into halftime...***

“I agree. I believe that we can be a good team, and we're showing that for periods, but we're not showing it consistently enough. These goals we are conceding are just poor. I don't know what else to say. That first goal was one ball over the top, and I don't know if it's a miscommunication. I don't really know what happened. But one ball over the top and they score. Then in the second half, once we slowly get ourselves into it — which again, takes a little bit too long for us to get into it — but once we get into it, we start to play well, and we start to move the ball and create opportunities and get back into the game, get the lead. Then from there, we need to continue to do the things that we're doing well, and not kind of try as hard as we can, not to sink back and just keep giving up the ball.”

***On the positives to take away from this game...***

“I think we need to take the positives from it, of the periods that we played well, and then I also think we need to learn from it. There's no point in just losing and then not learning and saying like the odd thing comes down to luck and the bounce of the ball and stuff like that. But you have to learn. We can see if we are conceding shots from the top of the box, we need to get more pressure on the ball. If we're conceding set pieces, we need to work on set pieces more. That sort of stuff. We need to learn, as well as take the positives, because there's no point in just getting on with it when we need to just grow up as a group.”