

MLS POST-GAME QUOTES

Portland Timbers vs. Los Angeles FC
April 11, 2026 – Providence Park (Portland, Ore.)
Final: Portland Timbers 2, LAFC 1

Portland Timbers Head Coach Phil Neville

On Kevin Kelsy's game-winner...

"I knew Kevin was going to score because yesterday when I left him out, he said to me, 'the team is more important than me in this game tomorrow.' We've got that kind of culture. Joao [Ortiz], Gage [Guerra] and Kevin, I spoke to them yesterday. Gage has not kicked a ball since he scored a goal in Houston — team first mentality. Joao yesterday — team first mentality. And Kelsy as well. So when you have that kind of spirit and togetherness, you know eventually that the tide will turn. And you know what? When [LAFC's] goal went in, my feelings didn't change, because I saw a [Timbers] team that played that was a mirror of how I wanted them to play. So I was super proud of them. My feeling is that I love the center forward to score goals, and I'm glad he got the goal today."

On Cole Bassett's performance...

"I think if we get our best players on the pitch, we will win games of football. It's as simple as that. I think Cole Bassett's a top player. I really do. When you don't have your top players on the pitch, it's difficult to win games of football. We've been patient. We have an incredible backing from the owner, and Ned [Grabavoy] has been really good. What's important to say is that I woke up this morning and I follow the Timbers Army on Instagram, and they posted something this morning that — actually, I never get emotional. My wife calls me the most unemotional. And I got emotional because [the Timbers Army] message was get behind the team today. They could have easily come here today and maybe doubted me, like other people have. They could have come here today, and maybe when it got a little bit nervy, they could have changed. I just said to the players that this club is different than any other club I've ever been involved in, because from the owner to the Timbers Army, to the people that helped me go to my car to the gates, this club cares for its own. I think we saw that today — a club that was together. And when the club's together, I think we can be a really good team."

On José Caicedo's commanding performance...

"I agree with everything that you say. I thought he was really good in Vancouver last week. I always thought when we were scouting José Caicedo — I don't want to be disrespectful to MLS — I always thought he's too good a player to come to our league. He's going to go to bigger leagues, maybe grander leagues. But I know the amount of texts that he sent Ned [Grabavoy], and I know the conversations that I've had, that he was desperate to come to Portland Timbers. I think he's had really good experiences against MLS teams in the League's Cup. And I think we saw today that we've got a top midfield player."

On if he thought the team should have won the game before the stoppage-time winner...

"I said to them at halftime that we're going to have to win this game by two or three goals. I didn't think we were ruthless enough in the first half, and then just before [LAFC] equalized, we had a chance where I thought we should have been ruthless. But I think we'll get there. I think we'll get there with the control that we had and the quality that we had on the pitch."

Portland Timbers forward Kristoffer Velde

On celebrating his goal on the Timbers Victory Log...

"I wasn't thinking straight. I don't know if it's legal to jump on the log or if it's holy. I don't know, but I should have stuck to the log because I lost my balance. But next time I maybe will grab the chainsaw and cut the log myself."

On scoring in front of the Timbers Army and taking confidence from this game...

"It was amazing to score in front of that end. That gives us a crazy confidence boost into the next games, which we know will be difficult. We knew that this game will be difficult, but like I told you, and like Phil [Neville] told you, and like any other player will tell you, we are building something really good. We are really close to being a really good team. I think we showed it today, how good we were, and how much we created, and how good we were on the ball. So this was a huge step in the right direction. And yeah, we won a game in a long time. So very happy for that."

On playing alongside Antony and David Da Costa...

"I think we found a good solution for me, Da Costa and Antony. I would say Antony is more like the guy that goes in behind and me and David can both do that. But we are good in the pockets as well. And I think we manage the pockets really good. When I get the chance to go and either set up or go for a shot, that's something I've always been able to do. So it's nothing new. It was just the right time today."

On the momentum shift and boost after LAFC's disallowed goal late in the second half...

"It looked like we needed that one because I think everybody got the belief that we were struggling a little bit. Little bit low, a little bit weak on the ball. And yeah, we're super lucky that it was offside. The momentum changed, and we got the goal in the end. It was an amazing feeling."

On the team's performance, including the new players getting involved...

"[José] Caicedo] was a dog today. He was everywhere, picking up second balls, winning duels, going forward. He was amazing today, and Cole [Bassett's] first start since the injury. He was looking good as well. Of course, he needs time to come back. But you see the result of having a full squad. People coming in. Ari [Lassiter] was amazing. [Alexander] Aravena was amazing. Kevin [Kelsy], everybody. So you need a full squad, and nothing is better than a healthy squad. We have competition and we have hungry people. We just need to keep building on this. We know that away games in MLS are tough. But we've been so close now so many times. So we needed this game. We needed this confidence for the next one."

Portland Timbers forward Kevin Kelsy

On scoring the game winner and if his haircut helped...

"I'm happy for how things have turned out. We really needed this. When the guys, myself and coach too, we've been having a few rough weeks. As far as the haircut, I was just bored. That's what happened. Maybe it did help. Maybe it helped with guiding the ball into the back of the net."

On scoring after having to be subbed out in the last game at Providence Park...

"Sometimes it's just soccer situations. Things that just happen. It's all about attitude and having mental strength. And I think during this time I stayed calm, I've worked hard internally, and today worked out positively for the team and myself opening up my scoring account this season."

On preparing to sub into the game right as LAFC have a goal disallowed for offside...

"It's very hard when the team faces a tough stretch and all you want to do is go in and help. Luck was on our side today, and we got the three points. The next few games will be the most important."

On the work it takes to be in the right place at the right time...

“Actually, it's lots of work and patience, trusting the work that you do, and sooner or later, in the end, the goals and everything else will come. It's like I said, just work hard and have patience.”

On beating an LAFC team that hadn't lost or conceded a goal yet this season...

“Breaking their unbeaten streak feels great, but the most important part is we have a victory among this very tough stretch for us. For us, getting this win brings confidence.”