

MLS POST-GAME QUOTES

Portland Timbers FC vs San Jose Earthquakes
May 23, 2026 – Providence Park, Portland, OR
Final: Portland Timbers FC 1, San Jose Earthquakes 3

Portland Timbers FC Quotes

Portland Timbers FC Head Coach Phil Neville

His message to the team for tonight's game...

“When you start in life, or the foundation of life is to compete, and if you don't compete, you can't win anything in life. I think you know I've got an incredible bunch of talented players, but if talented players aren't willing to do the jobs that San Jose plays. San Jose was a brilliant example. We told them all week about what that team is about. It's why they've got the points they've got. It's because they do the things that really matter to win games of football. In the first 14 games, we've not done those things and it's why we've got 14 points. I think it's totally unacceptable and we can talk about systems, we can talk about movements, patterns, whatever, but I think if you're not prepared to follow your head, block all shots, work for 96 minutes for your team, and that's without the ball, then you're not going to be a successful team. I'm a big part of that. And I feel like today was a reflection of the first 14 games. Were there periods in the game where we could score? Yes. Were there periods in the game where we played some incredible football? Yes, but it means jack really because we lost the game. That was no different in Minnesota, no different against Vancouver. Vancouver away, one-nil up with four minutes to go, and probably the same today. Wasn't willing to block a shot, wasn't willing to stay with it, wasn't willing to work as a team. And I think that's a big reflection of the 14 games. You've got to take responsibility. I take responsibility and accountability, and we move forward.”

On the Timber's Army chants and banners during the end of the game...

“I mean, it's what we sign up for, you know. It's not a pity party for me. The supporters deserve better than what we gave them in the first 14 games. I think if I was in that Timbers Army, I'd be doing the same. I'd want more from my team, the team that I support, the team that I love, the team that I'm passionate about. That's the reason why we work hard all week is to pay for that ticket at the end of the week to come and watch the Portland Timbers play. Got to take responsibility for it. I signed up for this role too. I signed up as a manager, as a player, and that comes with it. And, like I say, it's not the first time, and it won't be the last time that's happened to me. I take responsibility. I take responsibility and accountability for everything that's gone up and that's that. I think that's really important. I think when I came to this club, I wanted to bring success to this football club. I am even more convinced I can do it today, and I'm just going to control the things I can control and make sure that the team gets better. And like I say, it's the support that we've had at this football club is the reason why I'm here. The reason why those players love playing at home, and you respect everything that they do.”

His thoughts on why the team are struggling to shoot and create more chances...

“I thought Antony had an open net. Am I right? Is that not a big chance? That for me, that's a big chance. I think there's a chance from [Kristoffer] Velde and maybe I might be wrong. I think what we said at halftime was that San Jose has played six games in the last two weeks. Is that in the first 15 minutes after half time? What I felt in the first half was it was just chaos. They wanted to make the game chaos, and we got drawn into a chaotic game. In the second half, I wanted us to control the game, pick the right passes, they go man to man, so we had to be patient and wait for the right moments. If you say we didn't create any chances, I don't think I've seen a bigger chance that we've had this season than the one that Antony had in that moment and that was because we were patiently waiting for the right moment. It ultimately ended in three shots in the first half and scored

three goals. That's ruthless. That's what Miami did, that's what Minnesota did. At the end of the day, if we can't put the ball in the back of the net with the chances that we've got, then we need to work even harder at that. But in terms of the game plan after halftime was to make sure we controlled the game of football. The first half, I felt that every time somebody got the ball, they wanted to be the World Cup winner, they wanted to be the guy that scored the World Cup goal. I wanted us to have control of the game, and I wanted to tire them out. They played three games. They played in Colorado on Wednesday. I wanted to make sure that we controlled the game. I didn't feel we controlled the game in the first half how I wanted, because I thought it was too emotional. It was too chaotic and that's my thoughts."

Portland Timbers Defender Finn Surman

On what changes need to be made to salvage the season after World cup break...

"I think that it's still completely salvageable. I think we can completely turn this around. I've always said that I believe that we are a good team. We're close to being that good team that we can be. I think we really need to look at ourselves as individuals, and that starts with me looking at myself, and how can I help my teammates better throughout the game. How can I support them better? And then we, as a team and we as individuals, need to play a little bit better. We need to be more switched on in certain moments and have less lapses of concentration, and that will ultimately help us to become the team that we can be, and the team that we should be. I mean, it's like I said, 14 games. It's been a long time. We should be doing better by now, and we're not, and that's something that's difficult for all of us. But we will continue to work on that and continue to push to be where we think we should be."

Thoughts on managing the chaos and pace of tonight's game...

"I think when both teams, when we're at home and we're really trying to press, press, press, and they're a pressing team as well, it does ramp the intensity up and made the game go fast. I think that when we are going like that, it does sometimes turn into a little bit of basketball game. It's having that like that a lot of times at our home, which sometimes it's okay, because it works in our favor, and sometimes it's not so okay. I think the message was to get more control over the game. We wanted to keep the ball, try to pin them in a bit better and create good opportunities to get ourselves back in the game, and yeah, that's part of Ian [Smith] coming on, and then trying to slow people down, and yeah, say control again, just give all control."

On having only one thing to think about [World Cup] ...

"It's always been focused on Timbers until the end of this game. I'll have a little bit of a time to reflect on this past game, just a bit, and then it's all going to be on the World Cup now. I'm super excited for the couple friendly games coming up, and then we're into the big dance. It's super exciting time for me and my country, and I really can't wait for it."