



For immediate release: July 21, 2026

Collin Romer (503) 553-5433, cromer@timbers.com

Jill Farley (503) 553-5512, jfarley@timbers.com

Victor Gallardo-Molina (503) 553-5539, vgallardo-molina@timbers.com

PORTLAND TIMBERS NAME MARTÍ CIFUENTES HEAD COACH **44-year-old Spaniard becomes fifth head coach of the club's MLS era**

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Portland Timbers have named Martí Cifuentes as their new head coach, the club announced today. Cifuentes joins the Timbers on a three-year contract through the 2028-29 season.

[MEDIAASSETS](#)

"This has been by far the most detailed and exhaustive head coaching search the Timbers have ever executed and we are thrilled to have the process culminate in Martí Cifuentes taking the reins of our club," club owner Merritt Paulson shared. "Martí is a young, analytical leader who is as intellectually curious about his trade as I have seen in a coach. He has been tested in a variety of high-pressure environments and countries, and I have no doubt that with our support, Martí Cifuentes will build something truly special in Portland. Lastly, I want to thank the exceptional candidates we met throughout this process for their time and insight."

Cifuentes, 44, becomes the fifth head coach of the Timbers' MLS era. He is set to join the club upon approval of the visa process and will lead the team through the remainder of the 2026 MLS campaign. Interim head coach Jack Cassidy will continue at the helm for Portland until Cifuentes' arrival.

"We are incredibly excited to appoint Martí Cifuentes as the head coach of the Portland Timbers. With the conclusion of a vigorous process, it was clear that Martí's skillset made him a fantastic match that aligned with this sporting project," said Timbers General Manager Ned Grabavoy. "His cultural experiences and successes in various leagues speak volumes to his ability to adapt and his ambitions as a manager. A new era begins now for the Portland Timbers, and we look forward to welcoming Martí and his family to this amazing club and city."

A native of Catalonia, Spain, Cifuentes joins Portland with more than two decades of coaching experience across England, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Spain. Most recently, he managed Leicester City in the EFL Championship after being appointed in July 2025. Prior to Leicester, Cifuentes served as head coach of Queens Park Rangers, taking the helm of the London club in October 2023, with the team at risk of relegation from the EFL Championship. By the conclusion of the 2023-24 season, Cifuentes successfully guided QPR to safety, retaining its Championship status for the 2024-25 campaign.

"I am incredibly excited to become the next head coach of this club. My conversations with Merritt and Ned were truly inspiring, and their vision aligns perfectly with what I want to be part of. I have always followed MLS, and it has long been an ambition of mine to experience this league. To have the chance to do so at a club like Portland, with such an incredible fanbase and an exciting group of players, is truly

special. I know how passionate this city is about soccer, and the connection between the club and the city is what makes this opportunity so meaningful,” Cifuentes said.

“We want to build a team with a clear identity, strong ambition, and a real sense of togetherness, one that represents this city and makes our supporters proud. Soccer in the U.S. is entering a new era, with the country hosting the World Cup and the sport continuing to grow in so many ways. To be part of that journey and contribute to the next chapter of the game here is a privilege.”

Before moving to England, Cifuentes managed three top-flight clubs – Hammarby IF in Sweden (2022-23), Aalborg BK (2021-22) in Denmark and Sandefjord (2018-20) in Norway. Notably, Cifuentes has accumulated a winning record of 128-96-84 in his eight years of coaching since 2018.

Cifuentes led Hammarby IF to the 2021-22 Svenska Cupen final, a third-place finish in the 2022-23 Allsvenskan and subsequent qualification for the 2023-24 UEFA Europa Conference League. At Aalborg BK, he elevated the club to a fourth place standing in the table in the 2021-22 campaign.

During his time in Norway at Sandefjord, the Spaniard took over midway through the 2018 Eliteserien season and helped lead the team to promotion into Norway’s top-flight in his first full season in charge. Sandefjord and Cifuentes followed the promotion with an 11th-place finish in the 2020 Eliteserien, the club’s best top-flight result in over a decade.

Cifuentes began coaching at the age of 20 with stints in Spain, the Netherlands and England, primarily working in youth development and academy roles. After gaining youth coaching experience at CE Sabadell (2003-06), Terrassa FC (2007-08), and UE Rubí (2010-13), he advanced into senior roles with Rubí (2013-14), Sant Andreu (2014) and CE L’Hospitalet (2015-16). Cifuentes then managed youth and academy sides for AIK Fotboll from 2017-18 before joining Sandefjord.

A UEFA Pro License holder, Cifuentes earned his MBA in Sports Management from the Johan Cruyff Institute in 2010.

-- visit www.timbers.com --