

LEAGUES CUP POST-GAME QUOTES

Portland Timbers FC v Club Tijuana
Aug 13, 2026 – Providence Park, Portland, OR
Final: Portland Timbers FC 3, Club Tijuana 1

Portland Timbers FC Quotes

Portland Timbers FC Head Coach Marti Cifuentes

Overall comments on tonight's match...

"First of all, very happy to finally have the chance to coach the team and experience the Providence Park atmosphere. It's been a great feeling during the whole game, I would say. But especially to see the supporters at the end of the game, the last minutes enjoying the feeling of the win was really good. I think we started quite well. The first 5-10 minutes I think were pretty good according to the fact that we only had barely two trainings because obviously the team was quite tired. It was more about recovering, so there's not much that we could do. But very satisfied with the response of the of the team, especially after conceding. I think the goal came in a bit of a disappointing action because it was a chain of mistakes, probably two, three situations that we should have done better, and at the end they score. But overall, I think there was plenty of possession to try to attack. In the first half, it was more difficult because Tijuana was defending very deep in almost a six at the back formation, which is never easy to penetrate to create chances against. But I think in the second half we made some adjustments and it was better. And yeah, again for some minutes I really enjoyed what the guys did. The second half, in terms of being able to play through them on the last third, was better. We created good goal chances, and at the end we got a good win. Unfortunately, we are not going through, but that was I think a good way to start, especially for us and for the team to keep the good trend that that the guys had lately."

On how good tonight was for the team as a step in the right direction...

"Very good. And again, all the credit to the guys, to the players, to the staff, because everybody has been so good to try to embrace in just 48 hours, probably a lot of ideas. We wanted to have a good balance, but sometimes you get a bit excited when the group is very open and they're very ready. I'm aware that it's going to be some up and downs, but especially to see how the players try to do most of the ideas, basically three, four that we wanted to really reinforce, but it was very strong."

On his choices for starters and substitutions during the match...

"Well, I think it was in my first press conference, I said that for me it's very important to have this winning mentality in everything we do. So, I take very seriously every competition, every game, every training, every small-sided game, every drill. For me, it's important to have that edge. So, I didn't want in my first game to send a message that this game was not important. We knew that it was small chances perhaps to go through, but still, as long as it was some, I think it was worth to try. And second, most important, I would say, because with these few days before the Chicago game and obviously having mostly recovery practice, I took this one as well as a chance to work together with the players, to work together most of the ideas that we're going to try to have for Chicago. So, I think it was a combination of things. Then, as what I said to the guys over the last couple of days, for me, it's very important who starts the game, but also as important who finish the games. And I think that all the guys who came in the second half proved that that they can contribute. I'm very happy with the minutes of Joao [Ortiz]. Very happy with the minutes of some of the guys that really came with a lot of energy. And yeah, I think that that's going to be the foundation of what we try to do. That everybody is important, and they're going to have, especially in a competition like MLS, in a busy schedule, everyone will have moments during the season and during the games."

On what are the main things he wants to see change moving forward and what has progressed from what he's seen so far...

"Look, this is a tricky one because I will always be very respectful not only with obviously the job that Phil [Neville] did for a long time here, but as well with the job that Jack [Cassidy] has done. I think that every time there is a new coach, all of us we have an idea of our perfect way to win a soccer game, and that doesn't mean that we don't value what has been done. So you will probably not listen to me speaking

about what happened before, but what's going to happen from now on. So, there is definitely some things, some principles, if you want, on the way this team has been playing lately that I really like. One of the reasons why I wanted to join the Portland Timbers is because I really like the way the players can play potentially, what they got in them, and that there is a very good foundation. So obviously we're going to try to add hopefully more dominance during the games, hopefully higher press, hopefully more continuity in the way we attack. And I think today, for instance, the first goal was a very clear example of the way we want to counter press, which for me is a very important part of the game. Because if you have the energy to do it, it's one thing that shows desire, that shows great mentality, but as well, you need to have the right positions to counter press properly. In the first half, sometimes we considered too long transitions, very long contests for them, which we knew that is one of their strengths because they got great runners. But at the same time, we wanted to make sure that those transitions become shorter because that means that we have better control of the game, that shows better positioning. So, it's going to be a process, and it's going to be up and down. But again, for me, the most important is that we start today and that we start to shape this identity together."

On the reasoning behind José Caicedo's positioning during the match...

"Look, José [Caicedo] for me is a player that has great potential. Obviously, he has been competing with a legend like Diego [Chará], but at the same time we know that we want to manage Diego's minutes, especially with this quick succession of games. So, I spoke with José before the game, even yesterday, that for me he has the potential to be a very important player. The way we want to defend certain situations, he has the qualities to drop in between that should allow the sides to be more aggressive, to have an extra cover against teams that play a little bit more direct. In the first half, in my opinion, I told him he was running too much. He was running too much, and I'm one that I do believe that we need to run a lot to win soccer games, but we need to run smart. In the second half, he was much better. So yes, sometimes we need him to drop, but perhaps in the first half that allowed certain areas to be too open, second balls that no one could pick, because he wanted to be a good guy for the center halves. The center halves, they need to pick responsibilities as well. So, when he improved that one in the second half, we were much better. So, I'm happy with him, and I'm sure that it's going to be much more."