

MLS POST-GAME QUOTES

LAFC v Portland Timbers FC

Aug 22, 2026 – BMO Stadium, Los Angeles, CA

Final: LAFC 1, Portland Timbers 1

Portland Timbers FC Quotes

Portland Timbers FC Head Coach Martí Cifuentes

Overall thoughts on the match...

“Probably mixed feelings on today's match because obviously we knew that we play a good team, that despite the last few results, is still a very good team. I think we started the game good, scoring a good goal early in the start. We got some good counters over the first half but overall, we missed a little bit of control. We knew that they have talented players. As I explained, I learned a bit about my team against Chicago Fire. I learned that when you have an away game, this one was shorter trip, but still a decent distance, so you need to manage a busy schedule. We try to manage the way we press, managing a little bit. Second half, I think that we had some good sequences in possession, but over the minutes, I think legs started to be more tired, and we dropped a little bit more. Overall, I think that they had a lot of shots, high volume of shots, but most of the chances I would say they were long range shots out of the box. So, we defended very well. James [Pantemis] of course, had an important game. Eric [Miller] as well had a tough game against one of the best players of the league, [Denis] Bouanga, and still he managed quite well. With the injury of Jimmer [Fory], Ian [Smith] who has been away for a while, he had to jump straight in, and I think he did a good job at the same time. But yeah, overall, I think it's a valuable point. But in terms of identity, in terms of how we want to play, there is a lot of work to be done.”

On the defensive performance of the team and allowing a high volume of shots tonight...

“No, we didn't want to. But then you play against a team that today changed a little bit in structure. They were building up in a three-box-three, so they accumulated good players inside in the pockets. Then on the wide areas they had players that are very dangerous on one vs one. So we had to kind of survive for many situations. Since I came here, we didn't have the, I would say, the possibility to have a proper training week because it has been always about recovering, traveling, and that was it. Pretty much all the training has been done by video, by very light sessions, and we need to improve most of our behaviors, our principles. It's an early start. What I learned in Chicago, on a pitch that was much slower than it was today, if you are not aligned and you're a bit disjointed when you jump on high press then you leave a lot of space. This is something that we didn't want to allow LAFC to do tonight. I think that in one way we defended much deeper than what we wanted, but it was a kind of a choice. And I think that of course, James was very important to keep the team alive and get a valuable point on the road.”

On how well the team was able to build moving forward in the match tonight...

“I think that we need to find a balance between the identity that we are trying to build and the fact that we had very few sessions to work on our build-up situations. I think that for some of the moments that we were able to beat that pressure, we created interesting situations in the first half. I remember two quite open situations with Cole [Bassett], and then in the second one as well, one from Omir [Fernandez], another one from Kevin [Kelsey]. The one from Kevin, I think, was a very good chance. It's a work in progress. The most important for me is that the attitude there for all the players was very good. That we got a point away on the road. That is something that the team has struggled lately. I take it as a good foundation of trying to solve slowly some of the things that we want to improve, like having a better starts of the game, which in the last two we have done, and getting a better result away.”

Portland Timbers FC Keeper James Pantemis

Overall thoughts on tonight's match...

"It's difficult because I think if you look at the scoreboard, the stats, you'd think that we got completely dominated. Which I feel like at times, yes. But I think there are certain moments where if we were to be a little bit more clinical, I think the game changes a lot. I think the message for us in the locker room, and the mentality is that sure, we take the point on the positive, but we know we could be a lot better. We know that we want to come into places like this, especially on the road, and dictate our play and our principles. And I think that's we're going to try and build on. We get a point, valuable point on the road. I think we struggle on the road, so we take that positive, and then we prepare for three weeks at home. So got to make the most of that now."

On the defensive line's performance tonight...

"I feel like we've created good relationships with everybody. Like everybody knows what they need to do. I'm super happy with everybody, especially Eric [Miller] and Ian [Smith], who came on and may not have had a lot of minutes this year, but they put in an amazing shift. And I think it just goes to show our depth and the quality of our squad. We just we got to keep building. We got to hopefully try and concede a bit less, but at the end of the day our job is to defend and to save. That's we're there to do, and that's what we're going to do."

On how this first month with a new head coach has been...

"It's difficult because we haven't really had much time to train with the congested schedule. It's difficult to practice what you want, what he preaches. Obviously, we're doing a lot of meetings right now. It's clear in the messages we see what he wants to implement, and I think it's going to really benefit us now that we're going to have a full week of training. Next month we're going to have only games once a week for us to really work on our structure, our principles, and everything. I'm looking forward to that."

On how he stays focus with high volume of shots taken throughout the match...

"I think it's almost easier for a goalkeeper to make more saves than only one save. When I evaluate goalkeepers, when the best of the best have to make one save a game, is when you really tell the quality because but you're not as 'warm'. I don't want to say I want to continue getting so many shots, but getting so many shots kind of gets you into that rhythm and that momentum of just saving. You see the ball a lot, you're on it. But I mean, you just treat it like any other game. Like you could have two shots. You could have 20 shots. I think it's the mentality never changes. At the end of the day, my job is keep the ball out, whether it's one time or 20. That's what we work on in training; we might do a higher load and like let's say a small sided where I see a lot of shots in a shorter period of time, and that gets my fitness, that gets my sharpness. I think you just take what you can from training and treat it like the game."