

MLS POST-GAME QUOTES

Portland Timbers FC v FC Dallas
Sept 12, 2026 – Toyota Stadium, Frisco, Texas
Final: FC Dallas 2, Portland Timbers 1

Portland Timbers FC Quotes

Portland Timbers FC Head Coach Marti Cifuentes

Overall thoughts on the match...

"I think that it was a challenging game because we know that Dallas is in a good trend, that it's a long trip, and this extreme heat during the game. But we said to the guys, we approached the game with no excuses. We knew that it will be always difficult with eight injured players, and obviously, I really value the fact that the players really show attitude from the beginning. One of the keys for us today was to start the game well. Something that we have been struggling in some of the games, and I think that we did quite good at the start of the game. It was a very close first half with no big chances for either team, and it's true that one decision, one small mistake in the communication between Joel [Waterman] and Diego [Chara] defending a low block situation, who should jump into the pocket. Should be Diego squeezing up to a situation that we are defending the box. Joel gets a bit attracted, he opens a little bit of a big gap, and Dallas does well to punish us. But then perhaps it's true we didn't finish the first half as good as the control we had. I'm very happy the way we judge our build up because they were jumping in a different way. The way they press with [Bernard] Kamungo in the beginning he started on the right where he has been playing usually on the left, and they were a bit asymmetric on the press, but then in the second half we adjusted. I think it got even better. We got good control. Unfortunately for us today, I think that it was a big situation that is a game changer around minute 50-52. For me, it's a clear red card. Joel has the studs over his ankle. I think that probably not bad intention. I don't know what the VAR was checking because for me it's a clear red card, and unfortunately this could have been a game changer. But again, no excuses approach. I think that the team kept pushing. We create more pressure through the development of the second half. We finish playing with kind of two strikers, we tried to as well manage the load and the minutes of some players that were really tired. Some of them coming back from an injury, and the team did well. We arrived into the last third. We create a lot of I wouldn't say chances, a lot of situations that we miss just to be there because I remember two or three crosses that we just had to tap in, and unfortunately, we couldn't score until very late. Still after considering this second goal, that it's an individual mistake, and these things can happen. But of course, it's hard to then score two goals in just extra time. We were very close. We scored one goal with Ariel [Lassiter], and then we got the second great save from the keeper. So the feeling is that today it's a bit harsh, in my opinion, to leave Dallas without a point. But at the same time, I always say football is about achieving; it's not about deserving. We can discuss a lot about if we create more chances, if we create more shots. Definitely, they got a third chance to score the third goal when we were very open, very wide in the last minutes of the game, but I think that the most important in football is to achieve, and today we didn't achieve."

Thoughts on how the team controlled the midfield...

"I think we got some moments where we did some things well. Obviously, we knew that yeah, Joao [Ortiz] was a bit tired in the second half, and we felt that dropping Omir [Fernandez] could give us a little more attacking threat, so to say. But as well, Omir has not completed 90 minutes for a while now, so we felt that it could be an option to play more with a double six then, give more freedom for Kristoffer [Velde] to play inside in the pockets, and then play with a with a pure striker. I would like to have more options, but at the moment we got those. Obviously the injuries that we got in different positions made us take certain decisions. But that's the reality. That's the situation where we are. My job is to get the best of it."

Thoughts on the chances created in the second half and what made them better...

"I think that it was about adjusting a little bit to the build-up. Then in the second half, in halftime, they push Kamungo to the left side, the side that he has been playing usually, and then that created a little bit of

less space for Antony, which I think in the first half we should definitely have exploited more. Then we swap, and then we try to introduce Ariel in the right to have a little more freedom. I think that we improved in the second half. Obviously, as I said, I think first half was very close for both teams. We take away this mistake that obviously we cannot forget, but I think it was a zero-zero halftime, probably first half result. But in the second half, we improve because we had more numbers to get into the box. We start to attack certain areas that we could access the box and slowly we improve. But as I said, we miss perhaps the last touch not only to score but to create even more chances than with it.”

Portland Timbers FC Defender Joel Waterman

Overall thoughts on tonight’s match...

“I thought our first even 40 minutes were really good. We had lots of possession, created a couple chances. They weren't doing anything, and we looked really, really good. So it's unfortunate we gave up a goal right before halftime, and then again, I thought second half we came out with good energy too, and created a lot. They sat back, and that's their game. And in the end, I thought we did enough to win. But you know, that crucial second goal kind of put us out of the game a little bit, and we weren't really able to get back into it. But a lot of fight from the guys, a lot of heart. So that's good to see.”

On how the partnership with Finn Surman is developing...

“We have lots of conversations just about the game and trying to get the chemistry going as fast as we can. Same with Kamal [Miller]. Same with all the other center backs. We're just trying to be the best group of center backs we could be for this team and not allow any goals. So, you know, obviously disappointed letting into tonight, but you know, our relationships are slowly but surely getting better week by week, and we're starting to know kind of what the other person likes to do and how they play the game. So it's been good.”

On how he feels he plays with the rest of the defensive back line...

“I think any team is you know obviously a bit different. You have to learn the other guys' tendencies and where they like the ball and how they like to move and how they think. And I loved it, you know, I love playing alongside Finn [Surman]. I love having Ian [Smith] on my left side. Ronnie [Ronald Hernández] did well on the right side, but again, we didn't do enough to get the job done. We lost, so you know, as defenders, you never want to lose games and concede goals. But yeah, it's fun to start getting to know these guys and start getting relationships going.”