MLS POST-GAME QUOTES

Portland Timbers vs. San Jose Earthquakes
September 26, 2026 – PayPalPark (San Jose, Calif.)
Final: San Jose 3, Portland Timbers 1

Portland Timbers Head Coach Martí Cifuentes

General thoughts on the match…

"A bad game. I think that style of the game is really, really poor. For a few minutes in between the first goal and the second, we had some better approach to the game, but after that again, the rest of the first half was really, really bad, and then probably the game was over. You could argue that in the second half we created some more chances, we had a little bit more control, but I think basically San Jose just defended the lead, and the story of the game was practically over. A bad night. We had to climb a mountain with the amount of adversity, if you want, with the injuries, with the players that were out, but still, that shouldn't be an excuse. And as I said before, I don't want to feel sorry for ourselves. We need to compete better, and today we didn't."

On how the team defended from the front…

"There are some basics that go a little bit beyond the tactics. That is basically in football, you need to win the 1v1. You need to win the 1v1 when you attack, but you need to win the 1v1 when you defend. Some people call it duels. Call it duels if you want. The team was extremely long. This is not what we agreed. They think that the fact that [San Jose] played with two strikers like [Timo] Werner and [Preston] Judd. Usually they play more like a three-box-three. Today Werner was high, but still we know that about his pace. We know that Judd is a quick player, but the distance between the lines was too long, and then some of the behaviors once [San Jose] beat the first line of pressure were not at the level that it has been before."

On defensive adjustments made at halftime…

"As I said, it was not about the way we press because we have been doing that against St. Louis, against Minnesota, against teams that play three at the back, and we did it at a very high level. Today somehow it was not good enough as in other areas. As I said, the first half was very poor on the way we defended. Obviously, when the team has been struggling for a long time on the way we start the games. Today we didn't correct that. And then I'm not sure if it's emotional as well. A big wall to climb for the team. But definitely it was not good in that sense."

On Eric Izoita and Alexander Aravena's performances…

"Probably one of the few positives of the game, the fact that both [Eric Izoita] and Alexander Aravena got minutes. It's probably the good news. Alex is showing real personality. I would like him to have this opportunity before, but he picked that injury, unfortunately, some weeks ago in his knee. But now he's back fully, and I'm very happy with the minutes he played, and the same for Alexander."

Portland Timbers midfielder David Da Costa

On how the team felt at halftime down 3-0…

"The coach was mad because we didn't do the right things in the first half. We need to start our games better because it's unacceptable to come in from the first half down 3-0. We need to start the game better and in the future games."

On his rotations from the left side to the right during the game

“Because we defend one-on-one, and it's difficult to change during the game, so we follow the player and we stay on the right or on the left.”

On what made San Jose difficult to defend tonight…
“It's more on us. It's not San Jose. San Jose, of course, played well, but we need to be more aggressive and more compact because they can’t score three goals in three attacks.”