

MLS POST-GAME QUOTES

Portland Timbers v Charlotte FC
Oct 24, 2026 – Providence Park, Portland, OR
Final: Portland Timbers 3, Charlotte FC 2

Portland Timbers FC Quotes

Portland Timbers FC Head Coach Martí Cifuentes

Overall thoughts on tonight's match...

"I'm very happy for the players, especially, for the fans as well. I think it's been a long time since we've had this feeling, so very happy for everyone. But I think it was a very deserved win. I think we started the game as bad as we could start, because we lost a ball in a situation that we know can be dangerous, and then we allowed a very good left-footed player to open the angle and shoot. So actually, it was perhaps the first chance they had and the only chance they got in 60 minutes, but they could score. It was not the style we wanted. But at the same time, I think that the team responded exactly as good as we could expect. I think that since the moment we conceded, we started to play with intensity, with clear identity on how we want to play. I think that we were creating a lot of situations in the last third, a lot of chances, and I think that deservedly we took the lead again. It was nice to see the players enjoying the pitch. I was enjoying myself. It was a very good flow, and perhaps the only minus that we said in halftime, was that we had to score the third goal, the fourth goal, because that could be the end of the game. But unfortunately, I think that after starting again the second half really well. We had to make some adjustments because I think that Eric [Izoita] had his yellow card. He started to feel a little bit more tired, and Jimmer [Fory] was not feeling well, some stomach issue, and we had to sub him. But both of them were playing at really high level. But perhaps after that, I think that Charlotte brought on good players from the bench, and then the game shifted a bit. We started to suffer a little bit more, and then in the second chance they got during the game, in a situation that we definitely needed to defend much better, they scored the equalizer. It was a period about 15-20 minutes where they had more motion, the desire to get that win. But at the end, the last 10 minutes, I think we had control in the last third. In the last chance of the game, we're saying to the guys that we need to keep believing, and I think that's exactly what they did. And we score to get the win that I think that all of us wanted and the team deserved."

On the trust he has with Eric Izoita after picking up a yellow card early in the match...

"I said to him after the game that he was playing at really high level. That I'm so happy with him. That unfortunately, this yellow card perhaps affected our decision to sub him, but he's growing. He's growing every training. He's growing in confidence, and he's showing his quality. I'm very happy for him. I'm happy about the internal competition that there is in this position because we have another good player like Cole [Bassett], another good player like Joao [Ortiz] that can play in this number eight position, obviously David [Da Costa] as well. I think it's very good for the team. It's good for the club and speaks highly about what the academy has been doing. Not only T2, of course, with an amazing season, but as well what the job behind the scenes that all the coaches in the academy, so all the credit to them, because at the end I just picked Eric [Izoita] two months ago, but he's showing definitely his quality."

On what partnerships he is beginning to see within the team as they build a more final roster...

"When you start in a new club, for me the main thing is the culture, building a culture in terms of mentality on how we want to look, not only on the pitch but off the pitch. What are our values? And I think that I speak a lot with the guys about having a clear identity on the way we want to do things, on and off the pitch, to do it with intensity, no matter what the scenario is, and actually speak as well with doing that with integrity, because for me it's the guys. But I think that we speak sometimes about systems. Systems are just the players. So as a coach, the only thing that we can suggest to them is to give them the foundation where they can develop their best qualities, and I think that we start to see those partnerships. Obviously, you have an idea on how we can win games, which is always being dominant on the ball, and which is trying to attack as much time as we can. That will be the foundation, and to do that, we need to rein the ball very quick and so on. But the most important thing are those partnerships that you are talking about."

You can see that one of the main decisions when I arrived here was to use [Kristoffer Velde] on the left side, which, in my opinion since I've known him, perhaps is his best position. I'm not saying that he cannot play in other positions, but then as well to use David [Da Costa] close to him to try to create those relationships, those partnerships, as you call it, Jimer [Fory] joining, Ian [Smith] is joining. So when they are playing those three together, whoever they are, they are doing really well. We're trying to create the same today on the right side. We saw a lot of good combinations between Ronald [Hernández], Ariel [Lassiter], and Eric [Izoita]. They have not played that much time together, but we tried to work on those. Now we need to add more even centrally. But you could see that Joel [Waterman] is feeling more confident on carrying the ball. There are a lot of solutions that we can use, and I'm happy today for the bench impact because it's not just the guys starting. Omir [Fernandez] got into the game the way that Cole [Bassett] got into the game. They really gave us something special in the last minute."

Portland Timbers FC Attacker Ariel Lassiter

On the impact Eric Izoita has brought to the team since joining...

"I mean definitely a lot of life, a lot of confidence, a lot of energy, like you say. I mean, young 19-year-old first team getting minutes. I'd probably have all the confidence in the world too, and I think he's showing really well. I still think he's extremely humble and wanting to listen and wanting to learn, which is super important and will benefit him in the long run. But you know, he's taking the opportunity, and he's doing really well with it. And two really good assists tonight, and hopefully he'll continue that throughout the rest of the year."

On how he is fitting into Marti's system for the team...

"I think with the system that he has us playing and where I'm at right now, it opens the door for me to go and kind of be free and play. It gives me a lot of confidence going forward. Of course, he has high standards for me as far as making sure I track back and help defensively, which I try to do to the best of my ability. But yeah, I think going forward, I'm able to try to go score, try to go create, whether if it is much wider and higher or inside and closer to the goal, so I think within the system, yeah, for sure. I think it's giving me a lot of space and a lot of room to fly, and I'm just trying to do the best that I can with the opportunity."

On how it felt when the team celebrated the last-minute winning goal...

"I think it's a really good feeling when you see that and you feel that. I'm sure the fans felt it, we felt it off the field, and we want to show that we are together. Of course, the last couple of games have been difficult. It's hard to continue to do the right things when you don't see any success. But I think we're thriving on that. We're trying to be as tight knit as possible and keep our minds always focused on the next game. The togetherness is going to take us a long way, and I think we're going to need every single one, as you saw tonight. Whether a big role, small role, I think everybody's going to be needed to make sure that we get into the playoffs, and then the rest will take care of itself."

Portland Timbers FC Midfielder Eric Izoita

On his mindset after getting a yellow card in the 17th minute...

"I mean I was trying to just set the tone. I was trying to get an early challenge in but clipped him a little bit and got a yellow for it. But I tried to be smart for the rest of the game, and coach knew that, and he told me that, and I just try to be smart. Then they took me out because I was probably on the yellow end."

On being settling into the first team and how he connects with the more senior players...

"I mean, the togetherness in the group is so good right now. Everybody's together. All the older guys are all really nice to me, and they all talk to me. I'm friends with some of the guys, and we talk about football and other stuff. We connect, but it's like everybody's all together, and everybody just wants to win."

On how this experience has been for his family...

"My family are my biggest supporters. All of them: my dad, my mom, my sister, my brother, my grandparents started coming to the games too, and my uncles, and they're just like my biggest

supporters. And my dad, he always told me that I was going to get here, and he's just super happy. He just tells me to take it one game, one day at a time."