MLS POST-GAME QUOTES
Portland Timbers v Austin FC
Nov. 7, 2026 – Q2 Stadium, Austin, Texas
Final: Portland Timbers 2, Austin FC 0

Portland Timbers FC Quotes

Portland Timbers FC Head Coach Martí Cifuentes

Overall thoughts on tonight's match and qualifying for postseason…
"Very happy for the fans. Very happy for the players and happy for the whole club because obviously that was the target when we started to speak with Ned [Grabavoy] and Merritt [Paulson]. We all agreed that in my opinion the Timbers should be always a club that make it into the playoffs. Some weeks ago, it was an ambitious target, but we kept giving credit to the players, especially those that believed what we were doing and what we were working on. I think that today we knew that it would not be easy, but it's a great achievement. And in that sense, I want to say thanks to Jack Cassidy for his spell, where the team was fantastic, collecting a lot of points, and for Phil [Neville] as well, because without the points collected with both of them, it would not have been possible to be where we are."

On the team's mentality and dropping too much after the first goal…
"I'm not very happy about that after a great start of the game, because that's what we wanted to do. Perhaps we dropped too much according to what we want to do. At the same time, it's true that I think most of the possession was with the three center halves of Austin playing between them. So, we knew that we had to be smart on the way we jump, but we were too far to have real impact. Which we tried to correct in the halftime. We introduced Cole [Bassett] to try to switch a little bit, change a little bit of the formation out of possession. We did something that we call winger follow wing-back. So, Ari [Lassiter] was engaging with the right left winger, [Jon] Gallagher, and then we could have David [da Costa] on that side in the right pushing to create a three-by-three against the center halves. I think that it worked better. Obviously, taking some risks at the same time, but I think the second half was much better. I think that today I just want to praise my players because we knew that this was not an easy game. Austin, last game of the season, nothing to lose. They wanted to finish the season in style in front of their families, the people, the fans, and I want to give credit to the players because we knew that we had to grind it out. We said that two keys of the game will be to start well and then to be able to grind it out. I was never expecting an easy game or a big score because I know how competitive it is in this league."

On the biggest area of growth and what needs to be cleaned up going into post-season…
"I would say that I think the guys themselves, the players, have been saying that in interviews, and the feedback that we get from them, they keep believing all the time in themselves because at the end they are the guys who are making the difference. I think that today is a good example that Kris [Velde] didn't have an easy game, and we knew that it was so important to keep him on the pitch because when he has a situation, he can always be a game changer, and that's exactly what the guys have done. They have been growing while we were trying to implement those ideas. It's never easy. I have my experience on how it is to jump in the middle of the season. We are far from perfect. We are far from an end product. We have a lot of areas that we want to improve. Today is a good example. We need to be better at pressing higher, regaining the ball quicker, at creating even more chances. But I want to be fair as well, and I think that the team has grown a lot over the last three months. And yeah, I think the results and the development of the team is there."

Portland Timbers FC Goalkeeper James Pantemis

On how it feels to qualify for playoffs…
"Amazing, amazing feeling. I know that this club aspires to be successful and win trophies, and I think that with everything we've gone through this year and the years that I've been here, that's always been the

objective. So to be back, to get a seventh seed, and not have to play a play in. It's exciting. We got a home game as well, so looking forward to all that."

On what breaking the club record for playing every minute in an MLS match along and amount of saves in a season means to him…

"I'm just proud. I know for myself, one of the reasons why I came to this club was obviously the fact that I knew what I was able to give and what I was able to do on the field, and just the fact that they believed in me, and I'm able to repay the organization and the fan base with just me putting out a performance and playing every single minute and doing what I can to help the team. I think it's really special because this club's been great. It's been a great, great ride so far. So super, super happy. Too many more."

On defining the last four games of the regular season…

"It's a good question. I would say just overall great resilience from all of us. I think we've been in kind of playoff mode since the last three or four weeks, where I think every game has been something, and that's kind of what I was trying to reiterate to everybody before the game. That just because it was a decision day game doesn't mean that pressure was on today. I think the pressure has been there for the last four or five games, and I think you know we built this momentum now. I think we got hot at the right time. I think this league is very interesting, and if I'm not mistaken, I think in the past when this team has had a lot of success, they've they finished in like a seventh or eighth seed, and they got hot at the right time. So, why not? Why not us? Why not us now? And that's probably going to be the mentality and the mindset going forward."