



# NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION

## TRANSCRIPT

### **TRANSCRIPT (8/14): Press Conference**

*Soundbytes from Head Coach Caleb Porter & F/W Ignatius Ganago  
New England hosts Los Angeles FC on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. ET*

#### **Revolution Head Coach Caleb Porter**

##### ***On the intensity of teams fighting for playoff spots over the final stretch of the regular season:***

**Porter:** "It's when it matters, it's when you find out how it's going to go. You can see that light at the end of the tunnel. It's a long process and journey to get to the end of the year, and we are in a very simple mindset. I said it going into the last game, we need to take it one at a time. We've got nine games to go and yet we have to play the next game, and we have to win the next game. It's another home game. We're playing a much better team [Los Angeles FC]. If we're going to win, we have to perform really well on both sides of the ball, because they're definitely one of the most talented teams in Major League Soccer. When you look at the individual players they have, their players can change the game in a second."

##### ***On the challenges Los Angeles FC will present in this weekend's match:***

**Porter:** "The talent. They're a very good transitional team. In this league, if you're a good transitional team, you typically do well, because the game has a tendency, if you don't watch it, to go back and forth a lot, and to become an open game. In an open game, the more talented teams usually win."

##### ***On how New England will plan to play against Los Angeles FC:***

**Porter:** "We have to be a team. It's 11-v-11. I know that's cliché, but we need to be a team, and we need to defend with 11 guys. If we defend and we're honest with 11 guys, and we're organized – certainly there are a few other things that we're going to look to do in the game that I won't mention. But, for me, that's a starting point against a team like this. We have to be honest, we have to be organized, and that will give us a chance in the match, because with less time and space, their individual talent will have less moments, hopefully, where they can hurt you."

##### ***On the Revolution waiving Maxi Urruti and Luis Diaz:***

**Porter:** "It's never easy, players out. There were a multitude of factors. It wasn't one thing. Based on all those factors, we felt it was the right decision, like every decision we make, players in and out. Short term, when you look at the role they were going to play, you saw in the last game with [Ignatius] Ganago back, they weren't going to play as big of a role as they had played. So that reduced role short term was a factor. The fact that we have some young players coming through who we like is a big factor. We want to make sure that we give those players an opportunity to get closer, even if that's being on the bench, especially if guys aren't going to play a major role. We're still looking to sign a player or two in the attack, so having that roster flexibility is for sure a factor. There are a few other little things as well that I won't get into. But for me, it's all those things wrapped into one. These are decisions we don't take lightly. These are things we think through, and because of the multitude of factors, a few of them I've mentioned, it just made sense. It was the right thing to do, because long term, [Urruti and Diaz] weren't in the plans."

##### ***On the opportunities this can present for other players moving forward:***

**Porter:** "With [Ignatius] Ganago coming back [from injury], he's going to play a major role. He's a very good player. We feel like we have a talented group in the attack. When you have guys off the bench that

are a little bit older, that aren't maybe going to play or they're going to play a small role, I'd rather have some of our young guys get a little closer to it. I think you'll see, hopefully a signing that we make. As hard as it was to get rid of two guys that I really respect and care about, I respect and care about the entire team. But for me, I have to do the right thing all the time. If you look at all those things, and you look at hopefully the signing that we're going to make, it just made sense, for the short and long term."

***On defender Brayan Ceballos' strengths and potential:***

**Porter:** "[Ceballos] just has a great mentality. He's very focused, very competitive, and wants to win. He's extremely competitive and hates to get beat, hates to lose, hates to give up goals. That pride, defending, and desire to win, that will to win, from a mentality standpoint is really huge with your defenders. I love that in him. Then from a talent standpoint, he's extremely athletic. In this league, you have to be athletic against the talented players that we face every single week. I would say tactically and technically, he's improving. We knew those areas needed to be cleaned up a little bit, but the improvement that I've seen in those areas from him, in a short amount of time in this league, he's still pretty young. It really excites me for the future. I feel like he can be one of the best defenders in the league."

***On how Ignatius Ganago can contribute to the team's success for the remainder of the season:***

**Porter:** "It's funny, because there are always factors when you win games, right? Maybe sometimes you can say, 'It seems like we win when this guy is in' or 'It seems like we don't win when this guy is in'. Maybe you can overstate that a little bit, but I don't believe it's a coincidence. Even in training, when you see guys in small-sided games, it just seems like some guys win and some guys don't. I think having more guys that are in your team that seem to be winners, and you seem to win when they're in, helps, especially when you're in a situation like we're in."

"We were winning when Ganago was playing. I think it's not a coincidence, because he is a very well-rounded player. He's extremely complete on both sides of the ball. He's an honest player, which again, is very important in this league. He defends. He is a team guy, extremely humble. [He is] talented on the ball, can go one-v-one, can play in the pockets, can get crosses in. You'd say the one thing you want to see a little more of is just the finishing, but I would say he had four or five goals that were called back. So, I do think he's a little unlucky in some of those situations. But if we get that piece right, I think he is a really, really good piece in this league when you consider just how complete he is."

***On reflecting on the last 18 games, including a nine-game unbeaten run and nine games without a win, and the team's identity at this stage of the season:***

**Porter:** "I'm not thinking about the last 18 games, I'm thinking about the next game. Obviously, I'm aware of the last 18 games. I'm aware of the fact we went nine [games] unbeaten, I'm aware of the fact that we went nine games where we didn't win. I would've preferred it to not go that way, obviously. I felt like in that Montréal game [on May 31], we were in a great spot in the first third of the year. The next nine games, we didn't get enough results. There was some good play in there. We were in every game, we were tight. But going back to what I first said, it doesn't matter at this point. What matters now is in the last phase of the year, the last third of the year, that we make it right, and that will be our identity. That's what everybody remembers. Identity comes in what you do, it's not what you say. What we want to do is show who we are and show that we are a winning team, a winning group, and a group that can and should be in the playoffs."

***On how he helps keep his players focused during difficult moments of a season:***

**Porter:** "I think model – if my behavior is even and process-oriented, then theirs typically will be as well. For guys like Carles [Gil] and Matt [Polster], it's easy. They already do that. That's why they're successful players, that's why they're proven players. You're always going to have little moments when things aren't going well. You want the work rate to be a little more, you want the confidence to be a little bit more, and you want to make sure they continue to do the right things. It's not abnormal to have little things that you have to sort out to maintain that culture and maintain that buy-in, and maintain that confidence, and to stay focused on the process. But by and large, we have a group that knows that. Carles Gil is bought in. He's bought in, he's working hard, and he believes in the team. He believes in the direction we're headed. He understands, like I do, that it has not been good enough in terms of results. But he also understands,

like I do, that the only thing we can do about that is to win the next game and then, hopefully over the course of the next [nine] games, make the playoffs.

"It's put up or shut up, because in the end, it doesn't really matter what happened in the past. We can talk about it all day, but no one cares and frankly we don't care either. We recognize it, we own it, but we have to now go and get it done. It's that simple. If we don't get it done, we know what happens. So, I think guys that [have been] around the block – myself, Carles, Matt [Polster], Matt Turner – experienced guys, they have a great mindset right now. You won't see any B.S. out of them. You're going to see good guys. You're going to see guys that show up, guys that want to work, guys that are for the team, guys that have no drama, and guys that when they take the pitch, have good character. You're going to see all the right stuff when the bullets are flying with those guys."

***On coaching against Son Heung-Min and his impressions of him as a player:***

**Porter:** "There are a few other guys we can mention on their team as well. If you're a transition team like they are and they have a lot of talent, it's important that we don't put ourselves in a situation where they're in a track meet against us all game. That type of game will benefit them. They'll flourish in that type of game. Nine out of 10 times, they're going to beat most teams in the league, because if you allow [Denis] Bouanga to get going and Son [Heung-Min] to get going – there are three or four other guys I can mention on their team – if you let them get going and running at you, give them a bunch of time and space, they'll rip you apart."

"I want to be clear, we're not taking the game scared. We're taking the game with confidence, but we're also taking the game understanding what we need to do. There's not going to be a naivety in our play, and I think that's really important. We have a plan, the players know the plan, and they understand what we need to do to win the game. I think that's a big part of winning this type of game where they have guys like Son, Bouanga, and others."

***On Son Heung-Min joining MLS and how his arrival could help contribute to the growth of the league:***

**Porter:** "I have great respect for every top player that we play against, including Son. If I take my coaching hat off, it's great for the league. It's great for the sport that we continue to have players like him, who are in their prime, who, in his case, was producing at the highest level in the best league in the world. To have guys like that come into our league is amazing for our league. It makes a great statement, and it helps put the spotlight on our league for other players like him to want to come into our league. So, I have a lot of respect. But my coaching hat back on, I'm not thinking a lot about the growth of the sport. I'm thinking about winning the next game and what I need to do to stop him. I know it's very hard to stop a player like that, but I'm confident and my team is confident that we can still win the game, even though on the other side there is a player like him."

**Revolution Forward/Winger Ignatius Ganago**

***On returning to the field after rehabilitating his injury for several weeks:***

**Ganago:** "The last two months were really tough for me, because like you said, I got injured. It was a very difficult moment because I knew I would be out for a long time. I just said to myself, 'Okay, now I'm out so I have to do everything possible to come back and come back even stronger than before.' I really worked hard, trained hard, so I'm really happy to be back."

***On what he hopes to contribute to the team beyond scoring goals:***

**Ganago:** "Beyond just goal scoring, I think I bring maybe more energy, more runs. The last two months, I was there watching the team also. I was pleased with the way they were playing, because they were really playing good, but no results. It was very difficult for everybody, even for me, because I wanted the team to win. But I was really glad to see them playing well [and] creating a lot of changes."

***On Caleb Porter saying it is not a coincidence that the team tends to win more when he is on the field:***

**Ganago:** "When you are somewhere where everybody wants you to be there, then sometimes you feel like you have to give it back. That's the way, for me, that I approach the game. I know everybody wants to win, I know everybody wants to win make the playoffs. For me, I just want to win. Even [if] I don't score, I want the team to win. If I have to run back, I will run back and defend like ever just to win the game. This is the way I approach the game. It doesn't matter if I score or if I don't score. If we win the game, that's the most important thing to me. We're not in the ways of being the top goal scorer or something. Today, we want to make the playoffs, so we have to put the chances on our side. I think everything depends on us. We don't have to wait for others to lose a game or something like that; we have to just keep winning, so that's what we are trying to do."

***On looking to make an impact over the final stretch of the season:***

**Ganago:** "It's simple: I love what I'm doing, I love to play soccer, so for me, the most important thing is to be on the pitch, to enjoy the moment, win games. I know if you win games, you can make the playoffs, and if we make the playoffs, maybe we can win the MLS Cup. This is the most important – just enjoy the moment, try to show yourself as a team, because now we need the team, not just individual players. The most important thing is the team to be together and just enjoy the moment."

***On what playing for the Revolution means to him after bringing him in on loan before the season:***

**Ganago:** "This club really means a lot to me. From day one to today, they have always been there for me. They keep trying to push me to reach the top. They keep pushing me and keep advising me. It's not like I am owing them something, but sometimes when people are really nice to you, the least I can do right now is to keep myself on the pitch, to give everything. That's the least I can do. After that, I can try to score a goal to make us win. There are so many things. Like I said, from day one, they were there for me. Even when I got injured they were still there."

***On whom in the club has been helpful to him during his time in New England:***

**Ganago:** "They really speak with me. Sometimes I was speaking with the coach as well and they were telling me, 'Yeah, keep going.' They were telling me, 'You're working so hard, keep going, we are waiting for you.' The medical staff, they were there asking questions every time, how I feel, if I am okay with what they are doing, if I like it. If I don't really like something, they can change and do other stuff. So, we were working hard and [also] communicating together. It was really nice to work with them. It was tough, but they made it easier. Even the players were there for me. Every time, they were there laughing and smiling. When it's like that, it's [easier] to take the pain away."

***On playing against Denis Bouanga in France and if he has followed his career at LAFC:***

**Ganago:** "[Bouanga] is a really, really good player. No doubt. Everybody knows that. Even me as a player, I like the way he plays. He is a really good player, but I am on the opposite side as him, so we really want to win. We are focusing on ourselves. We know they have good players. They obviously have Bouanga, they have Son [Heung-min]. Yeah, they have good players, but these are big games. Big games [against] big teams. We have to fight them. We have to give everything to win the game. We want to make the playoffs. If we are playing against teams like this, we have to be 100 percent there. You just have to be ready for that."

***On if playing big games against quality opponents feels different and makes him play better:***

**Ganago:** "It's kind of different. You know on the other side, they have really good players. Sometimes you call them 'names'. Sometimes the names cannot win the game. I don't know, maybe there is more energy or more power. Sometimes, yeah, you want to show that we too can be amongst those [players]. We can show them, okay, you are maybe this guy, but me too, I can do something. It can be a little bit of a challenge, but it does give a lot of confidence, too."