



NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION

TRANSCRIPT

TRANSCRIPT (1/31): Preseason Match #3 vs. Houston Dynamo FC

Soundbytes from Assistant Coach Michael Morris, M Eric Klein & D Peyton Miller

Revolution Assistant Coach Michael Morris

On the objectives and takeaways from Saturday's match:

Morris: "The first thing – it's preseason – is to continue to build a base level of fitness. I do think that the players in both sets of groups that participated did push themselves to a reasonable level. That's one of the main objectives for preseason. Aside from that, we're always focusing on all of our four moments of the game. We knew Houston would present some unique opportunities in terms of the way they build and the way they rotated in the midfield, so our defending shape was a big focus. They actually had a little bit of flexibility in terms of how they pressed us, so just another opportunity for us to implement different ways that we want to build out and build better connections between the players."

On the areas he's seen the most progress from the group:

Morris: "I think I'm fortunate to say that I've seen a lot of progress in all four moments of the game. There's a lot more clarity in terms of how we want to bring the ball out of the back. It's always a work in progress. I think there are going to be steps that we need to continue to take in terms of how we finish the attack, even though the two goals we scored today were quite excellent. In terms of our defending shape, we talk a lot about different ways we want to set up our shape against the opponent. But then, trying to build a very intense level of pressure when the opponent is building out or in their mid [middle] third, so we can control the game with and without the ball."

On players describing the coaches' emphasis on taking advantage of chances to get forward:

Morris: "It's amazing that they're speaking about that consistently, because if the team is speaking in the language and the behaviors that we're trying to condition in them, that's a positive. So, that makes me smile in this moment here. It's just about, we want to be proactive and play on the front foot to make the opponent react to us. In order to be able to do that, when you have teammates who can face forward, you have to challenge the backline, you have to run ahead of the ball. Sometimes, that's a selfless behavior. We talk about togetherness. You make runs multiple times, every run might not always receive a pass, but it shifts the opponent and it's selfless behavior for the team, because you're creating space for yourself and also your teammates. For us to play the way that we want to play, we're just constantly looking to run forward and attack the spaces in front of us."

On the fighting attitude he's seen from the group:

Morris: "There was a moment today where it's a preseason friendly and everybody got together in that specific moment. Even the coaching staff got involved. But I think that's the message, that we're coming here for a fight, but we're not messing around about it. If teams come to play us, it's going to be a horrible experience. Our fight is going to be part of our identity, and that's just who we are. When it's time to make things intense and fight, we're going to be there for the fight. If teams want to fight us, then we're going to fight you back even harder."

On Leo Campana scoring in all three preseason games:

Morris: "It's great when your forward can score three goals in three games. I don't even think it's necessary to talk about the amazing goals that he [Campana] has scored. I think what I can talk about the most is the

intensity of his defending behavior and his commitment to that level of togetherness. There are moments in the first half when you watch it back. His immediate response to re-press the opponent, little details that he's taking up like cutting off passing lanes. Those little actions off the ball aggregate for the team, and it eventually ends up in creating better circumstances for him to finish attacks and create more goals for himself. So, it's all cyclical and it's been pretty exciting to see a player of his profile be so intense with his defending from the front."

On the importance of 25 different players getting minutes on Saturday:

Morris: "As I mentioned before, a big part of preseason is building your base level of fitness and also doing it in a way that's intense enough that we can maintain the intensity we want to play at. The other thing is, everybody has performed at such a good standard so far that we have the flexibility to look at different player combinations and know that we're building these strong connections throughout the course of the preseason that we can rely on throughout the season. We know that when we get into a dense level of matches, we have to continue to look at different combinations of the teams and player connections. It has been good that everybody has had a chance to get in and perform and not only build their fitness, but also their player relationships."

Revolution Defender Peyton Miller

On Saturday's preseason match vs. Houston:

Miller: "I think today was a great step in the direction that we want to go. There are lots of very good actions, but there's also things that we need to work on. We'll go back, look at it, and fix whatever we need to fix."

On the progress the team has made from the first preseason game to today:

Miller: "Yeah, it's been a lot of progress. Lots of different pieces coming in and just changing the style we're playing and stuff like that. So, it takes a little bit of getting used to, but I think we're stepping in the right direction."

On his familiarity with Marko Mitrovic and the coaching staff:

Miller: "It's been great. I'm very comfortable with them. Whatever I need or anything I need help on, they are there for me. I'm very comfortable with this staff."

On the attack today:

Miller: "I thought the attack was very good. We had a lot of great opportunities and the buildup to get those goals, it was amazing. Very good finishes by Leo [Campana] and Griffin [Yow]."

On Coach Mitrovic's style of play emphasizing aggressive forward play:

Miller: "He's very big on advancing the ball and attacking forward when we have the opportunity, but we have to have patience when we do it."

On the team's focus heading into the final two preseason games:

Miller: "We're very focused. We obviously want to keep taking steps in the right direction, but we also want to get good results while we're doing it."

Revolution Midfielder Eric Klein

On getting acclimated to the new coaching staff and his teammates:

Klein: "It has been a really good preseason. We have some new faces coming in, and it has been good to get to know them all. I think we've been playing really well so far."

On his initial impressions of playing for Marko Mitrović:

Klein: "I think it's going really well. We're all buying into the system and I'm excited for the year."

On what he has learned from the veteran players:

Klein: "Just being around them more and seeing how they hold themselves as a pro. A lot of those guys have been in the league for a while, so I'm taking it all in and just learning from them."

On Saturday's test match against Houston Dynamo FC:

Klein: "I thought we competed really well. [Houston] is a good team, and I thought we came in and played how we wanted to play. I thought we did well."

On the fluidity among the central midfielders:

Klein: "There's a lot more freedom. We're just kind of finding our own space, and as long as we're all seeing what each other is doing and just being able to find the ball in wider pockets or higher up. It's definitely been a good adjustment."

On how fine-tuned the focus becomes as the regular season draws closer:

Klein: "We just have to keep going each week and just keep getting ready for the first game of the year."