



NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION

TRANSCRIPT

TRANSCRIPT (2/2): Preseason Media Availability

Soundbytes from Head Coach Marko Mitrović, M Carles Gil, M Matt Polster

Revolution Head Coach Marko Mitrović

On what he has seen from the group during the first three weeks of preseason:

Mitrović: “I think we are moving things forward both on and off the field. We’re understanding what kind of environment we want to create. I can see a very, very good connection with the players and, in general, the staff off the field, and then having a commitment to understand what we want to achieve on the field. So, I’m really pleased with that commitment that everyone has here so far in the last three weeks. Listen, when it’s something new, it’s easy to be motivated at the beginning. It’s something that I’m looking actually to see if we can sustain the same enthusiasm going forward, and that’s something that we have to work on. However, I’m very positive on the first three weeks so far.”

On bringing in Brooklyn Raines after coaching him with the U.S. Under-20 National Team:

Mitrović: “I kind of have clarity in the way that I would love the team to play. That’s one of the positions that is very, very important. Every position is important, but to find the profile for that position somehow, I find it’s always completely difficult. I worked with Brooklyn [Raines] over the last four years. I know Brooklyn very well. He actually fits that profile very well. Also, playing last year and having a good amount of games with Houston, he also has experience in MLS. So, it was kind of a no-brainer for me, somebody that I know so well that fits what we are looking for. And also having that experience with the league put all the pieces together. I was actually very pleased that the club acted immediately. When we spoke about that and I mentioned Brooklyn’s name, they, as I said, acted immediately and started the process of how we can bring Brooklyn here. In the end, we made it happen.”

On his first impressions of the relationships the players have built:

Mitrović: “I don’t mean this in a bad way when I say this, it’s really a good thing, but there is no ego in this group. Starting with the guys that are veterans here and probably on paper someone that should be treated differently. But they are just very humble and very grounded players, and just act, practice, and behave like everyone else. I think every other player appreciates that, and they have really nice connections between them. I would say it’s a very humble and hard-working group of players.”

On working with a player like Carles Gil:

Mitrović: “Carles [Gil] is one of those that I just spoke about. He’s our captain, and Carles is definitely one of the most talented players in the league. But the way that he approaches every training session, and everything actually like our meetings, our meals, and his lifestyle, I think he’s a good example for younger guys to see what you have to do to get so far in your career and to present your talent on the field in the best possible way. Saying all this, that’s how he behaves. Carles is a very humble person. He’s very coachable. I know that, with the coaching staff, we have a certain way we want to play. Obviously, integrating our style and using Carles’ strengths, but also Carles kind of adapting what we want from him, he is very open to that. It’s a pleasure for all of us to have him with us.”

On how the process of installing his style of play in the team has been going through the first three weeks of preseason:

Mitrović: “I don’t think it’s a system, it’s more just the way we want to play. I’m happy with the way we are progressing. Week after week, we’re adding certain pieces in training sessions and, as we play one game per week, that kind of mirrors where we are in the process and the dynamic of the group. We have a certain periodization that was planned before the preseason, but we evaluate week after week how many things we can add or if we are advancing in certain things more than expected. So far, we’re in a good spot. I would say, preseason and friendly games are very different than official games. I would like to see once the season starts how we’re going to act in that moment and implement all those things. But, I’m very positive about those three weeks in terms of the team’s progress.”

On what he has seen from Leo Campana:

Mitrović: “I’m very pleased with Leo [Campana]. I don’t know how the last season was, the full context. Obviously, I watched the games and I know that he had some setbacks with injuries last season, but I think that he came back after the break very focused and very ready. I believe he has certain goals ahead of him and knows that he can reach those goals only if he is at his best. His attitude is great. Every session, he has very high numbers. That shows the commitment, but also that he is very focused on the things that we are asking him to do. Not just scoring the goals, obviously for a forward that is the description of their job. But there are also small actions on the field in all four moments of the game, including set pieces, that we like our forwards to do and he is taking it very seriously and trying to implement everything into his game.”

On Dor Turgeman entering his first full MLS season:

Mitrović: “Dor [Turgeman] is definitely a player that has high potential. He’s a 2003, so he is still only 22 years old. I can see the high potential in Dor. I would like to learn how we can use his potential in the best possible way. There is a lot of room in his development to grow as a player. It’s something that we will be focusing on in the period ahead of us – to work and develop him to become the best version of himself.”

On the approach to adding younger players to the roster during the offseason and if the team will be making any more signings:

Mitrović: “I would say this if we talk about young players, both Ethan [Kohler] and Brooklyn [Raines] are 2005, Griffin [Yow] is 2001. So, we talk about two players who are 20 years old and one who is 24 with certain experience. But I would say more, for me, it’s what we see on the field. Do we see quality and what level of quality do we see? That goes before age. That’s something that is very important. I think the selection process never stops. We know that the window is open sort of late, I don’t know the exact date but we’re going to be deep in spring when the window closes in MLS. Are there going to be some additional pieces? We’ll be ready to act if there is something that we strongly believe will improve our team. Obviously, we always have limitations with the salary cap and all the rules we have in MLS. If not, we’re going to look in the summer and the next transfer window. That process never stops.”

Revolution Midfielder Carles Gil

On signing a contract extension with New England through June 2028:

Gil: “I’m happy. This is what I wanted, to continue here. New England is my home, not just for me but my family, too. I want to continue doing good things here, trying to help the club, and help the team be better every day. Hopefully, many good things can happen in the next years.”

On his first impressions of newcomer and midfielder Brooklyn Raines:

Gil: “Obviously, Brooklyn [Raines] is a big talent. You can see in training during the week that he knows Marko [Mitrović], they know each other. He has played Marko’s style, so he understands every moment of the game, every position where he needs to be during every moment. We’re learning, because it’s many new things from Marko. But like I said, he’s coming from [United States Youth] National Teams with him, so obviously it’s a big signing for us. He’s still very young. For sure, he’s going to help the team a lot.”

On the leaders on the team heading into the new season:

Gil: “Obviously, I’m not the type of guy who talks a lot. I try to do it on the pitch, try to be a leader there, give my 100 percent in every training, in everything. It’s a very young club, but I think the energy is there.”

Everyone's very excited for what's coming. Not just me, but also Matt [Polster], Andrew [Farrell]. We are the elders, so we try to help everyone."

On the first weeks working with Marko Mitrović:

Gil: "It's amazing, honestly. We're coming from a difficult moment, and I think this is what we needed, a leader that tries to make a way for everyone [to succeed]. On the pitch, many new things in attacking, defending, but we're learning. Off the pitch, [we] try to be a family since the first day. I think we're doing that and everyone is very excited."

On his expectations for the coming year:

Gil: "I believe that MLS is a league that's changing every year. You can see that the teams, one year you're at the top and the next year you're not. We've had that. We were [at the top] in 2021. In 2023 too, in the middle of the season we were in second place [in the Eastern Conference] and everything changed. I still believe that we can do it. Obviously, Marko [Mitrović] also is an important part for me to stay here, what I saw in the first weeks from him and his staff. I'm excited for what's coming. Obviously, this is a young group. It's never easy but I think it's a year where we can change many things and I want to be here."

On what he's most proud of during his time with New England and what he's looking forward to accomplishing:

Gil: "I'm proud of being the player I am right now. When I arrived, I wasn't [the player I am now]. Honestly, in a soccer career you never know. Sometimes, you're thinking you're a player and then you can't be the type of player you want [to be]. I'm feeling that I'm the player I wanted [to be] when I started playing football, so I'm very proud of that. And what's coming is trying to be better every day, every year. Obviously, I'm getting older but I'm still feeling very good. I think I had a good year last year, but I can do better in many senses. That's what I'm focused on."

On MLS' upcoming transition to a summer-to-spring schedule format beginning in Summer 2027:

Gil: "It's going to be new for everyone, even for me. I played some years in Europe, but many years here too, so it's going to be new. I think everyone's happy with that. Like I said, it's going to be different. For example, for us, if we can play playoff games at Gillette [Stadium] with better weather, that's always good. It's going to be different, but for sure it'll be good."

On what gives him the confidence that the club can reach its objectives in the coming years:
(Translated from Spanish)

Gil: "Well, I think Marko [Mitrović] coming is a very important part of it, both Marko and his staff. I think we were in new territory. We didn't know where the club was going. I think bringing someone like Marko, someone who makes it clear what he wants, both on and off the field. From the first meeting he held, he made the objectives that he wants to follow very clear. On the field, we're learning a lot of new things that we didn't do before. For me, that has been key."

On his first impressions of Marko Mitrović:

(Translated from Spanish)

Gil: "With Marko [Mitrović], I had a meeting with him before we got started. He talked to me about the vision he had for the team. The first weeks have been very positive. Not just for me, but the whole group is happy. We're very inspired by what can happen."

On 17-year-old Somerville native Cristiano Oliveira, who signed a Homegrown contract with the first team in January:

(Translated from Spanish)

Gil: "I'm happy that [Oliveira] signed with the first team. He's still a very young player. He has a lot to learn but he's the type of player that I'm happy to have on the first team. He's learning every day with us in training, gaining his rhythm."

On extending his time in New England:

(Translated from Spanish)

Gil: "I'm very happy to remain here. Boston and New England are my home."

On the process behind signing the contract extension:

(Translated from Spanish)

Gil: “We spoke about how both sides wanted to remain together. When you get to the last season [of your contract], with an option, you reach the time to negotiate. Both sides were clear about what we wanted.”

On the team’s expectations for the upcoming season with a new coaching staff:

(Translated from Spanish)

Gil: “We’re very inspired. We know that we’re coming off some complicated years and that we need to take a step forward. I think Marko [Mitrović] arriving will help straighten things and bring us back to knowing what path we want to follow.”

Revolution Midfielder Matt Polster

On how the coaching staff has emphasized intensity as a foundational part of the game:

Polster: “I think the biggest thing is [being] intense in everything we do. That’s not just maybe how we press the ball, but the intensity of being focused on the field, knowing your role, and what the coaching staff is asking you to do in the game. So, it’s not just intensity in terms of play, but focusing as well is a big one.”

On forward Leo Campana starting the preseason three consecutive goal-scoring performances:

Polster: “Leo [Campana] has been very good so far to start this preseason. That’s to be expected in a way, because I know the quality he has as a player and what he wants to achieve as well. I know he wants to have a really good year, and I know he’s going to the World Cup. Those things motivate you as a player and I think you can expect big things this year from him, and those are the expectations as well that fall on his shoulders. We rely on him to score goals, but with that being said, I think he’s very good on the other side of the ball as well. His defending is intense, so he has a lot of good attributes.”

On the atmosphere that Head Coach Marko Mitrović and his staff are building in preseason:

Polster: “It’s been great. Obviously, I knew Marko [Mitrović] at [Chicago Fire FC] early in his coaching career as an assistant. Again, I don’t think much has changed in terms of intensity, which is great. It’s something that I’m familiar with. Then the staff entirely, with [Assistant Coaches] Sean [Hughes], Michael [Morris], and Blair [Gavin], who’s from last year as well. They’ve all had their individual roles, and they’ve emphasized parts of the attack and the defending parts of it, so it’s been really good to work with those guys.”

On where the team has made the most progress during preseason:

Polster: “The style of play. I think a lot of guys have tried to implement what [the coaches] are asking as best we can, and I think it showed up a lot in these games. Me personally, I’m very happy with where we are as a team right now, and I think we’ve taken all the information on board, and we’ve applied it quite well.”

On Carles Gil signing a contract extension and the leadership he brings as captain:

Polster: “I’ve been with [Gil] now for a little bit. Like I say, when you have him on your team, you always have a chance to win games. So, to extend his years here in New England is great for us. And the way he leads, I think he’s a big guy that leads by example. He’s a little quiet off the pitch, but when he gets on it, he’s very intense and his ability on the ball is second to none. So, to have him here even longer, we’re lucky.”

On his early impressions of Marko Mitrović and how the team can improve from past seasons:

Polster: “I don’t want to reflect on the past, just what’s going on now. I think with Marko [Mitrović], he has a clear plan in place. When you don’t execute the way he sees that it should be done, he will be on it immediately, and he’ll make sure that it’s fixed and it’s corrected. There’s a specific style, and I think we’ve implemented what the coaching staff has asked quite well in the first two or three games that we’ve played. I think the biggest thing is that there’s a really good plan in place, and if we do it properly, we will create a lot of goal-scoring opportunities.”

On playing alongside the team's younger players and the leadership role he has taken on:

Polster: "I think it's nice. I think it's the natural part of the game. You don't want a group of just old veteran guys, I think you need that young blood in the team, kids that are motivated to push the group and push the intensity of the sessions and have motivation to even go past where they are now. I think it's important in any team, in any sport, to have different ages where you're able to guide them as older players, but also for younger players to push us. That comes with competition, and that's how it should be in every sport."