



## **TRANSCRIPT (2/25): Media Availability**

*Soundbytes from Assistant Coach Michael Morris & D Mamadou Fofana*

### **Revolution Assistant Coach Michael Morris**

#### ***On the team's mindset heading into Saturday's match at Red Bull New York after the season-opening defeat at Nashville SC:***

**Morris:** "It's an interesting question because obviously we looked and reflected on that performance [at Nashville last Saturday], not necessarily the result. One of the things that's important is your last result sometimes emotionally feels like it defines you, but it doesn't. Our collective work so far is what we've been looking at. We know that wasn't ideal, but we have the behaviors inside of us that we've seen all throughout preseason that we want to continue to leverage and lean on, especially as we build into another away game against [Red Bull] New York this coming weekend."

#### ***On having central defender Mamadou Fofana back with the team after missing the season opener as he obtained his green card:***

**Morris:** "First of all, it's amazing for [Fofana] to get his green card. It's a really exciting moment in his life. We're very excited to have him back to give more depth and a player who's got experience in the league, in the back line. The challenge is he's been away for a little bit of time, but he's a very hardworking, humble guy. He's been staying fit and on top of himself as he's been away. So, it's nice to have him back in the group and continue to bring the depth back to the squad."

#### ***On working through this week's blizzard:***

**Morris:** "It's important to note that the whole East Coast is, from what I've seen, the majority is suffering from snow. New York is also going through this, and I wouldn't even qualify it as suffering. It's just some things happen, and you have to adapt and adjust. The nice thing is we have this great [indoor] facility, so we're able to continue training, and they're working on preparing the [outdoor] field right now. But that's one of the things that we're really trying to lean into as a group is, when there's adversity or when things don't go your way, that's just another opportunity for us to deal with the situation and take the next action and deal with it. From a personal standpoint, I've never seen a blizzard like that outside of the hotel room that I'm staying in right now. But other than that, we have a great facility, we've been training, we've had two positive days, and the show goes on."

#### ***On areas the team is aiming to improve on from last weekend's performance:***

**Morris:** "It's a great question. I think overall that wasn't the way that we drew it up on paper. Nashville is a good team, and they've been building what they've been building probably for the last 18 months under [Head Coach] B.J. [Callaghan]. So, we really want to show respect to that. From that term, I think we really want to respect ourselves a bit more. And in terms of the way that we want to play, I think we can build pressure with a little bit more intensity and clarity on the opponent when they're building up. Ultimately, we went into that game feeling like we had a lot of solutions. We suffered a goal early and now it's about, 'How do we just build the mentality in the group?' If an adverse situation happens, it's just about the next action. When you move on immediately and it's the next action, it's finding the intensity and the togetherness and moving together as a group and just dealing with it. Because getting punched in the face – it's your choice on how you deal with it."

***On the availability status of defenders Peyton Miller and Brayan Ceballos:***

**Morris:** “I don't have a full update on Peyton [Miller]. He's obviously out on the field now, which is great. And then Brayan [Ceballos] participated fully today and Mamadou [Fofana] is back. It's good to have depth within the group. And we'll see how it goes as the week progresses.”

***On Brooklyn Raines's debut performance for New England last Saturday and what he brings to the team:***

**Morris:** “Brooklyn [Raines], we know what we're going to get with him. We brought him here for a reason. I think he knows what his standards are in terms of the match. I think most players individually know what their standards should be at after reflecting on that performance [at Nashville]. But he's a young player who we have a lot of belief in. Like I said, [I have] a lot of respect for what he can contribute to the group. It's a long season, and we'll see what he continues to grow, bring, and develop as we go match by match.”

***On assessing the roles of defender Ilay Feingold and midfielder Alhassan Yusuf:***

**Morris:** “I'd say it's week by week. Some of it is, we're getting through preseason and we're trying to figure out the different lineups and how things are going to work. We have so much belief in Ilay [Feingold] and [Alhassan] Yusuf. That was just one moment, one match. Ilay has had a very good last two days of training, and I think Yusuf has had a very good week. It's a very, very long season to see how they're going to continue to perform and how the squad evolves and what it looks like.”

***On forward Dor Turgeman's versatility in being able to play out wide:***

**Morris:** “What I love about Dor [Turgeman] is he's such an attack-minded player. And there's things that we've seen in training where he scores goals and he goes on these dribbling actions that are just very unique and special. So for him, it's also being able to embrace the defensive side of the game. Leo [Campana] has been in a good spot up top. It's another opportunity for Dor to develop different aspects of his game, but also bring his attacking actions from outside to in to hopefully create goals and assists for himself, but then also be able to defend with the right intensity from the front.”

***On his first two months in New England and his early impressions of the Revolution players:***

**Morris:** “I honestly don't think I can necessarily single anybody out. It's been seven weeks now, and I can genuinely say every day that I wake up, I look forward to coming to work. Not just because it's like working for the Revolution is a new opportunity, but I love the staff. Most importantly, these are some very good players and people that I genuinely enjoy working with, and they're so open to feedback. It's just a pleasure. I don't think I could single anybody out because I think the whole group, on a day-to-day basis, every interaction I've had with each one of the players has been something special and unique.”

**Revolution Defender Mamadou Fofana**

***On returning to the club after being away to secure his green card:***

**Fofana:** “It's good to be back after a few weeks. I went to France to get my green card. Unfortunately, it took like two or three weeks, but I'm happy to be back with the team and I hope we will have a good game this week.”

***On the messaging from the coaching staff in training this week:***

**Fofana:** “We just started the season. Unfortunately we lost the first game, but we still have more games, so we have to focus. We have to watch [last weekend's] game, and then we have to improve. But [Marko Mitrović] was positive, and now we just have to keep working and win games.”

***On what the Revolution expect from Red Bull New York:***

**Fofana:** “I saw they won their first game, so they have confidence. We just have to do what we have to do to take the three points. We know it will not be easy, but it's the game. We have to do the right things and we will get the three points.”

***On traveling back to New England ahead of a blizzard this week:***

**Fofana:** “I arrived Friday. When I arrived, I was shocked because it’s not the same weather here as in France. But it’s life. I have to adapt, and I like this weather also, so everything is good.”

***On staying sharp physically while away from the team:***

**Fofana:** “When I was in France, I always kept in touch with the physical trainers. They gave me some programs, and I always do these. Then, I arrived Friday and Saturday I trained with coach Mike [Steidle]. I stayed fit, and I hope everything will be good.”

***On how he feels ahead of this weekend’s match and if he expects to play:***

**Fofana:** “Yeah, I would like to play, but the [Mitrović] will decide. We’ll see, but I am ready to help my teammates and the club. But we’ll see. In the end, the [Mitrović] will decide.”

***On his reaction to watching the opening match:***

**Fofana:** “I saw the clips and the video. I arrived Friday [late at night], I was tired and then when they played the game I was sleeping. When I woke up, I saw the result. Unfortunately, soccer is like this. Now we have to focus on the next game and to work to win the next game.”

***On what it has been like playing under Head Coach Marko Mitrović:***

**Fofana:** “I think he [Mitrović] is important to us because he is really close to us. He gives us [direction on] what we have to do, and he talks a lot. This is good for our confidence. Now, we just have to work and stay together, and everything will be good.”

***On the process of obtaining his green card:***

**Fofana:** “I just gave my passport and I had to wait. I have no idea. But as I said, this is life and this is the past. Now, I have my green card, and we just have to go. I needed to get an appointment, so it’s not easy. But as I said, this is behind me. I have the green card now and now we have to focus on soccer and winning games.”

***On his early impressions of the new additions to the roster like Ethan Kohler, Brooklyn Raines, and Griffin Yow:***

**Fofana:** “They are young, but they already know this league. Brooklyn [Raines] played with Houston last year, and he played in a lot of games. They are young, but they are very good players. I hope they will help us to get a lot of victories.”