



## TRANSCRIPT (4/9): Match Preview Press Conference

*Soundbytes from Head Coach Marko Mitrović & F/W Luca Langoni*

### **Revolution Head Coach Marko Mitrović**

#### ***On his takeaways from last Saturday's 3-0 victory over CF Montreal:***

**Mitrović:** "I would say our team spirit was definitely very high. I loved the way the guys celebrated small successes on the field. We had, obviously, some challenges. First, with myself, getting a red card. Then a couple minutes after that, with Matt Polster getting injured. Those are the things that can affect the team, but the team acted toward that in a very positive way. I would say those challenges that we faced, we handled then in a very good way. Also, I believe we had a very strong defensive performance. Not that we want to be a team that plays the game without the ball, but we also have to understand that's part of the game and if we don't have the ball in our possession we can still have the game in control. And being difficult for the opponents and being clinical when we get the ball, those were definitely positives. We can improve our game with the ball and being more consistent, even though we had several opportunities and created situations to score goals. We believe that we can still do a better job with the ball."

#### ***On what he expects from Saturday's opponent, D.C. United:***

**Mitrović:** "[D.C. United] is a very tough team to play against. Besides their last game [4-0 loss vs. FC Dallas], where things just didn't go their way. They're a very tough opponent in every game that they play. We expect a very difficult [game]. They have a clear identity of what they want to do on the field. I would say they are, in one way, predictable in their behavior. But being predictable can always be a strength for the team because habitually they are doing things that they are doing. I really expect a very demanding game."

#### ***On Matt Polster's status:***

**Mitrović:** "Matt [Polster] will be out for sure for a couple of weeks. Hamstrings are always tricky. He did an MRI, but it's one of those most sensitive injuries where you have to be sure that they're coming back after the injury ready to go, because the last thing we want with Matt is to have a setback. So, the next couple of weeks he will be out, and then after that we will evaluate everything."

#### ***On whom can potentially replace Matt Polster in the Starting XI while he's out injured:***

**Mitrović:** "One thing that we are always talking about is how great this team is on the field day after day. They're giving their best, and I think whoever plays now, those players are earning their minutes and just having such a strong effort day after day to put them in situations that they can succeed when they play. Whatever decision we make, I feel comfortable that those guys or that player will be ready to perform."

#### ***On Set Piece Coach Marc Orti Esteban's impact on the team's success in set piece opportunities:***

**Mitrović:** "Marc [Orti Esteban] is a great person with a great energy. We have a lot of people in this club that are working behind the scenes, like in every other club, and Marc's impact is significant. He's working really hard together with all staff members supporting not just set pieces but every other moment of the game. We all work together and collaborate. Set pieces are very unique situations on the field where it's a very short action and you have to be very successful. As I said, we are working and Marc is leading that very hard, day after day, to improve us both attacking and defending. The good thing in this game against Montreal, we got rewarded with that second goal that Mamadou [Fofana] scored."

***On the team's response after his red card during last Saturday's match:***

**Mitrović:** "I feel they actually responded great. Maybe the last 10 minutes of the first half were a little bit shaky, because it's not just my red card but it's also the injury that Matt [Polster] got. And now, you're coming in the game when [Alhassan] Yusuf did, it's not easy. Maybe those 10 minutes were kind of shaky, but I know the team, and the message from the coaching staff, from [Assistant Coaches] Michael [Morris], Sean [Hughes], and Blair [Gavin] was to stay calm. They gave the team some tactical instructions or certain behaviors we wanted to create in the second half, and I was really happy how they got together. As I said answering the first question, it's how they exposed our team spirit in that second half."

***On playing in front of the home fans and his relationship with the club's supporters:***

**Mitrović:** "I really felt good after the first game against Cincinnati about playing home. Obviously, every team when you play at home, there is an advantage because you have home fans. But it was my first game, and just the whole environment and how that's going to look, I think the whole team felt very positive. Then the second game we felt very positive. All those songs and everything that will make us better, it's really helpful and we just appreciate people coming and supporting us and helping us to win. That's home advantage, and when we have that kind of support then you really get the home advantage."

***On the key to the team's scoring output so far this season:***

**Mitrović:** "Obviously, everything we do, we do with two purposes. The first is to defend the goal, and the second one is to score goals. Scoring goals, that's not easy; that's probably the most difficult part of the game. But we are trying everything. We work intentionally with how we are going to get there. And then once we get into the goal scoring opportunities, it's how we are going to score our goals. For us, it matters a lot what the situations are where we are finishing the attacks. One of the metrics that we use a lot is like what is the average distance of our shots in the game, because the closer we get to the goal, the better the opportunities are and the higher the chances are we score goal."

"Then what are our prime assist zones? Where do we want to make the last pass before we get into a situation to finish the attack? Those are some behaviors that we work on day after day. Again, I would really love to say that no matter what we do, to execute those things and to score goals, that's the most difficult part of the game because you can have 50 successful buildups and still only score one goal. But I am happy with how the guys behave, and I would say how they act toward certain behaviors we want to install, as I said, day after day in our training sessions."

***On the importance of building positive momentum with a compact schedule in April and May:***

**Mitrović:** "It's very important, because when you get into the games that you play every three days – and we have now the next two weeks we know for sure we're going to have midweek games – and potentially one more week and another week after that, we know we're going to have a very busy schedule. Not only us, but every other team. With all the travel that we have in some of the games, for example in one week we're not going to be here with two away travels, you don't have much time to work. And then, you rely a lot on what you've done so far and also on that team spirit and momentum that can keep teams going with the belief that we're doing the right things. So, it is very important to build the right momentum at the right time."

**Revolution Forward/Winger Luca Langoni**

*(Translated from Spanish)*

***On how Head Coach Marko Mitrović's style of play has helped him as the club leader in assists:***

**Langoni:** "We try and improve on his style of play during the week. That's what we train on during the week so it's great for me to be the team leader in assists."

***On sustaining momentum at home with two upcoming matches at Gillette Stadium:***

**Langoni:** "Obviously, our primary objective is to win, and with the support from our fans here at home, we want to get these two wins in these upcoming home games. Then after that, [carry the momentum into] the road games."

***On what has led to his strong start to the season:***

**Langoni:** "First of all, it's the confidence. That's what's helped me start this season well. But then also the support of my teammates, the group, and the [coaching] staff. They've all been so great to me, so I feel really good."

***On what separates Marko Mitrović as a head coach:***

**Langoni:** "[Mitrović] very involved with us players individually, and he also understands our group really well. He brings us closer together as a unit, and that's what makes him a strong coach."

***On the importance of collecting points during the upcoming home-heavy stretch:***

**Langoni:** "It's important. We need to work hard during the week and build the right mentality, but our goal is to win games, improve on the areas we need to improve on, and continue to play well."

***On if he had prior experience taking free kicks before joining New England:***

**Langoni:** "I actually had not taken them earlier in my career, but it's a fruit of the labor. We work on those things during the week and training with Marc [Orti-Esteban], Carles [Gil], and Griffin [Yow], and we try to improve on ball-stoppage situations and everything."

***On how becoming a father has changed him as a player and as a person:***

**Langoni:** "Honestly, it changes a lot. It's a big change for me and it's a nice motivation, having my daughter. It motivates me in training, and it motivates me in my day-to-day. So, it's a beautiful thing."

***On if he took free kicks during his tenure at Boca Juniors:***

**Langoni:** "No, I didn't get to [take free kicks], but I did observe it from my teammates, the players who were there, and I always try to learn to improve my game."

***On the importance of working with Marc Orti-Esteban on set pieces:***

**Langoni:** "It's super important, all the work we put in tactically, and everything we do is super important. We take major responsibility in that and focus on it during the week in training so that it pays off during the games. Like I said, it's fruit of the labor."

***On building chemistry with his new teammates in the attack:***

**Langoni:** "[It's going] very well. We have a good connection. We're comfortable with one another. We work well together in training and things are going really well."