



June 26, 2019

POSTGAME QUOTES: New England Revolution 1 vs. Philadelphia Union 1

New England Revolution Sporting Director and Head Coach Bruce Arena

On the takeaways from tonight's performance:

Arena: "It was okay. You know, you like to believe that you can close the game out and walk off with three points, but give Philadelphia credit. They pushed hard in the second half. I thought they got through the midfield too easy and put our back line under pressure too often. We had a couple opportunities, perhaps, to get a second goal and maybe put the game away, and failed to do that. So, you become a little bit of a better team, you get a clean sheet tonight and perhaps three points. But a fair result. I'm not arguing about that."

On whether or not tonight was a must-win game:

Arena: "I don't think it was a must-win [game]. You know, we only have 17 more games left, but we'd like to win it."

On Carles Gil's performance:

Arena: "I thought he played well. He got a little tired at the end, but I think Philadelphia focused on him, was well aware that he's a key player, like every team is with opponents. They put a little pressure on him, but I thought he did a good job. They're a good team and they put a lot of attention on him, yet I think he was still part of a couple of good plays. You know, perhaps he could've got a goal tonight. He had a couple good looks at the goal and didn't finish off plays, but for the most part, had a pretty good game."

On if he would like to see Carles Gil shoot more:

Arena: "Every player is a little different. When he has his shot, he should take it. Every play is a little bit different, but I think that's a couple things with our team. I've noticed with our attacking players, they don't pull the trigger when they should. They've got to look at goal a little bit quicker, and there are times where we can cross the ball and we're not crossing the ball and making it a little bit more challenging for our opponents. We can get a little bit better at that. We'll hopefully be a little bit more aggressive in trying to get goals."

On the performance of Wilfried Zaha:

Arena: "Good. He's played well. He's going to get better. If I had his body, I'd be winning a few more tackles. So, we've got to get him around the ball a bit more, but he's a good passer. He's done well in the last month. He hasn't played that much, so his fitness isn't where it should be right now, but it'll continue to get better. He's been a pleasant surprise so far, so hopefully, he can continue to get better."

On the buildup that led to the Revolution goal:

Arena: "If you put a gun to my head, I would clearly tell you, that wasn't by design. Most goals are not by design. Sometimes, often set pieces are, but not that particular play. So, a good alert play by Brandon [Bye], and a good finish for sure."

On the performance of Wilfried Zaha paired alongside Luis Caicedo in central midfield:

Arena: "I think he's doing okay there. I think he just needs to play a little bit more and listen to what we have to say. But, I think he's done well and it's a good combination. His passing really helps us out of that position. Hopefully, we can continue to move him forward."

On what broke down in the play that led to Philadelphia's goal:

Arena: "I couldn't tell. It looked like a mess to me, but I have to look at the tape. From where I'm standing, I really can't tell what happened. The ball got through, maybe [Andrew] Farrell touched it at the end and left it sitting in the six-yard box."

On having not lost a league game yet:

Arena: "I've only been in two of them. It's not like we're going to have a parade here. [Laughing] That's good for you? You're like my best friend right now."

On the improvement of the squad during this unbeaten run:

Arena: "They have [improved]. Unfortunately, we're a little bit behind the eight ball, but I think -- is this our 17th game tonight? So, now we're officially in the second half of the season. MLS, the second of the season is the season so often. So, we have 17 games ahead of us. If we perform somewhat like we've performed over the last, I don't know, five games in the league, we have a chance to make the playoffs. We're not talking right now, despite your nice compliments about winning MLS Cup and all those other things, we're talking about trying to move up the ladder a little bit. The way the team has played over the last month would suggest that there's a chance we can get after it and have an opportunity to move up the ladder."

On Cristian Penilla:

Arena: "Yeah, we just have to get him a little fitter. In all honesty, I still don't know a lot of these players. I don't necessarily know completely his background as a player that would suggest that we're playing him in the right position and all of that. He has a way to go, a little bit, in the way we want to do things. But, he's a talented kid. I think with a little patience and some hard work on his part, he's going to move forward. I did notice last year, that he was a very dangerous player for the Revolution and I know he scored a bunch of goals. So, hopefully, over the next month or so, we can really get him going at full speed and be real dangerous."

On the progress of completing a coaching staff:

Arena: "Well, for the coaching staff, I think we're where we're going to be for the year, and then we need to continue to build the technical side on the scouting and the academy side, and the second team for next year. So, there's a lot of work ahead. Certainly, they'll be a few other people that come in, but for now, the coaching staff is set."

New England Revolution Defender Brandon Bye

On the lead-up to his goal:

Bye: "We worked on set pieces a lot this week; knowing exactly what we wanted to do, where we wanted to be. I had my head up, Carles [Gil] peaked at me and said 'Brandon,' knowing that he wanted to play a quick ball across the middle because he thought it was open. I was lucky enough to get a touch and finish it."

On whether or not the lead-up was a set piece or in-the-moment recognition:

Bye: "Completely [Carles] just being aware of the situation and being aware that there was space to play that quick ball and catch them off guard."

On what it is like playing with someone with the vision of Carles Gil:

Bye: "It's easy to play with him. Being me, I just make runs and he could be looking the other way and he'll still find me; so just make runs and try to get open as much as I can."

On whether or not watching film helped exploit the Philadelphia defense:

Bye: “A little bit, but not too much. We just played our game and saw what the defense presented to us. We have good center-mids and a good defense that was able to find me and recognize that I had space and they gave me the ball—that’s where we went.”

On what Philadelphia changed in the second half:

Bye: “They came with more energy. I felt like we could have kept it a little more in the first 10 to 15 minutes, but we were weathering the storm a little bit. Obviously, they’re going to come hot after being down at the break. I feel like we weathered that okay.”

New England Revolution Midfielder Juan Agudelo

On getting on the front foot in the second half of the game:

Agudelo: “I thought we should have done better in the second half, sorted it out. We knew what they were going to do was bring on Ilsinho and change the whole formation, but we couldn’t figure it out and we weren’t able to keep the ball. Repeatedly, they were being dangerous and keeping a lot of possession of the ball, so I felt like we lost the lead because we didn’t sort the problem out – whatever that was. We needed some leadership on the field to calm the game down.”

On his play and freedom to express himself on the field:

Agudelo: “100%. It’s special when a coach gives you that confidence to go forward. He told me before the game I’ve got to be a little more aggressive, selfish, and shoot the ball. It definitely made me go for nutmegs, go attack the defenders and everything.”

On his relationship with Bruce Arena:

Agudelo: “I think a very good relationship. I respect him a lot, his experience. I feel like he is more of a manager than a coach, so it’s good to have that on the team.”

On the morale since Bruce has arrived and if it will help the team bounce back quicker:

Agudelo: “I think there were a lot of positive things we did, but it’s a good wake up call to not be in the clouds, that we haven’t lost in a bunch of games in the league. It’s a good wakeup call, because we got beat in the second half. We’ve got to be better. Sometimes it’s better to learn that way than to actually not get any points tonight.”

New England Revolution Defender Jalil Anibaba

On the difficult of matching up with Ilsinho when he entered the match:

Anibaba: “He’s difficult. He’s good one v. one going at guys. I thought for the most part Edgar [Castillo] did a good job to contain him. He’s dangerous, but I thought [Edgar] did a pretty good job. I think we just need to be a little bit tighter to close that game out.”

On the overall, 90-minute performance tonight:

Anibaba: “I thought our play came in waves. I thought at times we were really good, really dangerous, really creative, and resilient at the back as well at times. And at other times, we were a little bit shaky. As of late, we have been a little more consistent throughout the course of 90 minutes, but I think those are small details we can correct that will make a big difference moving forward.”

On Bruce Arena’s effect on the team:

Anibaba: “He’s instilled confidence in everybody – everybody throughout the whole group. Training has been good, short, and sharp every single day. We are working on very pointed ideas to improve and really making sure we understand how to exploit our advantages, but at the end of the day the biggest thing I think he’s helping all of us with is confidence and enjoyment. He’s brought that back. Everybody is having a good time.”

Philadelphia Union Head Coach Jim Curtin

On his overall thoughts on game:

Curtin: “It looked like a first game back off of a break for both teams, for I think for a variety of reasons. You’re astro-turf, first and foremost, which is always difficult. The balls were bouncing all over the place. I think you had a lot of stops and starts at the beginning of the game. The ref called a very tight game. It’s a referee we obviously -- we scout every referee, if you can believe that. He leads the league in fouls called and he showed that tonight for sure. So there wasn’t a lot of flow to the game. Overall, I have to give credit actually to our sports performance department for the fitness that they did over the past two weeks. You can’t really replicate game fitness, but I think that our guys showed in the second half that we were the more fit team. We were able to push things and eventually got our goal. I think a draw is probably a fair result, maybe we could have stolen it at the end, but overall, not the prettiest of games but points on the road matter. I think it will be a big one by the end of the year.”

On the importance of bench players:

Curtin: “Having quality on your bench is critical in this league. You need guys that can come in and change the game. Both subs made a big impact for us. I think we’ve become almost too much of a second-half team. Maybe a lot of that is because Ilsinho is such a big part of what we do. We can wear teams down a little bit in the first half and let him run wild in the second. It’s kind of in our DNA right now, which is a good thing. I think Fafa [Picault] also changed the game as well. It’s disappointing that we conceded in the first half off of a restart. You know we talked a lot about doing our jobs. Sergio [Santos] made the mistake; he at least put his hand up and knew he made a mistake. I’m proud of the guys for picking him up, but again a little bit inexcusable on the corner kick to concede. But overall, the subs that we have are a big impact to the game. We’re lucky to have them.”

On his message at halftime:

Curtin: “With the turf, it’s tough to pass and connect balls. Credit to them, they were organized defensively and broke up a lot of the passing lanes. So we decided to be a little more direct, play balls and fight for second balls. Sergio [Santos] did a good job of stretching them. I thought we played more balls in behind and made their back four turn and face their own goal for the first time in the second half. We raised our level. We were happy with the performance there at the end. Again, it’s a good point off the break. We have two more tough road games before we get back into our building. We need to find a way to get points in those as well.”

On if he can already see Bruce Arena’s impact on the Revolution:

Curtin: “For sure. Look, under Bruce [Arena] now when you watch their last four games that he’s been there, he’s changed the mentality of the team. They’re very brave going forward and they also defend really well as a team. They’re compact and tough to break down. He’s a winner. He wins everywhere he goes. This is just the beginning for them. I know he’s going to get them back on top in the Eastern Conference, we just hope it’s not this year. At the same time, he’s the best at what he does. You can definitely see, he’s just getting started with the changes that they had. I thought they were really organized tonight and tough to break down. Like I said, it wasn’t the most pretty game, but I think a point is fair for both teams.”

Philadelphia Union Forward Fafa Picault

On his vision on the run that led to an assist:

Picault: “I just saw a hole and I know I can get there before them if I pushed the ball in the right spot. It’s a bit difficult to calculate with this pitch, but luckily I touched it where I wanted it to go and took another touch, went by, and was able to find Kacper [Przybylko].”

On his pace off the bench:

Picault: “I’m used to the 90 minutes, after the last few years. I hate the bench, honestly, but my job is to come on when I have minutes and show what I’m capable of doing, like all the defenders around the league know it; it’s not a secret. Keep giving them problems and I think that’s what happens when I do that.”

On if there’s pressure with new player additions:

Picault: “No, I think it’s always the same. We play football to produce. Whether that’s as a striker or winger, my job is to give defenders problems and make them fear me. I’m not in competition with my teammates. I think I’ve proven what I’ve done the last two-and-a-half years and at this point it’s just continuing to do that and whatever happens, it’s not my decision.”

On pulling out tough results on the road:

Picault: “We’re definitely a tough group. Like you said, it wasn’t an easy match and wasn’t maybe our best match. Look at the pitch and a lot of the things involved; it’s really difficult. We came back and pulled through, and were able to grab a point in a difficult setting. Now, we head to New York and get ready for that, we rest up, and get ready for another two away games and then one at home.”

On the confidence from a draw going into the next match:

Picault: “Yeah definitely, we didn’t get the zero points. We didn’t leave here with zero points and that’s always a positive to take. Now, we just look forward to get back to the drawing board and prepare for New York and look to get three points over there.”

Philadelphia Union Goalkeeper Matt Freese

On receiving the start in net and making big saves:

Freese: “Obviously, it meant a lot to be able to be out there again. The confidence that they’ve shown me is the biggest thing that ends up driving me and driving my work because I know that they *do* believe in me. Kind of the whole philosophy of the club, like growing your own players and everything, is not just going to take fruition without a few mistakes and learning bumps and stuff like that; is part of the game. Each mistake, as small as it is or as big as it is, I’m just trying to learn after each game and move on and be ready for the next time.”

On making second-half saves:

Freese: “I was definitely very happy to make some saves. By no means was it some incredible save; I thought it was pretty routine saves. Kacper [Przybylko] came up really big with a goal line save as well. Jack [Elliot] had a few really good clearances. Ray [Gaddis] obviously had a bunch of things on his side, so in general, I think it was just a really good team effort to keep it one-nil, and after that, obviously getting the equalizer is huge.”

On relying on the defense going into Saturday:

Freese: “Possibly, but hopefully it’s not something we’ll have to bank off of. Hopefully, we keep that shutout and just let the offense do their job without feeling the pressure of having to come from behind. It’s happened a few times in the past month.”

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