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MEDIA ASSETS: Sporting Director and Head Coach Bruce Arena Introductory Press Conference

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Please [click here](#) or view below for media assets from Thursday's press conference with Revolution President Brian Bilello and Sporting Director and Head Coach Bruce Arena, including:

- [Complete video](#) and transcript from the introductory press conference
- [Photos](#) of Revolution Owners Robert Kraft and Jonathan Kraft, President Brian Bilello, and Sporting Director and Head Coach Bruce Arena

New England Revolution President Brian Bilello & Sporting Director/Head Coach Bruce Arena

Opening remarks:

Brian Bilello: "Thank you everyone for being here and welcome. I just wanted to open up by saying how excited we are having this opportunity to bring in a leader like Bruce [Arena] into our organization. We are confident that he is the right person to lead our soccer organization going forward and bring the Revolution back to an era of continual success on the field, year after year after year. We're really excited to have him here. I'll speak just real briefly about what we've asked Bruce [Arena] to do as Sporting Director and Head Coach. We've really asked him to take over our soccer operation, make all of the decisions, and build an organization, again, that can be competitive on an annual basis here. I know you guys will have questions about what that means and we're both happy to answer those. In the very short term, we want Bruce [Arena] to be focused on the organization as a whole and how to build that organization up, and then obviously in a relatively short period of time, but not immediately, he'll be taking over the day-to-day coaching responsibilities and leading the guys on the field, as well."

Bruce Arena: "First of all, I'd like to thank Robert [Kraft], Jonathan [Kraft], and Brian [Bilello] for having the confidence in me to take on this exciting venture. I think in all of the positions I've had in the past in the league, I've always wanted to be in an organization that I felt wanted to win. In my conversations with the Krafts and Brian [Bilello], they're really confident that we can move the team forward. There are aspirations to build a stadium one day and we'll have the resources to make the team better. I said in my statement when I was named that this is such a great sports town and we want to try to elevate the Revolution on par with these other great championship teams in Boston. It's a big challenge, I feel great about being in a great city with great ownership and great potential, so I look forward to the challenge of moving the Revolution forward and I can assure you that we're going to work real hard to make things better."

On the timeframe of pushing the team to a top level:

Arena: "It's not going to happen in the next two weeks, but I'm confident over the next couple of years that we can make very good progress and make this team much more competitive than it is today. Everything will be here to be successful—the new training facility that will come on board at some point this year is fabulous. We want to have the energy to be a team that can attract free agents out of the

league, as well as players from abroad. I think there are going to be a lot of resources here to allow us to make this team much more successful than it is today.”

On his plans for evaluating the current roster:

Arena: “First of all, I think I have plenty experience in doing this, but whenever you’re on the outside, you really don’t know until you get inside a team. I’ll be able to evaluate the roster, obviously a lot better as I get on the field with them, get to see the players day in and day out; see the kind of mentality that they have, the kind of players that they are. As is the case with this team and other teams in the league, we have until November to make decisions on player contracts. I think we’re going to take our time, be patient, be smart in evaluating the players that are here, and enable us to make some good decisions as we get towards the end of the year.”

On when he knew the New England job was the right fit:

Arena: “This has been probably a short recruiting process. Brian [Bilello] and I first talked last week and then I spoke with Robert [Kraft] and Jonathan [Kraft] over the weekend, so this has not been a process that’s gone on a long time, but I’ve known the Krafts since the beginning of this league. In 1996, I remember Mr. Kraft hosting a party for the MLS Cup, so we’ve gone back a long ways. I’ve been well aware of the ownership, the organization, the city, and all of that. When Brian [Bilello] initiated contact a week ago, it wasn’t like I had to do a whole lot of work. I just had to have some conversations with the right people and understand what the project was. They convinced me that this is something we can make better.”

On the decision to hire Bruce Arena:

Bilello: “I think at a high level, it’s not that hard of a decision to bring Bruce [Arena] into your organization. When you’re looking at the results of your club over the short term and the long term, you’re trying to figure out how to make your club as competitive as it can be. The reality is over the last few years we haven’t been. We were thinking about making a change. I’ll say we had spoken to Bruce [Arena] a couple of years ago, so we obviously knew a lot about Bruce [Arena] from afar, we knew a good amount about him from speaking with him, and Bruce [Arena] is the first person I called. As he said, it moved relatively quickly. I think this is the most important thing that’s lost sometimes: ‘What’s your overall goal?’ ‘What’s your vision for the club?’ ‘What do we want to do for the club and does that match with what Bruce [Arena] would want an opportunity for?’ Completely fair, Bruce [Arena] should be picking the opportunities that he thinks are right for him and he has the right to do that given what he’s accomplished in the sport. I feel fortunate that we had an alignment in terms of the vision of the club and what we want to do and I think once you got passed that, you’re not really worried about the fine details. It’s really, the most important thing, is having that aligned vision about the future for the club and I think we both have that.”

On the numbers he will be working with in terms of salary cap:

Arena: “I think it’s difficult to peg a number, as you say. I think there’s a new Collective Bargaining Agreement coming up for next year, so that’ll establish the spending in the league. I don’t think any club in the league needs to spend the way Atlanta spends. You can be successful without being the top spender in the league. If you follow the history of the league, the team that spends the most money doesn’t win every year and, actually, most cases they don’t. I think we can smart about how we spend and still be positioned to be much more competitive and ultimately one day win an MLS Cup.”

On his plans to evaluate the Revolution Academy and the club’s approach to youth development:

Arena: “I think it’s too early to really answer that question properly, but I’m excited to have the opportunity to evaluate the Academy. I will be bringing some people that have expertise in those areas to help move this along, and we want to build a product here where some of our Homegrown Players are playing for the first team, as they are today. We want to continue to grow on that and make the entire program better.”

On the specific club culture that is sought after:

Bilello: “It’s kind of two separate things. I think there’s the culture of your club and then how you want people to look at your club. I think the most important thing is setting up a culture of winning; an expectation of winning, a desire to win, and a singular focus for the organization on winning. I think if

within your locker room there's a feeling that maybe you can't win, not capable of winning, or don't know how to win, that can be infectious in a very bad way. I think when you have a culture of winning and a desire and expectation to do that on an everyday basis; that can be infectious, as well. From our perspective, we want to have that internally and I think if you have that internally, that will bleed out externally. The soccer world, and certainly our fans, will see that and all of us: myself, our owners, Bruce [Arena], and our players would say that doesn't mean anything until we prove it and actually achieve on that, but I think what we're doing today, and going forward, is a clear sign from the club of the direction we want to go and make sure we can establish that winning culture."

On the timeline behind the club's recent head coaching and general manager changes:

Bilello: "You're never going to make decisions just based on what people are saying in the media or anything like that—you can't run an organization that way. I think when you're having bad results, the fans are going to be unhappy and the media is going to be unhappy, so there's certainly a correlation there, but one is not causing you to make decisions. I think what made, frankly, this situation with the club so difficult is when you're not having long-term results over a period of time, you start thinking about your big picture soccer organization and making changes there. I think in this case, in the very short term, we had a string of holistically unacceptable performances on the field that caused us to say 'we have to make an immediate change in the coaching position.' Your general manager can't change what's going to happen in two days on the field, but a coach certainly could. I'd say the timeline from everything wasn't something that you could plan out strategically and say 'this is the order which we want to make changes' and how we want to do it when you had what was taking place on the field and with the club. I'd say more than anything else, if the timeline doesn't seem to add up or people are questioning the timeline, I think you have into account that we had a game on Saturday night and whatever long term plan you may want to put in place, we had to make a change on the coaching side immediately and we got a reaction out of the players from that. Once we started talking to Bruce [Arena], I knew that Bruce [Arena] was someone that I'd want to come in and do more than just coach the team. Again, I understand some of that timeline might look a little bit weird, but you have to take into account that we were having unprecedented results on the field in a bad way, so that may have disrupted maybe how we would've ideally done things. Without question, Bruce [Arena] wasn't a reactionary hire—he's someone we've been thinking about for a very long time. I don't think there was anything in the short term that made this hire desirable or not desirable. This was someone we really wanted to have part of the organization. I think making those two changes in the order they did and as quickly as they did, part of that was just due to the fact that we had to fix the results on the field immediately."

On putting a staff together and when he could first see the sidelines as Head Coach:

Arena: "I think I can get a staff together rather quickly. I think the latest I would be on the sidelines is after the game in Los Angeles, the earliest would probably be for the game in Los Angeles. It's within a week. I don't expect to be on the field Saturday in Montreal, nor do I expect to be on the field against D.C. United."

On creating a winning culture:

Arena: "I think with teams that are successful, there are a lot of things that are involved. It's your whole organization—it's not just your coach or players. It's everything. It's a combination of the front office, the coaches, staff, and players working together and just coming in every day developing a good relationship and having the right kind of mentality as a team. The reason people seek out coaches to speak to organizations and talk about teamwork is because we have a feel for how to bring all of these important entities in your organization together. I think when I get here; I want to get everyone involved. Everywhere I've been, I think the front office is as important as the players and the coaches and I want to bring everyone together and make this a strong organization with a great work ethic, a lot of integrity, and the ability to work together and be successful. Certainly, results on the field enlighten everybody. From the equipment manager to ownership to the players, so we need to be successful on the field and we need to find the right formula inside this group and organization to make everything work and it's not going to be easy. When you fail, I don't attribute failure to one person. There are a lot of reasons why teams aren't successful. It's not because of the coach or the owner or the players—it's a lot of things. We have to look inside the team, evaluate things, and build the right kind of culture that I think is appropriate here and the kind of culture that I've been successful with in MLS. I've coached in MLS, I think 13 years, and I've been

to seven MLS Cup Finals and won five of them. I have a feel for that and I think I can bring it here in this organization, as well."

On taking the challenge after his role with the USMNT:

Arena: "I was actually proud of the job I did in 2017. We had a great group of players and they worked real hard and we fell short. That's life, unfortunately. Sometimes people don't understand that. We played 18 games and lost two of them in 2017. Overall, I think it was a positive experience. Certainly, I'm as disappointed as anybody in that failure. I don't define that as my legacy, personally. I know others do. I'm working and trying to be as good as I can be. I'm 67 years old in a country where the president is in his 70s. His likely competition in the next election is 70-something, so I'm the young kid on the block. Did I have to do this? No. But I love coaching, I love the sport, I love the challenge in building the game in this country; it's something I've done for 40 years and it's not easy to walk away from. It's something that's very important for me and that's why I'm here today."

On what sold him on New England:

Arena: "My conversations with the Krafts and with Brian [Bilello]. Also aware of the potential this organization can have. In the last year, you've seen coaches come in different organizations. I think the coach in Atlanta was really challenging coming into a club that just won an MLS Cup. To be honest with you, here it's a little bit easier—I think we can only go in one direction and that's positive. I think it's such a great sports town and I [have] a brother-in-law from Somerville and we've been arguing Yankees-Red Sox for the last 25 years, so this is going to be a little bit of a culture change for me. I love the city, I admire the Kraft family for everything they've done in the sport; this league wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for Robert Kraft, Lamar Hunt, and Phil Anschutz. I admire that and I'm confident that they're driven to also build a stadium here, which will make this sport outstanding in this city because I think this city is a potential home run for the sport of soccer."

On the club's leadership structure:

Bilello: "I'd say our organization is one where yeah, Bruce [Arena] is reporting to me, but I think he spent most of the game last night talking to Jonathan [Kraft] about the club. It's not a type of organization where our owners don't talk to their head coach, don't talk to me; sometimes when you're not in an organization and you think of hierarchies—that's not really important to our club. I'm going to assist Bruce [Arena] where I can. Not with soccer decisions, but making sure that we have those resources and we're getting those to him and having the organization around him that's being supportive to him. Everyone here is on the same page of getting results."

Arena: "I really believe we'll have a great working relationship. Obviously, Brian [Bilello] is the person I'll be working the most with, but I know ownership is always available if we need to talk, so I think it'll be a very good working relationship."

On his short-term goals:

Arena: "Short term goal is just getting to know the team and letting them understand what I'm asking of them and trying to make it a better team, and also making decisions that are going to go past this season. There are a lot of things that have to be done over the next six months and we'll do that, but we certainly want to be much more competitive and try to position the club to earn a playoff spot. I know it won't be easy, but you have seven spots in the East and we have some work to do. If we put together a string of wins, we get right back into the hunt."

On potentially building a soccer specific stadium:

Bilello: "I think we've been very clear for a period of time that, off the field, the stadium is the number one priority of the organization; to get that over the line. We know what a great market this is, we know how important it is to our fans, and to the sport of soccer to have a great soccer stadium here in Boston for the Revs and we're going to continue to push on that. From Bruce's [Arena] perspective, he's aware of those plans and what we're trying to do, but we're asking him to worry about what's happening on the field that we're playing on today. We want to build up a great organization for that. We'll remain focused on that. I don't have an update that I'm able to share with everybody on that, but in the meantime we're going to do what we need to, to make the team as good as possible on the field. Winning MLS Cups, the Training

Center shows our level of investment that we're trying to make on the competitive side, in terms of making the team better. The stadium project is still one that is the biggest priority off the field for the club."

On his memories of Foxborough:

Arena: "My fondest memory of Foxborough is still 1996 in the rain in the old stadium. It was an incredible day for the sport and country. It was great and I have fond memories of being in Foxborough."

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