

POST-MATCH QUOTES: Philadelphia Union vs. New England Revolution, 3.3.18

Philadelphia Union Head Coach Jim Curtin

Opening statement...

It's one win, but in a lot of ways I think for the club it's a big win. I think we faced some adversity this week, losing a couple of key players. We talked all week about guys stepping up in big spots. The other reason it's a big step for us is the fact that some Homegrowns weren't just on the field, but were on the field leaving huge impacts in the game, so special from that standpoint.

Obviously great for Anthony [Fontana] to get the goal and great for Auston [Trusty] to play as well as he did but overall a team effort from every player that was on the field all 11 guys attacking, all 11 guys defending, so really happy from that standpoint. I give credit to CJ [Sapong] too, draws the red card and probably kicking himself in the foot at halftime because he had three good looks but stuck with it, his teammates around him kept giving him service. We talked about at halftime, give him one more try and he'll bury it, which he did.

Overall, I think after a very hard preseason physically, pushing the fitness level, it was great to have the guys go out on the field and executed and they won the game. I have to be honest as a head coach, a lot of coaches will sit up here and say they know exactly what their team is going to look like in week one and I think that's not true. Week one in the MLS, as you've guys have seen from the scores, can go a lot of different directions. Credit to our players for all of them stepping up: young, old, and experienced. Andre Blake made a big save in a key moment in the game so everybody did their job and that's what we preach all season. When all 11 of us are together, just doing our job, we're a tough team to play against. Happy to get the three points and recognize that it is only one win but in a lot of ways, it's a big win.

On Anthony Fontana scoring the goal...

It's a special moment for him. Obviously scoring your first goal is amazing. Obviously playing in your first professional match is amazing. You can reflect back to when Anthony [Fontana] was in the Union juniors when our Youth Academy was just starting. There was a 40 x 40 patch of AstroTurf where this young group of nine year old kids were on the field that had a dream of maybe someday playing for the Philadelphia Union. You think Auston Trusty being there as well, with Ian Munro, Phil Karn with myself, and to see them now take this step in Talen Energy Stadium under the bright lights is something that is special. They deserved it though, a lot of people think that it's by chance or with a little bit of luck, but they've worked their tails off to get where they are. It's proud night for their families, parents and for our youth academy and the work that they do there with Tommy Wilson. It's a big day and again I think it's a hot topic right now about playing good young kids on their

team. A lot of teams are talking about it and I think tonight we showed that by putting them on the field that they can deliver.

I am really happy for Anthony [Fontana], really happy for Auston [Trusty] and Derrick [Jones] stepped on the field tonight and really did a good job and closed out the game. To have three of them out there was special and we have some good ones in the stable coming up as well, so we're happy where we are at in that regard. But it needs to be said that Homegrowns aren't going to succeed on the field unless they have a Alejandro Bedoya, Haris Medunjanin and Andre Blake behind them. It's not just one or the other and I think we have a pretty good blend with our group right now.

On the composure that the Philadelphia Union players showed tonight ...

The recovery sprint that Auston [Trusty] makes on the play where probably to the eye it looked offside where he got in behind, was an offside and Auston [Trusty] made a rookie mistake where he gets caught squared but has the recovery speed to get back and make a tackle. He made a couple of key tackles in the box and won a lot of duels in the box and did a lot of the things that don't show up on the stat sheet for centerbacks because there is not a lot of data that you can go to for centerbacks, but the thing that makes me most proud was that there was a 0 at the end of the day and that's what's most important. Auston [Trusty] did his job which was really good and I thought Anthony [Fontana] was in and around the box and arriving late in the box in the first half when it was 11 v 11 and in key moments in the game. I thought he showed composure and did a good job of not complicating things and we set him up to play one and two touch early just to get into the game. He found good pockets of space, but also I'm probably going to still be hard on him because he probably should've scored two more goals including the header so we're going to continue to push him. He played a good soccer game tonight, but there is still more in the kid. It's a real positive start but again we were greedy and want more.

On the decision to bring in Cory Burke and Jay Simpson as substitutes ...

We put a real emphasize in the preseason in training that ties are useless, ties are no good and ties are two points dropped and that has to be our mindset and mentality that takes a lot to flip. We're not there 100% yet but I think by the substitutes, Fabian [Herbers] started to fatigue, Anthony put a lot into it and Fabian [Herbers] started to slow down. I didn't like where the game was at, they started to have control of the ball so rather than be defensive, we were proactive and threw Cory [Burke] in the wide spot and Jay [Simpson] underneath CJ [Sapong] trying to shake things up. I thought Cory [Burke] came into the game and made a huge impact right away with the assist and also by drawing fouls and running with the ball. You guys can see how powerful he is in the open field. He was possessed tonight and in a brief amount of time he made the most of his minutes. He turned the head of the entire technical staff so that was a big spot for him to come in. Jay [Simpson] was underneath and didn't have his sharpest night but at the same time still contributed

and did a lot for us. I thought that we were being proactive rather than reactive at home and especially now when we go on the road we want to have the mentality that a tie is two points dropped and we train that in practice that ties are useless and were trying to shift that mentality which is not an easy thing but that was probably a factor in the substitutions tonight.

On relationship with Brendan Burke on Bethlehem Steel FC ...

Yeah it's great. Brendan does an incredible job with our Bethlehem Steel team. His staff, Stephen Hogan and he do a good job of developing players. Obviously with our academy it starts there with the really young ones. Again we created now a pathway and an environment for them. We proved that you can go from one to the next to the next and get on the field for our first team which is something that people see, something that young kids see and they will aspire to achieve. The environment has now been created and at certain points, players do become responsible for that development. The coaches have to walk around with fertilizer, drop a little bit of it, water it and sometimes a flower is going to grow and sometimes you might get a weed. At the same time we at least have to have an environment that gives them a chance to blossom and get better as players and people. Are we perfect yet, no ill never say that, we still have a lot to work on, but Brendan is doing an incredible job with Bethlehem Steel. My technical staff has done an incredible job in the preseason. People forget it is a completely new staff, we probably have three or four people that you hear about but then also behind the scenes from the scouting to the data analysis, to the things that Earnie is providing, that part has increased drastically compared to previous years. I can remember sitting on the bench for the Cup Final with two or three people that were there and now we have a staff of seven to eight guys that are all in this together and just want to get us better and I'm glad to be a part of that.

On the decision with Fafa Picault ...

The incident with Fafa [Picault] happened two and a half weeks ago. I don't think that it was handled the best way in terms of communication and the timeline of where we were going with Fafa. It made for a situation during the week where we had to train with Fafa taking partial reps and kind of with Fabian [Herbers] taking some partial reps, Eric [Ayuk] took some and from that standpoint we made a decision. I'll be the first to tell you that and so will Fabian that it was not his best preseason. He was not sharp and was not the elite player that we know that he can be but credit to him tonight, I thought he put in a good shift for the team and had a couple of good attempts at goal, created some chances, did a good job for us and stepped up. We talked all week about being down a few guys with injuries or guys getting suspended and we needed people to rally around and everybody to help out a little bit more and I think that Fabian responded well to a difficult situation and did a good job for us.

Philadelphia Union midfielder Alejandro Bedoya

On previous struggles and how the team performed tonight...

We made it a little hard on ourselves in the second half; I was getting a little worried. A win to start off the season, three points, it feels great. It gives us a little confidence going forward starting the season just how we wanted to with a win at home. Our start to the game was very good. We knew that the wind was going to be a factor and that New England was a little bit slow at the back so if we can get in behind them we could cause some problems and that's what we were able to do. The late runs from the midfield and balls over to CJ [Sapong], CJ could have had five goals today right? (laughter) It just wasn't his night but he got one and we felt he was going to get one so definitely a good start to the season.

On Anthony Fontana's debut...

I'm just so happy for him. We roomed together the whole preseason, just talking to get his confidence up and he's a good player so I really hope he takes a big step this season. Not a bad way to start his debut to score a goal. I thought he was active; he definitely wanted the ball. At times maybe he dropped a little too deep to get the ball, but that's good for a kid like that to always want to be on the ball and have no fear. He definitely tries to take some risks but it's just the beginning for him and he's got a bright future.

On the two attacking substitutions and the second goal...

I don't know Jim's [Curtin] reasoning for it but from my perspective I think maybe he wanted to get some more pressure to them because I thought we were maybe sitting back a little and being a little too complacent. So bringing Jay [Simpson] on provides a little more pressure on their back line and a big shout out to Cory Burke for coming on and making a difference with his speed and his directness. He came on and made a difference and created that second goal. I thought the subs came on and did well.

On the team's response to the attacking substitutions...

I don't like when we sit back and try to protect the 1-0 lead. I remember it happened to us last year when we played Montreal where we just started to sit back and protect the lead and the other team is going to get some more chances. We've spoken about how we want to be attack-minded and not just settle for a 1-0 game; try to kill them off especially when we're up a man. I think that that's a little different mindset that we have this year. Like I said, I think we got a little too complacent in the second half, I started getting a little concerned that we were dropping back and playing some passes a little nonchalant. I think it's important that we stay attack-minded and get that second goal and kill off the game.

On Auston Trusty's debut and his battles with Juan Agudelo...

Yeah, he's also another prospect that comes in through the ranks. For him, it's all about confidence and to be more decisive. I thought him coming out there, pressuring guys like Juan [Agudelo] and Teal [Bunbury] who are good number 9s and wingers in our league that can hold the ball up well, but I think he definitely held his own. It's good for him to continue to gain some confidence and the more games he gets the more confident and comfortable he is going to be.

On the large gap till the next game...

It sucks. You just want to keep playing games, especially in the beginning of the season when we're still kind of in preseason mode, you still want to get that match fitness. Not being able to play that second game right away it kind of sucks. You just have to keep working hard in training and keep the intensity up so that the second weekend when we rest it doesn't impact us or hurt us because we want to keep this momentum going.

On David Accam's impact...

I thought he did fine. When you see he gets the ball he is so direct the other team has to respect his speed no matter what. As soon as he's on the ball the outside back is backtracking and he's putting them on their back feet. It gives our players more space, especially in the midfield as the lines drop deeper it allows us more space in the middle for me and Haris [Medunjanin] to roam and [Anthony] Fontana. I think he was a little bit unlucky to maybe not get on the end of some things. Like I said, I like what I saw from him, that he was being direct, because during pre-season we talked about that. He was a little bit weary coming off an injury to get going a bit. He's still a little bit hampered by that but you'll see that he's already going direct and making those runs so it's good to see.

Philadelphia Union midfielder Anthony Fontana

On scoring his first ever MLS goal...

I came out here ready to play and try to help the team in any way I could, thankfully I was able to do that with the goal.

On the emotions after his goal...

I don't even know if I was there. I was just going on pure emotions, running around, doing whatever.

On being homegrown players and playing with Auston Trusty...

It's always been a dream of mine to play here at this club. Doing it with someone else that is similar to me is amazing. Like I said, the fact that I was able to actually help the team today feels good.

On the difference between playing and watching from the stands...

Of course, you're playing. It's a lot more energy once you're actually out there playing, it's amazing.

On the opportunity to start...

This team is so deep. There is a lot of healthy competitiveness in every single spot. I know once I get an opportunity, I have to take it. Thankfully, I feel I did pretty well tonight.

On his preparation throughout the week knowing he would start...

I just come in every day, put my head down and work hard. Like I said, once I get an opportunity I'll be prepared to take it.

Philadelphia Union defender Auston Trusty

On how making his MLS debut felt...

It felt amazing and was very humbling. Especially growing up as a young kid in Philadelphia and being able to go out on this field, because I remember back in the day, I used to buy tickets to go see this team play and see some of the players like Ray Gaddis. He was one of my favorite players growing up for the Union. Having him as my teammate and dreaming about this opportunity and this day as a young kid, visualizing at the games that I could someday be here and playing on this field and starting – for it to happen is truly humbling and amazing. I am thankful from everyone from the academy, to the Steel, to the organization, to the Union. Just everybody, I'm so thankful.

On catching up to Juan Agudelo and knocking the ball off him...

It was a miscommunication between Jack and me. Agudelo likes to peel off behind you, without you seeing it, without checking my shoulders he was right there. It was a little slip ball and after that, it was just a foot race and I guess I just won.

On the clean sheet in the first game...

It means a lot to me personally and also team wise. Just to get wins and more wins, the more chemistry, it's all the better. Starting the season off right that's what we

want to do and end the season off right. It's just a building point; it's not the end of it but a building point to the end of the season and building up and up and up.

On facing Juan Agudelo and minimizing his impact...

It means a lot, but it's also the challenge the coach put me up to it and our organization put me up to and they believed I could do it. I just set out to play my role, do my task, and keep the clean sheet.

On the spotlight and if it affected him...

I wasn't too nervous. At the end of the day, it's just a game. I didn't really think too much of it other than just play my role and do my task and play my role on the team. At the end of the day, I've been in big games before; it's just a regular game.

On previous experience in big games...

It helps tremendously because if I didn't have that, I could see nerves really setting in but since I've been in that environment and through all of that stuff it's just another game.

New England Revolution Head Coach Brad Friedel

On the two red cards...

It did not go the way we wanted it to. I have not seen the incidents yet, but at the time that I saw I did not have any complaints. We have to try and plan for these things, I think the killer blow was them scoring before the stroke of halftime. I think the start of the second half, they were finding it difficult to break us down. Once we had a little chat at halftime we had a couple chances of our own. We had a poor defensive mistake on their second goal. I thought the players that were on the field, especially playing with ten men for such a long period of time and then with nine men at the end, I thought they put their heart into the game. It is not easy playing down a man let alone two men. There were some positives that we can take from the game. There were quite a few negatives, but it is never easy playing down a man for that long.

On pushing forward at the end of the match....

Right before they scored, we tried to put three in the back with two strikers up front and we were going to try and put a little bit of pressure if we could. I will always try to go out and win games if at all cost. It wasn't to be tonight.

On Matt Turner's performance in net...

I thought he did very well, Matt Turner would have started none the less whether Cody was ill or not. Matt has been exceptionally good throughout preseason and he deserved the right to play today. I thought he made some good saves in some very windy condition, which is not easy for a goalkeeper. I thought he did well.

On having his two central defenders out for next week's game...

We have a good squad. We have the likes of Jalil Anibaba, who is very experienced who can step in that spot. Andrew Farrell, Brandon Bye, and Nicolas Samayoa can also play the position. We have bodies that can do the job. This why you have squads, you are going to have sending-offs from time to time and you are going to have injuries and suspensions. I have no issues playing any of our defensive pairings.

On always starting the season on the road...

We have a home game next week. We are going to want to get three points on our own turf. I think in the first part of the game we looked pretty comfortable, we created a couple of really good chances. If we score one of them, it can be an entirely different game all together. Andre Blake made a couple of good saves early on. In quick succession, we had a man sent off. The thing that really hurt the most was the goal right before halftime. If we would have went into halftime tied, we could have said what we wanted to say. We were making it difficult for them.

On the debut of Wilfried Zahibo...

I thought he played very well today. He was good on the ball and tenacious in tackling, very fair. He was one of those players that played very well. I thought Scott Caldwell gave a little bit more than his all. It is very difficult when you go down a man and you are chasing for large portions of the game. It is not a nice task to continuously have to run. Another name to mention on the work rate side of things is Teal Bunbury. He worked hard for all of the ninety minutes.

On the early substitution of Cristian Penilla...

We knew we were going to be defending. Cristian Penilla is an outstanding player going forward. We felt Diego has played wide and in a defensive mode before that is why the decision was made. It had nothing to do with Cristian, just unlucky with having a man sent off.

New England Revolution Goalkeeper Matt Turner

On the night...

Throughout preseason, I have felt I was in the running for the job the whole time. They instilled confidence in me as long as I was on the field trying to make positive things happen and moving on to the next play and showing the ability to communicate well with the team and I was going to have a chance to win the job. So leading up into this week, I worked hard over the last two seasons. I traveled and played a lot in the USL to get to this moment. It is really nice, disappointing to lose obviously. Now it is about getting consistent and finding three points next week in front of our home fans.

On handling the two red cards...

I have played in a lot of games even though this is my first MLS game, I have played in a lot games throughout my upbringing and it is not the first time I had to play through adversity like that. So, you call on your experience from the past and you communicate and talk to the team. You really got to believe in the group as a whole. I think that we did a decent job as a collective group. We had a good mentality even when we were facing adversity.

On having Brad Friedel as a coach...

A lot of people ask that. He has a special resume, but at the end of the day he is our coach and you do not want to look at him in this light. You want to respect for everything he has accomplished and try to learn from him the best way that you can. You take everything that he says and try to improve your game that way. He did it for so long at such a high level that it is very valuable especially for me as a goalkeeper, who is looking to break into the scene.

On when finding out he was going to start....

I found out today, but that is kind of the way that it has been. You prepare every week, every day, and every training session like you are going to be the starter. So when the team goes up the day of the game, you hope your name is on the sheet. You prepare like you are going to be playing, if you are on the sheet then you succeeded that week. You take every week, as it is you can't get complacent.

On telling his family about him starting...

Luckily I am from New Jersey, so it was not too far for them to make it down. My parents were here and a couple friends. They got to see my debut; unfortunately it was a disappointing end result.

On both centerbacks being out for next week's game...

We are excited to get in front of our home fans at Gillette. Obviously, it is a place where we really succeeded last year and we look to build on that. Yes, we are facing a little adversity with the red cards in key positions, but that is why we brought in

Jalil and why we signed Niko. We have more depth in the back than maybe years past. I think it is going to be fine. We are going to put on a great performance for the Old Faithful.

New England Revolution Midfielder Diego Fagundez

On the performance...

I think it was really unlucky. You do not want to start the year off this way, but nothing we can do now. We just have to focus on the next game and it is at home, it's a must win for us. You want to go home, and you do not want to start on a losing streak. We are going to prepare ourselves and see what we did wrong in this game.

On the first red card in the first half...

We knew it was going to be a tough game and that there was going to be a lot of running. It was tough for us, especially after we scored the first goal. It was hard for us to attack. There was a lot of space, so every time we attacked they would just counter us. We were just unlucky with the red card and there is nothing we can do about it now. We just have to move forward and keep working.

On the positive moments in the match...

I think in the first couple minutes, both teams were just back and forth. After a little bit, we had our chances. I think we had three or four chances where we should have scored. We got unlucky and then everything turned around.

On being down next week with two red cards....

Someone else is going to step up. There is not just eighteen players on the field it is a whole squad. Even though two red cards, two players are going to step up and they are going to do their job. Then we will go from there.

On playing out-wide....

For the low minutes I had a chance to play there, it was fun. Of course, it was not as fun