



Postgame interview transcripts from Head Coach Jay Heaps, goalkeeper Cody Cropper, and defender Andrew Farrell are available below.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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POSTGAME RECAP: Revolution Fall to Houston Dynamo, 2-0, in Desert Diamond Cup Opener

Knighton makes four saves; Kouassi sees first game action

TUCSON, Ariz. – The New England Revolution opened the 2017 Desert Diamond Cup with a 2-0 loss to the Houston Dynamo at Kino Sports Complex on Wednesday.

The Revolution controlled most of the first half and nearly broke through for a score in the 33rd minute when Lee Nguyen outraced a Houston defender and played a pass to Teal Bunbury at the top of the 18-yard box, but Bunbury's shot sailed high. One minute later, the roles reversed as Bunbury found Nguyen in a dangerous position in the area and the shot was blocked away.

Brad Knighton entered the game in the second half, replacing Cody Cropper in net, and posted four impressive saves in his 45 minutes of action. After a save from close range against Erick Torres in the 53rd minute, Knighton got a hand on another Torres opportunity, but the shot was strong enough to find the net to put Houston ahead 1-0. The Dynamo then put the game out of reach in the 89th minute with a goal from Alberth Ellis.

Midfielder Xavier Kouassi took another important step in his recovery from an ACL injury in February 2016, as he made his Revolution debut in today's match. Kouassi earned the start and saw 17 minutes of action before he was replaced by Daigo Kobayashi.

The Revolution will play three more preseason games in the Desert Diamond Cup before kicking off the regular season at the Colorado Rapids on March 4. The club will return to action on Saturday, Feb. 18 against Colorado and then play Sporting Kansas City on Wednesday, Feb. 22, before closing out the tournament against an opponent to be determined on Saturday, Feb. 25.

Scoring Summary:

HOU – Erick Torres 54'

HOU – Alberth Ellis (Alex) 89'

Misconduct Summary:

NE – Joshua Smith 21' (Yellow Card)

New England Revolution (1st Half): Cody Cropper; Chris Tierney, London Woodberry, Joshua Smith, Andrew Farrell; Xavier Kouassi (Daigo Kobayashi 17'); Diego Fagundez, Scott Caldwell; Kelyn Rowe; Lee Nguyen, Teal Bunbury

New England Revolution (2nd Half): Brad Knighton; Donnie Smith, Trevor Haberkorn (Jaime Olabarria), Joshua Smith, Tyler Turner; Emmanuel Appiah, Zachary Herivaux (Joe Brito 60'); Tristan Bowen, Napo Matsoso, Jose Rodriguez; Brian Wright

Houston Dynamo (1st Half): Tyler Deric; George Malki, Jalil Anibaba, Agus, Kevin Garcia; Joseph Holland, Eric Alexander, Boniek Garcia; Andrew Wenger, Mauro Manotas, Vicente Sanchez

Houston Dynamo (2nd Half): Joe Willis; A.J. DeLaGarza, Adolfo Machado, Leonardo, Dylan Remick; Juan David Cabezas, Ricardo Clark, Alex; Romell Quioto, Erick Torres, Alberth Ellis

POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

New England Revolution Head Coach Jay Heaps

On the match against the Houston Dynamo:

Coach Heaps: “Really a tale of two halves. I think fortunately for us, we got off to a good start. It was 0-0, but I thought we had some good movement, some good play in the first half. We weren’t as dangerous as we’d like to be, but solid defensively, didn’t give up much. Second half, we were really scrambling a little bit for bodies, because we still have Je-Vaughn [Watson] away, Juan [Agudelo]’s coming in, and the two center backs [Benjamin Angoua and Antonio Mlinar Delamea] are sorting out their visas. We were a little bit light on numbers, so we had a lot of trialists in and guys that we hadn’t really seen, quite frankly – hadn’t even trained with us. So, [we were] putting them all together and trying to tactically get them all on the same page in about a 10- or 15-minute session before the game, but thought the guys worked hard there. That last 45 minutes was not easy and our guys worked really hard to just try to play together.”

On getting new trialists ready for the game with little preparation time:

Coach Heaps: “I think that was their first team. We got mix-matched. That was, I think, close to their starting group. It was difficult for our guys. It’s good, though. We had some young guys out there. Guys that are young guys on our roster that are trying to fight for minutes, and then we had some trialists that we’re looking at. And we were able to get Joe Brito in, an Academy product, as well. He came on a little sooner than we wanted when Zach [Herivaux] got hurt, but at the same time, when you have three or four guys that are just basically picked up today – Joe got off a plane today, I don’t think he was expecting to play a full 30 minutes. But overall a good test for our guys, start to finish.”

On Xavier Kouassi seeing his first game action with the Revolution:

Coach Heaps: “I think it’s important. Fifteen minutes was always the number. He’s still a little bit, from a fitness standpoint, a little bit further away. But at the same time, I think it was a good stepping stone to get a game in, live action, prepare for a game and get in there and compete at the highest level. I think it was a good first test for him and now hopefully, that continues to kind of spark even more minutes coming up.”

New England Revolution Goalkeeper Cody Cropper

On today’s match against Houston:

Cropper: “Obviously disappointing to lose, but I think it’s a good game for us to open up [the second leg of] preseason, really. It’s obviously disappointing, like I said, with the loss, but just a good game to get out, get the legs going coming off a double session yesterday and obviously flying the day before. Good to get to better weather. But it’s something that we can take into the next game versus Colorado on Saturday and hopefully turn the result around.”

On the benefit of having a full preseason with the Revolution:

Cropper: “It’s been good. Obviously, like you said, last year was quite difficult coming in midseason, not knowing anybody apart from one or two names. But this year’s been a little bit different, from the start. It’s been good to see more and more what [Head Coach] Jay [Heaps], [assistant coaches] Remi [Roy] and Tommy [Soehn] and Carlos [Llamosa] want from the goalkeepers and just from the general standpoint of the team. So, overall it’s been good.”

On the team’s next preseason match against the Colorado Rapids on Saturday:

Cropper: “I think it’s a big game for us. I’m sure [that] the minutes will change. Maybe a few players will play 60, some will play 30 instead of 45, 45. I think it’s a great opportunity for us to get a better

understanding of what Colorado brings, especially for myself never having played them. If I do get on the field, it will be a great opportunity for me to get some understanding of what they're about. I think every game really at this point is feeling out every different team and seeing what they do. Like tonight, Houston, I was told that they wouldn't press, but they did, obviously with the coaching change that they had in Wilmer [Cabrera]. So, it'll be interesting to see what Colorado [brings] on Saturday and how we can adjust."

New England Revolution Defender Andrew Farrell

On playing the first 45 minutes in the match:

Farrell: "I think it felt good. We got here yesterday and we had a double session yesterday and we were excited about the game and a little bit of competition and playing against another team in Houston. We did well. Obviously, something that we wanted to translate from last camp to this camp was our defensive shape and I think for the most part we did a good job. We limited their chances in the first half. In the second half, I think they got a good run of play, but for the most part, I think defensively, we were better. It's something we want to grow on and keep working on."

On maintaining a sound defensive shape with new players on the field:

Farrell: "I think it's about not necessarily the guys who are missing, but the guys who are here and the guys learning our system. Not just necessarily the backline, but [also] the midfield and the forwards. We've got a lot of guys who aren't here with us, but a lot of the guys who are here on trial and our draft picks have stepped up and are filling in really well. I think it's a good step. We obviously didn't get the result we wanted, but we move on and get ready for the next game."

On the points of emphasis for the team moving forward in preseason:

Farrell: "Keep progressing. Keep getting that shape down in the 4-4-2 diamond that we've been playing. Keep limiting the chances. I think going forward, getting better in the final third and that transition from defense to attack, I think that's something we've been working on in this camp. When we get the ball and we get a turnover, we can force them to make a good chance and get a good shot on goal. It's something we want to work on and we're taking the right steps that way."

For up-to-the-minute information on the Revolution, visit the team's official web site at RevolutionSoccer.net, or join the conversation and interact with fans on any of the team's social platforms.

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