



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 12, 2017

New England Revolution Training Report: April 12, 2017

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Please see below to **access video, training b-roll, and transcripts** previewing this Saturday's away match against the Chicago Fire from post-training media availability on Tuesday, April 11, including quotes and footage from:

- **Head Coach Jay Heaps**
- **Midfielder Scott Caldwell**
- **Midfielder Diego Fagundez** (video available in English and Spanish)
 - *Last Saturday, Fagundez became the first Homegrown field player to total 10,000 MLS minutes. Quotes and video from Fagundez on the milestone and his time with the Revolution Academy are available here.*
- **Midfielder Lee Nguyen**
- **Defender Andrew Farrell**

For video, audio, and b-roll, please visit the [MLS Soundbytes Page](#) and navigate to the "Soundbytes Previewing MLS Games" folder. If you have any questions or requests, or if you would like to RSVP to an upcoming game or training session, please contact the Revolution communications staff at media@revolutionssoccer.net.

New England Revolution Head Coach Jay Heaps

On the team's defensive progress through the first five games of the season:

Coach Heaps: "I think we have defended well starting in preseason. Really, [defending is] the mindset for our group this year. The back four are doing a nice job, good communication with the lines. I just feel like it's not just the back four, but it's also everyone on the field. When you're in there and whether it's the forwards or the keeper making plays, we have to defend and we get a lot of chances created from our defending."

On Xavier Kouassi's role in the team's defensive success:

Coach Heaps: "He's so physical in that role and very smart in his positioning and reading the game and knowing when to step in, when to drop and cover. Also, he's really in a good position to shift into center back, so that if a center back does get taken out of [position during] the play, he's in a good position to cover."

On Josh Smith's progress following successful thumb surgery on Monday:

Coach Heaps: "We're going to see what the next day or two looks like. Obviously, it was a surgery that had to be done. You want to have your thumb. I think his performance on Saturday was excellent knowing that [he] basically [had] a thumb out of place. The swelling has come down and now he's had the surgery, so we'll see as the week progresses. We feel that we've got a good back line competition in Ben [Angoua] and Toni [Delamea] and Je-Vaughn [Watson] and different guys that play that position."

On Josh Smith contributing a second strong performance against Houston:

Coach Heaps: “That’s exactly it: performing on the weekend. I think we as a team and as a group feel strongly about training and that your performance in training will dictate minutes, and then what you get in those minutes will determine how many minutes you get. Josh [Smith] is a perfect example of someone that from day one of preseason came in with the right attitude, right mentality, earned a spot on the team, earned a spot in the 18, earned a spot in the starting lineup, and is fighting tooth and nail to keep it. You love situations like that, where guys are getting opportunities and taking them.”

On if Kelyn Rowe is a long-term option at outside back or a matchup-by-matchup option:

Coach Heaps: “Both. I think, for me, the most important thing for Kelyn [Rowe] is that a lot of times it’s matchup and that’s what puts him in those positions, but he’s so versatile. I’ve talked about this in the past – it’s not like we’re plugging a hole. He plays each position with a performance. I thought, to be quite honest with you, Saturday was no different in the sense that he had a great first 65 minutes at left back and then an additional 30 minutes with stoppage time at right midfield. [He] created a lot of our chances once he moved there. For me, he was one of the key players in the match, because he knows how to play, he’s athletic enough to defend, but he’s also very tactically aware and that’s huge for us.”

On facing the first conference opponent of the season and the added implications on the table:

Coach Heaps: “I don’t think there’s more to it in terms of how we prepare and the overall commitment it’s going to take, but the point swings are certainly more. I think if you give your opposition points, it’s going to be harder to get those points back later. We’ve got to go in, we’re playing against a very good Chicago team, and we’re going to have to obviously change a little bit of what we did from Saturday going in because it’s a different team, different tactics. But the overall mentality has got to be the same.”

On the importance of the midfield battle with Chicago:

Coach Heaps: “Critical, I think, with Juninho coming back in from injury and with [Bastian] Schweinsteiger joining them. Obviously, we’ve known Dax McCarty for a while. Those three are, I think, one of the best three in the League. It’s very important for us to win our battles in midfield but also look for areas where we can put the game on our terms and our strengths.”

New England Revolution Midfielder Scott Caldwell

On the team’s defensive progress this season:

Caldwell: “It started in preseason. I thought through the few weeks of the season, we were doing a good job in defensive shape from the forwards to the backs and the goalkeeper and we were letting in little goals here and there, but we finally were able to put it fully together and eliminate mistakes and kind of keep it clean in the back. Really, everyone’s done their job, starting off the top, new guys, old guys, it’s really been good to see everyone come together and put their best foot forward.”

On the role of Xavier Kouassi:

Caldwell: “He’s huge. He wins everything. He’s so athletic, he can cover ground. He’s got that good outlet pass when he wins it, too. There’s a whole bunch of stuff that he does really, really well.”

On playing more on the right side as opposed to centrally this season:

Caldwell: “It’s just a little different mentally. One’s not better than the other. You just [have] to do a few different jobs here and there, but mentally, you’ve got to bring a little bit more to the attack, a little more balance to the team from that right side. But, either way, there are things you’ve got to do to help the team.”

On shutting down the Chicago Fire’s revamped midfield:

Caldwell: “It will be very, very important. If we can win that battle, it will help us have a better chance at winning the game, but it’s not everything. It’s something we’ll definitely focus on, but we’ll have to be from the forwards to the backs, the backs to the forwards, we’ll have to be very tight as a team, going away to get our first win on the road.”

On starting the Eastern Conference portion of the schedule:

Caldwell: “I don’t think we’ll prepare any differently as opposed to a Western Conference team, but definitely, three points to us and zero to them is kind of a double whammy in terms of the standings and the point totals, so it’s definitely important and we’re going to go out there and try to get the best result.”

On the opportunities he and Diego Fagundez have had as Homegrown Players:

Caldwell: “That’s exactly what it is, we’ve been given the opportunity. It means a lot as local guys for the coaching staff to trust us to put us on the field. I hope that shows to the current Academy guys that if they put in the work, the coaching staff will give them a chance and I think it’s something to look forward to. Diego has been incredible and he’s been in a great run of form recently, too, so it’s great to see that for such a good guy.”

On the importance of the development being at the right pace for the individual:

Caldwell: “Everyone needs their own way through the system. To get games when you’re younger or just to get training minutes is very important for each individual, and it shows the coaching staff has done a good job of bringing up some of the young guys and giving us opportunities and giving us game time and letting us do the best we can.”

New England Revolution Midfielder Diego Fagundez

On becoming the first Homegrown field player to eclipse 10,000 MLS minutes played and Scott Caldwell being second in line to reach the milestone:

Fagundez: “I think it’s amazing to both have those under our belts. He’s almost there, so I guess we can wait for that. But for me, so many minutes in this team and playing and earning my spot on the team and doing so much. I have to thank everybody – the coaching staff, the players in there, all the people who believed in me. I just have to keep going. There’s still a lot where that came from. Every minute I get, I need to take advantage of it and make sure I reach 20,000 [minutes] next time.”

On developing at the right pace through the club’s academy system:

Fagundez: “I think the Academy gets you prepared for that, the fast speed and playing quick. Of course, I used to play reserve games for the first team, so that kind of prepared me for what I was expecting to do. So then once I signed, it was a lot easier process to come in and get to compete with the guys. Even though everybody was older and bigger, you had to be smarter than them and try to make sure they’re not hitting you or bumping you off. I think I grew as a player from the first day to now. I’m definitely a different player. There’s still a lot where I can learn and there’s still a lot I can bring.”

New England Revolution Midfielder Lee Nguyen

On the team’s mindset entering the second half of last Saturday’s win:

Nguyen: “First half, it was tough just because they got the wind [at their backs] in the first half and we were just trying to weather that and do the best we can. Second half, we got the wind at our backs and that’s when we decided we needed to take more chances with that factor. We put them on their back feet and that’s what we did.”

On Xavier Kouassi’s role anchoring the midfield:

Nguyen: “He’s a great plug for us there. He’s able to clean up everything. His physical presence also is huge. He gets into tackles and at the same time, he’s able to help us switch the point of attack. He’s been huge for us.”

On facing the first Eastern Conference opponent of the season:

Nguyen: “Every game is important, especially when you get results away, but especially when you’re playing against your own conference teams. They’re big, because those are the ones where you can make jumps in the table. We’re going to try to take full advantage of this weekend when we go into Chicago and try to take back three points.”

On matching up with the Fire's new midfield trio of Juninho, Dax McCarty, and Bastian Schweinsteiger:

Nguyen: "The team that wins the midfield is going to have a better chance, obviously, to win the game. They've had major improvements in that field, so it's going to be a tough matchup. All those three guys are class, so we're going to have our hands full on the weekend."

New England Revolution Defender Andrew Farrell

On the progress the team has made defensively:

Farrell: "We worked on defensive shape a lot through preseason, not just the backline, but the full eleven guys on the field. I think each game has gotten better and better, we have worked on different things that we could adjust and make us a little more solid in the back and I think we've done great. Obviously, the two guys in the middle, whether it's Ben [Angoua] or Josh [Smith] and Toni [Antonio Delamea], have been great for us. Kelyn [Rowe] filling in and Chris [Tierney] – we've got a lot of guys that can play on the backline. It's been a great group effort, and Cody [Cropper] and the goalies as well, and also the guys in front of us that help us shore up the defense. We let in a lot of goals last year. I think it's definitely progress and a step forward for us for the first part of the season."

On how the center backs have integrated seamlessly with the rest of the backline:

Farrell: "They've been doing a great job. They've played great, I think Toni [Delamea] early on has been a leader for us. He's been talking a lot throughout the preseason and he's been solid throughout. Josh [Smith] coming in and stepping up in Portland and then this other game at home, they've been great. They've talked, they're physical, they move the ball well. All in all, they've been great on the field. It helps the outside backs and also the guys in front of us to do their jobs."

On the recent play of Xavier Kouassi:

Farrell: "He's been solid. Obviously, watching his highlights from his former team, you knew was a good player. He just had to get healthy. Now that he is coming into full strength, he's great. He can break up plays. He's a force in front of us. He can also spread the attack and get involved in that. He's been a great addition. Last year, he obviously got hurt unfortunately, but now he's back and healthy and helping us get wins."

On if Eastern Conference games have any heightened importance:

Farrell: "I think so. Obviously, we want to win all the games, but Eastern Conference games are kind of like six-point games. We don't want to let another team [get] ahead of us and Chicago is a team that has been doing great this year. It's going to be a good test and a tough task for us to take on this Chicago team, but the past three games have been good results and we kind of want to build on that and keep that going."

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