



## NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION POSTGAME QUOTES

New England Revolution 2 vs Houston Dynamo 0  
Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### **New England Revolution Head Coach Jay Heaps**

#### ***On the halftime discussion to get the ball forward:***

**Coach Heaps:** "I think there's two factors that happened. First, the wind was very difficult to play in, so the first half, we were a little bit out of sync. We weren't moving the ball. The tempo wasn't great. At halftime, the conversation was, let's speed up the tempo. Let's make sure now that we have a little bit of the wind behind, we knew how hard it was to play out. Balls were getting slowed up, so we wanted to make sure the tempo changed, that we were going to come out flying. I think the real type of shift was to leave Kei [Kamara] and Juan [Agudelo] a little higher because they were going 2 v 2 and to make sure we hit the early ball. It was on in the first half, we never found the early ball, but I think a perfect example of it was Lee [Nguyen's ball] to Kei for the goal. That was something we were hammering on the halfback where [assistant coach] Tommy Soehn and I discussed it. It was just so clear that we needed to play that early ball."

#### ***On Houston playing a high line and how the Revolution exploited that:***

**Coach Heaps:** "Yeah, I think that they play a high line and knowing that, that had to be able to be punished, so it was good that we were able to do it before they adjusted."

#### ***On what led to the decision to start Kelyn Rowe at outside back:***

**Coach Heaps:** "I think we did a lot this week on how Houston [Dynamo] plays and they leave those three high and let you come and play. So, I thought Kelyn [Rowe] was going to get a lot of the ball and he did in the second half. I thought he added a lot physically, so he's going to win these individual battles. We knew there was going to be a lot of 1 v 1 defending and Kelyn is one of the best. He doesn't get enough credit for it, but he's a good one-on-one defender, especially when there's physicality involved."

#### ***On the athletic play Kei Kamara made to get behind the back line and stay onside:***

**Coach Heaps:** "It's the timing of his runs and continuing to be dangerous. That was something we really worked on this week, was making sure we timed the runs right. It was great that he stayed with it, but I got to be honest with you, I have to go back and look at it because I turned away after the first save. Next thing I know, they said 'He's still got it'. And he scored. I haven't even seen the goal yet."

#### ***On the thought process of Josh Smith retaining his place in the starting eleven:***

**Coach Heaps:** "You know what, I thought he had a really good debut and I thought tonight was critical that we have communication across the back line because we were shifting so much to cover against their aggressive three high. So if [Andrew] Farrell attacked, Josh [Smith] was to slide. You can't just do it and not communicate. If someone's going, you need to verbalize it and I thought they did a great job."

#### ***On shutting down Erick Torres:***

**Coach Heaps:** "Again, I thought the three guys that to me, did an excellent job, was Josh [Smith], Toni [Delamea], and we haven't talked about [Xavier] Kouassi. I don't think he took a wrong step out there. I thought he was excellent defensively, breaking up plays. And it's just a roll up your sleeves type attitude from him. He gets in on tackles, excellent with the ball. Thrilled with the three of them and how they dealt with the center of the park."

#### ***On the accomplishment of Diego Fagundez to reach 10,000 minutes as a Homegrown Player:***



**Coach Heaps:** “Pretty amazing. I think it’s credit to the organization. We were involved in signing young kids, in terms of the academy. I think Diego [Fagundez] was a perfect example of signing a young kid, but putting a structure in place that allowed him to grow within the first team. And then what I love about Diego, is for me, how much he’s grown over the last three or four years. I think he came into the league and was amazing. He scored goals, but then after where he had a lot of goals, we reset a little bit on how impactful in the game he was. He wasn’t getting enough touches. We really sat down with him. And now, you see he’s able to go 1 v 1. He’s keeping the ball more. He’s, for us, probably through the first five games, been one of our best players, in each of the games. And that, for me, is the most consistent he’s been through a five game stretch. All five games, he’s been measurable about how good he’s going to be.”

***On the save Cody Cropper made on Erick Torres:***

**Coach Heaps:** “That was my next one. I wanted to say, I thought Cody [Cropper] also helped shut down [Erick] Torres. I haven’t seen the replay if he was onside or offside, but the timing of Cody, waiting for the play because he was in clear. I thought the defenders did a nice job. Josh [Smith] closed down quickly to allow Cody to come make the play, but you need your keeper to make that one save when the game is 0-0 or 1-0, and that preserved our lead.”

***On if we are seeing the most out of Juan Agudelo or if he has more to give:***

**Coach Heaps:** “Juan [Agudelo]? Oh, yeah. More to give? He gives everything. He lays it on the line. I don’t think we’ve even touched the surface on Juan. I feel that way about Diego [Fagundez]. I feel that way about a few of our guys, but Juan in particular. He has shown his feet are soft, he can get out of trouble, he can go 1 v 1, he can score goal. He’s as strong as any forward in the league. So, yeah, I’m thrilled that he’s playing this way, but I know there’s even more, which excites me as a coach.”

***On whether or not Juan Agudelo looks like a 20-goal scorer:***

**Coach Heaps:** “I don’t want to take that away from him. Every time he scores, that’d be great, but for me, he’s not just a goal scorer. He’s creating. He’s holding the ball up. He’s laying off. Like I said, the soft feet. He’s technical. He gets out of trouble. He finds passes. He’s a good playmaker. So, for me, Juan is more of a balanced player. Ten and ten, fifteen and fifteen, or twenty and twenty – whatever he’s going to be, I think he’s always going to have equal number because he’s so creative.”

***On whether or not the first two fouls on Lee Nguyen were unfortunate or brought on by the type of attention he brings:***

**Coach Heaps:** “Unfortunate is a good word, I think. ‘Drawed’ is the best way to say it. Every time he takes one or two extra touches, he’s got a player on him. He’s done a great job these first five games getting himself out of trouble and finding the open man.”

***On the importance of taking the three points and getting the result to keep the good run of form going:***

**Coach Heaps:** “We always talk about putting games together. For me, the most important thing was to get a point in Portland. Get that in the rear view mirror and then get on to this game, but I love, you get a point and then back it up with the three points at home is exactly what you want when you get that point on the road. I think it galvanized us. Showed some toughness that we got a point there and then this week was critical that we prepared the right way, but came out with the right attitude. Credit all the players for that.”

***On sending a message that Gillette Stadium is a tough place to play:***

**Coach Heaps:** “You can’t say it. You got to show it. You want to make sure you work and make sure it’s tough for teams to come in and play against here at home, but you can’t talk about it. You got to go out and prove it on the field.”



### **New England Revolution Midfielder Diego Fagundez**

#### ***On the key to consistency:***

**Fagundez:** “I think just mindset. Just, I need to do my job when I get on the field, be prepared, and I think our training staff – especially [team massage therapist] Glenn [O’Connor] giving me those massages to be ready for the next game – is key. The hard work we’re putting in and our bodies are getting beat, but we have people helping us recover and I think that’s important.”

#### ***On eclipsing the 10,000<sup>th</sup> minute mark at home:***

**Fagundez:** “It’s a lot of minutes, but there’s a lot more minutes where that comes from and I just have to keep doing my job and keep doing what I’m doing and when I get my chances, I need to show the team that I’m putting the hard work in and we deserve what we have.”

#### ***On evolving as a player over his career:***

**Fagundez:** “I think I’ve been a better player off the ball both ways, defensive and attacking. I just have to keep working harder and when I get my chances, either way, make sure I do my job and keep working at it.”

#### ***On who he leans on most as a player:***

**Fagundez:** “I think it’s personally just myself. If I don’t step on the field and do everything I can to make sure I’m helping out the team – for me, I know Jay [Heaps] wanted me to be a two-way player – so I put that in my mindset that that’s what I’m going to be. I want to be on the starting 11 and whatever it takes, I’ll do.”

#### ***On tactical changes in the second half:***

**Fagundez:** “I think when our team, we’re moving off the ball and actually play through balls, I think that’s when we play the best. And I think that’s what we were trying to do. We knew that we had to win so we could take some shots, too. We knew that we were faster than them, so when we played the ball through them, we just had to finish our chances and Kei [Kamara] and Juan [Agudelo] definitely did.”

#### ***On finding consistency from game-to-game:***

**Fagundez:** “I think it’s still a roller coaster where one game’s good, one game’s all right, so we just have to keep grinding it out. I keep trying to do everything I can so when I get my chances to score or assist something, I’m going to do that.”

#### ***On a three-game unbeaten run:***

**Fagundez:** “It’s amazing. You know when you go away to a road trip and you get a tie and then you come home and three points, that’s huge. And that’s what we need to keep doing. I think this team knows the mindset, where it is right now. We just have to keep going and keep focusing on the next game and do our job and then come back and keep doing it.”

### **New England Revolution Forward Juan Agudelo**

#### ***On coming out strong in the second half:***

**Agudelo:** “Yeah, I thought the first half we were working the ball a lot. We were losing some possession, but in the second half at halftime we realized our main objective was to get some shots off, and score some goals. We were a bit more aggressive in that side of things. I think Lee took three shots in the first five minutes and everybody else was taking shots, it made them back up more and it gave us more space.”

#### ***On the urgency in the second half helped the performance:***



**Agudelo:** “Yeah, I think the movement that we had was great. We realized that in the second half our coaching staff did a good job telling us to get in behind more. Their center backs didn’t have the pace that we had, Kei got in behind a couple times and I thought our mobility was better in the second half so it stretched them out.”

***On the deflected ball on his goal:***

**Agudelo:** “Yeah, that was an awesome feeling, just focused a lot on the first touch and as soon as I brought it down, I knew I had to just put it on target.”

***On if Gillette Stadium has become a strong home-field advantage:***

**Agudelo:** “Extremely, I feel like teams don’t like coming here and playing games the way that we come out, we come out flying and come out to press. The cold weather, people complain about the turf, and other things, we just use it as a positive to us to move up the table like we just did.”

***On if he feels if he’s at his best right now:***

**Agudelo:** “Yeah, you always have more to give. I’m very fortunate that my teammates are able to put me in good positions to score goals, I’ve had zero shots I think in the three away games so I need to improve that, but luckily in home games I’m able to get shots. You can’t score goals without taking shots, so I’m grateful for that.”

***On Diego Fagundez reaching 10,000 career minutes as a Homegrown Player:***

**Agudelo:** “That’s pretty ridiculous just hearing that. Diego is a guy that’s been around for so long, he’s matured, he’s like a veteran but a very, very young veteran. I’m happy for him too, he works hard, and he hustles on both sides of the ball so he deserves it.”

**New England Revolution Midfielder/Defender Kelyn Rowe**

***On the team’s mindset heading into this game:***

**Rowe:** “We had a game plan going in that we knew that their guys were going to kind of sit three guys up top and not really defend. We thought we could counter that and I thought we did pretty well at that. I credit Josh [Smith] and Toni [Antonio Delamea], because they shut down [Erick] Torres every time he got the ball. He never had a chance to touch and spin off. He had one chance that we have to go back and obviously fix that, but Cody [Cropper] came up with a good save. So, I think defensively it was really solid, and I had guys around me to help me out.”

***On whether or not he had to change his mindset playing in a defensive position for this game:***

**Rowe:** “Yeah, when you’re on the ball, you don’t have four other guys behind you. Now you have one. And when you’re defending, you’re covering a lot more than you are in the midfield. You can’t go out blindly and step, because there’s always a chance that there’s a ball in behind you. So yeah, mentally it’s very different. But like I said, I had guys behind me, helping me, covering me out, and we did work on it through the week, so I got a little more comfortable in that way.”

***On what he has seen in Josh Smith stepping in as a rookie for the past few games:***

**Rowe:** “I think he’s been great. He plays like he does every game, whether he’s a rookie or whether he’s 30 years old and a veteran. He’s a guy that’s very vocal and he’s a strong player and you see it the way he plays. He’s going to be the same every game.”

***On whether he feels there is a future for him as a defender or whether he prefers to stay in the midfield:***

**Rowe:** “I’m not sure that one’s up to me. We’ll see. But as long as I’m on the field, I’m happy. If I can play up front, if I can play in the midfield, if I can play in the back, it doesn’t matter. If I’m on the field, that means I have a career still.”



***On what the halftime team talk was like today:***

**Rowe:** “We knew we had to come out hard, come out strong. They are a good team and we’re at home. We need to make sure we make a stand, things go our way, especially the first 15, 20 minutes. I thought we did a very good job with that. We wanted to make sure they didn’t get any clear-cut chances that we stopped in the first half. I thought we did really well defensively. For us, it’s about coming out and playing the same game, but again, can we step it up one notch, and use the win to our advantage?”

***On what the clean sheet meant to the group:***

**Rowe:** “I think it’s huge, especially when we change a little bit the back line, both in the game, and then when Je-Vaughn [Watson] came in as well. It’s huge for the guys mentally that we can get that shutout no matter who’s playing back there. I think good for confidence [for] everyone on that back line, especially Cody Cropper.”

***On what Xavier Kouassi has brought to the team:***

**Rowe:** “He’s just been very solid. He’s a guy—he’s not going to lose the ball passing very often. He’s going to get stuck in the tackles and he’s going to win a lot of balls. You can see his vision, whether it’s defensively reading a play or offensively finding a way to get around a guy and keep that ball and find a good pass. We’re happy to have him back.”

**New England Revolution Defender Josh Smith**

***On making his home debut:***

**Smith:** “It was awesome, I must say. Yeah, it was great feeling, it was. Playing at home meant a lot more to me than playing on the road. I think our fans, you could hear them 90 minutes long and it was great. It pushed us, definitely.”

***On getting starts this early in the season:***

**Smith:** “My goal was to come in and help the team the best way I can and improve day-by-day, so I’m going to try and keep doing that.”

***On building chemistry with Antonio Delamea in preseason:***

**Smith:** “Off the field, I’ve said it many times before, he’s a great guy. I think we communicate a lot before the games, after the games, and during the games, and that helps a lot.”

***On what changed for the team after halftime:***

**Smith:** “I think coach told us that this is our house and we had them. I think we did a good job in the first half. Maybe the final ball didn’t go in but we knew that this is an important game to get good points and jump up the table.”

***On securing the first clean sheet of the season:***

**Smith:** “For the defense, it’s important. I mean, a clean sheet is rewarding for you. You know our job is to have a clean sheet and not let a goal in. I think we did a good job today and I think hats off to Cody [Cropper]. He had a great save during the second half to keep it that way.”

***On his impressions of playing against MLS competition:***

**Smith:** “I think everything we do in practice prepares me. I think my teammates are really good on the ball and what we do in practice, the speed of play helps me definitely in the game.”

***On nearly scoring off a set piece in the first half:***

**Smith:** “Oh my god, I was coming into halftime and was like, “Man!” I felt the ball coming, coming, but unfortunately I didn’t get one today but maybe next time if I get a chance to play.”



***On what positive results does for the team's mindset:***

**Smith:** "Moving forward, you know, I think we've got to continue to do what we do. We know not take a day off and focus on the next opponent. That's really important for us right now."

***On if he ever feels intimidated playing as a rookie:***

**Smith:** "No, not at all. I think our guys – you look at Kei Kamara – he's a great guy. He's a really hard forward to mark against in practice and coming in, I picked a lot playing against Kei. I picked lot playing against Lee [Nguyen] and Juan [Agudelo]. And I must say, our guys prepared me really well to go against those strikers."

**New England Revolution Goalie Cody Cropper**

***On the key to limiting the Houston Dynamo's offensive potential:***

**Cropper:** "I think that we just did well defensively. We defended well for 90 minutes all around. I was connected with the back four. Toni [Delamea] and Josh [Smith] were connected with Andrew [Farrell] and Kelyn [Rowe], and when Je-Vaughn [Watson] came in, and obviously [Xavier] Kouassi and Scotty [Caldwell] play a huge role in that number six position. So I think shutting down their offensive attack was obviously a main point for us this week in training, and we did very well throughout the game in executing that game plan."

***On how they finally achieved their first clean sheet:***

**Cropper:** "Obviously, a huge relief. You know, there's been a lot of pressure on us, with all the new center back signings and defensive signings that we've had, but at the end of the day, we're so new to each other, that learning each other's tendencies and habits has taken us awhile. I think that today that finally showed, that chemistry is building, and hopefully we can continue to take that forward and continue to keep more clean sheets."

***On what was going through his mind when Torres was coming in on net and if he thought the ball would be a long touch:***

**Cropper:** "No, not really. More focused on gaining the correct position. Obviously, long ball over the top, I chose not to come. Some goalkeepers do, and obviously then, just waiting for the right time to either come or stay and make a save off of his shot. So it's basically, you're waiting and trying to make him make the decision, trying not to make the decision easy for him by going down earlier or making his mind up for him."

***On what he has learned about Antonio Delamea in playing behind him and what sort of presence he has:***

**Cropper:** "He's a leader. He demands the best from whoever's playing alongside him, playing in front of him, playing behind him. I think that that obviously carries over. He's obviously led Josh [Smith], who's a rookie. He's played two games now, two of the top teams in the league right now, and has done very well. I think that he's very good with his feet so the way that we play, obviously possession wise, it makes it a lot easier. And it's just continuing to learn those tendencies and those habits of what he's comfortable with, and what we as a triangle or as a goalkeeping unit and back-four unit, are comfortable with, and taking that forward."

**Houston Dynamo Head Coach Wilmer Cabrera**

***On the game overall:***

**Coach Cabrera:** "We had a real opportunity. We had one good shot on goal and we spoke about it. Then second half, we spoke about don't get caught too high. We had seen the bad pass once over to make the difference. Sadly, that was the goal that came in and they scored. By the way, we have the chance. We



have the same situation. We had the opportunity, and sadly for us, we couldn't score with Erick [Torres]. Then, that cross where we have to be better, they took advantage of the rebound that we gave away. It was, to be honest with you, for me, it was a game that was a 0-0 game if we don't make those two mistakes. But anyway, they have those two chances and they...we let it get away. So we got punished for our mistakes. But in some ways we improve some ways, but then we cannot make those mistakes against a team."

***On changes the Revolution made in the second half:***

**Coach Cabrera:** "I think they made the changes when they were ahead. At zeros, that was more comfortable for them. We talked about some changes also to just give a little bit of new pressure, new possibilities up front and tried to just give our new guys the possibilities to answer."

***On Memo Rodriguez's MLS debut and any words from Cabrera:***

**Coach Cabrera:** "Just to enjoy the time right there on the field and just get used to it. Get used to it. It's first time here and first time of his professional career, but enjoy, try to do the simple things. It's a great opportunity to any young player."

**Houston Dynamo Forward Erick Torres**

***On his thoughts on the match:***

**Torres:** "Sad, because of the result. We wanted to get three points on an away game and we couldn't accomplish the objective. However, we need move forward and get ready for next weekend."

***On his one-on-one opportunity against Revolution goalkeeper Cody Cropper:***

**Torres:** "It's a play in which I can't control the ball. It was a clear opportunity, but that's how it goes and I couldn't finish."

***On the performance of New England's defense:***

**Torres:** "They did a good job defensively. We had our challenges. We stopped doing some of the good things we had done before. Anyways, we have to analyze the game, see what we didn't do so that we don't make those mistakes again on the next match."

**Houston Dynamo Midfielder Memo Rodriguez**

***On making his MLS debut:***

**Rodriguez:** "It's all I ever wanted as a kid, to play in a professional game. I think the staff had given me the confidence and opportunity to go out there and get some minutes."

***On debuting for the Dynamo after coming up through the club's academy system:***

**Rodriguez:** "It's a different level out there, you know? You got to be ready at all times. Whenever your name is called, you got to be ready to go and try to perform, but unfortunately we didn't get the result today. So, that's important we didn't get the result but, overall, I'm happy that I got minutes today."

***On what Head Coach Wilmer Cabrera told him before he went in:***

**Rodriguez:** "Be up for it. Go have a good debut and just go out there and fight."

***On what was going through his mind as he walked onto the field:***

**Rodriguez:** "I didn't expect my name to get called up today, but you got to be ready at all times. I was just, it was mind blowing just hearing my name and being ready to get on the field."

**Houston Dynamo Defender Boniek Garcia**



***On playing at right back for the first time this season:***

**Garcia:** “First of all, this was a tough game, especially the second half. The first minutes, we weren’t able to control them. Respecting the position I played, I think it was over a year and half ago that I played there, it was under [head coach] Owen Coyle. It had been a while since I played there, yet we were trying to accommodate ourselves. This time the team needed me there and we were there.”

***On the Revolution’s performance in today’s match:***

**Garcia:** “I think having the wind on their favor helped them out. They always beat us on the long balls. I think, that is where they beat us. Also, they seem to have reinforced more at half field and they beat us there.”