



TRANSCRIPT: Post-Training Media Availability (Oct. 6)

Soundbytes from Asst. Coach Michael Morris & M Matt Polster

Revolution Assistant Coach Michael Morris

On his expectations for Saturday's match against Seattle Sounders FC and coaching against his former club for the first time:

Morris: "We'll start with the expectations. We have a good idea of what we think [Seattle] are going to use in terms of their attacking shape and their defending behaviors. Obviously, I won't hide that it's a unique moment for me. I spent a considerable amount of time with the club, so it's a good moment for me to see some faces that I've seen before, but also, I have a lot of respect for that club. The best level of respect I think I can show, and we can all show, is preparing to compete in a very important, meaningful match against them."

On the process of reintegrating players who were away from the team for international duty:

Morris: "You probably saw we have Dor [Turgeman] and Ilay [Feingold] in [training] right now, and then Tylon [Smith] will be coming in, as well as Peyton [Miller] and Brooklyn [Raines]. We have very close connections with what they're going on and what they're doing with the national teams, so we know what they've been experiencing. We have a good idea of what we're going to do in terms of their physical integration and how we're going to rest and recover them, but also most importantly, prepare them for the upcoming match. I think a lot of it just comes down to be a very clear collaboration and communication with the national teams, which helps a lot."

On the team's mindset ahead of the final month-and-a-half of the regular season:

Morris: "To be honest, I don't think we've ever really looked at it in terms of a month-long stretch. I'm sure we're all subconsciously aware of what's going on, but I think we're purely focused on what we're going to do [against] Seattle this weekend when they come to town."

On the team's success on the defensive end this season:

Morris: "I think a lot of it has to do with, first and foremost, the commitment of the guys and their willingness to defend individually and within small groups. Each opponent will present unique challenges but also opportunities for us to defend against. So, I think again, I'm always going to give the most credit toward the player and their individual commitment, and then their overall togetherness and just desire to defend. I think they have a strong mentality in terms of that overall behavior, which is the differentiator."

On the importance of the gritty and relentless identity that the team has developed:

Morris: "Gritty is one way to put it. I think you could find a lot of different adjectives. Relentless is another good word that we like to use because, regardless of the situation, we just deal with whatever comes against us. There have been moments in the last several games where we have had calls go against us by the referee, and we've immediately responded. Or you can look at the response in the last several minutes of a match. I think it's just that relentless behavior to treat each match not just as, 'Oh, let's start strong or finish strong.' We have to play strong for the duration of the 90 minutes, plus whatever additional time there is."

On the importance of collecting results over the last seven games of the regular season:

Morris: “At this point, we're not really talking about the table and positioning. Every team right now has a pretty compressed schedule, so we're all going into this situation pretty much in a similar circumstance. So, I think it's like we've just had enough time between our last game [at Real Salt Lake on Sept. 26] and Seattle coming up, that we're just purely focused on Seattle and what we're going to do to them when they come to Gillette [Stadium] over the weekend.”

On Peyton Miller's development on the international stage after the making his senior debut with the United States Men's National Team last week at just 18 years old:

Morris: “It's been good, it has been positive steps forward for Peyton [Miller]. I was fortunate enough to work with Peyton for several moments, with the [United States] Under-20s, and then worked with him again with the Under-21 and Under-23 groups that I had. So, he's done a good job of attracting a lot of attention for himself. He still has a long way to go in terms of his defending behaviors and actions. But it's exciting to see the steps that he's taking forward. I think what's more exciting is we believe we can continue to hold him to his highest standard possible because he has a ceiling that we think he's not even close to touching [yet].”

Revolution Midfielder Matt Polster

On the team's mindset ahead of the final seven games of the regular season:

Polster: “We're excited. This is the time of the season that you start looking toward playoffs and fighting for more points. The points start to get a little bit more meaningful, and I think that the games start to get more intense. It's an exciting time of year.”

On the importance of using last weekend's bye week to recharge and recover:

Polster: “I think when you have those moments [without a match on the schedule], you take them. But I think with that, we've worked on a lot of things that maybe we could have done a little bit better in against [Real Salt Lake on Sept. 26]. We've had some things to work on, and I thought we had a really good training today to emphasize those moments.”

On Saturday's matchup with Western Conference side Seattle Sounders FC:

Polster: “It's a really good team. I think they're starting to get their form again and get a lot of guys back from injury. [Seattle is] always a team that makes things difficult. There's good players within that group, and it's a playoff team, so it will be a really good game.”

On the keys to the team's defensive success this season:

Polster: “I think it's a collective thing. At the end of the day, you might look at the back four, [Matt] Turner, and some midfielders, but I think the front group does a really good job of making the play predictable for us and winning the ball in good areas of the field. I think, again, when we do have to defend for long stretches, it takes 11 guys behind the ball sometimes throwing their body on the line. I think that's what we've have – a good culture of defending.”

On the team's chemistry with a mix of veterans and young players:

Polster: “We've been getting, what I've noticed, are 20-year-olds and I'm 33 (laughs). So, it's a good mix. I think the [technical] staff has done a really good job bringing some youth into this team and, with that, just some really good players as well. I think, looking at what Marko [Mitrović] has brought in, he doesn't really look at age, he looks at quality. I think we've brought a lot of quality into this team and we have a great group right now.”

On the key to making a deep postseason run:

Polster: “When you go into a playoff game, it's the same game but I think everybody obviously raises their level a little bit. You need to start from the whistle, you have to start with intensity and a lot of clarity, and you have to know what your identity is in that game. And being patient, I think sometimes you come out of the gates in the playoffs and you get nicked early for a goal. So, just being patient and waiting for your moment. I think we've done really well with that this year.”

On how he would describe the team's identity:

Polster: "When you look at the group, I think we're pretty gritty. Gritty is a good word for us right now. If you take out the RSL game, I think, like you said, we don't give up a ton of goals. I think we're willing to put our bodies on the line for the team and when you also look at our group I think we have a great identity of how we want to play and build from the back. And then also, how to score goals. I think we have great players up top – Carles [Gil], Dor [Turgeman], Luca [Langoni], and guys coming back from injury as well who we will have when we get into playoffs."

On what impresses him about 18-year-old Peyton Miller, who's currently on international duty with the United States Men's National Team:

Polster: "These kids are fearless. Peyton [Miller], he just goes for it. I love it. I think he's found his rhythm and his position. He's a wide forward, someone that likes to attack and run in behind. And very few people can keep up with him, so he uses his strengths really well. But we have a lot of good youth. I think when you look at Brooklyn [Raines], Ethan [Kohler], and Peyton you said, those guys really stepped up this year and helped us win some games."