



TRANSCRIPT: Post-Training Media Availability (Oct. 13)

Soundbytes from Head Marko Mitrović & GK Matt Turner

Revolution Head Coach Marko Mitrović

On how the team's ability to overcome adversity has evolved since the beginning of the season:

Mitrović: "I think at the beginning of the season, as you said, there was kind of like internal adversity, where we were still trying to learn about each other, who we are, and in what direction we wanted to go. I think where we are in the season now, throughout the whole season, there are always different challenges. I think now there is a very high level of urgency and 'survival mode' around the league because everybody's [giving] their last push; for whatever they are pushing for, there is a last push."

"I think that's something that we as a group, together, are in this situation for the first time, but I don't think that our mindset is changed or will be changed. We really have the same approach, and that's something that I greatly appreciate from this group, that they come to work every day and understand that there are challenges ahead of us, and they are ready to face them. Throughout the whole season, you always go through ups and downs. It's like on in one game, and in that game, everything goes on your side. But I believe in this group. I believe in our work. I believe in their mentality, approach, and where we are right now."

On if he leans on veteran players to help prepare younger players for a playoff push at this stage of the regular season:

Mitrović: "We really don't talk about playoffs. I think from who is in this league, we all know what the ultimate goal is for every team to get to playoffs at the end of the season. But we can't change our behavior and our objectives that we have day after day, because there is something ahead of us right now. We have no calculation in our heads and we didn't the whole season."

"If I speak about that high level of urgency or the survival mode, this group had it from the very beginning, and I think that's why we put ourselves in the situation where we are right now. We just have to keep going and being who we are, understanding that there are always going to be challenges. There are going to be good times, there are going to be more difficult times. That's part of our lives. We just have to keep going."

On the factors behind falling behind in the early stages of the last two matches:

Mitrović: "It's actually very interesting what you mentioned. We all felt like that, and I don't know [why]. We're still trying to kind of understand why that is. I don't want to say that we are not humble because this group is humble. I'm saying that because sometimes we're like, 'Okay, we're down 1-0,' but we can sometimes become arrogant on the field. I'm still trying to learn. This team, we built that winning mentality, and no matter who we play and what the stage is, this team wants to win."

"But maybe that comes with experience, that when it's the 65th minute and we are down, 1-0, we have 25 more minutes, plus additional time, to kind of go all in, like in the last two minutes of the game. That's something that we spoke [about], why we have that anxiety, like, 'Oh, we have to change the game,'"

when we still have time to do the right things. I'm not saying we're playing in the 65th minute with no urgency, but maybe [we need] a little bit more composure in those moments."

On helping Peyton Miller stay hungry and focused following his first selection to the United States Men's National Team:

Mitrović: "When things like that happen, that any of our players have certain successes, we are here to celebrate those successes, small or big. But again, we always say that success is behind us and [to focus on] what we have to do in the future, because Peyton [Miller] has to keep doing what brought him to the national team if he wants to stay there. I think he understands that well."

"I can connect with what we just spoke about, our mentality. You have to come here and give your best. Something that I would say, maybe it's myself that is in charge of this group. I don't negotiate that with myself; I have to come here. We all might have limits in our knowledge or talent, but we cannot have limits in our work ethic, our enthusiasm, and coming and giving our best every day. That's something that not just Peyton, but every player that has that success, has to have the same approach next day."

On how impressive it is for Peyton Miller to accomplish all he has this season at 18 years old:

Mitrović: "At the end of the day, because [Miller] does those things now, we're talking about him. And I think having the ability to kind of put yourself in the spotlight, that's something that is not just about Peyton, but it's for every young player. That's how you make the next steps in your career, but you always have to sit back and reflect why that is happening to you. Those who haven't been in his shoes, like, don't know how difficult it is being 18 years old and in certain moments, really helping the team in a really great way. And I appreciate that about Peyton, but as you mentioned there's still a long way to go for Peyton to get where we all want him to be."

On moments where the team can learn:

Mitrović: "I would say if you purely talk about the game after the game, I actually don't like to talk much about the game, but somehow we started with those meetings at the very beginning of the season. And I feel that somehow the group is waiting for me to come in the locker room and say something because I think after the game, we're always emotional. We can be high or low. And then I kind of leave that time after the game for all of us. You can be very high or very low. But the next day, I just know that emotionally when we wake up we have to be very steady. We don't talk about the result and then say, 'Oh, this was great, that's why we won the game or this is why we lost the game.' I strongly believe that every game is a great opportunity to grow, to learn, and to emphasize certain things. They're not necessarily always to learn and grow, but you can kind of get like, 'Okay, this is good what we are doing or things that have to be better.'

"And I know that many times we hear that when you lose, you can learn more. I kind of disagree with that. I think every opportunity is a great opportunity, no matter what is the outcome, to learn something. And what we are trying to do every day here is to kind of always reinforce the right behavior. Like what is the right way to do something? And we go with that, really, day after day. Listen, when you lose two games in a row, it's always a different feeling than if you win two games in a row, don't take me wrong. But I'm not going to change as a person if I win or lose two games in a row. We are who we are. We are the same people as we were two weeks ago, we just have to keep going. I don't think that we have time now to evaluate those two losses or two wins. Just keep going."

On the challenges of playing FC Cincinnati on the road tomorrow:

Mitrović: "They are a team that, just purely watching MLS in the last four or five years, I think they are one of the best teams in the league. I read somewhere that's, the last few years they were actually the team that won most points during the regular seasons combined. Maybe this year they didn't have the results the way they wanted. But I think that over the last several years you can see the consistency of who they are. You can always have one good, or one better, or one not that good season, but it doesn't reflect really within your process. I really think that this team has a strong identity in the way they play."

"They also added some pieces at the very end of the window that helped them to keep going and who they are. They're one very, very difficult team to play against. They're one very physical, very direct team,

a team that scores a lot of goals. They have conceded this year, which was their strength in the past, not conceding the goals. So, I strongly believe that teams like Cincinnati can, in any given moment, find that right mood or, I don't know what's the right word, that 'get back' to really who they are in any given moment. They have a lot of players, that we spoke, with experience in the past in this league. I know that it's going to be very good and great challenge for us."

On how he expects the team to respond after consecutive defeats and his message to the team after last Saturday's loss to Seattle:

Mitrović: "I just said we just have to keep going. I don't know if we sit like this and then we win two games, we talk about how we handle the guys when we win two games, and we usually talk about how we handle guys when we lose the games. I think it's the same process. I really don't see in life doing anything else than to just keep going. Be sure the next day that you give your best. And there are always, challenges. Challenges could be when you win games in a row and now you have to sustain doing that. That's a challenge for itself, again. You always have those challenges. But we are who we are. We're not going to change our approach. And we just have to keep going."

On injury updates to Alhassan Yusuf and Jack Harrison, and if the team has to change the style of play depending on available players:

Mitrović: "We don't have Jack [Harrison] and [Alhassan] Yusuf and we're not going to have them back for a few more weeks. It's kind of like, who is the next man? We are very aware that every player has very different characteristics. When we go into the game and if Luca [Langoni] is playing as a wide forward or someone else, Luca has different characteristics. And we always try to adapt to players' strengths and who they are. We cannot expect that somebody comes and copy-paste what Luca is doing, or Luca is copying and pasting what someone else is doing. We are not going to change ourselves because of certain personalities on the field, but we have to adapt to those players and who they are."

On how he would assess the progress of the group from the beginning of the season until now:

Mitrović: "I think we are on a very good path. I believe that the group knows, in certain moments, how we have to behave and who we have to be. I believe there are games in this season where we clearly showed in what direction we wanted to go. And some of those games we didn't win, some of those games we won. I'll tell you, for example, let's not talk about the wins. The game that we lost against Toronto, that's purely the way we want to play. I think if we go through the amount of games that we had purely about style of play, it's present. Again, different personalities create a little bit of a different dynamic."

"There are games that clearly, we understand who we want to be from the soccer perspective, but then from the mentality perspective, it's also something that last two games, as you mentioned, maybe we rushed after losing 1-0 to kind of do the right things. But I think that this group also has that mentality of never giving up, and even those situations when we rush because they believe we can win every game. So, we just have to keep going because this is also, I'm very aware, a young group of the players and a lot of players are making their first steps. We have a lot of players that are coming from long injuries or haven't been playing for a longer period of the time, and we just have to be patient. I'm patient with these guys. And as I said, for me, the most important thing is how they approach every day. I'm quite positive about identity and the final product on the field in the future."

Revolution Goalkeeper Matt Turner

On how he views his role as a veteran leader on the squad in helping the team push through two consecutive defeats:

Turner: "I think the [last two] games are important reminders. I think both of them kind of took the same shape where we concede a cheap goal early and then as we chase and chase and chase, we open ourselves up to two counter attacks and the results were the exact same. I think we need to learn from our mistakes. If things are to go wrong early in games, we need to trust our plan, trust our process. A 1-0 scoreline in the 85th minute is a lot different than a 3-0 scoreline. At 1-0, you're never out of the game and we've shown that throughout the year that we have that character and that urgency to come back from a goal down. So, trusting the things that we've done this season already, but also with a reminder that this

is the business end of the year. All over the league, guys are playing for contracts, guys are playing for the security of their families, and guys are jockeying for position in the playoffs. This is when we need to make sure that we iron out all the little deficiencies in our game and make sure we take care of every small detail.”

On the factors behind falling in early deficits over the last two games:

Turner: “I think because we want it so badly, the effort is there. We’re really working hard for it, just sometimes you need to work smarter and not harder, I think, when we’re chasing the game and getting pulled out of our shape a little bit. In soccer, it’s hard to break down a low block and when teams are sitting back and score an early goal against us, they’re sitting deeper and deeper in that low block, it’s hard to find the space for us to really play to our strengths. Some of it is naivety. We obviously have to learn not to open the game up against ourselves and just continue to probe and trust the process that we know can work game-in and game-out.

“For us, we have a strong belief within the group. This is probably the first time, and I don’t know if this is correct, but it feels like the first time since the beginning of the season that we’ve lost two games in a row. These were stretched out across two weeks, so it feels a little worse than it actually is. But the scorelines when you’re not scoring and you’re conceding three goals, of course, you have to look at what you’re doing. Luckily for us, we get to go back out on the pitch tomorrow night.”

On the importance of maintaining a strong mindset during the final stretch of the season:

Turner: “It’s extremely important. We’re going to need every single player in our squad to be pulling in the same direction if we want to ultimately get to where we want to go. Words are words. I think the way that we speak is very important, but the actions are even more important. We have to ‘do as I do’ and not ‘do as I say.’ We have to get out there and we have to compete. This is the time of the year where the first tackle, every second ball, or every little mistake is maximized or scrutinized to the most. For us, I think it’s important to not take all that good stuff that we’ve done all season for granted and remember how hard it is to achieve the things that we achieved. Now, really we’ve achieved nothing. We have to keep going. It’s such a ‘What have you done for me lately?’ game.”

On reflections from his first international call-up and if he’s seen added confidence from Brooklyn Raines and Peyton Miller since their return to the Revolution:

Turner: “Of course, it’s great. I was extremely happy for Brooklyn [Raines] and Peyton [Miller]. They’re two very deserving candidates for a call-up. They’ve done really, really well this season and they have extremely bright futures ahead. I think the reminder is always, you’ve gotten the call to national team and you’ve done well, but now when you come back to your club you have to continue that form. You haven’t really made it. You have to just continue to push. We’ve seen that work from Peyton and Brooklyn. They came back obviously happy that they achieved dreams of theirs but also focused and hungry for what’s to come as well. I think that has been really great to see them have that, put their egos aside, and say ‘As great as that was I want more, I want to keep going and working.’ This team needs those guys to be at their best if we’re going to have success down the stretch here.”

On how the team can regain momentum and finish the season strong:

Turner: “We have six games left, I think it’s three away and three at home. Cincinnati is a team that obviously needs results, and we’re going to have to go into a tough place to play. For us, we want results too. We want to play at home in the playoffs. We don’t want to just be a participant, we want to be a contender. For us, we have to prove that we can go into these places – Cincinnati, Orlando, and Philadelphia – and we have to prove that we can compete with Miami and Chicago at home. We probably have one of the most difficult schedules left in MLS, so for us it’s important. We’re playing against playoff teams, and we’re going to have to show our stuff and see what fall soccer is all about.”

On injuries and international call-ups impacting the backline:

Turner: “Of course, Mamadou [Fofana] had played almost every minute this entire season, so you have that familiarity. But we have guys in our locker room that have tons of experience – tons of MLS experience – and the way we train we rotate a lot. There’s a lot of familiarity amongst our group. Of course, for us defensively it hasn’t been good enough. I think we’ve conceded eight goals in our last three

games. So for us, looking at myself in the mirror first, how do I communicate or how do I help my teammates to be organized in the best positions possible to limit chances. Also, the state of the game a little bit in Salt Lake and against Seattle for us, as we were chasing we just opened ourselves up. I think that even Mama was in that game in Salt Lake, and then for this game it was Josh [Wynder].

"For us, we just have to make sure that we are taking care of our X's and O's, taking care of our assignments, and not letting the game become this transitional game where we're chasing or where we're defending. We just have to take care of the small things and I think, really, the goals that sort of derailed us in those last two games were all about mentality and all about going into tackles and losing duels, then the other team scoring a goal off that. Like I said before, the margins are so fine this time of year. And if we want to iron ourselves out defensively, it starts from the front winning duels and then at the back when the game gets more clear and we have more clarity in how we need to defend, because there are no ambiguous moments. We know we're going to win the tackles, we know we're going to win the challenges, and then we know we can defend from back to front."

On what the team can take away from its 6-1 win over FC Cincinnati in March:

Turner: "First of all, in terms of Cincinnati, this is a very experienced MLS team. They are good at home, they're very physical, and it's going to test us massively, especially defensively. They have Kevin Denkey, Evander if he's fit, Tom Barlow, guys that know this league, know how to score in this league, and know how to play. They're at home, and they really need a result so this is going to be a huge test for us. We're going to hopefully get a lot of confidence from it. Especially with the duels, I think the duels are going to be very, very important tomorrow night."

"Obviously, in our game [on March 15], it gave us a lot of confidence early in the season. But 6-1, I think I was pretty busy in that game as well so I don't know if that fully reflected the scoreline. I think we scored on some set pieces, which was great for us, so I expect a cagey affair, back-and-forth, and hopefully it's a fun night for us tomorrow night."

On his individual performance this season and evaluating his growth as a goalkeeper:

Turner: "In terms of myself, I'm not going to reflect right now. I think for me, I've shown that I'm one of the top goalkeepers in this league, very consistently over the last year or however many months. But I'm not here for personal accolades. I want to win things, I want to succeed, and I want the people of New England to be supportive of this team. I want them to see us play and resonate with us, and want to get behind us for this tail-end. I think that's the most important thing to me is how this team does. It's cool that I set a new career high in saves, of course, but also could I do a better job of organizing or could I do a better job of staying off opportunities and communicating? I think I definitely could do better in those areas. I'm always looking for ways to improve. So, for me, it's not time for reflection, it's time to look forward on how we can keep building."