TRANSCRIPT: Match Preview Press Conference (Oct. 27)

Soundbytes from Head Coach Marko Mitrović & M Matt Polster

Revolution Head Coach Marko Mitrović

On preparing for Red Bull New York after the two teams met for the first time back in February:
Mitrović: "I think going into that first game that we played [on Feb. 28], the second game of the season, sometimes it's really difficult to get the final picture about the teams because it's the very beginning of the season. But I want to say about New York Red Bulls is that their certain tendencies and the way they wanted to play that game, they are very consistent through the whole season, and they have a strong identity in the way they want to play in and out of possession. They have a lot of young, talented, energetic players that are playing some of their first seasons. But you cannot see that inexperience in their game because they are very committed and expose that talent. They are a, I would say, very fun team to watch in a very positive way."

On playing the final two matches of the home slate this week and the support the team has received from fans this season:
Mitrović: "At the beginning of the season, maybe we didn't have the attendance that we have right now. I know it was cold weather and everything, and that probably impacted that. I was talking with the team about we have to earn their trust and we have to bring people to the stadium. When they believe in the team, they will show up, that's normal. I think I feel that people, the fans, believe more in our team now and I love to see more and more people coming, game after game. This game, it's really not the same without fans and without support. We are all together for the New England Revolution, with the same ultimate goal for this team to be successful. I really appreciate every single person coming to watch our games and supporting us."

On how much the Revolution have changed since their first meeting with New York, en route to qualifying for the MLS Cup Playoffs:
Mitrović: "Definitely on one side, I don't want to say that we changed because we were on the path to, day-by-day, growing as a team game after game. I think that we just grew as a team. Not that we are different or we changed, we just grew and I think we still have a really long way to go to grow as a team. I said the last several games we played, we played against very good opponents that tasked you in a very different way. They pushed us to our limits in every single action on the field and in different ways. I think the game against Red Bull New York tomorrow will be the same.

"Am I satisfied? I don't think we have that. Written [in big letters] on our walls here, we have a big message which we say we are never satisfied. We can have moments of happiness when things are right, or moments of sadness when things are wrong. Not connecting with just the outcome, winning or losing, there are other actions on a daily basis that we do. Sometimes we might not be the happiest or happy with something. But being satisfied puts you in 'sleepy mode,' so we don't want to create a satisfied mindset."

On the chemistry the team has built and how it helps lead to success:
Mitrović: "I think, if you really go and I believe you guys have this recorded somewhere when I was talking at the beginning of the season, my reflection on the preseason was that we have a really great

group of people, not just the players but the whole staff and support staff. I love coming here and enjoy working with the people here every day.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm around the building, and it just gives you energy and raises the level of your energy every day. If we transfer that to our players, our players are a very hard-working, humble group, and that's the foundation of who we are. That was there in the preseason, that was there maybe at the beginning of the season. Results-wise, we can say we struggled and maybe later when we got better results, the guys and everybody in this building would come every day, humble, and ready to work. We just move forward. Everything behind us is past experience. What we have to aim for is what's coming in front of us."

On the importance of dictating the match tempo when playing against Red Bull New York:
Mitrović: "I think it's every team that plays against opponents that have similar styles like Red Bull – try to avoid that trap that you get into the game that Red Bull wants to play. It's easy to say we have to take the game in our control and not play their way because they are so strong in what they are doing that you really have to compose yourself and impose yourself to be in situations that you can have the game on your side. That's going to be our tendency [on Wednesday]. I know that that task is not easy, but on the other side I know we have a group of guys that is ready to confront that and ready for that challenge."

On availability updates for forward Leo Campana, winger Jack Harrison, and midfielder Alhassan Yusuf with three games remaining in the regular season:
Mitrović: "For us, every player is important. Every player that we have in our squad is important for us. Unfortunately, we have those injured players. It's not that we don't want to talk [about] them, but not having players with an injury with the team and then to talk about them, for me that's kind of 'excusant.' I suffer with them because I know how much they suffer being off the field. On the other side, we have players that are available and we believe in them.

"In terms of some updates on injuries, [Alhassan] Yusuf is in a very good spot and he's back into the full team training. Because of the long absence that he had, we are not rushing and hopefully in the last couple of games, he'll be available to be on the roster for the team. Good thing we now have Mamadou [Fofana] back. Leo [Campana] and Jack [Harrison], I've said many times with Leo's injury it is very, very sensitive and tricky. It can be like it's not a long-term injury, but it becomes a long-term injury. Then Jack is on a very good trajectory, but we have to know that his injury was a very difficult injury that needs a long time for recovery. Hopefully, somewhere during the [November] FIFA window we will have Jack back in full training with the team."

<u>Revolution Midfielder Matt Polster</u>

On the support from the fans its importance heading into the final two home games of the regular season this week:
Polster: "I think when you look at the course of the season, it's a long season, and I feel like every game that we've had at home, the fans have always showed up for us. Recently, I feel like it's just been louder and a bigger crowd each and every time. So, I expect more of the same, hopefully come Wednesday [against Red Bull New York]. I know Sunday [against Inter Miami CF] will probably be a big one as well. So, we want to finish on a high note. We want to win as many games as we can to finish the season."

On longtime defender Andrew Farrell announcing his retirement with a ceremony yesterday:
Polster: "It's been absolutely emotional. But it's someone that I think we can all agree that should receive those kinds of flowers, and that kind of recognition and praise, because of what he's done for the club and for the community. So, I'm really happy and sad to have that moment. There's a moment of sadness, but excitement still that he's obviously still going to be around in a different role. He'll still be around us and be a part of this group, this team, and this organization. It's meaningful that they found a way to keep him here, which is amazing."

On his tenure with the Revolution and the opportunity to make a deep postseason run:

Polster: “It's definitely something I want to do. I know that's something a lot of the guys in the group and everybody in the staff wants to do. But it's one step at a time. We have Red Bull next [on Wednesday] and Miami on the weekend. But then from there, obviously, once you get to playoffs, anything can happen. You have to look at what your opponent will be at the moment. We're still fighting for spots in the table, so that can determine who we will have [in the postseason]. But again, I think it really comes down to what's in front of us, and that's Red Bull on Wednesday.”

On the biggest difference in the team this season under Marko Mitrović:
Polster: “I had [Mitrović] a little bit with Chicago [Fire FC] and obviously he was in a different role as an assistant, but he just brings that level of intensity. I think he's brought guys in that know his system, and then he just holds a standard, and he doesn't let anybody fall below that standard regardless if it's a veteran player, if it's an 18-year-old or 17-year-old kid. So, I think he's shifted the culture in a really positive manner, but then also the style of play, the recruitment he's done. I think those are all small factors that now you can see what he's trying to accomplish with our group, and that's come to fruition so far.”

On if he anticipated the team being near the top of the Eastern Conference standings by season’s end:
Polster: “I don't think you can start the season and say, ‘By the look of it, we should be a top team.’ I think you look at preseason, and how that progresses. Look, we started the first two games of the season, we lost both of them. Maybe in that moment, you're thinking maybe we're not. But it's just a phase of a season and then it's the consistency as well. I think we've been, over the course of the season, very consistent. We might have started slow, but in the middle half of the season, we were fantastic. We've always had guys step up. But regardless of who's in the Starting XI, we find ways to win, which creates a really good culture and a team atmosphere.”

On whether he has any personal stories about Andrew Farrell and his qualities off the field:
Polster: “I don't know if I can give you a story that people don't know, but I just think the person [Farrell] is, and I know we keep talking about it, he's so selfless. He always finds a way to make time for you, for me, for my family. He always comes by and he hangs out with the kids sometimes. He's just so loving and friendly. Again, I think I've said it before, he's just more than a teammate. He's really a family member at this point. So, it's not really a story, but it's just who he is, and I'm not going to get emotional, so I'm going to cut it there (*laughs*).”

On what stands out about Red Bull New York:
Polster: “I think under [Head Coach] Michael Bradley, we looked at quite a bit of their film and they're just very aggressive in the way they press and the tempo they play at. It's a typical Red Bull team that I've seen in the past. When you come up against these guys, it's a very intense game. So, we have to match their energy and even raise it at times. They're fighting for a playoff spot, they're trying to get in, and we're trying to get as high up the table as we can.”

On how he can control the tempo in the midfield against Red Bull:
Polster: “Like I said, I think they press with intensity. But with that intensity, if you're composed on the ball, you can control the rhythm and it kind of slows their press down and then impose yourself. It comes down to winning duels at times in one-v-one battles or winning 50-50 balls. That will help tilt the game in our favor.”