

POSTGAME QUOTES: Nov. 7 at Orlando City SC

Soundbytes from Head Coach Marko Mitrović & M Matt Polster

Revolution Head Coach Marko Mitrović

On his takeaways from Saturday's 1-0 loss at Orlando City SC:
Mitrović: "In general, I felt we had control of the game in the first half, and then that [Orlando goal] kind of decided the game at the end of the day. In the second half, they had some transitional moments, but we did some good things. We just couldn't find more clarity in the attacking third to create more goal-scoring situations. But listen, we can say that one detail changed the game, and where we are going now, after the regular season is done, there's going to be games [decided in] details. It's great for us to learn that we have to control every possible situation that we can."

On how the team will approach the next two weeks before the postseason begins:
Mitrović: "First, we have a couple of days off, and it's important for our guys to recover. It was interesting last week, because we kind of felt that there were, in the last couple of weeks, small injuries that guys started to pick up. There is a lot of fatigue in some guys that just play through the whole season and through every international window. For us, it's very important to recover our guys, first physically and emotionally, and go into the [playoff] games against Philadelphia. It's going to be a great competitive matchup in the playoffs.

"Obviously, we have a lot of international guys. I think [about] 10 guys are going to be away, and we're going to closely monitor their games, their performances, and hopefully we'll get all of them healthy and ready for the playoffs."

On the decision to deploy multiple substitutes in the second half with the opportunity to secure the No. 2 seed in the East with a win:
Mitrović: "I think having all the players available for the playoffs, for us, is more important than what position we're going to have. As I said, the last couple of weeks, we started to pick up small injuries, and we just didn't want to take any extra risk with Ethan [Kohler], Josh [Wynder], Carles [Gil], and Dor [Turgeman]. Also, with some of the guys that also accumulated a lot of minutes, like Matt Polster recently, and we have that small injury that Peyton [Miller] picked up. So, on one side, you want to compete, but then you don't want to go in the playoffs now and be so vulnerable because of the injuries."

On defender/winger Peyton Miller's status after missing today's match:
Mitrović: "There is no setback. We strongly believe that [Miller] will be ready for the first game."

On whether he has settled on a center back pairing heading into the playoffs:
Mitrović: "I think some things will happen organically. For the majority of the season, we have spoken about that. Ethan [Kohler] and Mamadou [Fofana] played together, and then Mamadou picked up an injury in a time where Josh [Wynder] came and joined the team. Then we finished the last seven or eight games with Ethan and Josh. It's great that the three of them hopefully are going to be available, and then it's up to the game circumstance to decide who's going to play.

“We had that situation last game where Ethan had to leave the field because he felt pain in his adductor, and then Josh picked up some soleus injuries, so we had to manage their minutes, and it was a great opportunity for Mamadou, after a long time, to get 90 minutes because we believe he's ready to play 90 minutes. Now, it’s how we can put all of them in the best spot that the three of them are available for the playoffs. And if they are all available, then it's up to us to make a decision game-by-game with what the best strategy for us is.”

On whether playoff success depends more on keeping the same identity or adapting to individual opponents:
Mitrović: “I think both. I think it's actually a great question because you cannot give up on who you are and thinking that in one or two games, you can be someone else. But also, we have to be very aware that particularly, Philadelphia, as our first opponent, has their strengths and things that they are really great at doing, and if you ignore those things, you can be punished. So, we have to have the right balance between who we are and then adapting to the opponent. Which I think we did throughout the whole season, because we tried to grow as a team, but then we always know that there is a different team that has different qualities and challenges in a very different way.”

On defender Ilay Feingold’s continued progression since returning from injury and his ability to be involved in the attack:
Mitrović: “We're happy that Ilay [Feingold] can play 90 minutes. After a long time, he got those consecutive games. I don't know what his situation is going to be and how many minutes he'll get with the [Israel Men’s] National Team, but we felt that we had the opportunity today to give him a longer game that can set him in a good spot for the playoffs.

“I still believe that [Ilay] can raise his level of performances, but also it's step by step, and he has another two weeks ahead of him to keep developing his form.”

<u>Revolution Midfielder Matt Polster</u>

On his takeaways from today's 1-0 loss at Orlando City SC:
Polster: “It’s kind of a playoff atmosphere. Last game of the season, Orlando’s pushing for a win, obviously, and so are we. I thought there were really good moments of the game. There were a few moments where we can improve on. But for the most part, if we’re a little bit cleaner in the final third, I think we find solutions and come away with a better result.”

On the team’s mentality as the postseason begins in two weeks:
Polster: “It’s good. I think we have time to shift focus now, reset. All the effort that we’ve put into the season, now we want to put that into the playoffs. So, for us, now it’s a little bit of a reset, but know that all the effort we put in for 10 months now, we need to focus and put that into playoffs.”

On how the team will stay sharp over the next two weeks before opening the postseason:
Polster: “I’m sure the coaching staff has a plan for that. It’s nice to have somewhat of a small break to let the body rest for a second and then get back into the swing of things. When that first playoff game comes, I’m sure the coaching staff is going to have us ready for that moment.”

On what the team could have done better in the attacking end:
Polster: “I thought we were a little more patient in the second half. Obviously, I think that’s because Orlando was protecting a lead. But I think if we would have been that level of patient when it was 0-0 in the first half, I think we would’ve found better spaces and pockets to break them down in the final third. Orlando’s a good team, they have good players and they worked really hard for that win, and they got it. But I think in the end, when it’s 0-0, if we push the way we pushed in the last 30 minutes of the second half, we find solutions early on in that game.”

On central defenders Mamadou Fofana, Josh Wynder, and Ethan Kohler, and what they each bring to the team:
Polster: “I think they all have really good profiles for us. Mamadou [Fofana] has a lot of experience, being the older player. With Ethan [Kohler] and Josh [Wynder], they’re both, for their age, very mature players on the field. They know how to be composed on the ball and break pressure. They don’t seem phased in the moment. So, I think we have really good options at center back. I think whoever plays there will be able to do the job for us. I know when it comes playoff time, everyone’s going to be ready, all three of them.”

On defender Ilay Feingold’s ability to add another dimension to New England’s attack:
Polster: “Ilay [Feingold] is a really good player. I think he’s very attack-minded, that can really help us. Tonight, I think he provided some really good service but we could’ve been a little more patient, like I said. But overall, I think he does provide that in the final third. When he’s on, he’s able to beat players one-on-one and get into the spots where he makes it uncomfortable for the defense. When he’s feeling really good and he’s on the front foot, he’s able to break pressure for us, get into the final third and go one-v-one to beat players.”