

TRANSCRIPT: Match Preview Press Conference (Nov. 19)

Soundbytes from Head Coach Marko Mitrović & M Carles Gil

Revolution Head Coach Marko Mitrović

On midfielder Carles Gil's importance to the team and his status ahead of Saturday's playoff match against the Philadelphia Union:
Mitrović: "We all know how important Carles [Gil] is for us, and we just made the decision to not [put] him on the field today. It's a regular thing, so he'll be available [for Saturday]."

On his expectations for Saturday's playoff match after defeating Philadelphia twice in the regular season:
Mitrović: "I [expect] kind of the same match that we had against [Philadelphia] in the previous two games that we played against them. Obviously, maybe some players that haven't been available in the first game we played against them [on May 9] and then the second game when we played them [on Oct. 24] – It wasn't the same [Starting XI]. Even though they have a very strong identity and the way they behave on the field, both in and out of possession, obviously different players bring different dynamics. I think there were a couple of guys that we expect on Saturday will play, that didn't play maybe in the last game or the first game. But they are who they are. They are the same team, and I expect very similar games as we had during the season."

On the energy in training from the players as they prepare for the postseason:
Mitrović: "It's the same as the previous 10 months. We just come here, do our best day after day, and that's what they are doing."

On New England looking for its first postseason win at home since 2020:
Mitrović: "It's always better to win. I didn't know about that record to be honest and that's something where this club has history like everyone else, and we are honored to represent this club. Also, this group has our own dynamic, our own history and record, and everything. So, what is in the past, we have massive respect toward that, but we have the present moment, and we are very focused on the present moment. In our games, it's always better to win, no matter if you play home or away. So, that's what we are going to try to do on Saturday."

On whether the team has tailored its preparation for the playoffs given the higher stakes of postseason play:
Mitrović: "I understand that perspective and it's very different in terms of when you play the [regular] season, you have the first game of the season, and if the outcome is not there, you still have 33 games to fix it. So, the amount of opportunities that you have to get somewhere, you obviously can't compare with the knockout games. But on the other side, I'm very aware that players know the rules and what's going on, and how this round plays. I don't think it's something that we have to talk with them about. I also think that we have the belief in this building that we just have to be who we are, and do what we do every day, without changing something now in our approach or comparing it with what we have done so far this season.

“As I said, I'm very aware that it’s different, maybe you can say it's higher stakes. I get it. But it's different because in these games, there’s no three points or one point, its knockout stages, but our approach is just the same. [The postseason] was so far, and I think this team played with a high level of urgency from the very beginning. We kind of built that survival mode from the very beginning of the season. I don't think that we had that luxury where we could kind of take a break and slow down in any given moment this year. I think when you come to those knockout stage games, that's what you have to do. You have no time to slow down, you have no time to not maximize every single action on the field. That's what we are doing so far, and we're going to keep doing the same things.”

On whether he has seen specific moments that reflect the team's growth since the beginning of the season:
Mitrović: “I have, several. Starting with the preseason, probably when we played the game against CF Montreal, and we were down 2-0 in the first 20-25 minutes. For me, that was a great learning opportunity to see how we behave when things don't go well, and this group is much better than what happened in that moment. I think later we showed that. So, that's kind of me understanding and learning because I was just very new with this team.

“There were a few games during the season where we kind of showed it's not just mentality in terms of, ‘Now we’re losing and winning the game,’ or 'It's a clean sheet.' Let’s just say the game, for example, against Chicago Fire away [on Sept. 13], where we played four games on the road and traveled across the country back and forth, and had injuries at that moment. I think for anyone on our team in that moment, it was very easy to find a reason not to succeed. But what I learned about this group, and then comparing to that game against Montreal, is that this group is not looking for excuses. This group is looking for ways to win and they are ready to do everything to win the games. So, those are a few moments from the very beginning, preseason, that it was crucial for me to understand who we are as a team.”

On forward/winger Jack Harrison back in full training and potentially being available for Saturday's match:
Mitrović: “We are really happy about [Jack Harrison]. He is now almost two weeks training in full. Obviously, we know that Jack didn't play a game for 10 weeks and maybe even more. We don’t think that he's going to step on the field and just play 90 minutes at the highest level. Every player that comes back [from injury] after a long time needs time, but we are actually very happy. Also, with his physical level, Jack is an amazing professional. I have to praise that because the way he behaves day after day, not just for himself but for our group, he's a great role model. He’s in a situation that even after such a long break with injury, he's very fit and in a very good stage. Jack is also someone who has a lot of experience that no matter [how many] minutes he's going to get, we strongly believe he can perform. It’s great to have Jack back with us.”

On Philadelphia announcing that goalkeeper is out for Saturday's match:
Mitrović: “I actually just learned about that [regarding] Andre Blake. I don't know if that's official or not. Listen, we just spoke about Philadelphia. They have a strong identity. Obviously, within that identity, every player creates a dynamic, and we know how great Blake has been in not just this season, but in the last 10 years for that club, proving that he's one of the best goalkeepers in the league.

"But I know that they also have good goalkeepers in their pool. So, I don't think that they're going to change something drastically now because Andre is not playing. Having played two games and having had two good, positive results against them [in the regular season], I don't think it matters much going into this game. This is a very different world now, and I don't think either of us are saying, ‘Oh, we won these two games,’ or ‘We lost two games.’ I think it's a very new book, a very new page, and a very new battle.”

On his thoughts on the best-of-three Round One series format in the MLS Cup Playoffs:
Mitrović: “The format is the same for us as it is for every other team. It's present to us. We knew before the season what goes on after the season for the teams that qualify for the playoffs, and we're just preparing for the circumstances that we are going to have.”

On if the team is peaking at the right time before the start of playoffs:
Mitrović: “I don't know. It's easy to say, but it's not easy to do. But, there are so many things that can impact one game. We are in a good spot in terms of having almost every player back from injury. Also, having that survival and urgent mindset throughout the whole season, I feel we are going into a game like that, and the team is ready to do that. Are we in our peak form? I think we'll see once the season is over.”

Revolution Midfielder Carles Gil

On his excitement as New England returns to the MLS Cup Playoffs:
Gil: “We are in an important moment. I think we arrive to the playoffs in the right way, after a very good regular season. Now it’s the big moments coming. We have been waiting, this club, since 2023, our last playoffs. So, we’re very excited.”

On how he feels the Revolution will match up against Philadelphia:
Gil: “I feel like we’re ready for everything because we know what to do in every moment. Every team is different. We played two times against Philly, and a month ago we played there. We know what to do to beat them. We have a clear plan. Obviously, coming from Marko [Mitrović] and his staff, they prepare for every game in the best way. We have a clear idea of what to do. When you are a team that has a clear identity and knows what to do in every moment, you feel very confident.”

On what makes the postseason different from the regular season:
Gil: “It’s playoffs, so it’s a little different than the regular season. The emotions, everything. Obviously, this first round you need to win two games. The first game at home is very important. I feel that we are ready.”

On his confidence in the team heading into the postseason:
Gil: “It’s like I said, the way we prepare for the games. Every team we face is different. During the week, we prepare in the best way to win the game. We played against them one month ago. We know exactly what type of team they are- what they do, what they don’t like to do. If you ask every player, he knows perfectly the plan for Saturday and that makes me very confident.”

On the importance of winning the first game of the best-of-three in Round One:
Gil: “For me it’s very important, because, obviously, if you win the first then you have two more opportunities to win the series. If you lose, to play away in Philly is going to be very hard. But we’re going to take it one at a time. We’re going to have our fans with us. We showed that we are very strong at home in the regular season. We want to continue like this. For sure, we’re going to be a team who wants to have the ball, to attack them. Hopefully we can win the first one and go to Philly to close.”

On if he feels the team is at its highest level ahead of the playoffs:
Gil: “Yes, I think so. We’re arriving in a very good moment, with almost our full team ready. I think the last two months, we’ve had very good moments. One of them was against Philly, playing there. I feel the team is in a very good point.”

On how he feels physically and his availability for Saturday:
Gil: “I had, last week, some issues but I’m feeling better. Tomorrow, I will train with the team and I will be ready for Saturday.”

On Philadelphia announcing that goalkeeper Andre Blake is out for Saturday’s match:
Gil: “Obviously, Andre Blake is a very important player for them. Not just on the field, but he’s their captain and an experienced goalkeeper in the league. For sure, it’s something that we’re going to talk [about]. It’s not an easy position for a guy that normally isn’t playing. I don’t know if it’s going to be his first game. To play in playoffs, away, it’s not going to be easy for him. We will try to do something where he won’t feel comfortable.”

On forward/winger Jack Harrison back in full training and potentially being available for Saturday’s match:

Gil: “It’s very important that [Harrison] is healthy and he’s back. We missed him in the last three, four months. He showed his quality in the games he played with us. He’s someone who helped the team a lot, with the ball and without the ball. He worked very hard. To have him back is very good news for us. I see him very good in training after three, four months. I’m very happy with that.”

On how the team is preparing for Saturday’s match:
(Translated from Spanish)
Gil: “Good, like we’ve prepared during the regular season. We know there are more emotions in playoffs. But we’re doing well. We’ve trained well during the week, and we’re excited for the game.”

On the two meetings with Philadelphia during the regular season, both 2-1 wins for the Revolution:
(Translated from Spanish)
Gil: “The game we played at home [on May 9] was months ago. They’re a different team, with different dynamics. Philly always keeps a similar style of play. Philly is a team that’s very aggressive, they like to press, they like the second ball. I don’t think anything they do will surprise us, but they have a clear identity and if you’re not at your highest level they will take advantage.”

On what he would say to his teammates ahead of Saturday’s match:
(Translated from Spanish)
Gil: “I think there isn’t much we need to change. We need to maintain our sense of calmness. These types of games can be emotional. But we’re calm. We know this is an important moment that’s coming but we need to stay on the same path. We’ve trained well during the week. The guys that were on international duty are coming back. I think we’re ready for the match on Saturday.”

On the importance of keeping the right mentality in postseason games:
(Translated from Spanish)
Gil: “I think the emotions can sometimes try to make you do things that you normally would not do. You have to try to control those emotions. We’re a team that maintains a clear plan. We worked on that during the week. We need to focus on that, on what we’ve worked on during the week with Marko [Mitrović], be ourselves, and I’m sure things will go well.”