



The Timbers Army in Providence Park stands to cheer on their team playing against the Columbus Crew on Sunday, March 6.

# TIMBERS REPEAT WIN IN SEASON OPENER

photos by James Harley



During the season opener, Dairon Asprilla fights Columbus player Tony Tchani for ball possession.

BY KATIE ARCHER

Before the 2016 Major League Soccer season started, the Portland Timbers unveiled their MLS championship banner.

On Sunday, March 6, the Portland Timbers opened their MLS season against Columbus Crew. For the third time in a row, the Timbers defeated the Crew 2-1.

When the game started, the Crew's goalkeeper Steve Clark had his back to the Timbers Army as they chanted "27 seconds." The time it took for Diego Valeri to score in the MLS championship game. Head coach Caleb Porter thought his team started the game very maturely and responded excellently to the Crew's goal by Federico Higuain.

Higuain was probably the most dangerous player of the game, according to Porter.

"I thought it was a really good game," said Porter. "The only thing I think we need to do better was finish off some counter attacks we had. I thought we were lethal all game long."

In the first half, Dairon Asprilla and Valeri were leading the attacks and both had multiple missed opportunities, including an offside call on Valeri which took away a goal. Before the clock struck 23 minutes, Valeri scored the first goal.

The Crew brought on their attacks and Liam Ridgewell, Nat Borchers and Adam Kwarasey shut out the attacks during the first half. During the second

half, Higuain ended the shut out with a bicycle kick goal.

"We obviously wanted to get the shutout, but I thought that they created some very good chances and Higuain did a great job with the finish in their goal," said Borchers. "Happy with how we respond though, I felt like we did a good job of counter attacking them."

Fanendo Adi scored the Timbers winning goal.

"It was a very important game for us. First one after the MLS trophy," said Valeri. "In the end we got three very important three points."

According to Ridgewell, after last season, there's going to be more pressure on the Timbers to do well this season and starting off with a win helps. He also said the mentality of the team is different this year.

"Winning your first game is huge. You're always struggling for your first win if you don't win your first one," said Ridgewell.

Porter is looking forward to the season with his players and knows there will be ups and downs during the season. If the team plays the way they did Sunday, Porter said there will be more ups than downs.

"We showed today how hungry we are. We showed today we picked up right where we left off," said Porter. "I'm confident we can continue to go another level."