

Timbers come out tied

STORY AND PHOTO BY JONATHAN VILLAGOMEZ
PHOTO EDITOR

The drums beat, the trumpets blare and the stadium roars as the the Timbers' Army starts to warm up. The Portland Timbers faced LA Galaxy once again after a 2-1 loss back in March.

The Timbers had a rough start to the season beginning with five away matches due to construction in Providence Park. They lost three and tied two of the total five games. Though clearly struggling as a team, external influences affected their gameplay as well.

Last year, Head Coach Caleb Porter announced that he would be departing from the Timbers. Porter lead the Timbers to win the 2015 MLS cup where they beat Columbus Crew 2-1 giving the Timbers their first major trophy. Soon after their victory, Giovanni Savarese took over as the Timbers' new head coach. Being on the road took a toll on the team and it wasn't until they

came back to the Rose City where they settled back in.

Saturday's match against LA Galaxy was a big one. Currently on their way to win the most consecutive wins, the current record is held by Sporting Kansas City with seven consecutive wins. The record hasn't been broken since 2012; Timbers are currently at six consecutive wins tied with Orlando City SC.

Fans eagerly awaited the team's win. Both teams started strong: The Timbers had an early chance when midfielder Andres Flores seemed to be going all in but was easily saved by Galaxy's goalie David Bingham.

LA Galaxy was quick to respond, putting pressure on the Timbers. Midfielder Chris Pontius received a pass from midfielder Emmanuel Boateng and was able to put it in the goal giving LA Galaxy an early 1-0 lead in the 19th minute.

The Timbers had many opportunities to score but Bingham was able to block all the shots. It wasn't until the 55th minute where the ref called a penalty on defender Jørgen Skjelvik for the Timbers giving them a chance to tie up the heated game. Midfielder Diego Valeri came up front to kick the penalty shot.

"I was very secure of where I wanted to kick it. I saw the keeper until the last moment and I tried to put the ball in the net," said Valeri, reflecting on his penalty shot that tied the game 1-1.

By the second half, it was clear that both teams were struggling to communicate and keep up with the ball due to the heat.

"To be honest, the time of the game is not the best. It has to be a little bit later on these kind of hot days or even sooner like in the morning," Valeri said.

The final score was 1-1 ending the Timbers six game streak in a difficult

game for the club.

"I think overall in the first half we got a little stretched out too much," said defender Zalek Valentine. "When we picked our moments great, we got to move our team up the field and were in a better spot to win the ball back and when we didn't, we were stretched out and we got really open and that's how they scored their first goal."

"It didn't have the fluidity that we wanted. Credit to them as well," said Timbers' Head Coach Gio Savarese, reflecting on the match. "It just became a very difficult match. For me, the most important part was that we were able to come back and get a point."

Although they lost their six-game win streak, they are still standing with seven games unbeaten (6-3-3.)

The Timbers are set to face San Jose today at 7:30 p.m. at Providence Park for the fourth round of the U.S. Open Cup.

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