

PDX WELCOMES HOME

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JONATHAN VILLAGOMEZ

PHOTO EDITOR

25,218. This was the attendance number for the first home game for the Portland Timbers at the newly renovated Providence Park. The Portland Timbers had a long streak of away games to kick-off the 2019 season having played 12 away matches before finally arriving back in the Rose City for their home opener against the Los Angeles Galaxy.

Thousands of fans gathered hours before kickoff to secure a spot in line. One Timbers Army couple was even married outside the stadium before the first whistle blew in the historic day for Providence Park.

It was clear from the beginning that the Timbers Army was going to make sure that the visiting team knew that they were ready for a fight.

Walking into the stadium for the first home match of the year is something that many people wait for each season. The new addition to the stadium added 4,000 seats. This resulted in a giant wall of screaming soccer fans who brought in even more energy into the stadium.

"You can feel the difference of those extra 4,000 and not only because they're loud, but the presence," said Timbers head coach Giovanni Savarese. "The building that feels like it's on top of you. It's fantastic. At the end of the day we have unbelievable fans. The support was incredible today."

Early in the 6th minute, goalkeeper Jeff Attinella misread a player and the ball was quickly recovered and scored by Los Angeles attacker Carlos Vela. The goal was Vela's 16th and gave the Galaxy a 1-0 lead.

"That one's on me. That one's clearly me on me," Timbers goalkeeper Jeff Attinella said. "I obviously saw Jorge coming from the corner of my eye. I obviously didn't hit the right pass and when you're a goalie and you make a pass like that and you make a mistake, you get punished."

The Galaxy would score again in the 34th minute thanks to Diego Rossi making it 2-0. The Timbers struggled defensively as they had moments where they would go push their offense but struggled being able to execute any plays.

Going into the second half trailing 2-0, Portland showed they weren't going down without a fight. Fresh into the 46th minute Cristhian Paredes scored to tighten the match at 2-1 and gave the Timbers fans hope that they still had a chance to win.

In the 54th minute, the Galaxy answered once again scoring for the third time Saturday night this time by Latif Blessing. Widening the margin to 3-1.

"We had 2 or 3 clear chances in the second half and then with their third goal it was difficult for us but we kept pushing," said team captain Diego Valeri.

Newly-acquired forward

Brian Fernandez helped give the Timbers the push they needed to get back into the game. Early the 84th minute, Fernandez scored a shocker of a goal to narrow the margin at 3-2. Jeremy Ebobisse assisted on Fernandez's goal which he scored on a bicycle kick that Pele would have been proud of.

It was a very physical match. Towards the end of the game things got really heated. A feud broke out eating much of the eight minutes that were added up. This resulted in one yellow card given to each team.

As the clock marched on the ninetieth minute it became clear that the 3-2 in favor of the Galaxy was going to leave the home fans with a sour taste in their mouth.

This was not the outcome that Timbers fans wanted to see. Especially on their home opener.

"It's two teams that want to win and credit to them that they fought through it and tried to win and at the end they got the result. But also we wanted to play for our fans and give everything that we had," said Savarese

Despite losing the first home match of the season, many fans of Timbers Army were happy to come to welcome their boys back home with a sold out crowd.

"It was a good game, a good performance but not the result we wanted. So we have to keep going," Valeri said.



The new renovations at Providence Park add 4,000 more seats.

