

Major League Soccer Media Conference

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Artur Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for joining today, Artur. Kick us off with opening remarks.

ARTUR: Yeah, it's just a very exciting moment to host the MLS Final Cup in here, being able to see all the hard work we put throughout the year. It's been a hard season for everybody. I think the whole team is very excited. Just very happy to play. We're going to do our best to be champions.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. What do you think your game has to do exactly to win the MLS Cup?

ARTUR: What we seen, they're a very good team. We could also see in the past seasons. First of all, I think we got to defend well the dangerous players, Lodeiro, Ruidiaz, Morris. Also we got to play our game. We got to be good with the ball, we got to keep the ball well, just play our game.

I think we play our game the exact way we want to play, we're going to be fine. If we defend well and we keep the ball, I think those are the key things to win the game against them.

Q. Your relationship with Darlington Nagbe, what has he brought to the team that been so valuable? What is it like playing with him? What has he brought that's different from the other midfielders you've worked with before?

ARTUR: Man, Darlington is amazing guy. I'm very happy to have the experience to play with him this year. I think he brought so much. What we seen, he's a winning guy. He won with Portland, Atlanta.

Been liking with him so much this year, like the way he plays, the experience he has. It will just be an amazing experience for everybody here.

He's amazing guy. Inside the field we talk well. We help each other. I think we add so much for each other's game, like the combination to keep the ball, defending, everything, the movement, I think it's a very good combination. Very happy to be playing with him.

I think I help his game. He help my game. Man, he's amazing player, amazing guy. Just very exciting to see how the season's going to end now.

Q. You are playing against a Brazilian counterpart in João Paulo. What is it like to be able to share the field with him? Talk about what the midfield has to do against a really tough Sounders team.

ARTUR: It's really nice to have another Brazilian, to play against him. I watched him when he plays in Brazil. He's a little older than me. I was in the academy, I could watch him.

It's going to be a tough game. They have a very good team, very good midfield also with him and Roldan and Lodeiro. I think we got to work hard, but also we have a very good midfield. I think it's going to be a good battle.

I think that's going to be a key moment in the game: whoever wins the battle in the midfield will have an advantage. I think we're going to be ready for them.

Q. You played with Josh Williams now for a few years. This year he seemed to take a step up after Vito got hurt. What have you seen out of him this year that's kind of taken his game to another level?

ARTUR: I think this guy, it's a very, very good teammate. His patience, whenever he wasn't playing, he kept to always working so hard. I don't think it is a surprise because, like, his patience whenever he wasn't playing, the amount of work he put in in the training ground, trying to support whoever was playing. It's not a surprise the moment he's having now.

I just very happy for him, very happy for the whole group. It's been a while we're being teammates. I know him well. It's not a surprise. He works hard for these moments. I'm very happy for him, so...

Q. This team has gotten to the MLS Cup just the

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second year of new coach, new ownership. For the guys like yourself that were here before Caleb, for the team in general, what are some key areas that you think has led to the evolution of this team, guys like yourself who were here before Caleb?

ARTUR: I think one of the things is some of the other players we brought here, Darlington, Lucas, I think also the improvement Pedro has had in his game was a very important thing for us.

Man, I think the mentality changed a lot. Also with the new ownership and everything, like they do so much for the club. I think everybody feels a little bit more comfortable, like, having a certain future. The club is staying, everything.

I think it's just a mix of everything. Everybody, like, bought what the coach staff was saying. Everybody believed we could be here right now. We worked hard for this. The whole group was together in that.

I think that's an important thing also, to have come this far, to be host the MLS Cup now. We are very exciting to this next game.

Q. All the way back to the last time you played Seattle in March, the season, there was nothing happening for about three and a half to four months. What did you and your teammates do during that time when you couldn't train together to keep that mentality alive about staying focused to make it to MLS Cup?

ARTUR: Yeah, we had a lot of Zoom meetings. We always kept in touch with each other, the whole group. We had calls every week, like multiple times in the week.

I think we have a very strong leadership group. Everybody hold themselves accountable to everything. Everybody's responsible. Everybody believed we could be here. Everybody, like, kept in mind that is what we wanted to do.

I think that was a very important thing because how you said about the break, we couldn't play, we couldn't train. The mentality part was very important thing. I think even worked that very well.

We had support for the club, everything we needed. I think it played important part also. I think just the whole group kept together, like, talking to each other. Always have in mind the objective we had. I think that was a key thing for us.

Q. What does this chance to play in an MLS Cup final mean specifically for you? To play in this type of

game for you, what does this mean, especially early on in your career?

ARTUR: Yeah, it means a lot. Means a lot because I came from Brazil, I played a few games in (indiscernible) Sao Paulo, which was a big team. I came here alone. My first year here we got to the Conference Finals. I couldn't play the second game in the final. We lost, couldn't play the MLS Final.

Always had the expectation to play the final, to be a champion, to have the ring. I always talked to my agent, to my closest friends, to my family, that I wanted the ring.

I'm very happy to being able to fight for that right now, very happy to being a conference champion. But I think the most important thing that everybody will remember is the MLS Cup champion.

It means a lot for me, like personal, my career, things I want to achieve. I think I can achieve. I can improve even more in my game. I have improved all my years here. I have learned a lot to come here at a young age, not being able to talk English, to speaking English. I have to learn the culture and everything. I have grown so much.

I'm just very excited to be here now, to being able to fight for the MLS Cup. I'm going to do my best. Going to do my best for my teammates and for my family and for myself, for my career, and for this club.

Q. Caleb has called you one of the top ball winners in the league. That's certainly an evolution. When did you feel comfortable and confident in what was being asked of you in that regard?

ARTUR: Yeah, I think I was the second most this year. I'm very happy about that. Man, I think I always been a very good defensive player. I always defended well. I never had in my mind to be that guy like to win the ball, that guy the whole team expects to be tackling, to be that secured guy.

I don't want to be just that, but I have bought what Caleb brought to me, to be that guy, to be winning the balls, to be helping the team with that. I think that played a huge part for me this year, this season, to have been successful in winning tackles, being one of the highest in the league.

I think this thing Caleb talked to me about, it helped me a lot improve in that area. I think I just still have so much to improve in everything. I am sure I have room to improve in all these areas, to still improving tackling, to still improving scoring goals, giving assists.

I'm very excited for these next years to come, very excited to keep improving this MLS Cup Final game.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much.

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