

# City Heads To Houston For Dynamo Duel Plus CITY2 Update

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**ST. LOUIS** - If it feels like there's been a recurring theme to the second half of St. Louis City SC's inaugural season, it's been the inability to secure points away from CITY PARK.

While they did tally a point on the road in suburban Los Angeles against the Galaxy on Sunday, it was a game that City led by two goals and came out with just one point instead of three.

“A little disappointed, of course, that we leave with only one point,” said City head coach Bradley Carnell after Sunday’s 2-2 draw. “I thought we could have seen out that game and found a way to get over the line.”

The draw did end City’s losing skid on the road, where before Sunday they had lost their last three. If not the ideal result, it’s a step in the right direction, and every point is crucial in the final stretch run of the MLS season.

Bradley Carnell doesn’t think City is too far off from capturing those points in away matches. “How we feel behind closed doors and how we quantify what we’re doing, I think we’re training in the right way.”

“We’re getting guys back, there’s competition for places, there’s a good energy,” Carnell continued. “It’s easy speaking about it, now we just have to find a way to do it. We had a tough away stretch, we’re getting over that hump now.”

As City tries to steady the ship away from home at an important point in their season, they head to Houston on Saturday to face the Dynamo. In MLS play, the Dynamo have won three of their last four since the Leagues Cup break, outscoring their opponents 10-0 in that span en route to three wins and a draw.

Much like St. Louis, Houston’s last result was a draw on the road against an LA Galaxy team fighting to make the playoffs. Much like St. Louis, it was a game outside LA that Houston will feel they should have won.

Houston couldn’t convert from a number of chances and settled for a goalless draw. Like nearly everyone in the Western Conference of MLS, they’re fighting for playoff position. Currently sitting 5th in the conference, the Dynamo are looking to move up and gain all-important home field advantage for the first round of the MLS Playoffs.

“They’ve managed to get a good string of results, they’ve kept clean sheets, they’re #1 in the league for that as well,” said Carnell of Saturday’s opponent. “I admire what they’re doing, what Ben (Olsen, Dynamo head coach) is doing. I like (Olsen) as a coach and a person. While they’re rivals, I acknowledge good work too.”

Carnell referred to the Dynamo as “rivals”, and in their first meeting back in June, it was a chippy encounter that felt like a rivalry in the making. A game at CITY PARK that saw seven yellow cards, 27 total fouls, 27 total shots, and a 3-0 City clean sheet win.

“Within their style of play, they have some edgy customers,” said Bradley Carnell of Ben Olsen’s Houston Dynamo. “They win a lot of their tackles, they’re very combative. They’re pretty good in possession, pretty good in transition too.”

“They have some weapons, so how do we counter? Just be us. I think those are a lot of our weapons too.”

One of those weapons in transition, Rasmus Alm, still looks to be on the mend and is likely not making the trip to Houston. Alm has been dealing with a groin issue, and training/exercising on his own in practice this week.

Outside of that, and Samuel Adeniran’s suspension after his red card last Sunday, City bring their full compliment to the Lone Star State.

Saturday’s match will mark the first time City Vice-Captain Tim Parker returns to Houston as a City player. Parker was captain of the Dynamo in 2021 and 2022 before he was traded to St. Louis City last November for \$500k in General Allocation Money (or GAM).

“It’ll be good to go back there, see some of the guys, see some of the staff that I was familiar with,” said Tim Parker on Thursday. “But it’s a business trip as well.”

A short, but sweet answer from the former Dynamo captain and current City Vice-Captain. That business, of course, is trying to lock in their place as the top seed in the Western Conference side of the MLS Playoffs. With a handful of games in the bag, City can clinch a playoff berth with a win and results going their way in other matches across the conference.

Parker and City take on Houston Saturday night just after 7:30, which can be watched on Apple TV. Local radio broadcasts are available on KYKY 98.1 FM in English and KXOK 102.9 in Spanish.

## **CITY2 Update**

The CITY2 Update returns, and why shouldn’t it, as St. Louis City’s MLS NEXT Pro development team has been absolutely flying as of late. They won 1-0 against Vancouver Whitecaps FC 2 north of the border last Saturday, extending their unbeaten run to eight games.

It’s the longest unbeaten run in the now nearly two-season history of CITY2. Even last year’s team of future MLS players like Roman Burki, Kyle Hiebert, and many more couldn’t put together a run quite like this year’s squad has.

They’ve won four in a row, and six of their eight undefeated have been wins. It’s as hot as CITY2’s ever been.

Part of that success has been the offensive spark given to the team by Faysal Bettache. Bettache joined the club at the start of the season after seeing his contract expire with Queens Park Rangers in the English Championship, who primarily sent him out on loan, his last game time before coming to St. Louis was with Aldershot Town in the English 5th tier.

Bettache has scored in four of the past five matches for CITY2, and has eight goals this season. Three of those came in a brilliant performance against Houston Dynamo 2 back on Sunday, September 3.

CITY2 plays their final MLS NEXT Pro regular season home game on Sunday, facing LA Galaxy II at CITY PARK. With a win, they'll clinch a spot in the MLSNP Playoffs.