

Avatar 1351

Chapter 1351: A Brutal Six Rounds

With six rounds left in Season 10, the battle between the top eight suddenly became harsher. Originally, everyone had thought that 301's strength had allowed them to replace Wind Howl for good, and the top eight would be set like that. But out of nowhere, Wind Howl had suddenly resorted to the harsh method of fighting person-to-person, and they sang boldly and loudly as they marched through their team battles.

After defeating Blue Rain in Round 26, Wind Howl consecutively defeated 301, Misty Rain, Void, and Hundred Blossoms.

Weaklings?

It looked like that designation was no longer accurate. But this new strategy of Wind Howl's had only appeared in the past few rounds. As to whether they could actually maintain this, everyone still held doubt.

At the end of Round 32, the commentator and honored guest expressed sympathy toward the match schedule that Hundred Blossoms was about to face. But when everyone thought about it, they realized that Wind Howl's upcoming match schedule wasn't easy either.

Wind Howl's opponents in the final six rounds were Thunderclap, Royal Style, Heavenly Swords, Parade, Happy, and Tiny Herb.

Among the six teams, three were in the top eight. Those wouldn't be easy fights.

But the most demonic match schedule still had to be 301's. Their final six opponents were Miracle, Samsara, Tiny Herb, Blue Rain, Seaside, and Happy.

This match schedule was enough to make one suffocate. Wind Howl only had to fight three of the top eight, but 301? They were basically fighting the top four.

And between these two match schedules, there were two teams in common: Tiny Herb, and Happy.

Tiny Herb was currently in fourth place with 224 points, a twenty point difference from Wind Howl and 301. Their lead was relatively stable. But the situation wasn't as relaxed for Happy. They currently had 212 points, only eight points ahead of those two teams. If they slipped up during their confrontations with these two, then they could be dragged right down. Behind that, Hundred Blossoms was still eyeing the top spots, and if they performed well, one good counterattack could directly kick Happy out of the top eight.

Happy's opponents in the last six rounds, aside from their direct competitors Wind Howl and 301, included Void, Lightly, Bright Green, and Thunderclap.

These opponents weren't weak either, especially Thunderclap, another team currently trapped in the mudhole. Currently, Thunderclap had slightly fewer points than Happy, only 211, and in the final six rounds they would be facing Wind Howl, Misty Rain, Happy, Hundred Blossoms, Samsara, Miracle...

Another brutal match schedule.

After analyzing the match schedules of the last six rounds, everyone was dumbfounded. Of the five teams currently embroiled in a battle for a spot in the playoffs – Happy, Thunderclap, Wind Howl, 301, and Hundred Blossoms – not a single one had an easy schedule, and there were multiple matches where they would be going head-to-head. Among the five teams, no one dared to predict right now which team would be kicked out of the top eight.

After Round 32, Happy's Boss Chen found herself so anxious that she couldn't fall asleep.

Originally, she'd thought that Happy already had a safe spot in the playoffs, but now at the end things had become so difficult and intense. Happy had actually played quite well in the past few rounds. After they'd begun to send up Luo Ji and Wei Chen, they might lose one or two points here and there, but wins of 8 and 9 points were still very pretty! Their one loss was their away game against Misty Rain, who'd beaten them 9-1. In an instant, the teams behind them had closed the distance. Perhaps it was true, that the other teams' recent performances had simply been too excellent, too strong.

In Round 33, Happy played their away game against Void.

Void was currently 28 points behind the top eight. Normally, they probably would've given up on the playoffs just like Misty Rain. But as of now, the current struggle for the top eight was a mudhole. Maybe there'd be a few teams that completely collapsed?

Void didn't want to give up. But their upcoming match schedule was also worthy of tears. For the final six rounds of the season, they still had to play Happy, Hundred Blossoms, Radiant, Royal Style, Blue Rain, and Tyranny...

But Void's dedicated fans had drafted an especially beautiful blueprint. According to the fans' plan, Void would use their home-field advantage to take care of their direct competitors Happy and Hundred Blossoms. Then, they would get the points they could off of Radiant and Royal Style. By then, four rounds would be over and the leaderboard situation would be clearer. Even though Void would have to face Blue Rain and Tyranny, these two teams had stable spots in the playoffs, and they might even be resting up in preparation for the playoffs. Void might have an easier time getting points off of these two teams.

This so-called "Void's Plan of Counterattack" post instantly became very popular. Some mocked it, but others voiced their support. After all, the analysis in the post wasn't without basis. Void's match schedule looked demonic, but the latter four matches might not be too bad to play. The same was true in general: if a team met one of the top four teams at the end of the season, it might not be a brutal match. It wasn't that the top four teams were going easy necessarily, it was simply logical to let their main players get a chance to rest after a full season of difficult matches and then use their full potential in the playoffs.

So, Rounds 33 and 34 became crucial. Void's dedicated fans had already pointed out the path for them, they couldn't fall here, could they? The team players were also chanting their slogans. These next two home games, they had to win, in order to see the dawn of entering the playoffs.

The discussion, commentary, and analysis from all sides worried Chen Guo, especially after she saw that Happy's training plans didn't undergo any special adjustment. She almost wanted to say, at such a

crucial time, shouldn't they let Wei Chen and Luo Ji take a break? After all, entering the playoffs in the first place should be the priority!

But judging from the rhythm of recent practices, Ye Xiu wasn't planning on changing the original arrangement.

Should she say something to him?

Chen Guo hesitated, because to express this at this point of time would be expressing her lack of faith toward those two. It was the reality that this old player and this new player were weaker in strength, but to prepare them for this crucial moment and then not use them, wouldn't that upset them? Did Ye Xiu anticipate this, and that was why he couldn't say anything?

If those two could take the initiative to bring this up, that would be ideal. Chen Guo had no hope for someone as shameless as Wei Chen, but Luo Ji wasn't Wei Chen. Luo Ji understood his own level very clearly, as well as the current situation. In the meeting before Round 33, when Ye Xiu scheduled him to go onstage as normal, Luo Ji actually brought up this point, wondering if it would be more suitable to make an adjustment.

What understanding! Chen Guo was moved. For the sake of the team, he didn't care about his individual gains or losses. What a good kid. Compared to him, Wei Chen was really an infuriating guy.

But to Chen Guo's surprise, Ye Xiu rejected Luo Ji's suggestion altogether.

"The current situation is critical, but the playoffs will only be even more so. If you hide from this now, then what will you do in the playoffs?" said Ye Xiu.

"Um..." Chen Guo wanted to say "we should at least ensure that we make playoffs first," but after opening her mouth, she restrained herself in the end. All this time, she had only listened from the side during these strategy meetings. Sometimes she would ask a question if something was unclear, but she never voiced an idea or suggestion. She knew exactly what level she was at, and she didn't want to become an idiotic backseat driver. This time, Chen Guo felt that this had nothing to do with strategy, it was just an attitude, and she had the right to say something. But just when the words were on her lips – she didn't know why, perhaps from habit or something else – she automatically swallowed them back.

But it seemed like Ye Xiu knew what she wanted to say. He turned his head to glance at her, and said, "Our goal is to win the championships! We need the courage to face any situation. You too, Luo Ji, this kind of match is training for you. After this round, be ready to play in the team battle."

"This is just a small stage. Relax, relax!" Wei Chen said, with the confident air of a veteran.

Chen Guo was speechless. But at least now she knew that Wei Chen wasn't truly shameless at this crucial time. He understood what choices Happy should make at this point. His and Luo Ji's going onstage now wasn't the typical training that teams would arrange for their rookies. This was all so that they could be useful in the playoffs. That was why Happy hadn't sent them up from the very start for matches that would only waste their time. Happy sent them up now so they could have value on the field. Because they were about to face the playoffs, they needed the courage and belief to take responsibility.

"I understand." Luo Ji was as anxious as ever, but he understood the rationale. Anxiety? Nervousness? Pressure? It was alright that he felt all this, because sending him onstage now was so that he could get used to this sort of anxiety, nervousness, and pressure. There were still six rounds left. He should value these chances. How could he retreat?

"Send me onstage!" Luo Ji mustered his determination, but his voice still trembled. He was truly terrified, terrified that he would lose one or two or even more points, and ultimately prevent Happy from entering the top eight. But he already demonstrated the determination to face difficulties head on. He would overcome all of this.

"Good," Ye Xiu nodded. "Then the plan is as it was before. Work hard, strive for this victory. Let's end Void's plan of counterattack right here."

"Ha..." Laughter in the meeting room. Evidently, they all had seen that recently trending post. The team that theoretically had the least chance of entering the top eight actually became the most attention-grabbing. It had to be said that people were miracle chasers. They wanted to see the seemingly-impossible become reality, that is, miracles.

After the meeting ended, everyone split up to gather their belongings. In the afternoon, they would be flying to City X. Ye Xiu watched everyone leave one by one, but he himself headed toward Happy's R&D department.

Guan Rongfei, along with the other R&D workers Happy had found, were all working frantically.

Pseudo-Silver equipment!

This was what Ye Xiu and the others ultimately decided to call their planned Level 80 Orange equipment. After all, any equipment that came out of the equipment editor would have its name in Silver. But because its stats were purposely weaker and closer to those of Orange equipment of the same level, everyone decided to call them "Pseudo-Silver."

Happy didn't have enough resources to create more Level 75 Silver equipment. Now, they were prepared to bolster their strength with Pseudo-Silver equipment. But Pseudo-Silver couldn't just be created on a whim either. The direct jump from Level 70 to Level 80 was possible in Guan Rongfei's research through accumulating materials. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella itself required a large amount of materials, but other equipment didn't. So, right now, they had to figure out how to change the blueprints so they could add more materials without ruining the stats of the equipment and ultimately push them to Level 80. This was one of the hardest parts in investigating Pseudo-Silver equipment. It was proven that this was possible, so Happy was currently working on creating as many Pseudo-Silver equipment as they could.

Chapter 1352: A Map Suited to Phantom Demons

The Pseudo Silver equipment might have cost huge expenses in materials, but since they weren't trying to achieve the best possible stats, the requirements for the materials weren't quite as high. For Orange equipment stats, even rare materials were rarely needed. This solved a huge problem. After all, no matter high level or not, rare materials were limited in number and held great value. Yet now, with low

requirements for rare materials, most of the other materials were easily obtainable from their guilds. Anything else they lacked weren't something they couldn't buy with a little money.

Sixteen pieces.

That was the answer Ye Xiu obtained when he came asking about it. They had already produced sixteen pieces of Pseudo Silver equipment. From nothing to this was impressive, terrifying even, progress. Thus, Happy decided to forgo switching their new equipment in for now.

May 1st, Round 33 of the Pro League began. Though Void had drawn attention with their "Plan of Counterattack", however, this analysis made by attentive and hopeful fans, was more anticipation than anything. In the Round 33, it was clear that the match between Thunderclap and Wind Howl was the hottest topic, and it naturally became the match to be live broadcasted.

However, none of the fans that came to the stadium cared about that. Banners, signs, they practically flooded Void's home stadium. For Void, this was like an early finals. If they lost, this season would end here for them. If they won, then they might still have a chance.

Amidst the cheering, the players entered the stage, their accounts projected one after the other in the center of the stage. To Happy, Void's fans weren't all that friendly. For one, the match was crucial, and second, Happy had beaten Void 10 to 0 last time.

Though a 10 to 0 and a 9 to 1 only had one point of difference, but they held two completely different meanings. A 10 to 0 was a flawless victory, a true sweep. It was equal to getting a perfect in a PK. The victorious side would be showered in glory and the losing side would be humiliated. No team's fans would be as naive as to not hate someone after such a humiliation.

Team Happy's members settled in their seats amidst the ear-piercing jeers of the fans. However, they had already experienced over thirty matches, with over ten of them away games. Happy's players wouldn't be scared by this. No matter how scary it was, it couldn't compare to Tyranny. They had already experienced Tyranny's home stadium.

The pre-match preparations came to an end and soon the time for the match arrived. For Team Happy, Ye Xiu was sent out, as expected. As for Team Void? All the fans were curious as to who their team would send out to beat Ye Xiu and his 31 consecutive victories. But... Li Xuan!

When the name appeared on the big screen, the entire stadium went into uproar. What was going on? Was it becoming fashionable for captains to challenge Ye Xiu recently?

Wind Howl's Tang Hao, Royal Style's Tian Sen, they had both done it, and now, their captain, the Number One Phantom Demon, Li Xuan, had stepped up to the challenge, too.

"Good luck, captain!" The stadium had erupted into cheering.

Fielding their captain was a display of Void's courage and confidence. However, if he lost, then that was sure to be a huge blow to their morale. Li Xuan's Crying Devil was a Phantom Demon, too, a class that was more on the supporting side. Yet, he had stepped up in this moment.

The two entered their booths and their characters were loaded into the map. The match soon began.

A Phantom Demon's map choice naturally wouldn't tilt the scales in Ye Xiu's favour. This map was a town with many alleyways, perfect for a Phantom Demon's Ghost Boundary's AoE effects and damage.

Seeing the map, Ye Xiu naturally understood Li Xuan's intentions. Lord Grim very uncharacteristically didn't head straight for the center of the map, instead choosing to move strategically.

The two characters, one took the left path, the other took the right. Once they were at the center, they looked out and neither of them saw the other.

"Huh? How come you've switched playstyles today?" Li Xuan asked in the public chat. In one on one matches, Ye Xiu had maintained a simple and brutal style, charging right into the center, hunting down his target and beating them into a pulp.

"Your map choice is too much! If you left even a slight opening, you think I'd have to resort to this?" Ye Xiu replied.

Li Xuan paused for a moment and then realized that Ye Xiu wasn't just trash talking. For this map of choice, even the area at the center of the map was just the right size for Crying Devil to cover as a Phantom Demon. He really didn't leave any room for his opponent. Under these circumstances, his opponent definitely wouldn't be able fight in such a straightforward manner any more. Playing dirty was pretty much his only choice.

"Hahaha, next time, next time." Even as Li Xuan wasted his breath with Ye Xiu, he began to pay more attention to what was behind him. He had chosen this map and was naturally very familiar with it. It took but a moment for him to analyze the routes his opponent could take to get behind him. It was a one on one map, after all, so it wouldn't be very large; it's complexity was therefore also limited.

Where would his opponent be? Just as Li Xuan was considering this, he heard the sound of cannonfire. Looking up, he saw a character fly into the air. Apart from Lord Grim, who else could it be? The other wouldn't just stay in the alleyways and wait for death, so he jumped right onto the roof.

This playstyle wasn't unexpected to Li Xuan. The alleyways were narrow. In comparison, the rooftops were much more wide and open.

Lord Grim turned this view on the rooftop. Li Xuan didn't make his presence known. In a direct confrontation, there was little chance his Phantom Demon would be able to take on the powerful Unspecialized! Thus, this match would rely on tactics. He had to find a chance and CC Lord Grim for good. He couldn't let him escape; he had to take him down in one go.

Thus, the first strike was critical. This strike may very well decide the entire battle. Li Xuan wouldn't act without 100 percent certainty. However, if he kept waiting like this, it wasn't like opportunity would just come to him. Li Xuan considered his options for a moment before letting Crying Devil stick his head up into Lord Grim's field of vision for a moment.

"I see you!" The message jumped out and light flashed. Lord Grim was already launching attacks over at him. Anti-Tank Missiles, the three artillery shells shot over.

It wasn't anything that could threaten him. Li Xuan easily had Crying Devil charge and dodge the attack, heading towards Lord Grim.

Ye Xiu, naturally, wasn't afraid of close combat. Seeing his opponent approach him, it was exactly what he wanted. Lord Grim didn't enter the alleyways, remaining on the rooftops as he approached.

Bang, bang bang...

Currently, Lord Grim was the only one who could attack. He shot normal attacks at Crying Devil as he leaped across the rooftops. These attacks were nothing significant, and it didn't matter even if Crying Devil didn't dodge. The two characters, after sneaking to the center, suddenly decided to show themselves one after the other and charge right at one another. Considering this, their earlier actions seemed completely wasteful.

Finally, the two characters were mid range from each other, and Lord Grim gained more usable attack methods. As for Crying Devil, his Ghost Boundaries were finally in range. However, face to face, there was no point in trying to unleash Ghost Boundaries. Ghost Boundaries required casting. If they didn't control their distance and used them in a head on confrontation, then it'd definitely be interrupted. Currently, Crying Devil and Lord Grim were a little closer, and it didn't seem like the former had any chance to summon a Ghost Boundary. But that was when Crying Devil suddenly swerved and entered Lord Grim's blind spot.

However, Ye Xiu was very experienced. Even just from this view, he could guess what the terrain was like in his blind spot. Standing above, his mind rapidly constructed the possible route Crying Devil had used the blind spot to take. However, he couldn't grasp the other's movement speed.

Not being able to grasp the other's movement speed meant that he couldn't estimate his opponent's position. Even if he could calculate the routes his opponent might take, Ye Xiu couldn't make a precise judgement. He really wasn't that familiar with this map, otherwise he'd be able to figure out where the other might attack from through sheer experience. Right now, Ye Xiu could only use what was in front of him to make a vague judgement.

There?

Ye Xiu glanced at a spot and immediately had Lord Grim charge over. He still didn't come down, remaining on the rooftops. He would jump over what gaps he could and those he couldn't, he'd jump down then right back up...

As he advanced, he continued to turn his view, looking out for any hints of Crying Devil.

A figure suddenly flashed in his periphery. Ye Xiu immediately had Lord Grim come to a stop. That position, that direction, it was off from Ye Xiu's prediction. Where was his opponent trying to go?

He had yet to come to a conclusion when another figure suddenly flickered into view.

How come he's come to this side now?

Ye Xiu turned around, observing the two places Crying Devil appeared, unable to figure out his opponent's intentions.

Was he just taking a longer route to hide his actual goal? Ye Xiu didn't think it was so simple. This seemed more like a trap, baiting him into investigating further. Thus, after Ye Xiu had Lord Grim carefully take a good look at the surrounding terrain, he stopped moving.

Li Xuan had Crying Devil run and run, popping out here and there. All this trouble, only to find that his opponent had stopped moving.

Crying Devil once again walked out of Lord Grim's blind spot, giving the other a clear view. However, he only saw the other turn to look, not move.

"That's enough of that. You can stop. I'm not going over," Ye Xiu said in the chat.

"If you don't come over, how are we going to fight?" Li Xuan saw that his opponent was far too experienced and cunning. He was running around, but the other just watched him like some sort of circus monkey, not bothering to move. Thus, Li Xuan also gave up.

"You come over," Ye Xiu suggested.

"No way, I can't fight you while you're over there like that," Li Xuan replied.

"Then give me a place you can fight in. We'll go over," Ye Xiu replied.

"I like where I am now."

"Then perish the thought."

"What about we roll die? We'll take the numbers we roll as coordinates and go over," Li Xuan suggested.

"Sure, you go first!" Ye Xiu said.

"Ok," Li Xuan agreed and then really did roll in the chat.

34!

Li Xuan's number had been rolled.

"Your turn," he messaged.

And so this time it was Lord Grim rolling dice in the chat.

41! "34, 41. There," Li Xuan said.

"I was already moving when 34 was rolled. Haven't you realized I've disappeared?" Ye Xiu replied.

"I've realized for a while now," Li Xuan said.

"Because I already knew you'd roll a 34," Ye Xiu said.

"I knew that you would know," Li Xuan said.

"Really? Then guess where I am now," Ye Xiu said.

Li Xuan didn't reply, because he had to keep his attention on his surroundings and not the chat. He knew that Lord Grim had already approached Crying Devil.

Chapter 1353: A Battle of Awareness

Cast!

Without a trace of hesitation, Crying Devil's blade flickered.

One shouldn't be fooled by the idle chatting and banter in the public channel. In reality, the two of them were carefully controlling their characters while relying on their wealth of experiences to determine the other's actions.

In the instant that Li Xuan had stopped chatting, he already knew that Lord Grim was nearby, and without the slightest hesitation, Crying Devil called forth a Ghost Boundary. But halfway through the cast, Lord Grim's figure suddenly flashed in front of him.

So fast!

Li Xuan was startled. This speed was a fair bit faster than what he'd predicted. With the cast halfway done, could he complete it?

Bang!

Lord Grim opened fire, sending bullets precisely towards him.

He couldn't complete it!

Li Xuan made an accurate judgement in a split second, cancelling his previous Ghost Boundary cast. Crying Devil jumped to the side to avoid the gunfire as the Silver Weapon, Four Heavenly Wheels spun one round next to him, casting a Shadow Image.

Shadow Image was a Ghostblade's protective skill. Within 1 minute, the player could activate it any number of times to offset the damage that they took. In a head-on fight, especially against a veteran like Ye Xiu, Li Xuan didn't make Crying Devil summon a Ghost Boundary, instead casting Shadow Image before immediately retreating.

Lord Grim had appeared at a speed which exceeded his expectations, but if one were to say that moment had decided the difference between victory and defeat, it really wasn't so simple. Crying Devil retreated, and in just a few steps, he had already turned another corner. Without hesitation, he began to cast his Ghost Boundary once again.

Crying Devil's cast speed was very fast. Li Xuan was confident that Lord Grim had no way of once again appearing before him so quickly that he couldn't finish his cast. But this time, an explosion rang out. The wall in front of Crying Devil had been blown up by Lord Grim's cannonfire, immediately sending fragments flying inches away from Crying Devil, who was now worried that he wouldn't be able to get out unscathed.

Interrupt!

Before even being able to see Crying Devil's situation, Lord Grim used such a method to indirectly interrupt his Ghost Boundary cast.

The two of them were carefully analyzing each other. The back-and-forth combat so far had been completely reliant on their snap decisions and conjectures made from their awareness. Apart from the

time when Lord Grim had interrupted the cast with his gun, the two people hadn't seen each other's movements directly at all. This was purely a battle of awareness and experience.

Retreat!

Li Xuan, who once again had his cast interrupted, had no choice but to retreat. Crying Devil continued to retreat frantically. On this map that Li Xuan chose, he didn't even need to look to know what the next street would look like. But before he could even retreat two steps, Li Xuan heard another gunshot before hearing the sound of Rotor Wing being used.

Chasing from above!

Li Xuan quickly raised his camera angle and adjusted Crying Devil's movement accordingly.

In the end, what the audience saw instead was Lord Grim using Aerial Fire, with the Rotor Wings only being used for hovering at a low elevation. Ye Xiu was too crafty!

The crowd was awed. Ye Xiu had made use of the sound effect of the two skills, managing to cloud Li Xuan's judgement. In reality, he controlled Lord Grim chase on level ground at first before suddenly popping out from a corner and charging straight towards his opponent.

As he had to defend from aerial attacks, Li Xuan had chosen to turn a different street corner. But at this time, he was suddenly face-to-face with Lord Grim, who had charged straight over, creating an extremely awkward situation.

Run!

Upon seeing the distance between the two of them, Li Xuan knew that he had no time to cast his skills, and could only run away again to find a better position.

But this time, it wasn't so easy for him to escape. Lord Grim's various movement skills were put on full display, and in that instant, his explosive speed wasn't something that a Ghostblade could compare to at all.

His once faraway opponent had very quickly begun to latch on to him.

Li Xuan immediately realized that Lord Grim's earlier burst of speed that had exceeded his expectations could really end up being the factor that decided victory and defeat! Because of that one moment, he had been passive at every step, and Ye Xiu had never given him the chance to summon his Ghost Boundaries again. And now, Ye Xiu had already succeeded in latching on to him. In this battle, as the number one Phantom Demon, Crying Devil had surprisingly not laid down even a single Ghost Boundary.

Wasn't this just too laughable?

Earthquake Sword!

Crying Devil suddenly turned his body, sending an Earthquake Sword towards Lord Grim, who was chasing him from behind.

Lord Grim jumped lightly, dodging the attack.

Moonlight Slash, Full Moonlight Slash!

The two skills slashed out in succession.

“Stop struggling!” While controlling Lord Grim to dodge, Ye Xiu still had time to send this message in the global channel. Evidently, this attack really didn’t pose much of a threat towards him.

But at this time, Crying Devil unexpectedly started casting. Surprisingly, he was trying to forcefully summon a Ghost Boundary.

In the end, Ye Xiu completely ignored it, and Lord Grim charged forth!

The Ghost Boundary was summoned.

Crying Devil had unexpectedly managed to summon a Ghost Boundary, but.....

Sword Boundary... It raised the Strength and Intelligence of characters, but it didn’t have any direct effect that restrained an opponent. At the same time as the Sword Boundary was completed, Lord Grim’s sword had already reached Crying Devil’s head.

“You’re too obsessive!” Ye Xiu sighed.

“Yeah, if I couldn’t even lay down one Ghost Boundary, that would just be too outrageous...” Li Xuan replied.

The Sword Boundary that he laid down was the only Ghost Boundary he’d managed to cast the entire match, but it didn’t have any real influence on the battle. Afterwards, Lord Grim latched onto Crying Devil like glue, not giving him another opportunity until he finally fell.

It looked as if Ye Xiu had taken the first victory effortlessly, and it seemed as if the so-called “First Phantom Demon” didn’t pose any real threat to him. Yet, real experts wouldn’t have that kind of opinion.

In this round, it had really been one move that decided victory or defeat. Now, because Lord Grim had managed to latch onto Crying Devil, it looked as if he had effortlessly obtained victory. But if at the very first step, Crying Devil had managed to use Ghost Boundaries to restrain Lord Grim, it could very well be that everyone would be watching Crying Devil effortlessly dispatch Lord Grim.

And the real factor that decided that one moment were the countless actions that the two sides had taken before that. The essence of the match was the decisions that the two had made without seeing their opponent at all, instead relying purely on their awareness and experience to make all kinds of judgements. But to most of the audience, a match like this, with no real head-to-head combat wasn’t worth watching at all.

Void’s supporters in the stadium were evidently somewhat dissatisfied with Li Xuan’s performance. But this was their captain, their core player, so everyone still gave him a bit more face. When Li Xuan stepped down from the stage, sparse clapping could still be heard from the crowd. But Void’s so-called “Plan of Counterattack” really wasn’t off to a good start, the very first point had already been lost. In a matter of minutes, Void’s home stadium, which had originally been a flurry of excitement and energy now had a slightly depressed mood to it.

At this stage, every single point was extremely valuable.

Quite a few spectators were listening to the outcomes of other matches while watching the competition unfold in front of them. For Void to enter the playoffs, it was no longer purely dependent on their own effort. They also needed to rely on the misfortune of other teams in order to snatch a place for themselves.

As their first individual round finished, there was some news about the other matches going on at the same time.

Team Wind Howl was already up 1-0 against Thunderclap, Hundred Blossoms was up 1-0 against Misty Rain, and 301 was up 1-0 against Miracle. Everyone else was winning, only Void had lost this one point.

Was there no hope left?

Everyone silently watched the players go onstage for the second round of the individual competition, and rigid applause filled the air. To the fans of Team Void, losing this one point was as bitter and painful as losing ten points. Even if they saw that they had a better chance of winning in the second individual round, they still weren't able to drum up much enthusiasm.

In the second round of the individual competition, Happy's Luo Ji was against Void's Ge Caijie.

Their ages weren't too far apart, and they could both be considered young in the Glory circle. But where Luo Ji had only just begun to temper himself in real competitions, Ge Caijie had already displayed the air of a general in the last season, cementing himself as an important member of Team Void.

Ge Caijie very calmly entered the player booths, but what about Luo Ji? His facade of calmness was only to cover up the nervousness he felt in his heart.

It really could be said that he had to summon all his courage to take up the responsibility of competing in this round. He had already begun feeling some anxiety in his heart from yesterday, and until now, it hadn't subsided at all. He didn't know when he would be able to get rid of these feelings of nervousness. All he knew was that upon understanding that Happy's situation was somewhat dire, his heart began jumping even more fiercely.

It was a pity that the referee didn't care for such things. Upon seeing the two players enter the player booths and the characters loading in, the second round of the individual competition quickly began.

The moment his character loaded in, Luo Ji promptly examined the map.

Hamlet was a map with nice scenery, with red clouds floating in the horizon. In the middle of the map, there was a main street, and at the end of the street, he could see Ge Caijie's Blue Exorcist already walking over steadily, at a pace that was neither fast nor slow.

Luo Ji immediately controlled Concealed Light to take a roundabout route, hiding behind a straw house. He still didn't have any confidence when it came to taking on a professional player in a head-on fight, so he persisted with using tactics in every round. If he was playing a home game, with the ability to choose his map, things were a lot smoother, but in an away game, where he was faced with a map that he wasn't familiar with, it only made him more flustered.

Unfortunately, this map happened to be one that Luo Ji wasn't familiar with. After temporarily having Concealed Light hide, Luo Ji momentarily had no clue as to what to do next.

He controlled Concealed Light to sneakily stick out his head, taking a look at the main road, only to realize that Blue Exorcist had already disappeared. At this moment, Luo Ji had even less of a clue as to what to do next.

Go out?

Stay at his position and wait?

Opponents that could fight directly and tactically created a lot of difficulties for Luo Ji.

His calculation skills were not bad to begin with, but when his opponent had adopted a pace that was neither fast nor slow from the start, he had no way of determining how quickly his opponent would arrive. Now that his opponent had clearly opted to take a tactical approach, Luo Ji also had no way of figuring out which corner of the hamlet his opponent had hidden in.

It seemed as if he could only rely on careful observation and thorough preparations now.

Luo Ji started to line up his Summons. He definitely wasn't a player that didn't use his brain. Seeing as he wasn't familiar with the entire map, then he would have to understand it one part at a time, and then use those parts to establish his battlefield, making full use of the map's features.

Luo Ji controlled Concealed light, quickly and carefully observing this corner of the map.

His Spirit Cat was the first to be sent out, moving and hiding in an underbrush in front of him.

Afterwards, the Devil World Flowers were planted behind a tree. From the direction that Blue Exorcist was coming from, it probably wouldn't be within his field of view.

Afterwards, his Young Wyvern and Thunder Eagle split up and flew to the roofs of the straw houses to his left and right.

Afterwards, Concealed Light himself holed up in the straw house on the left. The house didn't have a window, and Luo Ji's actions were as if he wanted to dig a hole for Concealed Light to hide in.

The entire audience was stunned.

Wasn't this supposed to be a fighting game? Why was it being played this way?

Chapter 1354: Decided by Details

Seeing Luo Ji's careful arrangement, the Void fans were on the verge of collapse.

What kind of people were these Happy players? What the hell was all this? This was an official match, you know? What were you taking it as, Carrot Fantasy or Plants versus Zombies or something? Seeing the summon creatures scattered across the map, it didn't seem like Glory anymore, but some sort of tower defense game.

However, Luo Ji didn't seem to notice at all. Concealed Light poked a hole in the wall of the straw hut and looked out through the hole.

The Void fans in the stadium were restless. They had an omniscient view, so they were even more clear on Blue Exorcist's movements than Luo Ji. Blue Exorcist really was approaching in this direction. Seeing his progress, it wouldn't be long before he entered the formation Luo Ji had set. Though everyone looked upon this tower defense-like setup with contempt, but it also seemed very powerful.

Ge Caijie... wouldn't lose to this rookie would he?

The Void fans began to worry. After Li Xuan had lost the first match they were disappointed like they had just lost ten points, their focus had subconsciously shifted as the match began, and they began to worry that Ge Caijie might walk into a trap. He's close! On the big screen, it was showing Concealed Light's view from where he was looking through the hole. Ge Caijie's Blue Exorcist strolled right into view, looking completely unsuspecting.

The audience felt their heart in knots, many of them yelling, but none of it could be heard by the players in the booths.

However, Ge Caijie seemed to realize that it wasn't logical that he still hadn't seen hide nor hair of Concealed Light from this position. Blue Exorcist slowed his movement speed slightly.

Step by step, carefully now. However, Luo Ji was very patient. Although his heart was already jumping into his throat, he held himself still. He believed that this was his only chance for victory; he had to grasp it. His fingers were a little stiff from nerves, but his mechanics couldn't go wrong.

From Luo Ji's view, everyone had realized what he was doing.

Under the default settings, summon creatures would attack anyone who came within their aggro range. However, a summoner could command their summons to defend. That way, they would only attack those that came within attack range or those that attacked them first. They wouldn't initiate combat or pursue targets. However, that wasn't all that Luo Ji was doing with his summons. He was suppressing even the attacks that would be released when a target came within attack range. There was no setting for this, so if one wished to accomplish it, they could only continuously order their summons to defend.

This was, of course, to make sure that his target was as deeply positioned within the formation as possible before attacking. However, if you wanted to suppress these attacks, you had to repeat actions at a certain rhythm. This sort of thing, for pro players, wasn't anything hard, but Luo Ji was nervous! His fingers were stiff, and he wasn't all that practiced at this sort of repetitive mechanics. It didn't feel like his fingers were actually his. By this time, Blue Exorcist had already gotten rather deep into range and the audience was cursing up a storm, but Luo Ji didn't think it was enough; his opponent hadn't gotten to prime position yet! However, he really couldn't continue with this repetitive actions that pro players shouldn't find very hard. His stiff fingers broke rhythm.

Swoosh!

The ones to attack first was the Devil World Flower, hiding behind a tree. A vine crept out of the ground and curled towards Blue Exorcist's leg. Luo Ji, seeing this, knew that he was at his limit and couldn't help but be overwhelmed by disappointment. But, at a time like this, he might as well hurry and attack.

With Devil World Flower launching the assault, Young Wyvern and Thunder Eagle on the rooftops to the left and right also flew into the sky automatically, one spat a fireball down and the other spat a thunderbolt. Spirit Cat was a melee summon creature, so after telling it to defend, it wouldn't move. Luo Ji immediately cancelled his defend order and then had Concealed Light begin casting to summon Frost Wolf.

Ice Wolf was relatively large in size and didn't have an appropriate hiding place in this area, so Luo Ji had Concealed Light summon directly.

Outside of the straw hut, Devil World Flowers' attack had come far too suddenly and by the time Ge Caijie noticed, hurriedly having his Aqua jump to dodge, it was too late. The vine whipped up, grabbing the limb it had caught and sending Blue Exorcist crashing back to the ground. He couldn't move!

That was the side effect that the vine attack came with. Devil World Flower was extremely annoying because it had such an effect.

Boom boom!

A fireball from one side and a thunderbolt from the other crashed down.

Blue Exorcist, unable to move, could only twist his body to dodge. However, he couldn't dodge them completely like this and immediately, flames and electricity scorched his body. Whirlwind!

Ge Caijie was very decisive as well, knowing that it wasn't the time to save up his skills. Blue Exorcist brandished his battle scythe, whirling it around and around. The vines of Devil World Flowers were like individual characters, having their own HP gauge. Once you used attacks to deplete its health, it would immediately break. Blue Exorcist ate another fireball and thunderbolt, but regained his movement, immediately lunging into a charge.

He had already figured out the position of Devil World Flower. This summons had the strongest CC. Ge Caijie could tell that Blue Exorcist was too deep in his opponent's formation. Trying to escape Devil World Flowers wasn't the best choice at a time like this; killing it first would be the best option.

Swoosh! Another spike stabbed up from the ground. Devil World Flower's attacks were considered very troublesome precisely because of how concealed they were. However, Ge Caijie's Blue Exorcist was already leaping up to dodge it. He was extremely calm, and even when surrounded like this, he could still make clear judgements on when Devil World Flower would attack.

The airborne Blue Exorcist already had a third of the Devil World Flower in view, his scythe raised and about to strike when suddenly, with a howl and a breath of cold, Frost Wolf lunged from the side and tackling him to the ground. Concealed Light had also followed Frost Wolf out of the straw hut. Even though it was safer to hide inside the straw hut, his vision was limited and therefore would be limited in his control over his summon creatures. For example, if Concealed Light had been in the straw hut for Frost Wolf's lunge, then he could only depend on the system-automated attacks and it probably wouldn't have been timed so well. Summons on auto were rather dumb, knowing only to attack and attack and attack. They wouldn't synchronize their actions and work with allies, and definitely wouldn't time their attacks. Thus, Concealed Light showed himself, and Luo Ji would use this field of vision to carefully control his summons and make sure Blue Exorcist didn't get another chance to escape. Blue Exorcist, tackled to the ground and torn at by Frost Wolf, had been slowed. With two explosions, the

airborne Young Wyvern and Thunder Eagle once again spat out their fireball and thunderbolt. Spirit Cat and already arrived as well. It was only by Luo Ji's orders that it had yet to attack, leaving the tackle to Frost Wolf. Now, with the situation under control, Spirit Cat was free to come up and make its DPS contributions.

Blue Exorcist rolled on the ground, dodging the attacks from the four Beasts, occasionally jumping up to avoid Devil World Flower's sneak attacks from below. However, under the control of its summoner, Devil World Flower wouldn't necessarily attack according its set rhythm any longer. Considering Luo Ji's IQ, there was no way he'd let Ge Caijie use the set rhythm to his advantage and Devil World Flower began choosing the worst moments to attack. Blue Exorcist jumped to dodge five times and failed four times, beaten.

"Good job!" Chen Guo was so excited! If Luo Ji could win, then that was already very impressive, let alone being able to control the situation so fully. With Blue Exorcist surrounded by summons like this, there probably wouldn't be any chances to turn the tables, right?

Luo Ji's confidence was steadily growing as well. His tactics were very successful, managing to trap even Ge Caijie, a young and composed player. This was definitely a boost to his morale. Luo Ji had his summons attack relentlessly, relaxing more and more. He slowly regained feeling in his stiff fingers and Luo Ji suddenly thought, this actually wasn't so hard.

Who would've thought that at that exact moment, Blue Exorcist managed to grasp an opening, his scythe twirling around and blue light shining on the ground...

Not good! Rising Emblem!

Luo Ji was startled. Blue Exorcist's successful attack was naturally because an opening had appeared amongst the four beasts around him. Luo Ji hurriedly had Devil World Flower attack, but as he did so, he was stunned by a sudden realization. Blue Exorcist was no longer within Devil World Flower's range.

Though it seemed like Blue Exorcist was been crushed by the encirclement of the four beasts and Devil World Flower, he had been carefully moving out of Devil World Flower's range. It was just that Ge Caijie had been carefully concealing this movement amongst the four beasts' attacks and Luo Ji, in the end, didn't have enough experience, allowing this movement to go unnoticed until Blue Exorcist had moved out of range and grasped an opportunity to counterattack.

Whoosh! Blue light rose from the ground, shooting towards the sky. Luo Ji desperately had his Four Summon Beasts dodge out of range, but he was too late for all of them. No matter if it was Spirit Cat and Frost Wolf on the ground, or Young Wyvern and Thunder Eagle in the sky, they were all within range of Rising Emblem. In that moment, they were all thrown upwards.

Blue Exorcist ignored them, lunging for Concealed Light, yet the scythe in his hand was thrown out with Spiritual Guidance, heading for Devil World Flower.

Boom! The scythe also had an Explosive Talisman stuck to it, and Devil World Flower was instantly enveloped in a ball of flame. Fire element attacks dealt a huge amount of bonus damage to Devil World Flower, too. Just this one attack had Devil World Flower charred and blackened, unable to continue.

Blue Exorcist continued to approach Concealed Light, empty-handed. He brandished his right hand through the air and formed another talisman while his left hand stretched out, catching the scythe returning from Spiritual Guidance.

It's over...

Seeing Ge Caijie's smooth attack combo, Luo Ji sighed in acceptance. Concealed Light's summon creatures had all been left behind. Right now, what else could he do? He wouldn't have the chance to cast and summon again. As for the four beasts, their time was coming to an end and they would soon disappear.

His opponent had considered all the details and currently, Luo Ji, really had no way of turning this around.

Pay attention to the details!

When Concealed Light finally fell, Luo Ji was feeling rather depressed. This had originally been his forte, but this time, it was where he had lost.

Chapter 1355: Battle of Nightwalkers

Translator:Nomyummi | Editor: Nomyummi

Ge Caijie's counterattack succeeded, and he won the battle. Void's fans in the audience were jumping and cheering in joy.

Walking offstage in this sort of atmosphere only made Luo Ji feel even more upset.

The huge digital display kept replaying the moment where Blue Exorcist leapt out of range of the Devil World Flowers, and then used a Rising Emblem to counterattack, successfully killing Concealed Light. It was Void's home stadium, after all! Of course they would replay their own player's soul-stirring moments for everyone to enjoy. Another wave of applause rose within the stadium.

I was so close...

Watching these images, Luo Ji's heart felt a wholly different emotion.

He actually hadn't noticed at all, when Blue Rain jumped out of Devil World Flowers' range. Pay attention to the details, pay attention to all of the details, this was supposed to be his specialty, his greatest strength, but just then he had overlooked such a key point, something so important that it couldn't even be called a detail.

Luo Ji truly couldn't forgive himself, especially for such an important match. He had held the advantage, but because of such a big mistake, he ruined his victory.

When Luo Ji arrived back at the player area, he couldn't even bear to lift his head.

"It's nothing," said Ye Xiu. "It's just a mistake, everyone makes them. When Old Wei was your age, his mistakes were much worse than yours."

"Oh, fuck off. When I was his age, Glory probably didn't even exist yet, did it?" Wei Chen said to Ye Xiu angrily.

“Oh? Really? Want to calculate it?” said Ye Xiu.

“I don’t want to look into this question,” Wei Chen said with a wave of his hand.

Standing to the side, Luo Ji knew that these two seniors’ light-hearted bickering was all to comfort him. He felt moved, but he couldn’t just brush this off like it didn’t matter.

“It won’t happen again.” Luo Ji solemnly expressed his determination.

“No...” But Ye Xiu shook his head. “I’m serious, don’t let this weigh you down. No matter how much you pay attention, mistakes can never be avoided completely. In fact, you can easily become too tense and do even worse. Relax. As long as you focus, pursue victory, work your hardest to do the best you can, maintain this kind of conviction, that’s enough. Don’t worry too much about the little details like mistakes.”

Again, he was supposed to stop worrying about the little details? Still, Luo Ji understood what Ye Xiu was trying to say.

Focus?

Maybe this was where his problem lay in this match!

In the instant when Blue Exorcist had fallen into the encirclement and been knocked over by Frost Wolf, Luo Ji had also fallen into an encirclement, one of happiness. In that situation, it seemed like all of his focus had gone to feeling happy, hence how he had overlooked something so important.

I really haven’t seen enough of the world!

Luo Ji mocked himself, knowing that this was because his match experience was still lacking. What kind of player would get so happy after just one successful attack?

Luo Ji continued to think quietly as he returned to his seat. But as soon as he sat down, a hand came down hard upon his shoulder.

“You played pretty well!” Steamed Bun praised him loudly, wearing a proud expression, as though it were the result of his own work.

Luo Ji had no idea what to say in response to Steamed Bun’s words.

“That defending radishes playstyle of yours seems really strong,” Steamed Bun continued.

Defend... defending radishes. What did that even mean?

Luo Ji was so agitated that he actually stood back up again, but seeing Steamed Bun’s serious face, he quickly felt discouraged. When did Steamed Bun ever make sense? Whatever he said, just accept it!

But. Defending radishes. Luo Ji still felt rather baffled.

It was now the third match of the individual competition. Happy sent up Wei Chen, while Void sent their Assassin player, Li Xun.

Li Xun was originally the most famed user of Life-Risking Strike, but ever since Yang Cong changed his strategy, he gradually became more overlooked. Yang Cong used Life-Risking Strike more frequently, and his success rate left Li Xun in the dust, especially when he used it in the team competition.

Even though Yang Cong was gradually stepping down from his position, he remained a main attacker for 301. Even if 301 wanted to use Life-Risking Strike, their strategy would still revolve around him. But Li Xun in Void didn't have such privilege. Void's core was the Ghost Duo, and all strategies revolved around those two players. Li Xun's Life-Risking Strike was his own decision in individual battle, but in the team battles, unlike Yang Cong, he didn't have a whole team serving his needs.

I never knew that Life-Risking Strike could be used to this level!

Li Xun, who especially loved this skill, felt all sorts of longing in his heart when he saw 301's playstyle. But he knew that Void wouldn't give him that kind of environment very often.

Only in the individual competition could he run freely. But Li Xun already didn't pass up any opportunity to use it there. What he really wanted was to use it in the team competition. That feeling of taking out the opponent's core or important character with one attack, trading his tragic death for the team's victory, Li Xun felt a thrill just thinking about it.

It's just... too bad!

Li Xun sighed. He could probably only continue to seize his chances in individual battle.

The third match of the individual competition began. Since Li Xun was this kind of Assassin, of course he chose a more complicated map.

This was another street map. Void was generally good at such maps, which wasn't unrelated to the fact that their core was a Phantom Demon. This kind of map was good for Phantom Demons, so Void often chose such maps during team competition. After a long time, they would begin to like such maps for individual battles as well.

The characters loaded in and the match began. A Warlock on one side and an Assassin on the other, both Nightwalkers. They both started moving strategically from the very start, ducking into alleys and slowly moving forward.

Wei Chen, Windward Formation...

Before the match, Li Xun hadn't expected that he would meet this player from Happy, so he hadn't really prepared for this. For such a critical match, Happy was still brave enough to use a player that hadn't really gone onstage much this season. This was a rather unexpected move.

Wei Chen had basically been overlooked in Void's preparations for this match. But even if they had paid attention to him, they didn't have much to work off of. There was only so much information to be found about a player who had appeared so infrequently. It wasn't like they could dig up old Blue Rain matches from Seasons 1 and 2 a decade ago, could they? The Glory competitive scene was tied to the game itself. Skills and tactics were constantly updating, becoming stronger and more extravagant. Ten years ago, levels were capped at 50, 55, there were fewer skills, and current playstyles had evolved so much since then. And with the Level 75 update, with the addition of Level 75 equipment and skills, even data from

just a few years ago had to be scrutinized with care. Some playstyles had grown extinct because of new equipment or skills.

About Wei Chen and Windward Formation, there were only two phrases in Li Xun's mind.

Dirty playing. Cast range.

Yes, dirty playing!

This Warlock was truly very dirty. This sort of match attitude couldn't be erased by new strategies or skills. It was like how Fang Rui was still dirty even after changing classes to Qi Master.

It was really hard to imagine. The old Swoksaar was actually a dirty-playing Warlock? Li Xun tried to compare Wei Chen and the current user of Swoksaar, Yu Wenzhou, and instantly shuddered.

The difference was too great!

Li Xun thought.

In general, when teams searched for someone to inherit such an important character, they would try and choose someone with a similar style. That way, the team's overall style wouldn't have to change much, and the transition would be smoother. But Blue Rain, this... Li Xun honestly had no idea how they'd transitioned. Wasn't there another person between Wei Chen and Yu Wenzhou at the time?

Was that person both dirty-playing and hand-crippled?

To Li Xun, Season 3 was a long time ago, and he wasn't a Blue Rain fan, so he didn't really know much about this extra Swoksaar user hidden in Blue Rain's history. Even Wei Chen – if he hadn't jumped back into the spotlight by joining Happy, how many young players would know about this old senior from Blue Rain?

Against dirty-playing guy, he couldn't become overconfident. Especially since this guy had that massive cast range. Li Xun couldn't let himself die without even managing to touch him.

Li Xun's Assassin Ghost Lantern walked along the streets, quickly arriving at his planned destination. And then Ghost Lantern jumped up, displaying the Assassin's special passive skill Air Jump. Jumping with his left and then right foot, he easily hopped atop this small two-story building.

The roof was spacious. Although it wasn't very high up, the angle and field of view from this position were really quite good. From here, many regions on this map could be examined. As soon as Ghost Lantern jumped on here, Li Xun found where Windward Formation was.

He's taking the middle road!

Li Xun silently watched for a while, judging what Wei Chen's plans were.

Windward Formation was using the most standard method of strategic movement, heading toward the map's center in a roundabout way, finding the target so a sneak attack could be launched from the side or back.

But too bad, I'm over here!

Li Xun's Ghost Lantern crouched on the rooftop, and he continued to silently study Windward Formation as the character appeared and disappeared. Finally, Li Xun made his judgment and Ghost Lantern gently jumped from the roof, directly landing upon another two-story rooftop across the street, and then directly headed toward where Windward Formation was.

"Hm? How come I don't see anyone, the little guy's hiding?" At this time, a message from Wei Chen arrived in the chat.

Dirty playing, as expected!

Dirty-playing guys always liked saying a few words in the chat to rile up the opponent. Speaking of this style, Blue Rain had really succeeded in carrying it on. But Huang Shaotian's method was entirely different from the dirty-playing style of riling up. His method was just straight-up bombing the opponent to exhaustion!

What in the world had happened in Blue Rain? How had the senior's talents been passed on like this? No more dirty plays, but the trash talking became so frenzied.

As Li Xun controlled Ghost Lantern forward, he actually grew quite curious about Blue Rain's past. He even made the decision, next time he met Blue Rain, he had to ask about their story. As for whatever Wei Chen said after that, apologies, but he didn't look! It was just trash talk, who wanted to see it?

Li Xun chose to ignore it, and his gaze didn't even wander toward the chat window.

Ghost Lantern continued to move, and finally, Windward Formation's sneaky-looking posture clearly appeared in front of him. Ghost Lantern rolled onto the ground. From now on, his movements needed to be even more careful.

How should he go about this? If he directly went up and used a Life-Risking Strike, could that take care of him?

As soon as he thought of this possibility, Li Xun instantly became fired up.

Chapter 1356 A Casual Poke

Translator:Nomyummi | Editor: Nomyummi

Closing in, step by step. Right now, the entire stadium's feeling's were bound to Ghost Lantern's movement. On screen, everyone saw from Li Xun's point of view. Windward Formation's outline became larger and clearer.

Closer and closer.

Life-Risking Strike!

Almost everyone had this thought, since they were familiar with Li Xun's style. This was a player who would always pursue a kill with Life-Risking Strike.

But could he do it this time?

This really needed to be considered. Just judging from their life totals, Ghost Lantern was capable of assassinating Windward Formation with a Life-Risking Strike. However, would Windward Formation's equipment affect the outcome?

Armor values weren't useful. Life-Risking Strike traded hitpoint for hitpoint; it removed health directly and ignored armor. However, what if Windward Formation's armor had damage absorption effects? Damage absorption would be able to reduce incoming health removal from Life-Risking Strike. If the absorption percentage was high enough, then this skill wouldn't be able to directly kill Windward Formation.

Unfortunately, Void had no such information on the Silver equipment on Windward Formation, since their team lacked information and research on both Wei Chen and Windward Formation. Li Xun could only rely on his own judgement.

When directly comparing health values, Ghost Lantern was 12% higher than Windward Formation. The Assassin's HP stat growth was below average. Ghost Lantern's equipment had some additional HP boosts; it was necessary for someone who loved Life-Risking Strike, where the damage output scaled with HP. The difference was that the HP was not stacked as high as possible like normal players would do, with disregard to anything else; Void did not want him to just focus on Life-Risking Strike and needed him to contribute in other ways too.

Right now, his health points were 12% higher than Windward Formation's. This meant that if Windward Formation's equipment carried more than 12% damage absorption, he could survive Ghost Lantern's Life-Risking Strike; if not, then Life-Risking Strike would be a one-hit kill.

Maybe attack a few times and do a calculation first?

It's possible an opportunity like this would not arise again. The opponent had a dirty playstyle, and all pro players knew how hard it was to successfully ambush a dirty player. Li Xun really just didn't want to give up this huge opportunity that presented itself before him.

Take a shot at it?

Li Xun pondered. 12% damage absorption was not high. However, Warlocks wore Cloth armor and had subpar defensive attributes. This meant not just basic defence values, but also other defensive attributes, such as armor values and damage absorption values. Cloth armors were the worst in this aspect, amongst all other armor types.

A lowly 12%. However, for it to appear on Cloth armor, quite a chunk of other useful attributes might have been traded off for it. Would a Warlock sacrifice these useful attributes for some extra survivability?

This was really hard to say; after all, survivability was useful for any class and couldn't be considered a waste. So did Windward Formation have it?

Ghost Lantern's movement grinded to a halt. Li Xun could not reach a conclusion and did not advance any further. If he kept going, he would have to act.

Equipment chosen by someone who loved playing dirty. Would he prioritize attributes like damage absorption?

Li Xun was trying to answer the question from perspective of the opponent's playstyle. However, before he could reach any conclusion, Li Xun suddenly remembered something else.

Cast range!

Windward Formation's biggest distinctive feature was his absurdly long cast range.

A long cast range meant a big attack area, which also meant a larger protective zone. A Warlock that had an advantage in that aspect, would he need more protective measures? Would he?

He shouldn't need it!

Li Xun's mind was made. It wasn't from the opponent's playstyle, but rather from his character's specialty. Then, let's go!

Ghost Lantern once again began his advance. He leapt down from a rooftop and landed in a half-crouch soundlessly, then patiently stalked forward.

Patient bastard, I'm behind you!

Li Xun couldn't resist complaining to himself after seeing that Wei Chen seemed to be patiently and cluelessly waiting for his target to appear. Ghost Lantern approached, step by step.

Finally, he ran out of cover and could only approach directly from behind. There were only a few steps left, but the closer he got, the more nervous Li Xun got. If the opponent suddenly turned around now, then it would all have been for naught.

Approach with a Shining Cut or continue slowly moving?

The two options crossed Li Xun's mind, and he made his decision in a split second.

At this time, Li Xun decided it was better to be fast about it. He didn't want to risk all his work being wasted after coming this far.

Shining Cut!

Immediately, a cold light flashed out, along with the fluttering of cloth in the wind. Ghost Lantern had already abruptly flashed behind Windward Formation.

Life-Risking Strike!

Life-Risking Strike as expected. Li Xun boldly used this skill to directly decide the match.

Windward Formation hastily turned around after hearing the sound behind him, but Ghost Lantern's dagger had already arrived. Fueled by his own life, a one-hit-kill assassination skill from Ghost Lantern. Fierce, powerful. Windward Formation's reaction was meaningless. Turning around only presented his chest to be stabbed by Ghost Lantern's dagger.

Shluck!

A hair-raising sound was produced as the dagger buried itself deep into Windward Formation's chest. However, an ominous feeling arose in Li Xun's mind.

Something's off, something's really off! Something had to be off!

The attack hit, and Windward Formation's health-bar slid down quickly. However, Li Xun felt something went terribly wrong. His intuition told him that he shouldn't stay here and pose; he needed to turn tail and run.

But... Windward Formation's arm was already raised. Death's Hand casually poked at a random spot on Ghost Lantern's body.

He fell...

Ghost Lantern fell.

Life-Risking Strike left the user with 1 hit-point. That meant that even a normal melee attack from a Warlock's staff was enough to kill him. For Windward Formation to be able to carry out that attack, however, it only meant one thing: Life-Risking Strike did not one-shot him.

Miscalculation.

Li Xun only had regret in his mind, but it was all too late. Ghost Lantern's 1 hit-point was not enough to handle anything, and a poke from his opponent's staff dispatched him.

How ludicrous.

No skills were used, and a regular poke ended the match? He really handed himself to his opponent...

Yes, he did. Handed himself on a silver platter.

Everything suddenly became clear to Li Xun. The opponent planned his whole strategy around his playstyle and gave him an opportunity to use Life-Risking Strike. Li Xun knew something was wrong, but now he knew exactly what. It was his opponent's reaction.

This was the Pro League. They were all pro players with unmatched experience. Even for someone who had not played for a long time, being part of the Pro League meant his Glory experience was richer than a regular player.

Just then when Ghost Lantern charged forth with Shining Cut, what was the opponent's reaction when he heard it? He turned around.

He actually turned around!

This was way too much of a rookie's reaction. Any Glory player who had some PK experience would know to dodge instead of turn around if they felt something was off behind themselves.

Roll, jump, strafe, rush forward, or use a skill. Anything was fine, but there was no reason to turn around. What would that do? If they saw your poor face, would they suddenly feel a rush of sympathy and stop their attack?

As it turned out, Windward Formation's reaction was to turn around.

Even though he barely made an appearance this season, wasn't it laughable for this antique of a player with more than ten years' experience in Glory to turn around in this situation?

Not realising immediately was absolutely moronic.

Turning around at that time meant Wei Chen was prepared way ahead of time. Wei Chen already had a plan in mind, so when the attack came, he did not dodge or retreat but turned around. When Life-Risking Strike hit, he just casually poked away.

I got fucking poked to death! Li Xun clutched his head and wished he could stuff his whole head into his monitor.

I got played, completely played!

If he realised a split second earlier, there was still time to cancel the attack. But he didn't; he completely missed it. At the time, he was already immersed in the elation of winning the match with one strike.

Turns out, the match really did end, not with his one strike, but the opponent's one poke.

A Warlock. Raised his staff. And poked. Thinking of this, Li Xun once again felt the urge to stuff his head into his monitor.

Thus, the third match of the individual competition was concluded.

It hadn't sunk in for the whole stadium yet. It hadn't even sunk in for the referee. Wei Chen appeared from his player booth, grinning ear to ear, and waved at everyone watching.

This isn't Happy's home stadium!

The audience didn't even have time to feel bad about him winning; who the hell would appreciate him showing off?

Wei Chen was purely trying to stir shit up. He waved his hands the stadium filled with boos. He then left the stage happily amongst the booing.

Boo away to your heart's content!

Wei Chen looked at this stadium full of people. So what if there were boos? Summoning boos was a special ability for playing an away game. I came, I won. Booing was the proof of that.

Wei Chen returned to Happy's bench. He glanced at Li Xun on Void's side, who looked distracted and lost after leaving the stage, and laughed scornfully. He raised his right pinky finger and said, "I can take care of this kind of small fry with my pinky. I hope you can give me more of a challenge next time."

Everyone laughed, and this time, even Ye Xiu didn't go burst his bubble.

Taken care of with a pinky? This really was a joke.

Wei Chen put a lot of effort into preparing for the match against Void. Li Xun was someone who would definitely play in the individual competition, since his playstyle was not suitable for the group arena. So for Wei Chen, there was a solid one in three chance that Li Xun was his opponent, and thus researched him a lot.

Fortunately, he did run into Li Xun in the individual competition, and everything indeed went according to his plan. This was the reason why he could topple Li Xun with just his pinky.

Small tricks. This was a specially targeted trick, and most likely wouldn't work again. The problem was, an old player like Wei Chen had more than ten years of experience and who knew how many more tricks he had up his sleeve! You would be underestimating him if you expected him to repeat the same trick twice.

2/2 Void's Send-off

The Void fans in the audience booed Wei Chen for a very long time. But when they looked at the screen displaying the current score, they felt another wave of despondence.

1 to 2, they'd already lost 2 points. Void was already far away from the top 8, and after losing these two points, their future was becoming increasingly bleak.

Next was the group arena. Happy sent Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, and Fang Rui, while Void sent Ge Zhaolan, Yang Haoxuan, and Wu Yuce.

There were still fans who refused to give up now, and they persevered in cheering Void on. But Tang Rou's performance when she came on was extraordinarily strong, nearly a 1v2. After Steamed Bun came one, he used 17% of his health to take care of Void's second player, Yang Haoxuan, who'd already been beaten bloody by Tang Rou.

Wu Yuce came out, facing a near 1v2 situation. The crowd was quiet; they couldn't bear to cheer. It looked like Void's season was ending here just like this. There was no need to increase the pressure on any one person at this time. A season's failure wasn't any one person's fault.

Even the audience members were pessimistic, but Wu Yuce hadn't given up. He was a pro player, someone who understood the difficulty of matches better than ordinary people did. But at this time, even more so than the audience, he anticipated a miracle. He believed he could create a miracle.

Wu Yuce came onstage, and Carved Ghost cleanly took care of Steamed Bun Invasion.

Fang Rui came onstage, facing a Carved Ghost at half health.

The map was another street map that Void was used to. For the dirty-playing Fang Rui, he could also take to this map like a fish to water.

"This time, I won't lose to you again," Fang Rui said after entering the match. During the previous Happy vs Void, Fang Rui had indeed lost to Wu Yuce, but back then he had already fought one person earlier. For the group arena, the fact that he had still managed to knock away half of Carved Ghost's health was already considered a success.

And this time, his Boundless Sea had the health lead, and his Qi Master style had undergone a season's worth of testing and was now solidified.

"Give it a try." Wu Yuce generally wasn't inclined to chat, but he actually said this tough sentence in the chat. He knew Fang Rui's strength, especially since they were from the same season. Compared to everyone else, he had gotten to know Fang Rui's dirty Qi Master style earlier than everyone else. Last time after fighting Happy, Fang Rui had called him to spar for many matches. In the end, it was unclear

who had gotten more wins, but Wu Yuze knew for sure: Fang Rui's new unique playstyle was definitely viable.

The reality confirmed this point. Fang Rui indeed walked a new path with his Qi Master, even though traditional Qi Master players all looked down upon his style. But with Zhao Yang's retirement, there was no longer one leading Qi Master. This season's All-Stars, there had been no Qi Master, but what about next year? Next year, given Happy's strong results and Fang Rui's performance, this guy could actually enter the All-Stars with the identity of a Qi Master. That would really show everyone who looked down upon this dirty Qi Master style!

You look down upon my playstyle, but I am the number one Qi Master.

When he thought about this, Wu Yuze felt that it was really quite interesting, and he very much wanted to see this happen. However, even so, he did not want to become Fang Rui's stepping stone. For the sake of Void's victory, he would not hesitate to block Fang Rui's way.

I will not lose!

Void's season is not yet over!

With a roar, with the Phantom God's power flashing around him, Wu Yuze fought even more fiercely than he had last round.

He... won?

In the instant that the results came out, even the live audience couldn't believe their eyes.

Wu Yuze's Carved Ghost remained standing at the very end, with four percent health remaining.

"You..." Fang Rui left this final message in the chat. Dirty players like him could really be helpless against an opponent like this. This kind of guy, bold and decisive, wouldn't play those psychological games with you dirty players. He would simply use his swordlight to slash through everything.

Void won the group arena. Those Void fans who had already given up suddenly all awakened once more. The crowd exploded like a volcano that had slept dormant for many years, releasing all of their enthusiasm in one instant, powerful enough to burn through everything. When Happy's three players returned to their player area, they could only shout to communicate with each other. The noise of the stadium was simply too loud.

3-2, now Void was in the lead. If they won the team round, a final result of 8-2, maybe there was still hope?

Wu Yuze's strong performance didn't just win two points, it ignited everyone's hopes for Void.

But, it ends here...

Wu Yuze sighed as he rotated his camera view, seeing his fallen comrades around him.

Blue Exorcist, Soul Defender, Ghost Lantern, Translucent.

"It's just the two of us left!" Wu Yuze was never one for melancholy, but this time, their season, Void's season, was ending here.

“Yeah,” said Li Xuan. Standing behind Carved Ghost, back-to-back, was his Crying Devil.

Void’s Ghost Duo. On Void’s side, only these two remained. Even though they were an experienced partnership, expecting them to pull off a 2v5 was simply too much.

Happy had already surrounded them completely, but they weren’t rushing to attack. Crying Devil didn’t have much mana left, so he couldn’t maintain the defense of Ghost Boundaries. They just had to wait until the Ghost Boundaries ran out, and then they could calmly attack them.

“Last one,” Li Xuan said. Crying Devil’s blade surged with the power of the Phantom God as he casted a final Ghost Boundary.

Boom!

But at this moment, Dancing Rain opened fire. Li Xuan was forced to interrupt the cast as he moved to dodge.

“Tsk, our last one’s gone too,” Li Xuan said. Crying Devil’s mana was used up for good.

“So it ends like this!”

“Yeah, it’s over...”

The Ghost Boundaries faded, leaving openings, and Happy’s characters charged forward. Long-range, short-range, they all began their attacks, and Void’s Ghost Duo finally fell upon the ground they had so tightly defended with their Ghost Boundaries for so long.

In the end, Happy won their Round 33 match with a score of 7-3. Void, having only achieved 3 points, could consider themselves finished for the season. Even if their competitors had abysmal performances in the upcoming rounds, with only five rounds left to close such a large point gap, there was no point in imagining what was theoretically possible. Only those who were especially stubborn in refusing to give up would still hope for that extremely unlikely possibility, hope that those competitors wouldn’t earn a single point in the next rounds and that Void would surpass them.

But, would that happen?

The moment that the Void vs Happy match ended, there were already people frantically checking for news from the other matches this round.

Hundred Blossoms, 9-1, a huge home victory against Misty Rain. The gap between them and Void was pulled from 23 to 29 points.

301, a 10-0 perfect victory against Miracle, which pulled their gap with Void from 28 to 35 points.

There was still one match in progress!

It was the match that had received the most attention this round, Thunderclap against Wind Howl.

After Thunderclap lagged behind in the individual matches, 1-4, the two teams were now engaged in a fierce team battle.

Wind Howl's recent team performance was quite fierce. Their strategy of tearing apart and playing one-on-one had shaken a number of strong teams. Maybe they would win again in this match? If they won 9-1, Thunderclap would have only won one point, and maybe they would just continue to lose and lose, and Void would win and win, and eventually surpass them?

The stubborn Void fans who refused to despair carried these sort of dreams as they studied the details of this match. But in the end, even they had to let go of their last strands of hope.

Thunderclap had taken teamwork to the peak. Individually, their players weren't all that strong. But they were all team players. They understood strategy well and their cooperative awareness was strong. Once they were together, their strength didn't lose to that of any team. And Wind Howl? Their new playstyle was the antithesis of Thunderclap's. Their "cooperation" was to not cooperate. Their method was to turn the team battle into individual battles.

By this point, they had already chopped apart many strong teams, but they finally met their match in Thunderclap. The most cooperative, cohesive team in the entire Alliance wouldn't be broken apart so easily. Wind Howl messed up, and with their playstyle, one mess-up meant defeat. They had played their best to last this long, but unfortunately for them, Thunderclap still won in the end.

6 to 4.

With the conclusion of this battle, the results of all the teams who were currently fighting for a spot in the playoffs were known.

Void was out for good, but Hundred Blossoms had caught up once again. They were tied with Wind Howl in terms of points, 208, but because they lost to Wind Howl in terms of their head-to-head point scores, they were in ninth place for now.

All of the current rankings were only temporary. The points differences between the teams was worth more attention. Smaller differences could be flipped in the course of one round. After the end of this round, the fifth place team Happy had 219 points, while the eighth and ninth place Wind Howl and Hundred Blossoms had 208 points. This was a difference of only 11 points from fifth to ninth. Happy was directly going against three of these direct competitors in upcoming battles, so this current 11 point lead really wasn't much.

This round was only one hurdle they'd had to make it through. Void had dropped out, but no team had made it to safety.

The upcoming Round 34 was, for a Happy, a good chance to grab points. Their opponent was Lightly, a weaker team that had no more prospects for this season. Chen Guo wanted to directly add these ten points to Happy's total.

But Happy's roster for this round once again gave Chen Guo something to worry about.

"You're not going in the team competition?" Chen Guo looked at Ye Xiu in shock. In the team round's roster, Ye Xiu and Lord Grim's names were absent.

"Yes. For these upcoming rounds, I will try to rest as much as possible," said Ye Xiu.

Chen Guo hesitated. She had worried time and time again about Ye Xiu's professional life expectancy; she had worried about whether he was working himself too hard. From in-game to the Pro League, from management to strategy, from training to equipment, Ye Xiu was involved in it all. Was he really not tired?

Chen Guo had had these doubts before.

And now, Ye Xiu, using this method, was telling her clearly: he, too, was tired. He, too, needed to rest.

Chapter 1357: Mistake

Ye Xiu could tire too.

Perhaps sometimes, perseverance would be enough to overcome fatigue, but Chen Guo knew that Ye Xiu did not lack perseverance. He needed to rest for the same reason that he insisted Wei Chen and Luo Ji play matches: he needed to prepare for the playoffs as well. He needed a hundred percent of his energy to face the playoffs.

And now, even though they were stuck in the struggle for top eight, Happy did have the most points out of all their direct competitors.

Chen Guo tried to think optimistically, and when they trained for the team round this week, they practiced without Ye Xiu and Lord Grim.

Soon, May 8th arrived, and Round 34 began.

Happy and the other teams vying for the playoffs underwent their desperate struggle, while the powerhouses at the top were already preparing for the playoffs.

Team Blue Rain was rotating their team battle roster nonstop.

Team Tiny Herb was working hard at strategies that didn't rely too much on Wang Jiexi.

Team Tyranny's three old generals ended rotation after that one round where they all appeared. Now, they all played both the individual and team battles.

And this round, Tyranny played a home game against Heavenly Swords.

There weren't many interactions between these two teams. Tyranny's fans cheered for their own team, just like normal. But when the names for the first individual battle were announced, the entire stadium froze.

Tyranny, Zhang Jiale.

Heavenly Swords, Sun Zheping.

Team Hundred Blossoms, Blood and Blossoms, one of the most quintessential partnerships of the Alliance. These former partners suddenly met in this match.

Reunited at last, but in a confrontation that had never occurred before.

Neither Tyranny nor Heavenly Swords would care about this one point very much, but the significance these two carried...

Tyranny's home fans and Heavenly Swords' visiting fans wouldn't have the same deep ties to these two that Hundred Blossoms fans would have. But who hadn't heard of the madness that these two brought, back in the day?

Blood and Blossoms had made its lasting mark in Glory's history. Even though they ultimately hadn't managed to win the championship, but in competition, heroes weren't determined solely by success or failure.

That former prosperity had ended on that summer five long years ago. Since then, the two had never reunited on the battlefield, and there was no more Blood and Blossoms, only victory and defeat.

But the outcome of this one battle truly didn't matter too much, and when the audience saw this pair of opponents, they didn't care too much who won or lost. They were more curious about what this duo, who had left behind countless regrets, would say to each other, when they had this sort of meeting on the battlefield.

And so, no one watched the match. Everyone was staring at the chat displayed on the large screen.

Nothing. Nothing at all.

The two had no conversation, no exchange. The characters simply charged forward and met at the center of the map.

Flowers blossomed, concealing Dazzling Hundred Blossoms. But the Berserker's slashes were no longer creating a scene of blood, and even if they were, it would be the blood of Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

Charge!

Sun Zheping's Berserker Another Summer of Sleep once again charged forward. Would anyone understand Zhang Jiale's playstyle than he? This playstyle relied on the light and shadows created by skills, and those on the same team weren't immune to these effects. It could impede teammates just as easily as opponents. Sun Zheping, as the partner who had once stood the closest to him amidst this light and shadow, of course understood how to maintain his bearings and search for targets to attack.

But this time, he was searching for the owner of this expanse of light and shadow.

Wild Blood Strike!

The blood-red silhouette of the greatsword instantly carved through the dazzle, and Another Summer of Sleep advanced forward as though there were nothing in his way.

"Oh..." The whole stadium made noises of understanding. From Sun Zheping's camera view, they could see how the light and shadow didn't give him any confusion at all. His field of vision was just as clear as always.

As expected! Everyone thought. As expected of former partners. They understood each other too well.

But just in this moment, when Another Summer of Sleep continued to advance, taking one step closer to Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, the light and shadow suddenly closed in, enveloping Another Summer of Sleep in their midst.

Is that so?

Sun Zheping rotated his camera view, looking around him in a circle. This time, he couldn't very much see through it.

So the Hundred Blossoms playstyle had also changed a lot! These years, he'd purposely not paid much attention to it, and now, he was truly beginning to feel that he couldn't keep up...

But, this shouldn't be enough to cause him any difficulty, right? He would never forget the logic of this playstyle! It wasn't too late to learn now!

Another Summer of Sleep looked left and right, as though searching for directions.

The audience watched silently, and Zhang Jiale, controlling the blossoming display, gradually revealed a shocked expression.

This was no longer the Hundred Blossoms style he had used during his time with Sun Zheping. After all, after so many years, the levels, equipment, and skills had all changed so much. But, just over the course of this battle, Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep caught up. Slowly, step by step, he had already entered the rhythm of the new Hundred Blossoms style.

Sun Zheping, knowing the Hundred Blossoms style so thoroughly, only needed the span of one match.

As expected of old partners. Just like this, Zhang Jiale watched as Another Summer of Sleep finally charged in front of his Dazzling Hundred Blossoms. The greatsword came down without a moment of hesitation – Dazzling Hundred Blossoms leapt aside and counterattacked.

Another Summer of Sleep fell. Charging through the cover of the Hundred Blossoms style was already his limit...

"Good luck." When he fell, Sun Zheping simply said this.

"Yeah," Zhang Jiale answered.

The only words exchange in the whole battle...

At the same time, Ye Xiu helped Happy win a first point in the individual competition. Although he was not playing in the team competition this time, he was still first in the individual competition as always.

And then Luo Ji and Wei Chen were up. This time, Luo Ji won, but Wei Chen made a mistake and lost the point. Winning and losing matches was an ordinary thing, but Luo Ji and Wei Chen were in a very delicate position. If they lost points, there would always be people jumping forward to question Happy's plan, as though if it weren't for the two of them, if other people fought instead, Happy would be guaranteed to win points.

But nothing was ever guaranteed on a battlefield.

And so even though Wei Chen lost a point, they were open and forgiving.

Then, in the group arena, Happy won a clean victory, entering the team round with a score of 4-1.

When the team competition lineup came out, without Ye Xiu's name, the crowd burst into whispers.

Beginning to let the main force rest? The team was really confident! Everyone thought this way, but no one was too worried, as Lightly wasn't a very strong team and didn't have much fighting spirit.

But in the end, in their home game, Happy lost the team competition.

4-6. The digital scoreboard recorded this all. In this crucial time before the playoffs, Happy lost a team competition.

The reason? Ye Xiu hadn't played.

No matter what, this point could not be avoided. Core players were simply like this. Even if they weren't onstage, they had to carry the responsibility of their team's mistakes. You weren't onstage! This was your biggest mistake...

Happy paid the price for their arrogance!

This was how multiple media reported it, especially those who liked to hate on Happy. They liked this angle.

After the match, all was quiet in the prep room.

Everyone could see Ye Xiu's hard work. No matter what, none of Happy's members would object to Ye Xiu's choice to rest, even during this crucial time where every point mattered. They were all upset, all blaming themselves, that as soon as Ye Xiu was gone, they lost points.

No one said anything. In the prep room, everyone silently watched the television, which was currently broadcasting the match between Samsara and 301.

To face Samsara during this crucial point-earning period, 301 seemed fairly unlucky. But a number of people felt that perhaps 301 was lucky.

Because no team's position was more stable than Samsara's right now. After 33 rounds, they had 282 points, over 42 points above the current second place.

Samsara didn't need any more points in the regular season. They could casually let their main players rest, train rookies, practice strategies. They faced no pressure.

Perhaps these conditions would give their opponents a precious opportunity. Perhaps a match against Samsara would actually be easier to fight.

301 won two battles in the individual competition. Samsara had sent up their rookies, and everyone believed their hypothesis was correct.

Then, in the group arena, Samsara sent up their strongest lineup as always, and won.

For the team round, they also used their strongest lineup this season. At that moment, although the match had yet to end, 301's loss was set.

Even with two championships under their belt, Samsara was still hungry for more. They didn't relax, they didn't let their team enter a trash or a performative period. They still faced battles with all they had. They continued to strive for victory above all else; they didn't want to slack off while still sprinting forward.

Let the main players rest? They might not even need it. Samsara's players were all in their prime. For them, one match a week was no great burden.

Just like that, Samsara still won in the end, 8-2. Samsara did not give 301 a so-called break.

After 34 rounds, Samsara had 290 points, and by now, Blue Rain's match against Parade had ended, with Blue Rain winning 9-1. But even so, this only shrunk their difference with Samsara from 42 to 41 points.

With four rounds remaining, Samsara led second place by 41 points.

The moment that Samsara won the match, their home stadium burst into cheers and applause louder than any other during this season.

Samsara had earned first place in the regular season, four rounds early. Even though there was no trophy associated with this, this was a still a result to be proud of.

It seemed that Samsara's home stadium had anticipated this possibility, and so they'd prepared a small celebration ceremony beforehand. Of course, it was just a small ceremony. After all, the season still hadn't ended, and having a large celebration now would be inconsiderate to the other teams.

Samsara, four rounds early, celebrated a beautiful end to their regular season. Happy, meanwhile, because of their failure this round, continued to struggle in the mud.

This round, their fellow competitors' results: Wind Howl defeated Royal Style 8-2, Thunderclap defeated Misty Rain 9-1, Hundred Blossoms defeated Void 9-1.

And so Thunderclap, with 226 points, surpassed Happy by 3 points, charging into fifth place and pushing Happy down to sixth. Hundred Blossoms beat Wind Howl by one point, rising to seventh. Wind Howl and 301 were once again tied with points, and based on their head-to-head score, Wind Howl was eighth, and 301 was pushed to ninth.

The situation became more of a deadlock. Happy was only 7 points away from ninth place. And in Round 35, Happy was playing their away game against a strong opponent, the team that had just surpassed them by three points, Thunderclap.

Chapter 1358: Tide and Xu Bin

In Round 35, Thunderclap would be playing Happy in their home game. These two teams would be fighting for the number five spot between themselves, so being direct competitors was not key. What was more important were the teams hot on their tails. The loser of this round might fall several spots and be a step closer to the danger zone.

For this round, of the three teams in pursuit, Wind Howl would play Heavenly Swords in an away match; Hundred Blossoms would play Royal Style in an away match, and 301 again faced a powerhouse as they did last round: they would be playing against Tiny Herb.

301 was perched precariously on the edge of the playoffs zone. They were currently out of the standings for the playoffs, and the schedule gave them an even larger obstacle. After this round, they had to face Blue Rain and finally Happy...

The television broadcast for Round 35 faced yet another dilemma: should they show Thunderclap versus Happy, or 301 versus Tiny Herb?

Finally, the broadcasting team decided on 301 versus Tiny Herb. Even though Thunderclap versus Happy was a key match, the two teams had already met and was broadcast once in Round 16. Also, Happy still had plenty of key matches coming: both their Round 37 clash against Wind Howl and Round 38 against 301 were candidates for broadcast.

The broadcasters could only choose one match, but the media focused equally on both. 301 became the primary team to stir things up following the winter transfer window and into the second half of the season. If it weren't for their sudden surge up the leaderboard, the top 8 would have been pretty much set in stone, after seeing the performances of teams just out of reach such as Void or Misty Rain.

Since 301 could stir things up, they became well received by the many enthusiastic Glory fans. Because of this, they managed to attract many otherwise-neutral fans. Their current style that used Life-Risking Strike liberally was very interesting to watch!

The Glory Alliance's Round 35 commenced on May 15th. 301 welcomed Tiny Herb to their home stadium.

"301's stadium is jam-packed today!" Pan Lin exclaimed in the broadcast.

"Well of course. For 301 to have reached this stage, their fans should also come out and do their best to support their team," Li Yibo said.

"No one would have expected 301 to create such a hectic scene before us at the start of this season. Actually no, even after the half-way mark of the season, no one expected it," Pan Lin said.

"Who would have guessed that 301 would go to Europe and come back with an expert suitable for their Knight character?" Li Yibo replied with a smile.

"If 301 manages to slaughter their way into the playoffs, I reckon their winter transfer will go down as one of the most brilliant moves in Glory history," Pan Lin said.

"I think the other teams would also broaden their horizons for next year's summer transfer window. Glory's player exchange market might gradually globalize from here on out," Li Yibo said.

"But the rules and formats being different around the world is a show-stopper!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"The formats are indeed different, but not vastly so. In the end, the different game versions are the biggest barriers to establishing a conversation. But, the Glory game company has taken strong steps towards unifying game versions over the past two years. The large-scale level 75 patch last season has finally mostly synchronized the game on a global scale," Li Yibo said.

"The rumor going around right now is that the game company is planning far ahead. Their sole intention of leaving the level 70 patch for so long was to synchronize the game globally. The game company had long been scheming for players from across the world to be able to play together," Pan Lin said.

“I don’t think this is a complete rumor,” Li Yibo nodded. “The game company’s actions must indeed be taking this into account. Looks like Glory’s competitive scene will have an even richer future!”

“Haha, having said all that, let’s first focus on how our own Glory League’s current season will play out! The first round of the individual competition is starting soon. The big screen hasn’t shown the players yet, but we can already see the players on both sides rising from their respective benches. It looks like they are getting ready to get on stage. On 301’s side, we’ve got a game changer for 301’s season, the former English Glory league pro, Bai Shu! How about Tiny Herb’s side? This is... ah! It’s Xu Bin! It seems the first player to go up for Tiny Herb is Xu Bin. Oh my, what a coincidence,” Pan Lin became more animated.

Xu Bin happened to be a former player of 301. He had been the previous owner of the Knight character, Tide. When Bai Shu arrived, he was given the Knight Tide, whom 301 was previously unable to find a replacement for when Xu Bin left. Two players who controlled Tide, old and new, who would come out on top? This really was an engaging match to watch. The audience didn’t seem to have noticed the little movements at the player benches. However, the clamoring immediately grew in the stadium when the big screen confirmed that it would be Bai Shu playing against Xu Bin.

Xu Bin was traded for Tiny Herb’s All-Star Grappler Li Yihui. However, after Li Yihui’s arrival at 301, the title of All-Star Grappler was very quickly snatched away by Samsara’s Lu Boyuan. Li Yihui didn’t seem to have as much value to 301 as Xu Bin used to. When 301 failed to reach the playoffs last season, the exchange was viewed as a loss in the eyes of the fans. The character Tide was benched because no player was found for him; it really was incomprehensible for them.

But now, 301 has acquired Bai Shu. Even though they were perched on the edge of the play-off zone, Bai Shu only became a member of 301 in the second half of their journey this season. Compared to the first half, Bai Shu had really improved their performance by leaps and bounds.

The fans couldn’t not support Bai Shu. Additionally, this successor has accelerated the weakening of their reminiscent feelings towards Xu Bin. In the minds of 301’s fans, the so-called Grind King Xu Bin would always be tangled up with an opponent, trying to wear them down slowly. Bai Shu was not like this; his individual fights were straightforward and he would balance attacking and defending in team fights. He was good at both providing protection and sudden aggression. This Knight player from the European Alliance had a different playstyle to those who were brought up in the Chinese pro circle. He almost seemed to be more in touch with the Knight character. The so-called Knight’s Spirit was not just a class awakening skill for him. His awareness, his playstyle, his habits; they all seemed to carry the true spirit of a knight. Under his control, the class seemed to symbolize some kind of glory.

This was a difference in playstyle influenced by a difference in culture.

There have already been articles focused on Bai Shu that tried to explain how his Knight style is different from those who grew up in the Chinese Glory circle from a cultural perspective.

Then, was this visitor from afar the real deal, or was the Knight of this land the better warrior? No one would have guessed that the Bai Shu’s first match with Tiny Herb as a member of 301 would lead to the confrontation between these two top Knight players.

Enter the stage. Load the characters.

Bai Shu's chosen map, Training Field, was reasonably simple. It was an unbiased, symmetric, and small map. The two opponents could see each other as soon as the match began. Bai Shu did not hesitate to have Tide move forward. Xu Bin seemed to hesitate for a moment before he controlled Angelica to go forth and meet his opponent.

The two knights faced each other and walked faster and faster, eventually breaking into a sprint. Both characters raised their swords and shields into place, and locked their gaze on their opponent's every move, but neither launched an attack.

Ten units away.

Eight units.

Six units.

Four units!

When there was just one step left before they could wipe each other's faces with their shields... Charge!

Xu Bin's Angelica acted first and unexpectedly unleashed the knight's Charge skill at four units' distance. Angelica's left hand gripped his shield, and the sword in his right was thrust forth. The four units gap vanished in an instant!

Dong!

A resounding gong instantly rang out.

Bai Shu actually managed to accurately block Angelica's sudden Charge. Angelica's Charge ended up colliding with Tide's shield.

Silver of Life!

This is the Silver shield held by Tide. Xu Bin has used it for three entire years and knew its attributes like the back of his hand. Even though it was raised to level 75 by 301 since and he didn't know if there were any adjustments, Xu Bin was confident that the health regeneration attribute on Silver of Life would not be abandoned by 301.

Not counting Silver of Life, if Tide's other equipment hasn't changed too much, they all held health regeneration attribute. Fighting Tide in a long match would be very unfavorable!

This was Xu Bin's judgement. But he was called the Grind King; famous for slowing the pace down. And Tide's equipment was painstakingly created to suit this playstyle.

A character specialized in drawn-out battles and a Grind King who slowed the pace of battle down. There wasn't a better combination of player and character. But now, Tide is Xu Bin's enemy. He found himself having to overcome his previously most valued attribute. In addition, he had to change his playstyle...

If the Grind King could not grind, then what would he do?

After Angelica's Charge was blocked, he immediately began to attack. A ferociously fast and violent attack.

The whole stadium was stunned. They were familiar with Xu Bin! That guy up on stage initiating attacks with an unmatched pace and ferocity, was that really Xu Bin? Did he change that much after going to Tiny Herb? No one has seen otherwise so far!

In the live broadcast, Pan Lin also froze. He stared for a full three seconds before saying: "Xu Bin is proactively attacking,". As soon as he spoke, he felt he said something super awkward. Xu Bin proactively attacking? This is a sentence with a syntax or semantic error, right? The individual words didn't string together properly to form a sentence, right?

"Haha, looks like Xu Bin is pretty clear on Tide's attributes. He knows that grinding away at Tide would only be walking away from victory. So he had to force himself to change his style!" Li Yibo said.

"This change, isn't it a bit too much?!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"It doesn't suit him. His play looks uncomfortable. Bai Shu is defending well, Xu Bin's attack doesn't pose much of a threat!" Li Yibo said.

"Then this match..."

Li Yibo stayed silent. As it was, he wouldn't be as bold as to predict the outcome!

But once again he regretted not doing so. The match played out exactly as he had analyzed. Xu Bin really wasn't suited for this playstyle, and the playstyle he was comfortable with could not deal with Tide. Finally, he was miserably dealt with by Bai Shu.

"How do I say this... Bai Shu really did slow down his pace for this match. He was also well aware of the implication of Tide's attributes and took advantage of it. This game, it feels like 301's Xu Bin defeated Tiny Herb's Xu Bin..." Li Yibo said.

Chapter 1359: Happy, Unmoved

"301's Xu Bin would beat Tiny Herb's Xu Bin?" Pan Lin repeated Li Yibo's words.

"Of course, I'm not saying that the past Xu Bin is better than the present one. I'm just saying that what's inhibiting his playstyle the most is his familiarity with the Knight character Tide," Li Yibo explained.

"Understood!" Pan Lin nodded his head.

301 started strong and took the initial lead. The stadium had erupted with cheers, but soon afterwards, in the second and third rounds of the individual competition as well as the following group arena, Tiny Herb took a string of victories. By the end of the individual rounds, Team 301 had lagged behind 1 to 4. How could the audience still be smiling? With their rise and fall, all that was left were sighs.

At this moment, news arrived for a different match. Wind Howl versus Heavenly Swords ended the individual rounds 3 to 2. On the other hand, Hundred Blossoms entered the team competition against Royal Style 4 to 1. The other closely watched match was Happy's away game against Thunderclap, ending with an incisive 5-0! Happy didn't let Thunderclap win a single point in the individual rounds.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were using the mid-match break to analyze the current situation. Team 301 had been behind in the rankings in the first place. Their current predicament was naturally grim. Even though Thunderclap was farther behind in terms of this current round than 301, they were farther ahead in the rankings, so their situation was just slightly better than 301's.

The team competition between 301 and Tiny Herb had yet to start, but the other matches had already started, so Pan Lin and Li Yibo naturally took the opportunity to discuss those. Happy and Thunderclap was undoubtedly the biggest spotlight. After the two saw the lineups for the team competition, the two were greatly surprised.

"Ye Xiu isn't coming up again!" Pan Lin gasped in astonishment.

"No way?" Li Yibo replied subconsciously and immediately checked the info in front of him. Ye Xiu hadn't appeared last round in the team competition. People could still understand that. After all, their opponents, Team Lightly, weren't that formidable. Letting a core player like Ye Xiu take a break was necessary. Team Tyranny's old generals had rotated the entire season, but their age was practically the same as Ye Xiu's.

After seeing Team Tyranny's intentional rotations, everyone began realizing that the reason why Ye Xiu didn't play in the group arena might just be to lessen the burden on him. After all, in the group arena, he might not only have to play against a single opponent. In addition, after finishing the group arena, he would have to start in the team competition. The break he got couldn't compare to if he started resting from the first individual competition.

Since playoffs were coming up, Ye Xiu resting was something everyone could understand. Unfortunately, without Ye Xiu, Happy had lost in their team competition against Lightly.

Those five points were truly a bit of a pity. As a result, their Round 35 against Thunderclap became even more crucial. Everyone thought Ye Xiu would be going up this time, but Ye Xiu ended up choosing not to. After the individual competition, he just sat there firmly at Happy's bench and never got up after that. Happy's lineup for the team competition was Fang Rui, Tang Rou, Su Mucheng, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, and Wei Chen.

"Leave it to us!"

Everyone in Happy said these words to Ye Xiu while preparing for this round.

Ye Xiu indeed had been planning on coming out for the team competition, but the rest of Happy had unanimously agreed to stop him.

"Oh? You don't need me?" Ye Xiu smiled.

"You're not that important," Wei Chen replied.

"Alright then!" Ye Xiu nodded his head, and the matter was done just like that.

Happy's arrangements had been completed easily, but the amount of shock brought by it was not small at all. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were shouting on the broadcast. Thunderclap's home crowd were also hollering after learning that Ye Xiu would not be going up. Thunderclap's fans were feeling a bit complicated. Ye Xiu not appearing should be good news, but Ye Xiu not appearing for such an important match felt like

disdain towards their Thunderclap. To think there was still a team that dared to underestimate their Thunderclap?

Thunderclap's Xiao Shiqin saw Happy's lineup and was also stunned. When they greeted each other before the match, he even spoke to Ye Xiu about having another good match, to which Ye Xiu laughed it off nonchalantly. He had thought that Ye Xiu had been acting nonchalant as a psychological attack, but Ye Xiu had truly been indifferent at the time. He wouldn't even be playing, so why wouldn't he be?

"Show them some color!" Thunderclap's Dai Yanqi was clearly a part of the group that felt like Happy was looking down on them. She was currently going beyond her position and urging the players who would be going on stage.

"Calm down," Xiao Shiqin regained his composure and hastily went over to advise against everyone going into the match with this mentality. Their individual strengths weren't that outstanding. What they had was team cooperation. Every individual was an important part of the system. If any one of them broke away from the team's rhythm due to a peculiar mindset, the negative effects on Thunderclap would be multiplicative.

"Captain, they're looking down on us!" Dai Yanqi seemed to be complaining to Xiao Shiqin.

"Don't treat this so simply," Xiao Shiqin said seriously. His gaze shifted towards Happy's bench. Happy's players were gathered together for a pre-match huddle, and although Ye Xiu wouldn't be going onto the stage, he was also standing among them, talking to the team seriously.

Ye Xiu not coming out for the team competition definitely had a reason behind it.

Xiao Shiqin thought about it.

Is he pretending to look down on us to shake up our mentality? This sort of psychological attack was certainly one reason, but apart from that... Xiao Shiqin looked at Happy's lineup. Ye Xiu wasn't there, and Tang Rou took his place. Wei Chen was their sixth player. The only player who rarely appeared this season was Wei Chen.

They probably have a counter strategy planned! Xiao Shiqin thought. Ye Xiu not going up was a surprising arrangement that had thoroughly messed up Thunderclap's pre-match plans. They could not be careless facing this Happy lineup. He needed to quickly come up with a new strategy.

Xiao Shiqin was constantly thinking, but Thunderclap's players were waiting for what was coming after "Don't treat this so simply", but all they got was silence and a few glances towards Happy.

The captain was thinking.

Thunderclap's player knew. Ye Xiu not appearing in the team competition required them to make adjustments to their plans. Xiao Shiqin was most likely thinking about this issue.

At this time, Happy's six player had started walking towards the stage. Xiao Shiqin snapped back to the present and called out to his teammates: "Let's go."

Seeing how Xiao Shiqin's expression was extremely serious, the other Thunderclap players didn't dare be negligent. They readjusted themselves to the correct mentality and followed Xiao Shiqin to the stage.

The match began.

Team Happy rushed forward eagerly. As for Thunderclap, as soon as they loaded into the map, Xiao Shiqin's orders immediately started appearing in the chat. A screen of words quickly scrolled down. Quite a few of them were team-agreed-upon words. If one did not do specialized research on Thunderclap, it would be difficult to understand.

Thunderclap's players had collected their thoughts of taking revenge on Happy for looking down on them. They were following Xiao Shiqin's arrangements precisely. Xiao Shiqin's brain was constantly turning. The initial strategy was formulated, but what followed afterwards, the opponent's reactions and what changes needed to be made to their strategy were all things he needed to think about. He wouldn't neglect any of Happy's possible class compositions.

Thunderclap's team capabilities were truly exceptional. Immediate corrections and commands were accurately implemented. Their ability to carry out orders wasn't mechanical either. Everyone in Thunderclap understood Xiao Shiqin's tactical intentions. They weren't Xiao Shiqin's wooden puppets. All of their thoughts combined together to form a whole. The less Xiao Shiqin talked in chat, the stronger the team.

Soon, the two sides met. Their confrontation wasn't direct. Both sides had players sent out to move strategically.

From the direct confrontations to the wandering players, the two sides' setups began to slowly reveal themselves. It was too much for the eyes. Without Ye Xiu, they thought Happy would instantly collapse, but that didn't happen. A Happy without Ye Xiu still had the strength to compete with Thunderclap. Thunderclap could not be careless.

Xiao Shiqin felt glad as well. He was glad that he was able to control his teammates' emotions at the start of the match. If their mentality had truly been disturbed as a result, they would have certainly paid the price.

The battle spread throughout the map. Every player was brilliantly displaying their abilities, but in the end, the scales gradually tilted towards Thunderclap. They had the home game advantage, after all. For a very tactics-oriented team, being able to choose the map was an incredible advantage.

Thunderclap won.

But it hadn't been an easy one. They were on the edge until the very end. When Happy's final player fell, Thunderclap only had two players remaining as well. Up until the last moment, they couldn't be careless. 2v1? With everyone at such low health, if they made a slight mistake, the opponent could turn things around. The healers on both sides had died early on.

5-5.

The final score on the big screen made Thunderclap's players and the audience members let out a sigh of relief. In the end, they were able to win. Happy hadn't shaven them bald.

Even though they had been leading eighth and ninth place by 10 points, if they didn't win a single point here, their days ahead wouldn't be great. Their next opponents were Hundred Blossoms and Samsara.

Hundred Blossoms was their direct competitor. Samsara had already established themselves firmly as the number one, and Samsara was still maintaining their thirst for victory.

Happy and Thunderclap's intense match ended rather quickly. The results quickly spread to the other stadiums. From many people's perspectives, Ye Xiu not appearing for the team competition meant a certain loss for Happy. 5-5 seemed to be a pre-determined result. No one was surprised in the slightest.

As for the highlight broadcasted match, it had also finally ended. 301 had won a bitter battle against Tiny Herb, earning those five precious points.

Chapter 1360: Excellent Era's Return

Round 35 had ended, but strangely, the rankings hadn't changed in the slightest. Hundred Blossoms, Wind Howl, and 301 had all won, while the leaders Happy and Thunderclap had tied 5-5.

There were only 3 rounds remaining, but none of these teams held a firm spot for playoffs. The leader among these five teams was Team Thunderclap in fifth place, but the difference between Team Thunderclap and the ninth place Team 301 was only 9 points. If Team Thunderclap performed too poorly in the following three rounds, they might not make it into playoffs.

The fight for top eight had reached such an extent. Everyone wanted to analyze this battle between the five teams. Those who published print issues all felt like there wasn't enough space to write what they wanted. And even at such an urgent moment, they had no choice but to give a few pages to cover another competition.

The Challenger League.

The Season 10 Challenger League.

This time's Challenger League finals had a certain level of hype to it.

Team Excellent Era was back!

Even though they were no longer powerhouses and they no longer had the Battle God One Autumn Leaf, the name Excellent Era could not be buried. The team had charged their way through to the final step in the Challenger League. Just one more step, and this name would once again return to the Glory Alliance.

What was Excellent Era like now?

Now that Excellent Era had reached the final stage, the Esports Weekly was finally willing to give a few pages to give an introduction.

This new Excellent Era was still centered around a Battle Mage.

Qiu Fei and his Combat Form.

Those who watched last season's Challenger League matches should still have an impression of this youth. When Excellent Era crumbled and their players went separate ways, he had been regarded by

numerous teams as a talented youth and had received numerous invites. In the end, this youth chose to stay; he chose to stay in a team that had fallen and looked to be at death's door.

Excellent Era still had a number of fans, but the media had practically abandoned it up until this moment. Now that they looked to have hopes of returning to the Alliance, a few introductions and reports started coming in. As it turned out, the surviving Excellent Era wasn't as bad as people had initially imagined.

Qiu Fei's talent had already been recognized. This year, he seemed to have improved remarkably. Combat Form had been a part of Excellent Era's main roster in last season's Challenger League. As a team with vast amounts of experience with a Battle Mage, they had been able to create impressive equipment for him, and this year, his equipment had been upgraded to Level 75. The other main roster players were found to be members of Excellent Era's training camp that year. New Excellent Era no longer had the capacity to continue operating the training camp. Instead, the exceptional trainees from there were directly kept as official members.

During the disbandment, while Excellent Era's players, characters, and precious materials were being sold wantonly to other Clubs, Excellent Era's successor Xia Zhongtian made his move at the last moment and secured two items.

First was Qiu Fei as New Excellent Era's core and soul.

Second was Guild Excellent Dynasty. Xia Zhongtian had accurately grasped the fact that competitive Glory relied on the game. Having a firm control over the in-game guild was an important foundation for a club and a team.

New Excellent Era had set foot onto another season of the Challenger League and had once again reached the finals. Friday would decide their final fate.

Excellent Era's opponent was Mysterious Fantasy, the other team that had been relegated alongside Excellent Era in Season 8. But in Season 9, the one to have the last laugh was Happy. Both teams had been eliminated by them. After another bitter struggle, the two sides stood against each other in the finals.

The Excellent Era now was not the Excellent Era then, but the Mysterious Fantasy now was still the same Mysterious Fantasy. Their coach Zhang Yiwei had stayed last season, and Mysterious Fantasy's players had stayed as well. On their way through to the finals, Mysterious Fantasy had eliminated the two Season 9 relegated teams, which had boosted their confidence greatly.

As for their opponents in the finals, the new Excellent Era did not scare them. Mysterious Fantasy were extremely confident from top to bottom in wait for the finals to come.

Friday was the day before the Pro League matches. Teams usually wouldn't arrange for any practice on this day. As a result, Ye Xiu was walking in circles out of boredom in Happy's Forest Park residence.

"Are you going to watch?" Chen Guo asked.

"Watch?" Ye Xiu asked back. He didn't ask what she was referring to. Everyone knew.

The TV was turned on and switched to the esports channel. Six Pine Stadium, the place Happy had battled at one year ago.

Both sides had entered the venue and were just waiting for the match to officially begin. Pan Lin and Li Yibo, the golden duo, once again commentated for the Challenger League, though they didn't seem to spirited at the moment. The story for this year's Challenger League finals didn't even come close to last year's: a mere river was nothing after having crossed the vast sea.

"Okay, the first players for the individual competition are about to go up," Pan Lin remarked dully.

"Ahem," Li Yibo coughed.

Pan Lin glanced at Li Yibo in confusion. The TV director's angry roar quickly made him realize his mistake.

"Oh, it's not the individual competition. It's the group arena. I'm sorry friends, a slip of the tongue," Pan Lin hastily apologized. The Challenger League finals was based on the playoffs competitive format. A 5v5 group arena and a team competition with the points calculated based on the results. Pan Lin had been thinking it was an ordinary regular season game and failed to react in time.

"Excellent Era's first player will be..." Pan Lin did a clear pause before the introduction. He didn't recognize this person! So he could only take a look at the lineups and match the name to the position.

"Wen Li." Pan Lin announced the player's name and then dully read the information on him. That was all of his understanding of this player. He clearly had no personal opinion on him.

"As for Mysterious Fantasy, their first player is..." After introducing one side, he moved to the next. He knew a bit more about Mysterious Fantasy though. Even if it had been two years since the player had competed in the Alliance, he still had a rough impression of him.

"Okay, the match is starting now," Pan Lin recited.

But soon afterwards, Pan Lin was sucked into the contents of the match and gradually grew spirited.

After all, the Challenger League finals was an important match for these two teams. Their entire year's worth of efforts would be put to the test in this one hour. There was no retreat. It was either you die, or I die. Although the level of their fight might not be able to compare with the fights for top eight in the Pro League, their thirst for victory was no less, and it could clearly be seen through their playing on stage. This sort of competition would always be able to move the spectators.

When the fourth player for Team Mysterious Fantasy went up, Team Excellent Era was already at their fifth and last player. Pan Lin was starting to worry for Excellent Era.

"Excellent Era has been making a bit too many mistakes! They originally should have had a good chance at the group arena! What are your thoughts Coach Li?" Pan Lin said.

"Yes," Li Yibo nodded. "Just from a technical skill perspective, Excellent Era's players are no worse than Mysterious Fantasy's. However, in terms of real match experience, the current Excellent Era is lacking. Mysterious Fantasy's players have at least experienced the Pro League before. On the other hand, Excellent Era's current members have never participated in a real professional match before. Their match experience is still somewhat deficient, especially in this sort of life and death match. All of them look nervous, and that nervousness is certainly one reason for their mistakes."

"If they don't deal with this issue, Excellent Era might not perform well in the team competition either," Pan Lin said.

"It's up to Excellent Era's final player. Right now, the team needs something to boost their resolve," Li Yibo said.

"Mm, Excellent Era's final player for the group arena has gone onto the stage. He's Excellent Era's current team captain, Qiu Fei. He's very young actually. The information I have on hand is telling me he's only 19," Pan Lin said.

"But he is truly a very talented player. I heard that last year, Tiny Herb tried to recruit him, but he rejected them," Li Yibo said.

"It looks like he still holds a lot of feelings for Excellent Era. But feelings alone isn't enough. We all know that what matters in the end is strength," Pan Lin said.

"Qiu Fei, 1v2! Let's see how far he can go!" Li Yibo said.

The two team's characters set out and started fighting in the middle of the map.

"Beautiful!" After a few blows, Pan Lin shouted a word of praise. Qiu Fei's Combat Form had taken the initiative and was attacking ferociously.

"Very solid foundations!" Li Yibo sighed.

"His opponent doesn't seem to be able to defend," Pan Lin said.

"This Qiu Fei. I remember in last year's Challenger League finals, he produced a combo that even Ye Xiu was helpless against," Li Yibo said.

"If even Ye Xiu was helpless, that's truly the peak of what can theoretically be accomplished," Pan Lin said.

"It's looking pretty hopeless for this Mysterious Fantasy player," Li Yibo gave a fairly bold prediction. He could see the difference in skill between the two sides.

His prediction was correct. Qiu Fei won.

"Combat Form still has 68% health left! That was an impressive fight. Qiu Fei truly lives up to his name," Pan Lin said.

"But next up is Mysterious Fantasy's captain, Tang Xin. He's quite skilled too," Li Yibo said.

"If Qiu Fei can really pull off a 1v2, it'll be a huge blow to Mysterious Fantasy's morale. Let's see how Tang Xin does!" Pan Lin said.

In the end...

"He won, Qiu Fei won again! The last laugh belongs to Excellent Era, and they now have a one point lead. That wasn't easy at all. Excellent Era sure has a capable captain, even though he's only 19 years old right now," Pan Lin yelled.

“Yes, even if it’s only a one point lead, it’s a huge swing for Excellent Era. The blow to Mysterious Fantasy’s morale must be huge. I hope they don’t get discouraged and can bring their spirits back up for the team competition,” Li Yibo said.

“Neither side will let the other win easily!”

“But there’s only one champion.”

Challenger League, final victor: Excellent Era.

“We’re back!” In the post-match press conference, Team Excellent Era’s new-generation captain, Qiu Fei, faced the cameras and gave a solemn declaration.