

Godfather Of Champions

Chapter 31: Must Win Part 1

The manager of Wimbledon, Stuart Murdoch, and Keith Rupert Murdoch, were not related, though they had an identical family name. The latter was a well-known media mogul, while the former was just the manager of a league team just like Tony Twain, who only had a local reputation.

This season was his first time being the main manager of a team. Wimbledon's poor record was a reflection of his capability. He had poor judgement about what was going on in the match and then made wrong decisions based on his assessments, which continued causing the team to lose.

Like at that moment, he had just asked the team to push the formation forward, and they were knocked down by Forest's counter break.

Forest's captain, Michael Dawson, stole the ball from Wimbledon captain Nigel Reo-Coker's pass, and then he directly passed the ball to the wing Andy Reid. Reid brought the ball forward and then passed to the attacking midfielder Eoin Jess.

When he saw Jess get the ball, Harewood thought of what Tang En had just shouted at him, and he really believed that he might get replaced, though it was not even 30 minutes into the match. So he did not dare relax and was searching for the chance to get the ball.

After Wimbledon brought their formation forward, there was a lot of space behind them, which looked like big portions of English countryside scattered all over the place.

Eoin Jess saw all the spaces, and he had to make a snap decision about through which one he would shoot the ball, and not just pass the ball into any space. Whether there was anyone that could get there to pass the ball to was another problem.

Harewood ran to his left and the full back, Leigertwood, of Wimbledon, chased after him. There was temporary space. Where was Johnson?

Jess turned back, searching for him, and he saw that Johnson had the chance to break through from the right to the center. So he stopped hesitating and kicked the ball directly. The ball rolled across to the goal area, passing through Wimbledon's defense!

Johnson started running simultaneously, went diagonally across the midfield, and got the ball at the back.

Then the center back, Dean Lewington, raised up his hands to show the referee that Johnson was offside and was almost giving up on counter attacking.

The assistant referee did not raise the flag and the main referee did not blow the whistle. There was a loud cheering from the viewing platform of the City Stadium.

“Johnson and Davis are currently one on one!”

Wimbledon’s goalkeeper, Kevin Davis, had played in the Premier League, and he had fast reflexes and agility. He was especially good at competing with strikers one on one. Compared to the goalkeeper, Johnson was the lesser experienced player.

Johnson, seeing that Davis was about to defend, immediately shot the ball skilfully toward the back corner of the goalmouth. Davis had an even faster reaction, and as he jumped out to one corner, he put his leg out to the far corner. The ball just barely bounced off the tip of his toe and flew out to the other side the penalty area.

Hundreds of Wimbledon fans cheered after the nerve-racking moment. Davis had saved the team, as well as saved their hearts.

But no...the test for their hearts was not over yet.

While Jess passed the ball to the center, Harewood had just run that route, and he thought that he had missed out on his chance again. However, the ball approached him.

What about the goalkeeper? He was still lying on the ground, and Harewood could feel Leigertwood madly wanting to steal the ball.

This is going to be my last chance, and if I cannot shoot it in, I am going to be replaced! I will never let that happen!

Harewood did not have time to think. He tried his best to block Leigertwood behind him, and then he did a diving header!

The ball shot into the goalmouth!

The depressed energy of City Stadium was all at once released! The red viewing platform looked like the mouth of the volcano with hot magma flowing out!

The commentator shouted the shooter’s name throughout the stadium! “Marlon—!”

Followed by about 30,000 fans cheering, “Harewood!!”

Tang En jumped from his chair, threw his fists in the air, and hugged the people around him in celebration.

“How many passes?” he asked Walker, and Walker answered excitedly, “Four passes!”

“Great! This is the evidence!”

“Tony! We have played what we trained for...”

“Please keep it up.”

Harewood ran over after Tang En had just finished talking with Walker, “Are you still going to replace me?”

“Not enough! I need one more goal!” Tang En replied happily. “And many more!”

The radio was saying that today’s Forest was strange, that they were playing with an unfamiliar style that was totally different from the usual Team Forest, and that no goals had been made yet. MacDonald worried that something was wrong with the team.

He was still worrying when he heard sharp shouting from the radio.

“Harewood! And Gooal!!! The score is 1:0! Nottingham Forest is in the lead.”

The old man MacDonald jumped out of the small room and was shouting and waving his arms around with the sounds from the radio. He felt like one of the fans on the viewing platform with all the others who wore red jerseys for Forest and were jumping around, cheering wildly for their team.

Upon finishing his own celebration, the old man was about to go back to the room and continue listening to the rest of the match. At the same time, more excited shouting came from the radio. “It’s a...? It’s a Goal!!! Again Marlon Harewood scoring to make it 2:0!”

When Harewood smashed the football into the goalmouth, the commentator Motson hesitated. The loud cheering and applause from the viewing platform of the stadium had made the camera lens wiggle, and he was not sure whether the ball really was shot in. Then he immediately spotted David Johnson and Eoin Jess waving their arms in excitement, and Wimbledon’s goalkeeper, Kevin Davis, looking crushed. He had tried to block it, but, undoubtedly, it was a goal!

“This is way too exciting! In the first 29 minutes, Forest’s performance was somewhat lacking, but they just scored two goals in just three minutes! Marlon Harewood is the new hero here, and he has really done a fine job!”

After Tang En waved his fists at Michael, he turned back to Walker. “Fast! Direct! Simple! Productive! Wimbledon never expected us to play like this and the second goal is all the proof! I just said one is not enough for Marlon and then he made another goal. I couldn’t ask for more from him!”

Walker laughed. "All the players are amazing. Maybe you don't know that because of what you did during halftime at West Ham United that made the players look up to you and willing to follow you. Your first approach as manager was quite a success because you gained their trust."

Tang En scratched his head. He had never thought that acting on his passions and whims could have helped him so much.

For the remainder of the half, the possession rate of Forest did not increase. People realized that Forest was the team holding down the situation. They continuously threatened Wimbledon's goalmouth, and if it was not Kevin Davis, Nottingham Forest would have gotten many more goals.

Tang En was quite satisfied that Forest was in the lead.

The first half of the match ended in a blink. The home team was two goals ahead. The fans sitting on the viewing platform gave all of their applause to Forest and its manager.