

Godfather Of Champions

Chapter 32: Must Win Part 2

In the changing room during halftime, Tang En praised Harewood for his excellent performance for the first half, as well as all the other players. They played according to how they had trained before the match and achieved that ideal standard. Tang En didn't have much to say. He just asked the team to keep performing like they had in the first half.

It was totally different from the other changing room.

Stuart Murdoch vented all his anger on his players and scolded them all, including goalkeeper Davis, even though his performance had been impressive.

"...Damien Francis, David Connolly, and Neil Shipperley, what were three of you doing? I can point it out for you if you don't know where Forest's goalmouth is! Nigel Reo-Coker, you are the captain and you should be standing out now, be it a goal or assisting players. Stop running around for no reason! Dean Lewington! This is your first time playing on the first team. Please be more energetic and do a good job if you do not want to go back to your reserve team!"

After scolding the team, Murdoch took a relief breath.

"We just moved this season and lost many fans. No matter what, we are still holding up the reputation of Wimbledon, and we are still the Crazy Gang! Was Crazy Gang ever afraid of other b*stards? What you have just played was a total shame for the Crazy Gang! Vinnie Jones, Dennis Wise, Lawrie Sanchez, Dave Beasant, and Jack Cork... If only they were still here!" Murdoch said their names one by one, adding emphasis to each name, and then he pointed angrily at the ground. "They would have shouted at us to smash all those b*stards from Forest! This is what the Crazy Gang does! We have slowly lost this spirit in recent years, and I want it back today!!"

When the second half of the match began, Tang En and Walker were sitting at the managers' seats calmly talking. Behind them, Michael had shut his mouth. Everything was going very well.

However, in just five minutes' time, Tang En was not so relaxed. Only five minutes into the second half, Wimbledon had a total of seven fouls and had gotten two yellow cards. The ground was very messy and many players were off their feet! Looking at this, Tang En recalled the second half of the match between Forest and West Ham...

His tactic became more useless under Wimbledon's brutal defense, and more mistakes were made. The players seemed to be avoiding body contact with Wimbledon, who seemed as though they were playing rugby instead of football.

Murdoch had become very lively compared to the first half, as he was standing at the side shouting, "Shovel their feet!! Idiots!"

Tang En heard it clearly. "That b*stard..." He had said the same thing at halftime when they played West Ham, but he was not raging enough to shout it openly at this match.

"This is normal, Tony. At the time when I was playing, managers always shouted stuff like that," Walker tried to explain to Tang En, as he had never heard that kind of talk before, like he was the old Twain.

"No, Des. You misunderstood what I mean. I know this is normal. I do it as well. But I cannot stand it when they use this defense against my team." This was one of Tang En's pet peeves. Walker shrugged his shoulders and did not say a word as he thought Tang En was just being stubborn.

After another 10 minutes, the situation in the match had not changed. Wimbledon used their barbarous ways to take the initiative in the match. Even Motson said if the match continued to be like this, Forest's captain would be the best player, as he was being constantly challenged, and almost all the cameras were on him.

This kind of match provided an opportunity to train the full back, but Tang En preferred that his full back not get trained like this. He was anxious and could not sit still. How to tackle their barbarous ways of playing?

He thought for awhile, and the only solution he could think of was to pray the referee would be strict and send some players off the field. However, there were many wild footballers in England's lower league, and the referee might already be used to them. The most they could do was blow the whistle, stop the game, and give verbal warnings. Only for serious fouls would the referee then issue cards.

Tang En had also realized that the manager of Wimbledon assigned his players to take turns committing fouls instead of letting one or two players take charge. Thus, this could divert the referee's attention and lower the probability of receiving cards. This kind of capitalist is really cunning.

It was not accurate to say Tang En was not helpful, although he couldn't think of a solution. In the past, during Wimbledon's best times, they made Liverpool lose face, cry in the changing room, and give up the FA Cup. Moreover, they also caused Manchester United and Giggs to surrender. It was difficult to adjust to their barbarous ways in the middle of a match, and so they were promoted through three leagues in four years' time and were FA Cup champions in five.

Of course, the current Wimbledon was already not the scary and fierce Crazy Gang of the past, but the problem was that Nottingham Forest was also not the red tornado they used to be. Both teams were about the same, and thus there seemed to be no way to tackle it.

After 14 minutes, Wimbledon attacked even more. It seemed as if they had abandoned defending, and there was a lot of space left in the backfield. Any shot from far away could have gotten a goal. However, under their crazy offense at the front field, Forest just could not pass the halfway line.

Wimbledon got three continuous shots, and then they got a corner kick. Except for the goalkeeper, Kevin Davis, almost everyone else was rushing in front of the Forest goalmouth and positioning themselves.

Johnson followed the tactic and stayed at the kickoff circle waiting for the counter break. He looked at all the empty space around him and was puzzled.

What's wrong with Wimbledon? The match has only gone on for less than 60 minutes, and they are so hard-core. Yet this is also a chance to shoot a goal, and if I do, they'll realize there's no reason to play like this.

He held his fist tight. Harewood has already gotten two goals. I must have at least one goal, too.

As a result, he stood at the kickoff circle, ready to run. He turned back, looking at the crowd in front of his own team's goalmouth.

Wimbledon's midfielder, Damien Francis, made a corner kick, followed by a header done by Leigertwood! Forest's penalty area was suddenly chaotic. In this messy situation, Dean Lewington at the back quickly sent a diving header!

"It's a goal! Wimbledon has a goal! It was Dean Lewington! This is his first official match of this season, and he brings hope for Wimbledon!"

The hundreds of loyal Wimbledon fans celebrated on the viewing platform. The crazy team players surrounded Lewington, and all were celebrating the goal that brought back their faith and hope.

Johnson could not help but wave his hands when he saw Wimbledon celebrating. He just stayed at the kickoff point and did not move.

From the moment when Wimbledon was ready to take the corner kick, Tang En was leaning his body out of the manager's seat. After seeing Lewington get the goal, he shrugged his shoulders with disappointment and regret. The noise from the Wimbledon side roared, as manager Murdoch lifted both of his arms and ran up and down the field. He hugged anyone he saw, and there was loud cheering from the substitutes' bench.

Tang En turned back a few times to look at them and mumbled, "It's just a goal and they're so joyful. What losers!"

This goal alarmed him. Wimbledon's strong attacks at the front of the field had caused Forest to struggle. In the last 10 minutes, Eoin Jess had not stood out at all, and it was time to substitute him out.

Tang En decided to substitute in a defensive midfielder to get the control of midfield back and beat off Wimbledon's arrogance. He asked Walker to call Eugen Bopp who was warming up.

Nineteen-year-old Eugen Bopp was not English, but a German born in Ukraine. He had been under Bayern München Junior team and was once selected for the U-16 National Team of Germany. He was found by Paul Hart in Germany and just came to Nottingham last season. He had already represented the first team, being fielded 19 times and had one goal on his record.

Tang En trusted Paul Hart, and this little guy was indeed not bad. His height was 183 cm with weight of 81kg. Due to his experience under the of German traditional football training, he had excellent tenacity and a strong body to play. These characteristics were what Tang En needed for this match.

Ever since Tang En had become the manager, Bopp had only played a complete match once, and he thought that he was about to lose his position under the eyes of the new manager. So when he heard Walker calling for him, he ran over immediately. Tang En was very pleased with Bopp's attitude, nodded his head and then started to tell him the tactic. "Eugen, have you seen our situation on the field?"

"Not very good, manager..." He used broken English. "They snatched very fiercely and fast."

Tang En smiled. "Correct, they attacked very fiercely and are even faster than us. So I want you to play and partner with Scimeca to be in charge of the midfield, and your main task is to defend. Concentrate on 26 (Reo-Coker) and 8 (Francis) who are the core, as they started all the defense and attacking. I want you to cut off their connection and at the same time... be crazier than Wimbledon and try to tackle their balls at the midfield. Don't be afraid of making mistakes, as I want midfield to be as messy as possible. Can you do that?"

Bopp nodded his head after every sentence that Tang En had said, and lastly he nodded hard and said, "Don't worry, manager. I can do this." He hoped that he could use his good performance to convince the manager and assure a bright future for his career.

Tang En patted Bopp's shoulder and asked him to change. He then took a water bottle and was about to drink to relieve his anger. As he just turned the cap, he saw that annoying manager jumping out of the manager's seat again on the other side.

Eh?

He turned immediately and saw Wimbledon was celebrating again.

What just happened? Are they still celebrating the previous goal?

He turned to look at the TV screen, and it clearly showed the score of 2:2!

What the hell! It's been less than five minutes! Tang En was so pissed off that he threw the water bottle. Some of the spraying water sprinkled the fourth referee, and he was stunned. Tang En immediately pretended that nothing had happened and walked quickly to the managers' seats, and asked Walker what happened.

"Francis had a long shot..." Walker answered numbly.

"F*cking b*stard!" Tang En scolded, and then he did not know what to say. Bopp, who just took off his singlet and was standing at the substitutes' bench, was not sure what to do. He plucked up his courage and asked the manager who was extremely unhappy.

"Manager...do I still substitute in?"

"Of Course! Why not! Go and shovel all these b*stards!" he pushed Bopp out.

Tang En felt even more pissed off seeing Murdoch jumping around happily. The two-goal lead had turned into a draw, how could he still be in a good mood?

Bopp stood at the side expectantly, passionately doing his last warm-ups, when he suddenly heard the manger calling him again.

"Eugen, shovel their feet! Do not care about committing fouls! If you get sent off the field, I will go and complain to FA!" Tang En put his hands on his mouth in the shape of trumpet and shouted, "Anyway, I am their friend..."

He would never allow today's victory to turn into draw. Perhaps Walker thought it was nothing serious, and he did not mind waiting for a few more rounds. On the other hand, Tang En did not want to wait anymore. At the Forest Bar that day, what he said about how he detested losing... he really meant it. He truly hated losing. As a Chinese fan, had he not encountered enough failure?

In china, both of my life and football were all bad as hell! Now God has given me another chance of living life again. I never want to taste failure again. I must win! Always win!

