

Rise of a Football God

#Chapter 15: Christmas game [2] - Read Rise of a Football God Chapter 15: Christmas game [2]

Immediately after the ref's whistle blew, the game started.

For the first few minutes of the game, both teams stayed conservative, playing safe passes anytime they won possession as they were not in a hurry to score against the opposition.

On the sidelines, watching the game, Sam was able to tell that both of these teams were more or less on the same level.

Apparently, this was not their first time playing against each other. They were more like local rivals.

From his biased point of view though, Sam thought that his team had the advantage entirely due to the presence of a single player, Joshua, the starting attacking midfielder of this team.

Originally, he was supposed to be happy due to this but his personal feelings said otherwise. He wanted to be part of the action.

Watching from the sidelines, he was not scared of the game becoming boring. Afterall, there was money at stake and he was right, after 15 minutes of boring conservative football, Black Hearts FC upped the tempo.

All of a sudden, more players ran into the opposition 18-yard box and in the 17th minute of the game, like expected, Joshua unleashed the first shot on goal.

It was a powerful driven shot with his right leg aimed towards the bottom left corner, forcing the opposition goalkeeper into a full stretch dive as he poked the ball into the corner.

The referee blew his whistle for a corner kick.

When Joshua floated the ball over, D'Tigres FC's imposing striker and no. 9 was the one who rose highest, heading the ball away to safety.

Sam paid more attention to that striker. 'This guy is tall, why are they involving him so little in the game?'

He got his answer almost immediately.

Black Hearts FC decided to up the tempo, and their opponents responded in kind. Once they left their conservative gameplay behind, Sam was finally able to see this team's true playstyle.

Their playstyle revolved around their tall and imposing striker and their short and agile right winger. This fair-skinned short boy left an impression on Sam immediately as he got more involved in the game.

D-Tigres FC's game went through him.

The midfielders had a preference for passing to the right because of this boy. And whenever he received the ball, he caused chaos in the opposition blackline with his rapid dribbling and quick feet.

In the 28th minute of the game, receiving the ball again, he did a feint, leaving the opposing fullback for dead as he drove with the ball into the opposition box.

Players in black immediately swarmed this boy but undeterred in the box, his quick feet enabled him beat the first player.

He nutmegged the next player, and just as he entered the 6-yard box, there was a tug from behind.

The boy did not hesitate, falling on the pitch immediately.

FWEEEE!

The ref's whistle went off.

Incredibly, it was a penalty against Sam's team in just the 28th minute of the game. Of course, Sam's teammates protested the decision but the referee was firm with his decision.

The short boy picked up the ball.

The tall striker in sky blue went up to the short and speedy winger, whispering a few words to him only for this boy to shake his head.

He was determined to take the penalty.

After receiving the referee's signal, this boy ignored the opposition goalkeeper's attempts to enter his head, did a short run and jumped slightly before roofing the ball into the top right corner with his lethal left foot.

"GOALLL...!" Minority of the spectators exploded in cheers.

Running to the corner flag with a big smile on his face, this boy jumped and did the suiii celebration.

In the 21st minute, Black Hearts FC was down 0-1.

From the sidelines, Coach James barked orders to his players.

When the game finally restarted, the tempo increased even more. The players in black ran all over the pitch, jumping into tackles, winning possession, passing to Joshua, allowing this attacking midfielder to do what he did best.

Joshua dictated the game for his team as he played a few dangerous passes to his teammates, setting them up but D-Tigres' defense was too rugged.

Sam soon realized that he underestimated the opposition.

Despite the fierce intensity of their opponents, the players in sky blue held their nerves, playing calm football and despite the many shots that Black Hearts FC took, D'Tigres came closest to scoring again as a dribble from the right and shot from the short boy again rattled against the post before flying off for a goal kick.

This boy grabbed his hair and screamed in frustration.

In the 37th minute of the game, after winning the ball deep in his half, Joshua played an impeccable through ball for his striker to run into.

The fast striker ran faster than the defenders, making it to the ball on time but his decision making was not fast enough against the rapidly sweeping goalkeeper. The goalkeeper swatted the ball away before he could shoot.

In the sidelines, Coach James groaned in frustration.

The game continued with even more intensity.

In the 40th minute of the game, Joshua went himself again with another long-range shot that flew just a few inches away from goal.

In the 42nd minute of the game, the short boy once again troubled with his dribbling, cut back before floating a cross into the box.

In the box, D-Tigres FC's tall and imposing striker overpowered and outjumped everyone to power a shot at goal with his head.

The opposition goalkeeper did just enough to push the ball out, saving his team from going 2 down in the first half.

For the remaining minutes of the first half, only half-chances were created till the referee blew the whistle for half-time.

In the 10 minutes of half-time, Coach James berated a few of his players angrily, most especially the fullback marking the short D'Tigres FC winger.

"In the second half, anytime that boy is with the ball, Ogaga, I want you to fall back from midfield to support Elisha. I want you both to double-team him, make sure he doesn't create any more chances".

"Yes, coach".

"And you, Elisha, you better do a better job this second half".

The fullback wiped the sweat of his forehead and nodded seriously.

And finally, this coach looked at his star player. "Joshua, come on," he clapped. "This is your stage, do something this second half, we need to mount a comeback".

Joshua stayed silent, only giving a short nod to his coach.

To Sam's disappointment, the coach didn't even look his side once while he addressed the players. The second half restarted with no changes made.

Coach James learned to regret his decision.

Just 8 minutes into the 2nd half, despite being double-teamed, the short boy in the right wing did it again, cutting back from the byline before floating a teasing cross in.

Again, the tall and imposing striker rose above everyone else to power a header in and this time, the goalkeeper could not pull off the same heroics that he pulled in the first half.

The ball floated into the roof of the net.

"GOALLL!"

The tall striker celebrated exuberantly, pointing a finger to the sky.

In the 53rd minute, Black Hearts FC was down 0.2.

In the sidelines, a livid Coach James fumed.

This was when this coach finally paid attention to the tall boy that stood with him in the sidelines, his eyes gleamed with desperation.

"Sam, get ready, you'll soon be entering the pitch".

"Yes, coach".

Sam instantly started warming up again.

In his mind. 'Finally!'