

Football God 25

Chapter 25: Training [2]

10th January, 2023...

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On this day, Samuel Moses, the newest summer signing of Enyimba FC was finally presented to a stadium with only a few hundred fans present.

Despite the low reception of fans, the media publicity overshadowed it.

Unlike in European clubs where tens of thousands of fans come for the unveiling of their club's new signings, football in lesser leagues across the world didn't attract as much attention, which was directly proportional to lesser fans coming for unveiling ceremonies.

Despite everything, the unveiling ceremony was a big success as with a big smile on his face, Sam faced the camera and said his first words.

"I may be young but I'm ambitious".

"I didn't come to Enyimba FC to be lost in the history of this club. I'm determined to do my best to help this club win titles and extend our record as the most successful team in NPFL history".

"Up Enyimba!" He pumped a fist in the air and celebrated with a big smile on his face amid cheers and applause from the fans.

Of course, his dad organized that speech for him.

And with that, the unveiling ceremony came to an end.

It was not the end of the day for Sam though. Despite the fact that he really wanted to celebrate this moment, he put pleasure aside for now as he quickly entered the pitch to join the other players for training.

Today, the fans would watch him train for the first time.

All the players were hard at work, giving their best to return to tip-top condition in preparation for the new upcoming season.

Their first game of the season would commence in just 4 days.

While Sam trained with his teammates even as his best friend and dad toured the city of Aba, unknowing to him, his unveiling already caused a slight storm in the Nigerian football circle as pundits speculated where Coach Yemi Daniel unveiled the youngster from.

The NTA News Channel covered it.

"Samuel Moses, have you ever heard of the boy?" The host of the show asked.

"Nah," the pundit shook his head. "Personally, I think it's just a show of muscle from Enyimba FC to reassert themselves in the Nigerian football stratosphere since they were not so dominant last season".

"Last season, Rivers United created history as they won their first-ever NPFL championship title after an impressive campaign".

"To me, it's just Coach Yemi Daniel trying to show that his team is making waves but to me, it's just foolish bravado".

"If we ride on what we saw last season, Rivers United is currently scary and Enyimba should be thinking of signing a veteran to increase their chances of competing, not an unproven youngster who popped out of nowhere".

The host looked at the pundit. "Emma, do you think Enyimba has what it takes to take the NPFL title back?"

"If Enyimba has what it takes?" This pundit shook his head. "Nah, no. With the way their recruitment is going, I don't see them winning the league title this season unless something radical changes".

"Well, sports fans, that's it for today. Now, we'll be moving over to the top news of the top 5 European football leagues".

"Emma, what do you..."

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By the end of training today, Coach Yemi Daniel finally dropped his preferred starting line-up that was to start the first game of the season in 4 days, including the players that would start on the bench.

With much hope and expectations, Sam looked through the list.

Goalkeeper: Olorunleke Ojo

Center Back: Timothy Danladi

Center Back: Adekunle Adeleke

Right Back: Sadiq Abubakar

Left Back: Ezekiel Bassey

Central Midfielder: Austin Oladapo

Attacking Midfielder: Cyril Olisema

Defensive Midfielder: Farouk Mohammed

Center Forward: Emeka Obioma

Left Winger: Chijioke Mbaoma

Right Winger: Victor Mbaoma

The starting line-up remained unchanged.

Sam tried not to let it show on his face but staring at the coach's chosen starting line-up, he could not help but feel a little disappointed. He was to start the first game of the season on the bench.

He didn't let himself stay down for too long though. 'It really was a stretch to think I can start the first game of the season from the first minute'.

'Before today, I've never played a professional match before, I'm as inexperienced as inexperience can get'.

'I shouldn't be impatient'.

'My time will come'.

With these words of affirmation, Sam was able to go home with no unnecessary thoughts stuck in his head. He had a lot of gist for his dad and best friend, he was loving life as a footballer already.

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The next day, again, it was all about training as Sam gave his best.

Again, with no distractions in his head, he impressed in training, especially wowing his coach and teammates today as he trained with even more determination to impress.

Today, he managed to score 2 goals while also chipping in with an assist.

This was when the captain of the team, Austin Oladapo finally noticed him as the central midfielder voluntarily offered to integrate him with the rest of the team. Austin was jovial and light-hearted, and he was also damn good at socializing.

With him, it was even easier for Sam to ease into this team.

After training today though, Sam was sad because after spending 2 days with him here in his first professional club, his dad and best friend were to go back to Delta State to continue their lives.

Mr. Moses held his son by the shoulder. "You're a man, Sam. Sooner or later, you would have left the house to make a living for yourself".

"The foundation has already been built, work on it son".

"Make me and your mom proud".

Sam felt emotional but he nodded seriously. "I will".

He watched his dad drive off as Ian kept on waving him goodbye from the car. "You better keep in touch on WhatsApp!" Ian shouted.

Sam chuckled and answered. "I will".

Once the car was gone, he went back to his apartment, going through today's training in his head while exploring with his system.

He also paid attention to the result of the first game of the season that was played a few days ago, on Saturday.

(Match day 1)

>Akwa United 2-0 Bendel Insurance<

Despite the fact that Bendel Insurance played their opponents away from home, they were able to overwhelm them, snatching all 3 points from their opening game of the season as they asserted early dominance in the league.

And just like that, another day was gone.

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With no distraction in the way, Sam was able to focus on football for the next few days as time moved fast and before he knew it, it was Thursday already.

Coach Yemi gave his players the day off to rest properly for Saturday's game as they already did all the tactical preparations that they needed for the game.

Sam spent the whole day at home, relaxing and watching a movie.

He slept early to wake up early tomorrow morning.

Then, the next day, Friday 13th January, getting set early, he went to the stadium to meet up with his teammates and his coach as they entered a bus for Nasarawa State.

Their first game of the season was in away ground.

They would be playing Nasarawa United in the Lafia Township Stadium in Lafia, Nasarawa State. It was a long and grueling 10 hours' journey.

The players arrived totally exhausted. This was another problem that professional football players in Nigeria faced, bad roads.

And of course, clubs in Nigeria didn't have the money to book flights for their players every away game.

The players had no choice but to deal with it. Checking into their hotel rooms, they gathered and after one last brief coaching session, Coach Yemi sent his players to their room to go sleep and rest for tomorrow's game.

While sleeping, Sam had a dream. He dreamt that Coach Yemi Daniel changed his mind at the last minute, changing the lineup to include him in the starting 11 and he scored a hat trick on his professional debut game.

He woke up with a big smile on his face. 'I feel good,' he thought.

And then, getting set, he left his room.

It was the D-day, Saturday, 14th January.

Today, it was Enyimba FC vs the Solid Miners of Nasarawa.