

Football God 251

Chapter 251 What next?

"Congratulations Sam! You managed to do it again!" The excited female reporter welcomed Sam as soon as he arrived for the post-match interview.

"And that's a 7th straight win for Arsenal!" She raved. "Even I never expected what I saw today, and it was all you Sam". She smiled. "First take my respect and second, how do you feel after today's win in the Emirates Stadium?"

Hearing that question, Sam smiled wryly as he wiped off his sweat even as he kept on breathing heavily. "I won't even lie, today's game was hard," he chuckled. "Really really hard".

"It was an unpredictable game," he wiped off his sweat again. "The scoreline does not reflect the correct situation on the pitch".

"From beginning to end, we never got to rest because it always felt like Arsenal would equalize and take the lead any moment".

"We were always on tenterhooks".

"As for the home supporters?" Sam sighed, shaking his head. "They were incredible today man; my respect for Arsenal fans definitely grew after today. Their noise truly affected me and my teammates a lot today".

"But what matters in the end is that we won," he grinned. "So, of course, I'm happy. In fact, I've never been happier".

"Now, that's 2/3 of our fixture of death played and won". He chuckled, animatedly pumping a fist in celebration as the reporter also laughed.

"Honestly Sam, I won't even lie, Fulham is now the talk of the town. Your performance against Arsenal today, that should do it, dissuading any other premier league fan that has been looking down on your team's ability since".

"You've shut a lot of doubters up with that goal and honestly, I'm now rooting for Fulham to win the premier league title".

Sam laughed. "Thank you".

"But first, you have to pass through game 3/3 in your fixture of death," this reporter smirked. "Sam, tell me about Fulham's next game against Liverpool, I believe that will be the game that will decide who wins the premier league title".

"What do you think? Do you think Fulham will win?"

Hearing that question, Sam did not answer immediately as he took his time to organize his thoughts before answering.

He grinned and gave a simple answer. "We'd win".

...

{We'd win!}

This term became the next trending topic on social media, alongside themes like Samuel Moses and Zinedine Sam after the Arsenal game.

The whole of England simply could not stop talking about the game.

It was clear to the whole world that on 1st of April, Arsenal's top of the table clash against Fulham was the biggest highlight. It was a daunting challenge for the West London club, but they won with flying colors.

And Sam was the star of the show after his man of the match display, chipping in with 2 incredible assists that changed the game.

This season, he never ceased to come up clutch for his club.

He was the talk of England and like expected, after the game, a particular popular premier league show talked about the game.

"Max, your boy has done it again, helping Fulham to win and not against any club either, against Arsenal this time. What do you think?"

Max, the premier league pundit grinned, taking his time before finally responding and just like expected, his response was extremely dramatic.

Jumping up from his chair, this pundit pumped his fists excitedly. "And that's why he's the G.O.A.T!" He raved, roaring loudly.

"Sam is the MVP of the 2024/2025 premier league season, take it from me!"

"My God! Did you see that first assist? Ghosting William Saliba like he was not there, passing to someone that was behind him so perfectly, almost as if he got eyes on his back. My gosh!" This pundit seemed to almost want to cry.

"God! This is unfair, how can a teenager be this good?"

"Heck! How can just one player be this good? It's unfair to the others!"

"And that last goal, did you see it? I mean, come on now Charles, have you seen anything more iconic than that this season?"

"That break, that counterattack," this pundit seemed emotional. "All of it reminded me of a prime counter-attacking Real Madrid of the BBC era, Benzema, Bale, and Cristiano Ronaldo".

"The only difference being that it was mostly just Sam. Dammit, the boy is just too good, freaking hell!"

"And that trivela pass to end his mazy run, that was straight out of a movie script, nothing otherwise you'll tell me that I'll believe!"

"That trivela pass was devilish, diabolical!"

"Man, all that's remaining to cement his greatness this season is for Sam to lead Fulham to a win over Liverpool and I believe nothing can stop him from winning the PFA Best Footballer of the Year award".

Hearing that, the show's host interjected. "Liverpool is Fulham's last hurdle; do you believe they can win against them? Don't get me wrong, I mean, Fulham are good but this season, Liverpool are simply high-flying".

Max grinned. "That's what will make it even crazier, because I believe somehow, anyhow, Sam will lead Fulham to win".

"The boy is crazy this season!"

...

Even as England and the rest of the world raved over the young Nigerian International, Samuel Moses, the rest games of matchday 30 of the English premier league were played, bringing the matchday to an end.

And with it, the premier league table was updated again.

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 30 of 38:)

(Wolves 1-1 West Ham)

(Date: 1st April, 2025)

...

(Bournemouth 2-2 Ipswich Town)

(Date: 1st April, 2025)

...

(Brighton 1-2 Aston Villa)

(Date: 1st April, 2025)

...

(Nottm Forest 0-1 Man United)

(Date: 1st April, 2025)

...

(Arsenal 1-3 Fulham)

(Date: 1st April, 2025)

...

(Southampton 0-4 Crystal Palace)

(Date: 2nd April, 2025)

...

(Chelsea 3-2 Tottenham)

(Date: 2nd April, 2025)

...

(Newcastle 1-0 Brentford)

(Date: 2nd April, 2025)

...

(Man City 3-0 Leicester City)

(Date: 2nd April, 2025)

...

(Liverpool 2-0 Everton)

(Date: 2nd April, 2025)

...

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 30/ W:24/ D:1/ L:2/ Pts: 79)

(2. Fulham GP: 30/ W:22/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 72)

(3. Arsenal GP: 30/ W:18/ D:8/ L:4/ Pts: 62)

(4. Chelsea GP: 30/ W:19/ D:8/ L:3/ Pts: 65)

(5. Nottm Forest GP: 30/ W:13/ D:9/ L:8/ Pts: 48)

(6. Tottenham GP: 30/ W:14/ D:4/ L:12/ Pts: 46)

(7. Aston Villa GP: 30/ W:13/ D:9/ L:9/ Pts: 48)

(8. Man City GP: 30/ W:13/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 47)

(9. Brighton GP: 30/ W:12/ D:7/ L:11/ Pts: 43)

(10. Bournemouth GP: 30/ W:11/ D:8/ L:11/ Pts: 41)

(11. Newcastle GP: 30/ W:11/ D:9/ L:10/ Pts: 42)

(12. Man United GP: 30/ W:12/ D:5/ L:13/ Pts: 41)

(13. Brentford GP: 30/ W:10/ D:7/ L:13/ Pts: 37)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 30/ W:8/ D:11/ L:11/ Pts: 35)

(15. West Ham GP: 30/ W:8/ D:8/ L:14/ Pts: 31)

(16. Leicester GP: 30/ W:5/ D:9/ L:16/ Pts: 24)

(17. Everton GP: 30/ W:5/ D:7/ L:18/ Pts: 22)

(18. Ipswich Town GP: 30/ W:3/ D:9/ L:18/ Pts: 18)

(19. Wolves GP: 30/ W:2/ D:9/ L:19/ Pts: 15)

(20. Southampton GP: 30/ W:3/ D:3/ L:24/ Pts: 12)

Just like expected, Liverpool won too.

For Fulham, what next?

What next was welcoming the Merseysiders to Craven Cottage.

Chapter 252 Clash of titans; Liverpool vs Fulham [1]

Matchday 21 of the English premier league brought a lot of drama with it, but premier league fans could not help but look forward to matchday 22.

The main reason why they were already looking towards the next matchday was simple, it was because of a specific premier league game.

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 31 of 38:)

(Fulham – Liverpool)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

It was not just a premier league game, it was dubbed a clash of titans, a top of the table clash that would play a big role in deciding the 2024/2025 premier league champions.

In a way, it was like playing a final.

This was why the build up to this decisive game was absolutely electric, drama-filled, and filled with a lot of emotions.

More tension was added to this game also due to history.

Earlier in the season, back in 14th December 2024, Liverpool welcomed Fulham to Anfield for the first leg of this specific premier league fixture.

On that night in Anfield, Sam made his name known to Liverpool fans, also announcing it to the rest of the English premier league.

His iconic display haunted Liverpool for a long time as his stand-out performance pushed Fulham to win 2-4 incredulously against Liverpool at home.

A lot of things have happened since that match but here they were again, on 5th of April, about to play the 2nd leg of this fixture.

It was safe to say that just like the Fulham players were motivated to win the game, the Liverpool players were even more motivated to win.

This was a clash of titans, a clash of 2 top tier football clubs with incredible winning mentalities this season.

And to top it up, both teams were in form.

Hours before the game, the lineup of both teams was released.

Starting in their regular 4-2-3-1 formation, Raul Jimenez started up-top as the sole striker for Fulham while behind him was the familiar trio of Alex Iwobi, Sam, and Emile Smith Rowe.

The Englishman may have suffered a fractured nose last time out against Arsenal, but wearing a bandage over his nose, he was prepped to start this game.

Behind them was the midfield duo of Lukic and Andreas Pereira, while the 4-man defense comprised of Antonee Robinson, Diop, Calvin Bassey, and Castagne. Bernd Leno naturally started in between the posts.

Just like Fulham, Liverpool started with their strongest starting XI for this clash in Craven Cottage.

Starting in a 4-2-3-1 formation just like Fulham, Alisson Becker started in between the posts while the 4-man defense ahead of the goalkeeper comprised Trent Alexander-Arnold, Ibrahima Konate, Virgil Van Dijk, and Andrew Robertson.

The midfield duo comprised of Ryan Gravenberch and Alexis Mac Allister, while the 4-man offense up top comprised of Mohamed Salah on the right, Curtis Jones in attacking midfield, Cody Gakpo, and then Luis Diaz.

It was a formidable team of elite footballers.

When the Liverpool team bus arrived in West London, the prepared home supporters gave them a sufficiently hostile welcome.

In this period of the season, emotions among fans were volatile and they no longer kept their hostility in check. This was the period of the season where the stakes of every football game were highest and emotions rose high.

The Fulham fans abused the Liverpool players, trying to get into their heads even before the game started.

When they eventually entered the stadium, the Liverpool players quickly learned that today was going to be grueling for them because the noise in this 30,000+ capacity stadium rose through the roof in extreme decibels.

The home supporters sang, chanted, and roared at the top of their lungs.

In this atmosphere, both teams finally went inside the pitch.

"And here it is!"

"The moment we've all been waiting for since Liverpool overtook Fulham at the top of the premier league table".

"Like they say, this is a clash of titans. Which of the 2 titans will emerge victorious today, Fulham or Liverpool?"

"Fulham have the Nigerian Zidane, Sam while Liverpool have their Egyptian King, Mohamed Salah, which one will prevail today?"

"No one knows, we can only watch and see the result".

"Liverpool will be starting kick off, and the referee is about to blow his whistle".

FWEEEE!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded, a battle started in Craven Cottage.

From their very first touch of the football, Liverpool showed that they meant business as Luis Diaz charged diagonally down the pitch at full speed only to receive an immaculate pass from Mac Alister that caught Fulham's defense napping.

"Woah...! What is this from Liverpool?"

"Will it...?!"

"...!" Craven Cottage froze.

The Colombian International executed a perfect touch, taming the ball but reacting quickly, Bernd Leno already chased him down.

Luis Diaz pushed the ball to the side, intending on rounding the Fulham goalkeeper but reading his intentions perfectly, Bernd Leno dove, punching the ball out for a corner with his fist.

"Wow..., what an early scare from Liverpool!"

And that set the tempo for the rest of this game.

When Liverpool took their corner kick, the imposing Dutch defender, Virgil Van Dijk rose highest but his header just flashed past the Fulham post.

"...!" Tensions in this stadium rose due to that initial play.

But it was only just the prelude.

When Fulham restarted play, just like Liverpool did, they took the game to their opponents, playing an incredibly aggressive game with the Merseysiders.

Coach Marco Silva's approach to this game was extremely straightforward.

The current Liverpool may have evolved from the Jurgen Klopp days but they were still the masters of gen-gen pressing. Due to the stakes of this game, the Fulham coach expected Liverpool to play with high intensity.

Instead of defending like he did against Tottenham in the early proceedings, Marco Silva rather told his team to match Liverpool aura for aura.

This was because this was going to be a game of momentum and morale.

The side that lost the psychological aspect first would be the one to lose the game. Defending would make his team seem weaker, and Liverpool may just ride that momentum to blow them out of the water.

This was why Fulham attacked, just as Liverpool attacked.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The fans in this stadium were put on the edge of their seats by the incredible attacking play by both teams.

This was truly an elite game.

For neutral fans, they were having far more than their money's worth, it was a high-end game of attacking football.

For Liverpool, led by Mohamed Salah, the Liverpool attack played with ruthless efficiency and urgency, searching for the early goal.

As for Fulham, Sam already launched at least 3 outside the box shots already as Alisson's gloves were left stinging from the power of his shots.

The S partnership was also striking this game, but Liverpool's intense gen-gen press killed the effectiveness, leaving Sam isolated most times.

For dozens of minutes, the game continued at an elite level but still, there was no goal till the 38th minute.

Despite the attackers of both sides showing up to this game, in the end, the goal came from an unlikely player in the pitch.

After another Liverpool corner kick, the imposing Dutch international, Virgil Van Dijk finally broke the deadlock as rising up above everyone again, he planted a firm header towards goal that finally beat Bernd Leno.

"...!" Craven Cottage was silenced, and then...

"GOALLLLL...!" Liverpool fans roared in ecstasy.

Chapter 253 Clash of titans; Fulham vs Liverpool [2]

"VIRGIL VAN DIJK...!!!" The commentator screamed at the top of his lungs.

"When Liverpool needed a goal the most, their captain responded, what a captain fantastic moment!"

"And with that, Liverpool are up ahead!"

Virgil Van Dijk pumped a fist in celebration, inviting a chorus of boos from incited Fulham supporters even as the tension in this stadium increased even more, rising to a crescendo.

That goal seemed to have ignited a dynamite in this game.

FWEEEE!

When second half started, the Fulham players resumed play and this time, they were even more aggressive in chasing the goal.

Mohamed Salah was bundled down by Antonee Robinson, becoming the first yellow-carded player of this game. And before half-time, 2 other Fulham players got yellow cards for rash tackles as emotions started cascading in this game.

During half-time, the coaches were expected to calm their players down but in the dressing room, Coach Marco Silva did the exact opposite.

On this matchday, this coach decided to channel his inner Jose Mourinho.

At this point, all that mattered was winning, this coach didn't care how his team did it. If they did it dirty, he was fine with it, anyhow so long they won.

When the Fulham players came out of the tunnel for the 2nd half, they didn't feel like players at all, but rather gladiators ready to kill for glory!

BOOM!

Sensing their rabid energy, the fans erupted, going behind their team.

The atmosphere was absolutely electric.

FWEEEE!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded again, chaos started.

Liverpool was dubbed the Kings of chaos but at this moment, Fulham no longer cared. They were ready to take their opponents to the trenches, duke it out the old way and fight to the death to get a result.

The confrontation became physical, intense, and highly controversial but somehow, the referee still had control of this game.

Despite Fulham's high intensity, Liverpool never let up as they matched them energy for energy, Mohamed Salah even coming closest to score the second goal of this game as his effort hit the crossbar.

The tension was at its highest.

Fulham could feel themselves losing control of this game to a rampant Liverpool side who were unwilling to let an inch.

50 minutes, no goal...

60 minutes, no goal...

70 minutes, no goal...

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

That voice already started since; Sam was already becoming desperate.

Fulham's full season rested on the outcome of this game and at this moment, they watched it slipping out of their grasp.

But then in the 74th minute, it happened.

Having just stopped another rampant Liverpool attack, Calvin Bassey rashly cleared the ball up field but in a stroke of luck, the ball floated towards the path of the pitch where Alex Iwobi lurked.

Thud!

Muniz who was already substituted into this game at some point reacted, sprinting after the winger as Alex Iwobi ran with the ball.

It was a 2 on 1 scenario as Fulham suddenly caught Liverpool off-guard.

Other Liverpool defenders retreated but they would not get back on time, leaving Ibrahima Konate isolated at the back with the 2 Fulham players rushing towards him.

Just before they entered the 18-yard box, instead of dribbling, Alex Iwobi passed to Rodrigo Muniz and having expected it, Konate reacted immediately, closing the Fulham striker down.

But before this defender could tackle the ball, in one touch, Muniz hit the ball back to Alex Iwobi, obliterating the Liverpool defender in the process as Konate tackled him to the ground but the ball was already gone.

"...!"

Tensed, Fulham fans rose up around the stadium in anticipation, watching and hoping as Alisson Becker charged out of his post, making himself big.

Alex Iwobi did not try anything fancy, hitting the ball first time with the inside of his boot as he raised and curled it past Alisson Becker and then into the net.

...for a moment, the home supporters failed to react and when they did, emotions cascaded in Craven Cottage.

"GOALLLLLLL...!!!" The fans blasted at the top of their lungs, roaring, hugging each other as they felt like they were finally vindicated.

A few Fulham fans even broke down in tears of joy in the stands.

"And they've done it!" The commentator screamed.

"It took them 74 minutes but Fulham finally have that goal, that goal they've been desperately searching for! What a moment to score it!"

"And Alex Iwobi is the hero this time!"

"Now the scores are level, will Liverpool be ok with this?"

"There's still 16 minutes to the end of this, a lot of time, is there still more action to be seen in it?"

Well, yes, there was still action, a whole lot of action.

Alex Iwobi's goal... well, unlocked this game.

Since, the tension, the pressure, it was getting to the players, subtly restricting their play but that Alex Iwobi goal acted as a catalyst.

The catalyst that accelerated the chemical reaction of this game.

The first player who got unlocked was Mohamed Salah.

Just 2 minutes after Alex Iwobi's goal, Alexis Mac Allister floated a ball to the right side of the pitch and as the ball floated in with the Egyptian tracking it with his focused eyes, that was when he entered the zone state!

Salah felt electricity and adrenaline coursing through his body, energizing his body and pushing him into a state of ultra-instinct.

Antonee Robinson, Fulham's left back rapidly closed the distance to the winger but almost as if in ultra instinct, Salah reacted with his first touch.

Bam!

Instead of just controlling the ball, with his first touch, he pushed the ball forward, completely obliterating Robinson as he blitzed past him speedily.

The Fulham left back was left grasping at shadows!

Suddenly inside the box, Salah staggered, his quick feet dancing to a tune that only footballers with the flair trait could understand.

Like a slippery eel, he cut the ball, weaving past Diop and with a drop of his shoulder, he made Calvin Bassey lose his balance, making the Nigerian International fall to his butt and that was when he did it.

With needle accuracy, Salah set his sights to the far-left corner post before hitting the ball, sending it across the face of goal.

Bernd Leno reacted, diving but the low-driven shot was just too accurate.

Salah made it look easy; it didn't seem like a shot at all, but rather it seemed like he passed the ball into the net!

"GOALLLLL...!" The away stands erupted again.

"My God! What am I bearing witness to?!"

"The Egyptian King strikes!"

"This game does have more drama in it after all!"

Yes, and there was still more drama.

Salah scored in the 76th minute after Alex Iwobi's goal and then in the 80th minute, Sam struck!

Chapter 254 Clash of titans; Fulham vs Liverpool [3]

Sam struck, and in scintillating fashion.

Liverpool was given just 4 minutes to celebrate their 2nd time leading in this game as the Nigerian Zidane took the game by the scruff of the neck.

From the beginning of this game, Sam found it incredibly difficult to go on those mazy runs of his, cutting through players simply because the intensity of this game was so high and his opponents were playing at such an elite level.

But in football, there was a level above the elite level.

As soon as Salah scored, Sam also entered the zone state and in that state of flow, his level exceeded the elite level.

Receiving the ball in his half, Sam went on a lumbering run, cutting through Liverpool players with impunity, shoving aside the ones he couldn't dribble past as he singlehandedly penetrated into the Liverpool 18-yard box.

Thud! Thud!

His run sent trepidations through the Liverpool defense, forcing them to react to his movement and before they knew it, 4 players swarmed Sam inside the Liverpool 18-yard box.

Virgin Van Dijk, Ibrahima Konate, Ryan Gravenberch, and Andrew Robertson all surrounded him, a fatal mistake that Sam took advantage of.

Sam was boxed in, but someone else was left unmarked in the box.

Tick! Tock!

Time moved...

Everything seemed to happen in slow motion as soon as he was surrounded.

Before the defenders could make a move to dispossess him of the ball, Sam executed a delicate touch, flicking the ball up and behind him, and then with the heel of his right boot he kicked it to the left.

"Woah...!" Gasps of amazement erupted around this stadium.

Fulham fans recognized that pass, it was extremely similar to the pass that he used to neutralize William Saliba and set up Emile Smith Rowe in the Arsenal game but this time, Sam set up someone else.

"...!" Virgil Van Dijk was alarmed immediately.

But before the Dutch defender could react, the ball already got to Muniz who was left unmarked in the 18-yard box due to the Liverpool defenders' overzealous approach to dispossess the rampant Sam off the ball.

Besides, it was a perfect pass, too sweet for Muniz to miss.

Raising his right leg up, this player unleashed a volley.

Bam!

His boot kissed the ball perfectly, shooting it with devastating force and rifling it into the roof of the net as Alisson Becker was left rooted to one spot.

"GOALLLLL...!!!" The commentator screamed.

"2-2, Rodrigo Munizzzzz!!!"

"And the game is level again!"

"What a game!"

Charging towards the corner flag, Muniz slid on his knees in celebration even as the Fulham fans rose to their feet, roaring in ecstasy.

"Does this game still have more juice in it?"

The commentator just had to go and jinx it.

Liverpool was not done yet, nor was their Egyptian King.

Fulham equalized this game a second time in the 80th minute of the game and from then on till the 90th minute, Fulham felt the full brunt of Liverpool's offensive ability as they were pushed back to their own half.

Mohamed Salah played like an Egyptian god reincarnated.

Antonee Robinson was having a horrid time against the Egyptian as he dazzled, going at it a few times while at other times, setting up his teammates.

In the 90th minute, in one last devastating attack at fulltime, he set up Alexis Mac Allister who unleashed a powerful volleyed shot from outside the box, completely beating Bernd Leno but just sliding past the Fulham goalpost.

"F*ck!" Cursing, the Argentine International grabbed and ruffled his hair, not believing how close that was.

The tension in this game was at an all-time high as all the Fulham players were forced to defend, including Sam and Muniz.

3 minutes of additional time was added to this game.

In the 2nd minute of additional time, the inevitable Mohamed Salah went on the attack again, dribbling, teasing, and weaving through defenders till the angle opened up for him and without hesitation, his left leg whipped a powerful shot.

BAM!

Just before Salah could whip that shot which was definitely goal-bound, he saw a familiar white and black jersey flash past him.

Having read the Egyptian King's threat as he weaved through his teammates, Sam burned through his stamina reserves and charged back, arriving just in time to jump and put his body on the line to block the shot.

The ball hit him on the head, leaving him dizzy for a moment.

But with a shake of his head, Sam's clarity returned as his eyes shone with fire. 'One last counterattack!' He thought.

Antonee Robinson got to the loose ball first and not taking any risk due to the Liverpool jerseys all around him, the left back cleared the ball up field.

As soon as he cleared the ball, 2 players erupted...

Thud! Thud!

From the right, Adama Traore who was already substituted into this game charged forward while on the left, Sam who just intercepted Mohamed Salah's shot dug in again, chasing after the ball.

The ball was not a free ball though, Conor Bradley who was already introduced to replace Trent Alexander-Arnold also chased after the ball.

But... Sam was faster.

Thud! Thud!

Sam could feel his lungs burning, leaving him breathless and dizzy but his legs never stopped moving, eating yards of space.

Conor Bradley started ahead of him but Sam overtook this player in no time, chasing after the ball as Fulham fans stood up around the stadium.

"Sam!" "Sam!" "Sam!"

Familiar chants started around Craven Cottage.

Beating the young Liverpool right back for pace and getting the ball first, Sam shrugged him off with his physicality as he recovered before cutting with the ball towards the Liverpool 18-yard box.

There, he met Ibrahima Konate as the last man of defense again.

And this time, Adama Traore was bombing down the right, almost there to support him again which made it a 2 vs 1 scenario.

Again, the towering French center back was made to shadow 2 players.

Raising his leg, Sam moved like he wanted to initiate a pass but when his leg hit the ball, instead of a pass, he executed an elastico dribble.

BZZZZ!

Ibrahima Konate already slid in to intercept the pass before he realized that it was a fake pass, Sam already left him scrambling in the box.

Whoosh!

Conor Bradley arrived the next moment, pressing Sam but slowing down, Sam nutmegged the young right back, making him fall on his butt as this left him one-on-one with Alisson.

"Now, it's just Sam and Alisson!"

"Can he do it?"

"Will he do it?!"

Alisson Becker charged out aggressively but keeping his calm, Sam lobbed the ball above the goalkeeper and into the empty net.

Even before the fans realized what just happened, Sam was already whirling off towards the corner flag with a look of pure joy and ecstasy on his face, his pupils dilated in ecstasy.

When he arrived at the corner flag, Sam crossed his arms the Black Panther way, debuting his Wakanda Forever celebration.

"Come on!!!" He screamed and the Fulham fans responded.

"GOALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL...!!!"

Craven Cottage went haywire!

A few seconds later, the referee's whistle sounded, bringing this incredible game to an end.

What... a game!

Chapter 255 Superstar status!

"Wakanda Forever!!!"

As soon as the regular premier league show started, jumping and crossing his arms like the iconic Marvel character played by the legendary Chadwick Boseman, Max, the premier league pundit screamed, imitating Sam's celebration today.

"Charles, no need to ask," this pundit said with exuberant energy. "You wanted a highlight game? Well, there you have it, your highlight game!"

"Jesus, Sam was unbelievable today!"

"What a game!"

"What a f*cking game!"

"What a freaking game!"

"My God! The boy is just too good!"

"Heck! I think my expectations before now were too low, Sam has gone and exceeded my expectations again, this boy's football seriously has no limits!"

"Sam for the ballon d'or!!!" He screamed.

Charles, the show's host chuckled. "We've heard Max, can you calm down now, we have a show to..."

"This is the show Charles!" Max roared. "This is the show!"

"I mean, what else do you want?" He faced the cameras. "Come on viewers, are you not entertained?" He grinned.

"Were you not entertained by that iconic performance today?"

He turned to look at Charles again. "Come on man, don't give me that look, did you see that pass to Muniz?!" This pundit grabbed his head in disbelief as the unforgettable moment played in his head again.

"Before focusing on the skill involved in that sequence of play, let's take a moment to analyze the emotions and stakes involved in that moment".

"Just imagine the pressure that Sam would have definitely been under".

"You are playing against a high-flying Liverpool side led by a crazy Mohamed Salah, you're losing 1-2 at home, do you know the pressure involved in that?"

"Now, imagine this, with all of that pressure, you were surrounded by the likes of Virgil Van Dijk, Andrew Robertson, Ibrahima Konate, and Ryan Gravenberch, I dare say that 90% of professional football players would freeze in that situation!"

"I mean come on, most forwards in the premier league halt when they meet just Van Dijk's imposing figure in defense".

"Most dribblers don't have the confidence to try dribbling past him, they'll rather pass, that's how intimidating that Dutch guy is".

"Now imagine the situation I just described, not just Van Dijk, but 3 other Liverpool legends surrounding you, pressing you, locking out all angles for you to shoot and pass".

Max grabbed his head in disbelief again. "I was a footballer before Charles so I know what I'm saying, in that situation, Sam was like a frog stuck in a well".

"Nowhere to escape to, he was locked, trapped, shackled and yet, my God, the Fulham mother*cker did it against all expectations!"

"That flick to raise the ball up and behind him to open the angle for a pass, the creativity needed to think of that in such a pressure-filled situation is God-tier!"

"And the skill to execute it? Gosh, that's above world-class man, come on!"

"And pulling off that pass to Muniz successfully, even if I was a Novelist, I would have never scripted something that mind-blowing!"

"That deserves a gift, gosh, a Dragon, a Magic Castle, or even a Golden Gachapon!"

"That was the deciding moment of that game, and not just that, the other moments in the dying stages. Damn, thinking of it is giving me so much dopamine!"

"Salah was amazing, but Sam was just beyond amazing this game!"

"Salah almost won it for Liverpool in the dying stages of additional time and guess what, who saved Fulham? It was the same Sam".

"What I still don't understand is how after blocking that shot, Sam still had the stamina to run the full length of the pitch to the other side to score the winning goal of the game".

"Man, this boy is just too good".

"His winning mentality reminds me of Cristiano Ronaldo, he never gives an inch until the last moment of the game, until he wins".

"Sam is a winner!"

This premier league show was not the only place where Sam's scintillating performance was highlighted and given rave reviews.

After the game against Liverpool, Sam established himself as a superstar in England, rising to the status level of top stars of the English top tier competition.

Millions of fans watched the Fulham vs Liverpool game from all around the world, eager to see how it would play out since so much hype was generated before the game and after such a performance before countless eyes over the world, Sam solidified his status as a Fulham superstar.

Besides, he finally debuted the celebration that he spoke of since.

On all social media platforms, themes like #Zinedine Sam, #Samuel Moses, and #Wakanda Forever were trending like mad as the Sam hype train started.

After the game, Craven Cottage was turned into the arena for a wild celebration as the tens of thousands of fans present in the stadium celebrated the landmark victory with their players.

After such a grueling game, Sam felt like his legs were lead, he felt too tired to move and so his teammates carried him, parading him around the stadium.

With just this performance, Sam immortalized himself in Craven Cottage.

Coach Marco Silva also joined in on the celebrations as with tears all over his face, the emotional coach enjoyed the moment with his players and the fans.

The world had never felt brighter to fans of the Fulham persuasion.

On this day, all the stars in the sky seemed to align in their favor and they could not stop celebrating.

After his incredible 2-goal display that doomed Liverpool to such a painful and damaging defeat, of course, Sam won the man of the match award.

Before going for his post-game interview, Sam and his teammates finally relaxed after the high emotions of winning the game.

Like in every football game, while there was always a winning side that celebrated at the end of the game, there was also the losing side.

The Liverpool players felt devastated at the end of the game.

Most of them collapsed on the pitch, too tired and devastated to move. After their celebrations, led by Cairney, the Fulham captain who finally entered the pitch, the Fulham players showed sportsmanship with their rivals, going to console them.

At the end of it all, it was a sport, a game of football.

At the end of the game, the only feeling that the players of both teams felt towards each other was respect.

They swapped their jerseys as Mohamed Salah took the initiative to ask for Sam's jersey after getting over the sinking feeling of defeat.

...

In the post-game interview, before answering the reporter's questions, Sam first did his new celebration again and grinned. "Wakanda Forever!"

"Is that the celebration that you said you'll show us?"

"Yes," Sam chuckled. "I told you guys I'll only debut it when the moment calls for it, and that goal, that goal definitely called for it". He grinned again.

After answering a few more questions including addressing his current popularity after his iconic display today, the interview finally came to an end.

With the end of the game, a few upheavals took place at the top of the English premier league table.

Chapter 256 4 points

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 31 of 38:)

(Aston Villa 1-2 Nottm Forest)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Ipswich Town 0-0 Wolves)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Leicester City 1-4 Newcastle)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Tottenham 2-0 Southampton)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Man United 1-3 Man City)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Brentford 2-2 Chelsea)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Crystal Palace 1-0 Brighton)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Everton 0-2 Arsenal)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Fulham 3-2 Liverpool)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(West Ham 1-1 Bournemouth)

(Date: 5th April, 2025)

...

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 31/ W:24/ D:1/ L:3/ Pts: 79)

(2. Fulham GP: 31/ W:23/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 75)

(3. Chelsea GP: 31/ W:19/ D:9/ L:3/ Pts: 66)

(4. Arsenal GP: 31/ W:19/ D:8/ L:4/ Pts: 65)

(5. Nottm Forest GP: 31/ W:14/ D:9/ L:8/ Pts: 51)

(6. Man City GP: 31/ W:14/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 50)

(7. Tottenham GP: 31/ W:15/ D:4/ L:12/ Pts: 49)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 31/ W:13/ D:9/ L:10/ Pts: 48)

(9. Newcastle GP: 31/ W:12/ D:9/ L:10/ Pts: 45)

(10. Brighton GP: 31/ W:12/ D:7/ L:12/ Pts: 43)

(11. Bournemouth GP: 31/ W:11/ D:9/ L:11/ Pts: 42)

(12. Man United GP: 31/ W:12/ D:5/ L:14/ Pts: 41)

(13. Brentford GP: 31/ W:10/ D:8/ L:13/ Pts: 38)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 31/ W:9/ D:11/ L:11/ Pts: 38)

(15. West Ham GP: 31/ W:8/ D:9/ L:14/ Pts: 32)

(16. Leicester GP: 31/ W:5/ D:9/ L:17/ Pts: 24)

(17. Everton GP: 31/ W:5/ D:7/ L:19/ Pts: 22)

(18. Ipswich Town GP: 31/ W:3/ D:10/ L:18/ Pts: 19)

(19. Wolves GP: 31/ W:2/ D:10/ L:19/ Pts: 16)

(20. Southampton GP: 31/ W:3/ D:3/ L:25/ Pts: 12)

4 points..., that was the only difference separating Fulham from the top spot of the English premier league after matchday 31.

There was still 7 matchdays of the 2024/2025 premier league season remaining, a lot of time and matchdays for Fulham to play catch up.

Like a few analysts in the premier league said at the end of matchday 31 on the outcome of the blockbuster encounter between Fulham and Liverpool, it was not about the 3 points, rather, it was more on the psychological damage.

Before today, Liverpool and Fulham had both been high-flying in the premier league, seemingly invincible sides.

But with yesterday's result, Liverpool's aura of invincibility was broken.

Other premier league clubs would see it as a sign of weakness, while Fulham's imperious aura would only grow more prominent.

At the highest levels of professional football, the mental aspect was just as involved in winning as the physical aspect.

The pressure was now on Liverpool to bounce back from defeat.

It now depended on the mental resilience of the Liverpool players to see if they could rise from adversity and continue their bid for a first premier league title in years, breaking Man City's dominance at the top.

It was also up to Fulham. If Fulham added to their advantage, winning their next games in the premier league, it would affect the table toppers even more, making them more likely to stumble and make a mistake.

By now, it was already clear that the premier league title race this season was between only Liverpool and Fulham.

They were the only sides still in contention.

After the game against Liverpool, a lot of the regular starting Fulham players were all exhausted as their fatigue extended to the next few days.

Those 90 minutes against Liverpool felt like 200 minutes!

Only Sam managed to recover quickly with the help of his physical conditioning elixirs, but the rest of the Fulham team was still lethargic.

And this was one of the many ruthless realities of professional football because the schedule would not wait for you nor understand that you were fatigued, the schedule would keep on counting.

After the blockbuster encounter in Craven Cottage, Fulham's next premier league encounter was an away clash against Bournemouth.

But before that game, they had an FA Cup quarter final game to play.

(FA Cup:)

(Coventry – Fulham)

(Date: 8th April, 2025)

...

(Premier league:)

(Bournemouth – Fulham)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...the cruel reality of professional football.

After the Liverpool game, the Fulham players still suffered from fatigue but scheduling gave no damn about their plight because they had just 2 days of rest before their away FA cup game against Coventry.

And in another 4 days was their premier league game.

These 2 fixtures after the Liverpool game truly tested Coach Marco Silva's management skills, this coach was pushed to the limit but he improvised.

Time moved fast and it was soon D-day.

On the 8th of April, Marco Silva took a big risk, heavily rotating his team for the FA Cup game against Coventry as he rested all his big stars, including Sam.

Like expected, seeing this as an opportunity, Coventry played the game of their lives against Fulham on their home ground.

Playing with their regular 5-3-2 formation, the home side frustrated the Fulham players, running them ragged for most of the game.

In the 2nd half, they finally broke the deadlock, scoring the goal to go ahead in the 61st minute of the game.

On the touchline, Coach Marco Silva became touchy but this coach remained firm, not making changes till the 75th minute of this game where he was forced to introduce his star player again.

Marco Silva was unwilling, he didn't want to overwork Sam again and expose him to another injury but with the current situation, he had no choice.

His decision paid off though as just 6 minutes after entering the pitch, Sam powered a header into the net, finally breaking the Fulham drought this game.

The game remained tight even with him on the pitch as the Coventry players played the game of their lives.

With the score 1-1 by fulltime, they were forced to go to extra time.

The score remained level in the first half of extra time but in the second half, Sam pulled another moment of magic from his box of tricks, scoring from a freekick in the 114th minute to win Fulham the game.

Another day, just another Sam man of the match winning display.

Chapter 257 Faith

With the win over Coventry, Fulham did the incredible, booking a semifinal spot in the 2024/2025 FA Cup.

Since the other quarter final games were already played about a week ago, Fulham was able to see their next opponents in the FA Cup almost immediately.

(FA Cup:)

(Semifinal:)

(Man United – Tottenham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Newcastle – Fulham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

After 6 rounds of the FA Cup, in all of England, these were the 4 clubs remaining in the competition this season.

Despite Manchester United's horrible run of form in the premier league under their new manager, Ruben Amorim, in the FA Cup, they upheld their reputation as the reigning champions of the cup as they were the favorites.

In the semifinals, they were the favorites to progress to the final of the FA Cup over Tottenham Hotspur despite the North London club being in form too.

Fulham was competing in 2 fronts this season and it was safe to say that it was taking a toll on the players and their manager, but they relished the challenge.

After another electric display in the FA Cup, helping his team progress at Coventry's expense, just like in the Liverpool game, Sam was also exhausted.

Getting back to his home in Fulham, the first thing that he did was to call his girlfriend after enjoying a cold bath to relax.

"Hey big man, how are you doing?"

Sam chuckled. "I'm good, what of you?"

"I'm great!"

Sam could hear how excited his girlfriend sounded on the phone as she continued. "I know you needed to be focused as you told me the importance of the last 4 games for your club but I can't hide it this time, I'm impressed!"

Kayla did not hold back on her praise. "You managed to show up in 3 important games for Fulham where your team needed you the most, congrats love".

But then she complained. "I want to keep on congratulating you but you've only made my work even more hectic".

"Huh?" Sam was confused.

"What do you mean by huh?" Kayla pouted. "Of course, it's my job as your social media handler. The activity in all your social media accounts exploded after that Liverpool game, your followers and subscribers are skyrocketing again".

"But I like it though! It means you're growing in your career".

"So, will you guys win the premier league now?"

Sam palmed his face on hearing that question. "As if it was that easy," he chuckled. "Winning the premier league is even harder than other leagues among the top 5 European leagues in the world, it's not that easy".

"Liverpool are still leading at the top of the premier league table".

"Our win definitely demoralized them, breaking their momentum, all we can do is hope that it affects them psychologically for an extended period of time".

"Right now, they're still leading us with 4 points".

"All we need from them is to drop points in 2 different games, a loss and a draw is enough, we're ahead when it comes to goal difference".

"What's goal difference?"

"It's the difference in the number of goals scored and conceded by a team. This season, we have been really imperious when we win". Sam grinned, but then he sighed. "And it's not just about Liverpool dropping points too".

Sam looked at his ceiling, silently clenching his left hand into a fist. "While they drop points, we need to make sure that we also take all available points".

"That's the only way that we stand a chance of winning the premier league this season". Saying this, a smile could not help creeping into his face. "It's crazy that we're talking about Fulham and a premier league trophy side by side".

"If we can really do this, we'll become immortals in Fulham".

"You can do it!" Kayla motivated.

Sam smiled. "By the way, if we're able to stay perfect from now to the end of the season, we can do one more than just winning the premier league title".

"If we win the FA Cup too, that'd be a historic double".

Sam grinned. "If we can do that, that would undoubtedly be the greatest season in Fulham's history".

This time, Kayla hesitated. "Can you guys do it?"

Sam chuckled. "Nothing is set in stone; that's the nature of football and what makes it exciting. We can only do our best".

"Goodluck then".

Sam rolled on his bed. "Enough with the me talk, let's talk about you, how are you doing? How's school?"

With that, the conversation topic switched to his girlfriend and like he expected, Kayla had a lot of gist to tell him about.

That night, they spoke for almost 2 hours before the call came to an end.

Sam was dead beat tired but before sleeping, he dialed a number on his phone that he rarely spoke with these days.

{Outgoing call to My Superman...}

His superman... was his dad.

Click!

As soon as the call connected, there was silence for a few seconds before Mr. Moses spoke. "Hey son, how are you doing?"

"Hanging on". Sam replied.

Hearing that, Mr. Moses already knew what his son was feeling and this man already knew the best way to tackle it.

He chuckled. "The pressure is getting to you right?"

Sam sighed. "Yeah".

"We achieved our goal, we won all 3 games, we won against Liverpool but instead of the pressure reducing like I expected, it only increased".

"In that game against Coventry, I struggled more than I expected".

"It's a bit overwhelming dad..., I feel like a moving train that's moving so fast there's no checkpoint for me to slow down, stop, and reset".

He sighed again, staying silent for a few seconds and then he added. "I just want to win dad, I really want to win, and the scare of losing is wearing me out".

"Then don't think of it".

"Huh?"

Mr. Moses chuckled again, expertly trivializing the situation. "You're only scared because you think about it".

"You already have a gift that no other footballer in the world have," Mr. Moses hesitated. "I know it adds to the pressure of wanting to prove yourself, but Sam, what else do you want to prove?"

"You've done it all already, know that and believe it".

"Don't think of the future, focus on the now, the next game, that should be your only focus".

"Keep on doing what you've been doing before, approach every game like it's your last and I promise you with your ability and your teammates helping, you'll win every game".

"I'm rooting for you Sam!" Mr. Moses smiled behind his phone back in Nigeria. "You can do it!"

"And know, when it gets overwhelming, I'm always here to listen".

"Never hesitate to put a call, even if it's in the midnight, I'll pick".

Hearing that reassurance from his dad, Sam felt at peace as his smile returned to his face. "Thank you dad". He muttered. "I love you".

"I love you too son".

"Help me extend my greetings to mom".

"I will".

"Goodnight".

The phone call finally came to an end.

That night, after speaking with his girlfriend and his dad, Sam slept peacefully like a baby. He had a dream of lifting the premier league trophy and the FA Cup.

The next day, Sam woke up with a big smile on his face.

"It's going to be a great day!"

Chapter 258 Head-to-head battle [1]

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 32 of 38:)

(Bournemouth – Fulham)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Liverpool – West Ham)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

The days moved fast and in no time, it was D-day for matchday 32 of the English premier league already.

There are 10 matches in each premier league matchday but this time, most of the attention, mostly from those of the Fulham and Liverpool persuasion was on only 2 matches as 2 different fanbases followed each other like creepy stalkers.

Liverpool played its game against West Ham first.

Like expected, after the loss against Fulham in away ground, the morale of the Liverpool players was hit hard but, in the end, they were elite footballers.

They topped the premier league table for a reason, they all had elite mentalities and in the game against West Ham in Anfield, the Liverpool players proved their mettle, showing exactly what they were made of.

Like expected, both teams started with their strongest lineups.

After Liverpool's fumble against Fulham in the top of the table clash last time out, West Ham came to Anfield with a lingering hope of also clawing out a result.

When the game started, at first, it seemed like West Ham's objective would be achieved as they took the lead in the 35th minute through a Lucas Paqueta header that left Anfield stunned.

"...!"

The home supporters clearly did not see that coming.

That goal definitely riled up the home supporters as the noise in Anfield rose to a crescendo. The fans in red showed their displeasure to their team while at the same time going fully behind them in support.

And from then on, it was all Liverpool.

Trent Alexander-Arnold after a difficult time out last time against Fulham finally decided to redeem himself today as he raised his level in this game, being the first to enter the zone state.

From the 40th minute, he became unplayable, spraying pin-point accurate passes that cut the West Ham defense open like a hot knife through butter.

And then after the 45th minute, in the 2nd minute of additional time, the English fullback did it, whipping a trademark shot into the box out of the reach of all the West Ham defenders as Luis Diaz ran into the perfect spot, heading it past Areola, the West Ham goalkeeper and into the net.

You had to see the response in Anfield.

"GOALLLL...!!!" The fans screamed at the top of their lungs.

The first half came to an end with the game level 1-1.

In half-time, Arne Slot definitely told his players something to lift their spirits because they came out for the 2nd half with venom.

Just 4 minutes into the 2nd half, the Egyptian King struck. Running into an unreal trivela pass from the electric Trent Alexander-Arnold, Mohamed Salah beat his man, charging into the box before shooting into the bottom right corner, beating the goalkeeper with lethal accuracy.

Anfield responded with roars of ecstasy.

In the 49th minute, Liverpool finally went ahead and they didn't stop after that, the rampant Liverpool players only put on the gas more after that.

3 minutes later, in the 52nd minute, another Trent Alexander-Arnold pass to cut the West Ham defense open and another moment of brilliance from the inevitable Egyptian King again doomed West Ham to defeat.

After receiving the pass, Mohamed Salah was left one-on-one with Areola, the West Ham goalkeeper and he did not miss his mark, rounding the goalkeeper and scoring the 3rd Liverpool goal that sent Anfield roaring again in ecstasy.

The game came to an end with a well-deserved Liverpool win.

Liverpool went over the line, and then came Fulham's turn.

...

After resting most of his players in the Coventry FA Cup game, Coach Marco Silva got the privilege of starting this game with his strongest lineup again.

Despite the fact that they were playing Bournemouth in away ground, from the very first minute of this game, Fulham showed their intent to win.

And this time, it was a Raul Jimenez masterclass.

In the 8th minute of this game, the Fulham striker got the first goal after receiving a pass from Emile Smith Rowe as twisting and turning in the Bournemouth 18-yard box, he threaded an accurate shot past Travers, the Bournemouth goalkeeper.

In the 15th minute, the striker got his 2nd goal and this time it was Sam-created as after winning the ball in midfield, the Nigerian international played an incredible trivela pass that cut the Bournemouth defense open like a hot knife through butter.

Exploding with speed and leaving the Bournemouth defenders in the dust, the striker took the ball in his strides and scored an incredible goal.

His first touch to control the ball perfectly, and his second touch to lift the ball above the goalkeeper, running after it and his third touch to poke it into the net.

"GOALLLL...!!!" The away stands in this stadium erupted in joy again.

In the 33rd minute, Raul Jimenez completed his 10/10 display with another goal, making it a hatrick as this time, Alex Iwobi was the one to set him up.

The Nigerian International played a lobbed pass across the face of goal and reacting first, the striker who was feeling it today jumped, scoring from an incredible diving header that left Travers scrambling helplessly for the ball.

After that goal, all the Bournemouth momentum deflated.

A few minutes into the second half, Coach Marco Silva made changes, taking Sam off first to rest him and Fulham cruised to a comfortable victory after.

Raul Jimenez produced all the goals, giving his team a comfortable 0-3 win.

The first round of Liverpool and Fulham's head-to-head battle resulted in a draw as both teams won their games.

And with that, matchday 32 of the English premier league came to an end.

(Matchday 32 of 38:)

(Southampton 1-1 Aston Villa)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Nottm Forest 2-0 Everton)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Arsenal 1-0 Brentford)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Chelsea 2-0 Ipswich Town)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Wolves 2-1 Tottenham)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Newcastle 1-1 Man United)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Liverpool 3-1 West Ham)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Man City 4-1 Crystal Palace)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Bournemouth 0-3 Fulham)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Brighton 1-1 Leicester City)

(Date: 12th April, 2025)

...

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 32/ W:25/ D:1/ L:3/ Pts: 82)

(2. Fulham GP: 32/ W:24/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 78)

(3. Chelsea GP: 32/ W:20/ D:9/ L:3/ Pts: 69)

(4. Arsenal GP: 32/ W:20/ D:8/ L:4/ Pts: 68)

(5. Nottm Forest GP: 32/ W:15/ D:9/ L:8/ Pts: 54)

(6. Man City GP: 32/ W:15/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 53)

(7. Tottenham GP: 32/ W:15/ D:4/ L:13/ Pts: 49)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 32/ W:13/ D:10/ L:10/ Pts: 49)

(9. Newcastle GP: 32/ W:12/ D:10/ L:10/ Pts: 46)

(10. Brighton GP: 32/ W:12/ D:8/ L:12/ Pts: 44)

(11. Bournemouth GP: 32/ W:11/ D:9/ L:12/ Pts: 42)

(12. Man United GP: 32/ W:12/ D:6/ L:14/ Pts: 42)

(13. Brentford GP: 32/ W:10/ D:8/ L:14/ Pts: 38)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 32/ W:9/ D:11/ L:12/ Pts: 38)

(15. West Ham GP: 32/ W:8/ D:9/ L:15/ Pts: 32)

(16. Leicester GP: 32/ W:5/ D:10/ L:17/ Pts: 25)

(17. Everton GP: 32/ W:5/ D:7/ L:20/ Pts: 22)

(18. Ipswich Town GP: 32/ W:3/ D:10/ L:19/ Pts: 19)

(19. Wolves GP: 32/ W:3/ D:10/ L:19/ Pts: 19)

(20. Southampton GP: 32/ W:3/ D:4/ L:25/ Pts: 13)

Chapter 259 Head-to-head battle [2]

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 33 of 38:)

(Leicester – Liverpool)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Fulham – Chelsea)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

Premier league football matched onward to matchday 33 even as Liverpool and Fulham's head-to-head battle at the top of the premier league table continued.

And on this matchday, Fulham faced a mighty challenge.

They said Fulham was in the title race, right? Well, once again, they met a challenge to prove their credentials against another formidable premier league team that was close to the top of the table in Chelsea.

Having rose back to 3rd position in the league table, this was a formidable team that was still in form, Fulham's first real challenge in the head-to-head battle against Liverpool.

Before Fulham got to prove their credentials in the top of the table clash, Liverpool played their game against Leicester City first.

It was an away game for Liverpool but the Liverpool players entered this game with 0 doubts and once the game started, they proved their credentials which was the basis for their confidence.

Leicester City started with a strong lineup against Liverpool, but still, they didn't have what it took at the highest level against the Merseysiders at home.

Liverpool played a comfortable game from beginning to the end, winning 0-2 courtesy of goals from Trent Alexander-Arnold and the Argentine midfielder, Alexis Mac Allister.

With Liverpool winning their game, the pressure was on Fulham to win theirs and keep the pressure at the top.

This game was extremely pivotal to the West London club. If they lost, they would have officially lost the premier league title race against Liverpool.

When the time came, the Fulham players gave their neighbors from across town a sufficiently hostile welcome to Craven Cottage.

Like expected, both teams started with their strongest lineups.

Fulham made no changes to their previous lineup. As for Chelsea, they started with a formidable lineup in their usual 4-2-3-1 formation.

Renato Sanchez started in between the posts for the Blues, while their quadruple defense comprised Marc Cucurella in left back, Levi Colwill and Acheampong in center defense, and Malo Gusto in right back.

The midfield duo comprised of Moses Caicedo and the world-cup winning Argentine midfielder, Enzo Fernandez.

The 4-man attack up front comprised of Jadon Sancho, Cole Palmer, Pedro Neto, and Nicolas Jackson who started as the striker.

FWEEEE!

From the first whistle, despite the hostile atmosphere that was created by the home supporters, Chelsea showed their mettle this game, playing with aggressive genius as they took the game to Fulham.

Fulham were playing at an elite level, motivated to win but Chelsea matched their energy, playing an exciting end to end game with the home side.

With the likes of Jadon Sancho, Cole Palmer, Enzo Fernandez, and even Nicolas Jackson today who showed up for the Blues, they played exciting attacking football as they utilized all the weapons in their arsenal.

Marc Cucurella was also electric as his tricky overlapping runs aided Jadon Sancho's case in attack, repeatedly leaving Castagne confounded in right back.

The Fulham right back was being violated by his opponents.

Even as Chelsea dominated in attack when they had the ball, Fulham also dominated in the same way, just in a different pattern and style.

Whenever the ball got to Sam in midfield, the whole Chelsea team was left tracking back in trepidation, dreading the threat posed by him.

And in this game, Moses Caicedo was tasked to man-mark Sam, limiting his effect this game. But still, the Chelsea team felt trepidations anytime that the ball got to him because he already proved countless times that he could create anything from nothing.

Last time out, Liverpool relaxed, thinking they already boxed him in when he created an easy goal out of nowhere for Muniz to score.

Despite being man-marked, Sam fought with gusto, relishing the challenge posed by the stalwart Moses Caicedo.

And with Emile Smith Rowe repeatedly drifting close to him to help him out, the S factor shone in this game, leading to some exciting string of plays that left the fans in the stands rising to their feet and gasping in awe.

Despite the attacking play this game, somehow, the defense of both teams held as they played an extremely tight game.

Cole Palmer came closest, hitting the post twice in the first half alone.

And against all odds, the first half came to an end with the game level 0-0.

In half-time, Coach Marco Silva had a little talk with his players.

"It's the moment of truth guys".

"It's now or never".

"We won't have this fixture again this season. We either do it and grab glory out there, or we bow out in defeat".

"If we draw this game, that is bowing out in defeat against Liverpool".

"I believe we can do it".

"Let's go out there and do it".

The Fulham coach didn't roar aggressively at his players, trying to rile them up, he simply said those few words in a calm tone, resonating with them.

He was right, it was now or never.

This was their time to chase glory or lose it. The Fulham players entered the 2nd half of this game with this mentality and with it, they dominated.

Chelsea still fought valiantly but Fulham was the clear superior side in the second half as they all fought like a team, utilizing all the weapon in their repertoires to try breaking down this tough Chelsea side.

50 minutes, 0-0...

60 minutes, 0-0...

70 minutes, 0-0...

80 minutes, 0-0...

85 minutes, 0-0...

And then it happened in the 88th minute of the game.

After running all day-long already to no avail, Antonee Robinson dug in again, going on an overlapping run down the left side of the pitch as he tapped into his stamina reserves, pushing himself to the limit.

Combining with Alex Iwobi down the left side, exchanging one-two passes, he penetrated into the Chelsea 18-yard box and that was where panicking, Levi Colwill, the Chelsea center back made a blunder, taking him down in the box.

FWEEEE!

The referee's whistle sounded as he instantly pointed to the spot.

It was a penalty to Fulham!

At some point, Muniz already replaced Raul Jimenez in this game and in this tense moment of truth, the striker stepped up to take the penalty kick.

Despite Renato Sanchez's antics, Muniz stayed calm, playing a cool Panenka penalty kick straight down the middle as the Chelsea goalkeeper dived to the right side, missing the ball entirely.

"GOALLLLLLLLLLL...!!!" Craven Cottage erupted.

Charging to the corner flag, Rodrigo Muniz slid on his knees, celebrating his goal exuberantly even as his teammates swarmed him, prompting the commentator to wax lyrical about the sheer importance of that goal to Fulham's season even as the Chelsea players deflated.

The Chelsea defenders collapsed on the pitch, exhausted.

In the end, that goal was the difference between victory and defeat, Fulham won 1-0 against Chelsea at home, grabbing an all-important 3 points.

The head-to-head battle against Liverpool was still on!

Chapter 260 Head-to-head battle [3]

The highlight of matchday 33 of the English premier league was of course Fulham's blockbuster encounter with Chelsea in Craven Cottage, and the repercussions that it had in the premier league title race against Liverpool.

Fulham and Liverpool were still neck and neck at the top of the premier league table, it was an exciting head-to-head battle.

Fulham's home game against Chelsea was not the only highlight though, blockbuster encounters between Aston Villa and Newcastle, including Tottenham vs Nottingham Forest also brought a lot of drama and excitement to the matchday.

And eventually, matchday 33 of the premier league came to an end.

(Premier league results:)

(Matchday 33 of 38:)

(Aston Villa 3-3 Newcastle)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Ipswich Town 1-3 Arsenal)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Brentford 2-1 Brighton)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Leicester 0-2 Liverpool)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(West Ham 1-0 Southampton)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Everton 1-2 Man City)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Tottenham 1-1 Nottm Forest)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Crystal Palace 1-0 Bournemouth)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Man United 1-2 Wolves)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

...

(Fulham 1-0 Chelsea)

(Date: 19th April, 2025)

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 33/ W:26/ D:1/ L:3/ Pts: 85)

(2. Fulham GP: 33/ W:25/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 81)

(3. Arsenal GP: 33/ W:21/ D:8/ L:4/ Pts: 71)

(4. Chelsea GP: 33/ W:20/ D:9/ L:4/ Pts: 69)

(5. Man City GP: 33/ W:16/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 56)

(6. Nottm Forest GP: 33/ W:15/ D:10/ L:8/ Pts: 55)

(7. Tottenham GP: 33/ W:15/ D:5/ L:13/ Pts: 50)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 33/ W:13/ D:11/ L:10/ Pts: 50)

(9. Newcastle GP: 33/ W:12/ D:11/ L:10/ Pts: 47)

(10. Brighton GP: 33/ W:12/ D:8/ L:13/ Pts: 44)

(11. Bournemouth GP: 33/ W:11/ D:9/ L:13/ Pts: 42)

(12. Man United GP: 33/ W:12/ D:6/ L:15/ Pts: 42)

(13. Brentford GP: 33/ W:11/ D:8/ L:14/ Pts: 41)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 33/ W:10/ D:11/ L:12/ Pts: 41)

(15. West Ham GP: 33/ W:9/ D:9/ L:15/ Pts: 35)

(16. Leicester GP: 33/ W:5/ D:10/ L:18/ Pts: 25)

(17. Everton GP: 33/ W:5/ D:7/ L:21/ Pts: 22)

(18. Wolves GP: 33/ W:4/ D:10/ L:19/ Pts: 22)

(19. Ipswich Town GP: 33/ W:3/ D:10/ L:20/ Pts: 19)

(20. Southampton GP: 33/ W:3/ D:4/ L:26/ Pts: 13)

The atmosphere within the Fulham squad after the impressive win against Chelsea was absolutely electric.

Again, Coach Marco Silva celebrated the victory exuberantly with his players even as they prepared for their next premier league fixtures.

After the game against Chelsea though, Fulham's next fixture was complicated since 2 games fell on the same day.

Their next game in the premier league is against Southampton in away ground but it was scheduled for 26th April, the same day for the blockbuster FA Cup semifinal encounter between them and Newcastle.

And since this time, the FA Cup semifinal took precedence, the premier league game against Southampton was postponed.

In the next few days, Coach Marco Silva multitasked. Even as he prepared his players for the blockbuster FA Cup semifinal encounter against Newcastle in St. James' Park, he also paid attention to Liverpool's fixtures.

In recent weeks, the Fulham coach was becoming obsessed with Liverpool.

While he finalized his tactic to be used in St. James' Park, he could not help but pay attention to their last 5 league fixtures of the premier league campaign, comparing them against Liverpool's.

(Premier league- Fulham fixtures:)

(Matchday 34 of 38:)

(Southampton – Fulham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Matchday 35 of 38:)

(Aston Villa – Fulham)

(Date: 3rd May, 2025)

...

(Matchday 36 of 38:)

(Fulham – Everton)

(Date: 10th May, 2025)

...

(Matchday 37 of 38:)

(Brentford – Fulham)

(Date: 18th May, 2025)

...

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Fulham – Man City)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

(Premier league- Liverpool fixtures:)

(Matchday 34 of 38:)

(Liverpool – Tottenham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Matchday 35 of 38:)

(Chelsea – Liverpool)

(Date: 3rd May, 2025)

...

(Matchday 36 of 38:)

(Liverpool – Arsenal)

(Date: 10th May, 2025)

...

(Matchday 37 of 38:)

(Brighton – Liverpool)

(Date: 18th May, 2025)

...

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Liverpool – Crystal Palace)

As soon as Coach Marco Silva was done drafting the fixture comparison between his team and their archrivals this season competing for the premier league trophy, a smile could not help but outline his face.

"We have a chance!" This coach clenched his fists, excited.

Compared to their archrivals this season, Fulham had a more forgivable fixture against the likes of Southampton, Aston Villa, Everton, and Brentford, their toughest game of the last 5 being the eventual blockbuster clash against Man City to close off the 2024/2025 premier league season.

The likes of Aston Villa and Brentford were obviously going to put up a challenge as the battle for spots in the premier league ramps up but the Fulham coach had higher hopes of getting a result against them.

Even against Man City, Coach Marco Silva could see his team beating them comfortably despite the fact that the reigning champions were already regaining their form in recent weeks.

Compared to them though, Liverpool's final 5 fixtures were fixtures of death.

Their matchday 34 and matchday 35 alone were against 2 troublesome clubs in North London, Tottenham and Chelsea.

Liverpool may be the more in-form team compared to the other 2, but football was football, it could not be predicted.

Winning against both clubs was not going to be easy since they were among the top 6 clubs of the English premier league and from there on, it did not get any better for the Merseysiders.

Of their last 3 premier league games of the season, they had blockbuster encounters against Arsenal in Anfield and a clash against Brighton in away ground, games that were likely going to give them a headache.

And besides, one important factor that Coach Marco Silva added to his calculations was the fact that Liverpool was still competing in the top competition of club football, the UEFA champions league.

They were one of the favorites to claim the trophy this season buoyed by Salah's consistent performances, and it served as a distraction to them.

All these reasons gave Coach Marco Silva confidence.

'We can still do it,' he thought. 'We can create history!'