

Football God 431

Chapter 431: Copa del Rey final; Barcelona vs Real Madrid [1]

26th April, 2026...

Saturday. 21:00.

After a day filled with restless energy and anticipation, the sun finally set in Seville, but the city was already burning with anticipation.

It's Copa del Rey final night at the Estadio La Cartuja, and the air is thick with history, hostility, and raw passion.

This isn't just a football match, it's Barcelona vs Real Madrid. El Clasico in its purest, most explosive form.

It was the moment of truth.

On the evening, the streets leading to the stadium were flanked by seas of color; Blaugrana on one side, Los Blancos on the other, split like the rivalry itself.

Flares ignite, drums thunder, and chants pierce the evening air long before the buses arrive.

Then comes the first roar, a signal.

Through a tunnel of smoke and security, the Real Madrid bus crept forward. Immediately, white jerseys swarmed the vehicle, chanting loudly.

"Hala Madrid!"

"Hala Madrid!" They chanted with already hoarse throats.

Some slapped the sides of the bus, trying to inject adrenaline directly into the veins of their heroes.

Moments later, the noise intensified again.

This time, it's Barcelona.

Their bus was greeted by an inferno of blue and red.

"Visca El Barca!"

They chanted, singing out like a war cry.

Fans pound drums, waving massive flags, and throwing confetti like it was a parade, but this parade was marching toward war.

Outside the stadium, it was a spectacle bordering on madness.

Street vendors hawk shirts and scarves while firecrackers explode like gunshots in the alleys. Impromptu chants break out at every corner, sometimes escalating into shouting matches between opposing fans separated only by lines of riot police.

The sevillano night is humid, but the tension is electric.

Songs belted through the night, beers spilled and eyes were wild.

To the fans privileged to be on the stadium on the night, they weren't just about to watch a match; rather, they were living for a moment that had the capacity to define their year.

Inside the stadium, the pregame energy was infectious, electric.

As kickoff approached, La Cartuja transformed into a cauldron.

The stands are a split battlefield. Half the stadium is swathed in Barcelona's blue and red, a mosaic of scarves, flags, and painted faces.

The other half is Real Madrid's pristine white as if they were envoys of heaven, gleaming like armor under the floodlights.

The noise? Simply deafening.

Every warm-up pass from either team was cheered or jeered.

When the big screens flash highlights of previous Clasicos, the crowd explodes with either cheers of triumph or bitter howls of rage.

On the night, there was no calm corner of the stadium.

There was no neutral zone. Not tonight.

And then, the lights dim just slightly.

Immediately, a crescendo builds. A solemn atmosphere settles in this stadium as the Copa del Rey trophy sits on its pedestal, gleaming under the spotlight.

Then, a booming voice announced the arrival of the teams.

And with it, the tunnel shakes.

First out was FC Barcelona; led by their captain, Raphinha, faces hard, eyes locked forward.

In response, the whistle of hatred rained from the Madrid side.

And then came out Real Madrid, equally unbothered, matching the intensity step for step. Now it was Barcelona's turn to jeer with venom.

As both teams line up on the pitch, the chants hit a fever pitch.

Anthems were screamed, not sung. Every fan was on their feet, fists clenched, hearts pounding in the passion for the game.

This is more than a final.

This is a war of identity. A clash of philosophies. A rivalry soaked in history, politics, pride, and hate.

Just like FC Barcelona came out with the big guns, their best starting XI, Real Madrid also held nothing back, coming out with their best.

Real Madrid started with a similar 4-2-3-1 formation, Thibaut Courtois starting in between the posts while ahead of him was a defensive quadruple of Trent Alexander Arnold, Raul Asencio, Antonio Rudiger, and Ferland Mendy.

In midfield was the solid midfield duo of Federico Valverde and Aurelien Tchouameni, while in attacking midfield was the mercurial Englishman, Jude Bellingham.

The attacking trio comprised of 2 Brazilians and a Frenchman; Vinicius Junior in left wing, Rodrygo in right wing, and Kylian Mbappe upfront as the striker.

This was a formidable lineup.

As their anthem played, the eyes of the Real Madrid players burned with fervor, Vinicius Jnr. in particular nodding in his with fire blazing in his eyes.

Kylian Mbappe was stone-faced, already locked in.

Jude Bellingham was calm; the Englishman seemed to have the uncanny ability of never losing his composure.

The FC Barcelona players matched the fervor of their opponents.

Raphinha was just like Jude Bellingham, calm and composed, including Pedri. Like Vinicius, Gavi had a fiery blaze burning in his eyes.

Lamine Yamal had a subtle smile playing in his lips as he stared at the seething stadium stands, while Alejandro Balde nonchalantly chewed on a chewing gum.

As for Sam himself?

Sam could not stay in one place.

Even as the anthem sang, his blood was already boiling. And so, he moved, swaying from one foot to the other to keep his body moving even as he clenched and unclenched his fists in intervals.

His eyes? They seemed to have narrowed into slits, like the eyes of a predatory Dragon ready to soar into the sky and hunt prey, and devour them.

It was an iconic lineup of players.

And then, the anthem was over.

The players shook hands with themselves, and then the officials, before jogging into the pitch, separating into their different side of the pitch.

The noise in the stadium rose to a crescendo with this.

The captains of both teams moved last after the referee exchanged one last words with them. Raphinha ran to his side of the pitch, while Real Madrid's captain on the night, Federico Valverde also ran to the middle of the pitch.

The referee looked at his watch, and then...

FWEEEE!

The shrill sound cut through the night like a blade.

The game started.

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FWEEE!

The shrill sound cut through the night like a blade.

The game started.

And with it, all hell broke loose.

Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, the 2 biggest clubs in Spain, characterized by a rivalry unlike any other in football, the El Clasico.

Real Madrid, the Spanish Capital Club, the pride of Spain.

Well-known and feared in Europe for their 15 UEFA Champions League trophies, 15! That is twice more UEFA Champions League trophies than any other club in Europe has.

To a lot of football fans, the biggest football club in the world.

A club with a long and deep history of victory, trophies, and fielding some of the best football players in the history of football.

From the earliest Galacticos of Raul, Ferenc Puskas, Alfredo Di Stefano, to the early 2000s Galacticos era of Zinedine Zidane, Ronaldo Nazario, David Beckham, and the likes to the just past era of Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema, Gareth Bale.

All these players were some of the biggest offensive players in the history of football, and yet, they were just one part of the big club, Real Madrid.

Afterall, they also fielded some of the best midfielders in defenders in history.

In the middle of the park, renowned world class midfielders like Luka Modric, Toni Kroos, Kaka, and Casemiro all plied their trades for the club at some point. In the new era, they had boys like Jude Bellingham and Federico Valverde, all elite football players.

In defense? Real Madrid are well-known for their star-studded attack, but they are also renowned for their stalwart no-nonsense defensive lineups through the years.

From the era of Sergio Ramos and Pepe, to Raphael Varane, Marcelo, Carvajal, and now in the era of David Alaba, Antonio Rudiger, Ferland Mendy, and Trent Alexander Arnold, Madrid always fielded the best players in the world.

Afterall, they had the money to enter the market and spend on big players, and the history and allure to attract them to their team.

As for FC Barcelona?

Their history and story were much more modest, but no less legendary.

Unlike their archrivals, the Blaugrana club are Catalan true and true. While Real Madrid are known for spending big on top and already established players, FC Barcelona are more renowned for their football academy, the La Masia academy.

Afterall, the biggest legends of the club all came from the academy.

From the era of Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta, Xavi, Puyol, all homegrown academy players of the club. And even earlier in the Yohan Cruyff era, then the Pep Guardiola, Ronald Koeman, and Mikel Arteta eras, Barcelona had history, lots of it.

And then the new era of Lamine Yamal, Raphinha, Sam, Pedri, Gavi, Alejandro Balde, Pau Cubarsi, Jules Kounde, and the likes.

Both clubs were very different.

One wears the pristine white representing their pride and superiority, while the other wears valiant red and blue to show that they are not inferior in any way.

And subjectively, they are indeed not inferior.

Yes, Real Madrid has 15 UEFA Champions League trophies to Barca's modest 5 but Barcelona also made history in their peak.

During the purple reign of the Lionel Messi era, Barcelona won 4 of their 5 UEFA Champions League trophies and the main difference between them and Real Madrid is their style of play.

While Real Madrid are now above playing dirty, doing anything to get the victory, FC Barcelona was more characterized by their unique style of play..., the legendary tiki taka.

Like the legendary Pep Guardiola said, we play not just to win, but to entertain and during their peak years, that was exactly what Barcelona did.

In the 2009 UEFA Champions League final, they beat Manchester United with a 2-1 score line but 2 years later in 2011, peak Barcelona was shown to the world.

That Barcelona team led by Xavi Hernandez and spearheaded by a young Lionel Messi passed Manchester United to death.

That was peak Barcelona, that was peak Catalan football, tiki taka.

During that period, core Barcelona players, Xavi, Sergio Busquets, and Andres Iniesta also led the Spain team to a legendary treble, winning back-to-back Euros, a World Cup, and the Euros tournament again.

Tonight, at the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla, it was not just 2 football clubs playing in a final, it was 2 distinct football histories clashing.

2 football philosophies, 2 Titans of football clashing.

And the 22 players on the pitch, tonight, they carried this weight that could crush a mountain on their shoulders, playing the game of their lives.

There is El Clasico, and then there is El Clasico final.

Sam had experienced El Clasico before, tonight, he experienced El Clasico final. And it was humbling.

The tension in the stadium was palpable.

The heat, the energy, the noise, Sam felt all of it permeating through his body, invading his bones, rattling him to his core and yet, he forced himself through it all to play his best football.

'This energy...!' He grinned.

It filled him with bloodlust, and Sam embraced it.

The first half was an exciting game of end-to-end football, and it was embodied by high octane attacking football.

Both clubs had a plethora of talent, and they showcased their skill tonight.

For FC Barcelona, Sam, Lamine Yamal, and Raphinha spearheaded a dynamic attack, Pedri feeding them swift and accurate passes.

For Real Madrid, their lightning-fast attack erupted like Predators in a jungle.

Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jnr. and Rodrygo, all speed demons showed what they were made off this game, pushing the Barcelona defense to its wit's end.

And yet, despite the fearsome attacking potential of both teams, somehow, the defense of both sides was able to hold.

After a highly entertaining first half, it came to an end 0-0.

During halftime, Hansi Flick and Carlo Ancelotti gave a piece of their mind to their players, commending the commendable part of their games this first half while criticizing the blunders that they made.

After a fiery team talk, both coaches sent their players back to the pitch.

The second half started.

Just 2 minutes after the second half started, a goal was scored.

Real Madrid scored...

Kylian Mbappe scored.

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The first half ended in a goalless draw.

An entertaining and tension-filled first half, but still goalless.

The second half clearly had no intentions on taking the example of the first as just 2 minutes after coming on, the deadlock was finally broken.

Real Madrid scored!

It came from a lightning-fast Real Madrid counterattack.

Having started kickoff in the first half, in the second half, FC Barcelona started kickoff and as the zealous Catalan players loomed over Real Madrid's 18-yard box, eager to score, a stalwart presence in Federico Valverde stole the ball.

As soon as Valverde stole the ball, Pedri and Frankie De Jong closed him down, initiating Hansi Flick's favored high pressing approach.

And yet, they couldn't get the ball because Valverde didn't take the risk of holding onto possession longer than usual, knowing what was at stake.

And so, shortly after winning the ball, he flicked it to the right side of the pitch where a certain Englishman was already bombing up field after seeing him win the ball.

Thud!

The ball landed in his path and taking one silky first touch, Trent Alexander Arnold pushed the ball forward and past Alejandro Balde.

He already evaded one player, but he didn't take the risk of running with the ball knowing just how fast Balde could recover and defend.

Besides, he didn't need to take the risk because he had the perfect players for a counterattacking scenario like this in Mbappe, Vinicius, and Rodrygo.

As soon as Valverde won back the ball, the crazy trio were already running, and so...

Bam!

Arnold hit one of those trademark crosses, sending the ball in a curving trajectory through the field from the right to the left where Vinicius lurked.

Jules Kounde pursued the Brazilian but he was not fast enough.

And Vinicius barely beat the offside trap.

Knowing what was at stake, Vinicius dared not dilly dally as the ball floated towards him as after overtaking Jules Kounde, he took one touch of the ball, kicking it forward and pursuing after it like the flash himself.

He was not alone.

Through the middle, Kylian Mbappe ran, swinging his long legs and arms like a rampaging bull even as Rodrygo ran from the right.

He had two options, so, which one?

Vinicius didn't even think, the idea came to him subconsciously and without hesitation, he executed it fueled by sheer instinct.

Swinging his right leg, Vinicius hit a devilish trivela!

Bam!

As soon as his right leg hit the ball with the outside of his boot, it moved, hitting the grass once and floating forward in a curving trajectory like a discuss.

Mbappe was running...

Pau Cubarsi and Inigo Martinez were also running, eager to close the lighting-fast striker down but due to their high offside line, they stood no chance.

The Frenchman was just too fast.

Kylian Mbappe was a literal speeding train.

They could not catch up. They knew it, Mbappe knew it, Marc Andre Ter Stegen also knew it. And so, instead of placing misguided hope on his defenders, the German goalkeeper decided to take matters into his own hands.

Whoosh!

Ter Stegen charged out of his post to intercept the ball.

Silence.

For a few moments of pure tension, the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla in Seville became as silent as a church.

Time and space seemed to compress, slowing down to a crawl.

All that remained was the pitch, the 18-yard box, and movement.

The thudding sounds of Kylian Mbappe reverberated, the desperate charge of Marc Andre Ter Stegen was highlighted, and then...

Whoosh!

Kylian Mbappe lunged at the ball.

Kylian Mbappe was faster, but the distance between Ter Stegen and the ball was shorter. The goalkeeper should have arrived first, and the Frenchman knew it, and so he lunged at the ball, throwing himself in a reckless attacking move.

Before Ter Stegen could touch the ball, with the heel of his boots, Kylian Mbappe poked the ball past the scrambling German goalkeeper.

Ter Stegen evaded the Frenchman's boots at the last moment, narrowly escaping the grim reality of ending up injured.

As for the ball?

After Kylian Mbappe's strangely acrobatic and reckless heel kick, the ball rolled into the net, unobstructed.

Thud!

Kylian Mbappe landed on his butt but he didn't even feel the pain as the next moment he already stood up, waving his hands excitedly like a mad man while charging towards the corner flag in celebration.

And then...

"GOALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!"

The Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla erupted!

"KYLIAN MBAPPEEEEE!" The commentator roared at the top of his lungs.

"KYLIAN MBAPPE, the mercurial Frenchman have struck at the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla!"

"Vinicius Jnr. and Kylian Mbappe, what a duo!"

"That pass, my God..., it was straight from heaven!"

"And that finish? It could only have been done by Kylian Mbappe and no one else in the world, prove me wrong if you can!"

"And Real Madrid are ahead in the Copa del Rey final!"

"0-1! Game on!"

The FC Barcelona players?

They could not even point fingers at anyone, not that it was something they did regularly. This was because no specific player was at fault for that goal.

It was just a result of a few certain player's individual brilliance cooperating, cohabiting to create the moment of magic.

At the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla, there were 2 distinct energies in the stadium at the moment.

On one side, tens of thousands of fans in the pristine white of Real Madrid celebrated at the top of their lungs, waving banners, whistling, screaming, undressing in an unbridled display of madness.

On the other side, silence; somber, solemn silence.

47 minutes, 0-1...

Real Madrid was leading.

In just the 2nd minute of the second half, the game already turned on its head, but how long could this status last?

What would be the response of the FC Barcelona players?

Well, their response was pretty straightforward and brutal.

Chaos, war, battle!

All hell broke loose on the pitch!

Chapter 434 434: Copa Del Rey; Barcelona vs Real Madrid [4]

Defiance...

A single word, a simple meaning, but with a heavy undertone.

What is defiance?

In the simple dictionary, defiance is a daring or bold resistance to authority or to any opposing force.

An open disregard; contempt.

A challenge to meet in combat or in a contest.

47 minutes, 0-1...

Real Madrid scored, and in extension, they issued a challenge.

In response, Catalan energy bloomed in all its full glory at the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla.

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

That voice was back.

That voice, it was the voice of defiance.

FC Barcelona accepted Real Madrid's challenge, and Sam was the tip of the spear that took the battle to the army in white.

Pure, unadulterated football started on the pitch.

FC Barcelona was already playing good since, dominating possession a bit in the first half but in this second half after Mbappe's goal?

They simply exploded, leaving hesitation behind to embrace instinct.

There seemed to be a limit lock on the FC Barcelona players before but after that Mbappe, a limit breaker mechanism was initiated, breaking the limit.

And so, flowing, relentless, attacking football followed.

Real Madrid still had their moments, their half chances but for large swathes of this second half, they were largely stifled as FC Barcelona exploded.

It was an all-out attacking display.

The defense pushed forward, pushing the offside line so high, far higher than anything that FC Barcelona have played the season under Hansi Flick's orders.

And with such a ridiculous highline, the pressure became palpable.

The FC Barcelona players were like a swarm of locusts, swarming and overwhelming every obstacle before them, devouring any and everything in sight.

In the middle of the pack, Pedri was like a flea, weightless, elusive, untouchable, quick-footed.

Tonight, Pedri played the best game of his career.

He led the press from midfield, winning back balls mere seconds after Real Madrid got it, and when he got the ball, he actually made use of it.

Of course, in response to Barca's offensive high press, Real Madrid tried to press back and that was where Pedri comes to fore as the orchestrator.

Pedri didn't get the chance of playing with legends like Andres Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez to learn directly from them, but of that iconic FC Barcelona midfield trio, he did play with one, Sergio Busquets.

And from the Spanish legend, he soaked and learned as much as he could, the core of it being his ability to escape pressure and press.

Shifting the ball, changing his center of gravity, tight shuffling the ball, la croquetas, roulettes, Cruyff turns, Pedri used it all on the night!

Every time he did, weaving through 2 or more Real Madrid players, FC Barcelona fans rose to their feet in awe.

Frankie De Jong was his willing partner but tonight, the Dutchman was more of the destroyer, breaking down any Real Madrid attack before it could even start.

And with Pedri being such an effective press resistant midfielder, and also executing his passing duties to a tee, the already iconic Barcelona attacking trio was let loose in Real Madrid's half.

Pedri did the orchestrating, Lamine Yamal did most of the dribbling and trickery. Tonight, in the second half, after that goal, Lamine Yamal was unplayable.

Ferland Mendy was made to see stars.

Yamal dribbled, weaving in and out, turning Mendy inside out with startling consistency as he created chances for his teammates.

While Yamal did the dribbling, Raphinha repeatedly kept on running into space like a tireless madman, receiving passes not just from Yamal, Gavi, and Pedri but also Sam as he unleashed shot after shot at goal.

Tonight, Thibaut Courtois put on that 2022 Champions League final cloak again, putting out a flawless goalkeeping performance.

Sam and Raphinha had chances, again and again, and yet every time, the devilish Thibaut Courtois was up for the challenge.

Sam didn't just threaten and shoot, he also played.

Sam played his heart out on the pitch.

He dribbled, he created, he unleashed lethal shots at goal, making the Madrid defenders work their ass out to barely keep him in check.

FC Barcelona was dominating heavily, and yet, no goal yet.

This second half, after that goal, FC Barcelona ran Real Madrid ragged so thoroughly that it was diabolical, and so the Madrid players started playing dirty.

Playing dirty when the going gets tough, that was also the Madrid way.

The Spanish Capital club was not above playing dirty, so long that they get the win at the end of the game and tonight, that was exactly what they did under the onslaught of the FC Barcelona players.

The defenders tackled like wrestlers, kicking like MMA fighters.

The midfielders? They lunged like agile boxers, doing everything in their powers to slow down the game and kill FC Barcelona's momentum.

The FC Barcelona players complained bitterly, and yet the referee refused to brandish a card, yet.

It was extremely frustrating but they had no choice but to play on.

And you know the most painful thing? The dirty tactic was working.

50 minutes, no goal...

60 minutes, no goal...

70 minutes, no goal...

In the 72nd minute, Hansi Flick took out Gavi, introducing Dani Olmo to the game in a desperate gamble to turn the game around.

75 minutes, no goal...

80 minutes, no goal...

84 minutes, finally, it happened...

By now, the atmosphere in this stadium crackled with literal electricity, packed with palpable tension.

Tiki taka, was the answer...

It started from Pedri.

Pedri played a through pass to Lamine Yamal. Pursued by a relentless Ferland Mendy, Yamal received the ball with the heel of his right boot, flicking it towards Jules Kounde who was behind him who didn't hesitate.

As the ball floated towards him, without even looking, simply focusing on the players in red and blue in the 18-yard box from the periphery of his vision, Koude hit the ball into the box.

Bam!

It was a silky first touch from Dani Olmo.

One touch to calm the ball, and a second touch to flick the ball again into the box, towards the position where Sam lurked.

As the ball floated in, Sam didn't even think.

He forgot thought and embraced instinct.

This was why as the ball floated in, even before the Real Madrid defenders surrounding him could realize what was happening, his right leg was already swinging and then, his leg connected to the ball in a powerful volley.

BAM!

The ball left a blur in its wake as it flew with power, tearing its way into the right corner of the net.

This time, Courtois was rooted to one spot.

He didn't even see it coming.

He only reacted when the roar of a thousand fans drowned him.

"GOALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!"

Chapter 435: Copa Del Rey Final; Barcelona vs Real Madrid [5]

"GOALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!"

"1-1!"

"BARCELONA HAS DONE IT!"

"THE KING HAS STRUCK AGAIN!"

"SAMUEL MOSES, IMMORTAL, RELENTLESS!"

"AND FINALLY, THE BLANCOS DEFENSE HAS BEEN BREACHED!"

It was not just the commentators, the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla in Seville literally exploded as tens of thousands of fans with pent up emotions in this stadium for 84 minutes finally let loose.

Most FC Barcelona fans simply tore their shirts in the stand in the passion of the game, beating their chest, roaring excitedly.

As for the culprit?

As soon as he struck the ball, Sam fell down. But following the ball with his eyes, as soon as he saw it enter the net, he rose up to his feet and like a mad man, with dilated pupils, he charged towards the corner flag.

His teammates charged after him excitedly amid the boiling stadium. Arriving close to the corner flag, Sam jumped down, sliding towards the flag on his butt.

And then, he kicked the corner flag before jumping back to his feet.

"COME ON!!!" He roared, pumping his fists excitedly.

Raphinha jumped on his back, celebrating with him excitedly even as Lamine Yamal went to his front, holding his face and touching his head with Sam's head.

The whole Barcelona team was suddenly feverish with excitement and energy. Since, they've been trying their best to no avail even as Real Madrid played unhinged and dirty football.

Finally getting a result now? They were emboldened, they felt unstoppable.

FWEEEE!

After the passionate goal celebration, the referee's whistle sounded to continue the game.

Real Madrid kicked off, continuing the game but it was never the same.

For the whole of this 2nd half, most especially after that Kylian Mbappe goal, Real Madrid played this game, hanging at a delicate balance.

The FC Barcelona pressure was just too much.

And yet, by playing dirty, they managed to hold on for so long. Unfortunately, they couldn't do it for the full 90 minutes.

After that goal, uncertainty invaded like an insidious poison.

If Barcelona scores one, what is preventing them from scoring two?

Will they score two?

Real Madrid was the mentality monster club. A club that other clubs across Europe feared, the club renowned for their remontada spirit, clawing victory from the depths of defeat and yet against this Barcelona side, they felt fragile.

And once that insidious poison invaded, there was no stopping it.

Real Madrid no longer attacked, rather, they spent the next few minutes desperately defending more Barcelona attacks after the Catalan giants won back possession as the game continued.

That belief that they could do it, that they could hold on against all odds was what held the team in white together against the onslaught of attacks since.

But that goal put a dent on that belief, a crack, small and insignificant but at this moment, all Barcelona needed was a crack.

They had the tools to widen the crack.

84 minutes, 1-1...

5 minutes after Sam's first goal, Real Madrid won back possession, Jude Bellingham leading the charge to get the all-important 2nd goal to win the game.

And yet, that was the moment when Sam decided to drop back.

Due to his exploits in front of goal and his clutch factor, Sam already built such a fearsome reputation for himself that fans thought his shooting was his best attribute. But in reality, his stamina remained his strongest attribute.

It was already the 89th minute of this grueling and punishing final, and yet, Sam was not tired yet.

Fatigue was settling in, but the mamba mentality kept him going.

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

One goal was good, but it was not enough.

Sam wanted more. To win, he needed one more.

And so he dropped deep, chasing after the ball.

Federico Valverde was the one who halted the Barca sequence of play, stealing the ball and immediately passing towards Jude Bellingham.

Pedri pressed Bellingham but with his superior physicality, the Englishman shrugged of the Spaniard's challenge, spinning past him with a roulette.

After that roulette, Bellingham looked left and right, scanning his options, and then he pushed deep with the ball.

That was his mistake. He scanned left and right, but due to being tired after such a grueling game, he forgot to scan behind him.

Whoosh!

Sam arrived like a storm. Unstoppable.

He rushed past Bellingham, stealing the ball from him. Bellingham tried to challenge immediately for the ball back but with more energy at this stage of the game, Sam flexed his physicality and shoved the Englishman aside.

Jude Bellingham fell down, and Sam was left alone with the ball, in the middle of the pitch.

Looking forward, Sam's eyes narrowed as he saw an uneven line that led through the heart of the Real Madrid formation.

He moved.

BZZZ!

Pushing the ball forward, he ran.

He met Fede Valverde's challenge first but with silky smooth step overs and a drop of the shoulder, he left the Uruguayan captain for dead, blasting away with speed on the other side.

Other players in white tried to stop him, but Sam was unstoppable, charging through the middle of the pitch with blistering speed.

He didn't seem tired at all.

Everything happened within just a few seconds and now, Sam was before the Real Madrid 18-yard box, about to step into it.

The Real Madrid defense stirred, reacting.

But he never entered the 18-yard box, Sam had the ball right where he wanted it. At that moment, his eyes narrowed into slits like those of a snake. He narrowed his vision towards one corner of the post, and then...

BAM!

The motion of swinging his leg back and striking the ball was so fast that it seemed like one movement.

The ball moved with the force of a missile.

Rushing so fast through the ground that grass were left swirling in its wake, defenders' leg trailing helplessly in reverence of its passage, and then...

Thud!

Thibaut Courtois dived but after that first goal, his voodoo this night was already broken. The tall Belgian could not get to the ball on time.

Whoosh!

The ball kissed the bottom left corner of the net at such an acute angle that it seemed to have been measured before being shot.

BOOM!

The Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla erupted.

Chapter 436: FC Barcelona; Copa Del Rey Champions

BAM!

An iconic shot that would soon become entrenched in history.

The ball kissed the bottom right corner of the net and immediately, the Blaugrana end at the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla went ballistic.

Fans threw limbs, strangers hugged like brothers, tears welled up in eyes painted red and blue as smoke bombs turned the sky crimson and violet.

Pandemonium.

Madness.

Delirium.

The commentator lost all restraint.

"OH MY WORD!"

"SAMUEL MOSES, TAKE THE BOW, YOU ABSOLUTE MONSTER!"

"A STRIKE FROM HEAVEN!"

"FROM THE DEPTHS OF HIS SOUL!"

"HE HAS PARTED THE SEA AND WALKED ON WATER IN SEVILLE!"

"BARCA LEAD! BARCA LEAD!"

Fans collapsed to their knees, fists in the sky, screaming to the heavens. Some were crying, others shaking. In the Madrid end, pure silence.

A thousand white shirts frozen in disbelief, like statues witnessing a miracle they could not stop.

They knew. It was over.

Screaming at the top of his lungs, Sam allowed his body, mind, and soul to bask in the moment as he charged towards the corner flag, spreading his arms wide to embrace the energy of the stadium before sliding on his knees in celebration.

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

The Sam chants started at the Estadio La Cartuja de Sevilla.

His teammates finally arrived, most sliding on the field after him in celebration, others jumping in joy, punching their fists out of sheer passion for the game and for their club.

Raphinha hugged Sam excitedly, kissing his forehead without restraint as he lost himself in the celebrations already.

When Sam rose back up to his feet, Lamine Yamal jumped on his back, pumping a fist in excitement as the fans roared with his movements.

It was pure pandemonium, but there was joy in the chaos.

FWEEE!

The referee's whistle soon sounded again, the signal to continue the game but at this point, there was very little that Real Madrid could do.

Carlo Ancelotti, the Real Madrid coach went all out, setting his team loose as they went all out attack, sending majority of the players up field to attack.

And yet, it was not bearing much fruit. Barcelona defended as a team.

4 minutes of additional time were added to the game.

Real Madrid kept on chasing the equalizer, but they never saw it. At the final minute, when Real Madrid got a corner, even Thibaut Courtois ran up field to join his players, desperate to help his team even the score line.

And yet, it was not enough.

The corner kick was played, and Real Madrid still failed to score.

That was the last kick of the game.

The final whistle blew.

Barcelona 2. Real Madrid 1.

As the players in white collapsed on the pitch in exhaustion, the players in red and blue still found the energy to run around the pitch in celebration, celebrating the victory excitedly in front of their fans.

The commentators chipped into the celebrations.

"And there it is!"

"It is done!"

"Barcelona are Kings of the Copa once more!"

"In a night that will be carved into the marble halls of footballing legend, they have defied the odds, silenced their doubters, and lifted the crown above their eternal rivals!"

"The mighty Real Madrid has been beaten!"

"This wasn't just victory, it was resurrection. It was rage turned to glory. It was Samuel Moses, the storm in human form, writing his name into the stars of Seville!"

"Tonight, in La Cartuja... Barca didn't just win the Copa del Rey".

"They conquered it!"

And as the Barcelona captain raised the trophy high, gold confetti rained, and fans sang at the top of their lungs.

"El Cant del Barca!"

They sang with tears streaming down their cheeks, with joy overflowing.

And as they sang, one thing was certain:

This night would never be forgotten.

...

That night, Sam was the star of the show.

With another MOTM award for his 2-goal haul in the final, singlehandedly winning the game for FC Barcelona, Sam solidified his position as the player primed to win the best player award of the Copa del Rey.

And he did scoop the award, adding it to his growing individual award cabinet and yet that was not all for the night.

With 2 more goals to his numbers this season, in the context of the Copa del Rey tournament, he also won the golden boot award for the tournament.

That night, Sam felt on top of the world.

That night, Barcelona was to celebrate all night, fans of the Catalan club savoring a well-deserved victory over their eternal rivals in one of the biggest stages of club football in the context of Spanish football.

Sam did not exclude himself from the celebrations though.

After such a grueling game both mentally and physically, even he wanted to relax and properly recover from the game.

To his surprise, by the time he arrived back to Barcelona to much fanfare with his teammates, his fiancée was already there at the Spotify Camp Nou waiting for him. Sam was surprised to meet Kayla, but he didn't say it.

He was excited to meet her.

Having driven to the stadium, Kayla scooped her fiancée away from the overzealous fans, driving him home.

On getting home, Sam was treated to a sumptuous African meal that Kayla already meticulously made for him with the most love and care.

That night, Sam didn't just enjoy that meal, he enjoyed another meal.

And another unforgettable night was added to the lore of romance between Sam and Kayla. That night, the fiancées let themselves loose in the throes of pleasure, basking in each other's warmth, presence, and affection.

Spending time alone with Kayla, Sam could not think of a better way to spend his night on the wake of such a legendary performance against Real Madrid in the final of the Copa del Rey.

'Ah... I'm living the life'.

Not just Sam, the other FC Barcelona players let themselves loose that night, savoring the moment and the incredible feeling of victory.

The streets of Barcelona were lit with the flames of passion that night.

It was an unforgettable night.

Chapter 437: Locking in

16 days of death...

That was what the media called it.

And the FC Barcelona fanbase agreed with the media, including the players. It was the 16 days that would decide their season and it already started.

(Copa del Rey:)

(Final:)

(Barcelona 2–1 Real Madrid)

(Date: 26th April, 2026)

...

(UEFA Champions League:)

(Semifinal:)

(Leg 1 of 2:)

(Barcelona – Inter)

(Date: 30th April, 2026)

...

(La Liga:)

(Valladolid – Barcelona)

(Date: 3rd May, 2026)

...

(UEFA Champions League:)

(Semifinal:)

(Leg 1 of 2:)

(Inter – Barcelona)

(Date: 6th May, 2026)

...

(La Liga:)

(Barcelona – Real Madrid)

(Date: 11th May, 2026)

5 games in 16 days.

Out of those 5 games, one of them was already played, one of the most important, the Copa del Rey final and it was a victory for FC Barcelona.

And yet, they dared not rest on their laurels yet.

The season was not over yet.

The fans may be allowed to let loose for a long time, celebrating their second final win of the season over their archrivals, Real Madrid but the players could not afford the same leisure if they wanted to keep the late season momentum uniform.

Sam especially did not dare be complacent.

After the Real Madrid game, he truly was now on the cusp of victory.

With his 2 goals against Real Madrid, he eclipsed more legendary goalscorers in football history, including Cristiano Ronaldo's personal record of 61 goals in a season, a feat the legendary Portuguese only managed once in his career.

Now, in the history of football, Sam had only two players ahead of him in the most goals department... Lionel Messi and Josef Bican.

With his 2 goals against Real Madrid, Sam took his tally for the season to an incredible figure of 71 goals in 1 season!

It was a figure that left most elite strikers in football history chasing the wind.

In just his debut season for FC Barcelona, and his first official season as a striker, Sam already entrenched his name among the greatest strikers in the history of football. He already wormed his way into the top 10 goalscorers in a season list.

In the top 10 goalscorers in a season list, Fernando Peyroteo was the previous number 10, beating the legendary Robert Lewandowski and Mario Jardel, 55 goals apiece with his 56 goals haul in the 1945/1946 season.

And yet, with Sam's introduction, this legend was already kicked off the list.

Now in 10th position was another Barcelona legend, the Uruguayan hitman, Luis Suarez with 59 goals in his record-breaking 2015/2016 season.

His was the only other name besides Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo who made the list from a major European league in the 21st century, until Sam.

Now in 9th position in the list is the legendary Portuguese, Cristiano Ronaldo with his 61 goals haul in the 2014/2015 season.

After Ronaldo in 8th position is Dixie Dean with 63 goals in the 1927/1928 season, then Zico in 7th position with his 65 goals in 1979, and then the Brazilian G.O.A.T himself in 6th position, Pele with 66 goals in 1958.

Tied with Pele at 66 goals a piece is Romario in 2000, another Brazilian legend in 5th position, and then the German legend, Gerd Muller in 4th position with his 67 goals in the 1972/1973 season.

As for the current top 3?

Currently in number 3 was the new King in Catalan, Samuel Moses with his 71 goals in the current season and counting.

The season was still yet to come to an end!

And Sam was still healthy, meaning he would likely participate in all the games till the end of the season. The mere thought of it is mindboggling.

71 goals is an incredible figure, but it only puts into perspective the incredible goalscoring feat of the 2 figures above Sam in the list.

In the 2011/2012 season, in a calendar year where Lionel Messi went absolute bonkers with his numbers, the legendary Argentine registered 73 goals in a single season!

And above Lionel Messi is the one and only Josef Bican, the legendary Austria and Czech Republic international with 76 goals in the 1943/1944 season.

It was a crazy list.

And it puts Sam's crazy performances this season into perspective.

Seeing your name in a goalscoring list with legends like Pele, Gerd Muller, Josef Bican, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez is crazy, but is even crazier when you know you've made the top 3 spot in the list already.

For emphasis, Cristiano Ronaldo is only ranked 9th!

No one would blame Sam for feeling proud, for feeling fulfilled, for feeling complacent. Afterall, after that Real Madrid game and as a direct consequence of his brace, his fame managed to rise even more, something Sam never thought was possible at this point.

They were already calling him the new G.O.A.T candidate of football.

The G.O.A.T of the new generation.

Others dubbed it the Rise of a Football God.

So yeah, Sam would be vindicated for feeling immensely proud of his achievements but despite everything, he still had the mentality to keep his head down.

'The season is not over yet'.

That was the simple phrase he used to keep himself sober.

This time, he didn't even put too much focus on the system rewards that he got for winning the Copa del Rey and his performance in the tournament.

All his attention was already focused on the preparations for the UEFA Champions League semifinal clash against Inter Milan.

They had just 4 days before the Inter Milan clash. It was a tight schedule, and yet Hansi Flick gave his players 1 day of rest.

Knowing the importance of rest, Sam followed the instructions of his coach, resting properly as he focused on his post-match recovery.

And then, the next day, alongside his friends, training started.

Sam jogged, worked out in the Spotify Camp Nou gym, and went to team training as Hansi Flick drilled his players in training, ingraining his tactics for the semifinal in their head.

It was just 2 days ago when they won the Copa del Rey final against Real Madrid, and yet now, the atmosphere in Barcelona was electric again.

This was because in a few days, a menacing team from Italy would arrive in Spain to challenge them in their turf.

So, while the players trained and prepared, they also made their preparations.

Time moved fast.

And in a blink, D-day was here.

Chapter 438: A rainy night in Barcelona

30th, April...

2026.

The city of Barcelona pulsed with a raw, feverish energy.

It was a rainy night in Barcelona.

Rain drizzled steadily from a bruised sky, turning the streets into slick rivers of light reflected from the flares, headlights, and electric screens. But not even the rain could douse the inferno the Barcelona faithful had prepared.

Hours before kickoff, the roads leading to the Spotify Camp Nou were clogged with a seething mass of supporters.

They wore ponchos or simply let the rain soak them to the bone, their faces painted in blood-red and deep blue, their banners held high and defiant.

Flares hissed and spat smoke into the wet air, casting an eerie glow through the mist. Thunderous drums pounded out a primal rhythm, and chants soared like war cries through the storm.

"Barca!" "Barca!" "Barca!"

"Inter, cabrones, saludad a los campeones!"

When the Inter Milan team bus finally rolled into town, escorted by police, it was as if a spark had dropped onto a powder keg.

The rain amplified the fury; fans banged on the security barricades, smoke engulfed the bus, and flares were tossed onto the wet pavement, hissing and spitting fire like furious serpents.

Red and blue smoke clung to the ground, swirling around the tires like ghostly warriors. No matter what affiliation you were, any player not of the Barcelona persuasion would have felt the energy seeping into them.

The energy was unstoppable. It was insidious, like a drug.

Inter's players peered nervously from behind the glass, their faces momentarily illuminated by the flashes of lightning above and the wild strobe of camera flashes.

It was chaos in the rain.

It felt less like arriving for a football match and more like marching into enemy territory during wartime.

Heck, it felt like walking into the opened maw of an Ancient Dragon.

They finally entered inside, and yet, it didn't stop.

Inside the Spotify Camp Nou, the atmosphere was a living, breathing thing.

The rain hammered the roof and the terraces, but under it all, the fans created a wall of sound so dense it seemed to shake the very concrete beneath their feet.

Every song, every whistle, every jeer layered into a roaring symphony of hostility for the enemy team.

Massive tifos unfurled across the stands; a snarling dragon in Barca colors swallowing a black and blue snake whole; another one of Sam sitting on a throne with a crown on his head, radiating royalty while stomping a similar black and blue snake on the head.

The stadium lights glared down through the misty rain, catching the haze of smoke still drifting over the pitch, making the scene look almost surreal, like something out of a fever dream.

Or to the Inter players, something out of their nightmares.

As the teams lined up in the tunnel, every player could feel it; the energy.

This wasn't just a game.

This was a battle for survival in the heart of a fortress, on a night when even the skies had turned against the invaders.

And then, finally...

FWEEEEEE!

When the referee blew his whistle for kickoff, Camp Nou erupted, not like a stadium but like a volcano, sending a shockwave of raw, primal energy hurtling into the rain-soaked night.

And under the rain, in a slippery stadium, the war for a spot in the final of the UEFA Champions League started.

The weather forecasters never predicted rain.

And so, the rain was as much of a shock to the FC Barcelona players as it was to the Inter Milan players.

But they were professional football players; they would manage.

For the first few dozen minutes of this game, it was pure chaos as both teams struggled to settle on a steady rhythm to control the game.

The pitch was slippery and wet, limiting the options of the players.

Playing long ground passes was now a complicated and risky affair. If not hit right, the wet grass could slow the ball down, resulting in your team losing the ball in a dangerous position.

Dribbling also became much trickier, and yet, the Barca players rose to the occasion fueled by the relentless energy of their fans in the stadium stands.

Lamine Yamal played like a magician with his magic wand.

Instead of being affected adversely by the wet ground, he took advantage of it, weaving through his markers with effortless ease as the famed Inter Milan defenders were forced to their knees and butts on numerous occasions.

In the middle of the pitch, Pedri Gonzalez also kept it tidy, helping Barcelona to maintain control over the middle of the pitch despite the chaotic momentum of the game due to the rain.

Upfront, Sam assumed a lethal false 9 role, dropping deep to help his team build attack. This was Hansi Flick's strategy tonight.

Alongside Atletico Madrid, Inter Milan had one of the best defenses in Europe and to break them down, Sam was given freedom to create.

In the rain, he thrived.

10 minutes, no goal...

20 minutes, no goal...

In the 33rd minute of the game, the deadlock was finally broken.

Benjamin Pavard passed towards Calhanoglou in midfield, but the wet grass slowed the ball down, allowing the Wolfish Samuel Moses to pounce.

Sam arrived at the ball first.

Whoosh!

Calhanoglou slid in recklessly for the ball, the wet pitch carrying him further as he slid and yet, anticipating it with his spatial awareness, Sam flicked the ball up before jumping over the challenge.

As soon as Sam won back the ball, he already spotted someone's run since and after evading Calhanoglou's challenge, he hit a long lobbed pass to the right.

Lamine Yamal took the ball in his strides, rounding his man before passing a lobbed pass back to Sam who already rushed into the 18-yard box.

Immediately, in trepidation, the whole Inter Milan defense reacted to the presence of the most in form striker in Europe.

And yet, Sam didn't shoot. Rather, he simply flicked it behind him.

POW!

Pedri unleashed a thunderous volley!

Having been following him since after Sam dropped back, he was in the right place to hit Sam's flicked pass sweetly, sending it into the back of the net.

"GOALLLL...!"

The Spotify Camp Nou erupted.

Chapter 439: War in the rain [1]

33 minutes, 1-0...

Even in the rain, as soon as the ball entered the net, the Spotify Camp Nou erupted, briefly drowning the deafening clangor of the heavy downpour.

The FC Barcelona players reacted, celebrating the goal as Pedri ran towards the corner flag before sliding on his knees in celebration.

Due to the slippery pitch, he slid for a long time before coming to a stop.

His teammates swarmed him. And when Pedri stood back up, with a big smile on his face, he pointed at Sam, acknowledging him for the role he played in creating the goal.

While the Barcelona players celebrated, for a few seconds, there was an argument among the Inter Milan players till Yann Sommer, their goalkeeper intervened, separating them with a few heated words.

The celebration soon came to an end, and the Barca players returned to the pitch.

FWEEE!

The game continued.

And finally, FC Barcelona got a firm grip over the game.

During training, Hansi Flick never anticipated for a heavy downpour and this was why the fluid FC Barcelona team struggled to set a steady tempo at first.

But after that Pedri goal, the team finally adapted.

They learned to play in the rain.

FC Barcelona finally gained the decisive advantage in this game, dominating possession and posing significant threat in attack, forcing Inter Milan to focus more on defense as the pressure mounted.

"Visca Barca!"

With the fans roaring nonstop on the fans, the players played their hearts out. For the next 10 minutes after Pedri's goal, it was literally 70% to 30% possession in FC Barcelona's favor.

They were passing their opponents to death in the rain!

Somehow, they learned to pass better in the rain.

And then, in the 43rd minute of the game, the game was sealed.

Pedri intercepted a pass aimed to Lautaro Martinez with his chest, bringing the ball down before quickly playing it up, lobbing it over the Inter Milan defense.

The Inter Milan defense reacted, but someone was faster... Samuel Moses.

BZZZ!

Sam left a blur, turning into a speeding train on the spot.

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

The Sam chants erupted at the Spotify Camp Nou as evading the reckless challenges from the defenders to hold him down, he sped past them, running with the ball towards the goalkeeper as he was suddenly one on one with Yann Sommer.

The Inter Milan goalkeeper was one of the best goalkeepers in the world, but against the best striker in the world, even he was not confident in this scenario.

Yann Sommer bid his time a bit, and then he sudden rushed out, rapidly closing the distance to the striker as he slid towards him.

'Shoot...!' Tens of thousands of Barca fans definitely thought that as their blood pressure rose, but Sam didn't shoot, rather...

Bam!

He passed it to his left.

To his left where Alejandro Balde was.

It was crazy for a left back to be in this position in the first place. But when Inter Milan was about to attack before Pedri's interception, Balde was caught out of position and this was the reason why he managed to appear here when Sam looked for a partner in crime.

Besides, he recognized the fact that it was Balde running besides him and since his friend rarely received opportunities like this to score was why he passed.

That pass obliterated the goalkeeper out of the equation.

Balde ran with the ball towards an empty net, and then he smashed it in.

"GOALLLLLLL...!!!"

The Spotify Camp Nou erupted again.

Alejandro Balde scored in the 44th minute, effectively sealing the game, or so Barca fans thought but Inter Milan had something else in mind.

The first half came to an end 2-0 in Barca's favor.

During halftime, Hansi Flick only had a little words for his players, telling them to seal the game so he could sleep on time.

The players laughed to his joke. And then, they entered the pitch.

FWEEE!

Inter Milan restarted the game.

As soon as Inter started the game, Lautaro Martinez, the Argentine striker started running straight at the Barcelona defense.

For a moment or two, the Barca defenders were confused, then...

Bam!

Nicola Barella hit a long pass towards Martinez just before he could be caught by the infamous Barcelona offside trap.

All of a sudden, in one hit, Martinez was one on one with Ter Stegen!

The German goalkeeper charged out to meet the Argentine striker but keeping his cool, Martinez kicked the ball forward, past Ter Stegen's reach, rounding the goalkeeper before scoring a smooth goal.

"GOALLLL...!!!"

The away stands at the Spotify Camp Nou that had been quiet for over 45 minutes erupted suddenly, brought back to life by that goal.

Lautaro Martinez pumped a fist at his fans with passion but he didn't celebrate, rushing into the net, picking the ball and rushing back to the center of the pitch to restart the game.

Inter Milan scored in the very first minute of the 2nd half.

The game continued, but that lightning-fast goal seemed to have rattled FC Barcelona's nerves because just 3 minutes later, in the 48th minute of the game, Pedri played an uncharacteristic loose pass, letting Federico Dimarco to pounce.

The Inter Milan wingback intercepted the pass and without waiting for a single moment, he kicked the ball forward, pursuing it with speed.

With a one-two pass with Calhanoglou, he evaded Jules Kounde before running deep down the left flank of the pitch.

Before the Barcelona defense could properly recover, he hit a silky trivela pass with the outside of his boot, sending it into the 18-yard box.

Inigo Martinez and Pau Cubarsi both kept an eye on the suddenly crazy Argentine striker, but Lautaro Martinez was just too elusive.

The striker was already in the flow state!

He jumped in between both defenders, flinging his body acrobatically at the ball as he played a beautiful scissor kick, sending it towards the top left corner.

Marc Andre Ter Stegen was rooted to one spot.

GOAL.

The Spotify Camp Nou was stunned.

Chapter 440: War in the rain [2]

45 minutes, 2-0...

48 minutes, 2-2...

"WHAT A GOALLLLL!" The commentators went haywire in excitement, screaming in a shrill voice that cut through the rain that was now a mere drizzle.

"SENSATIONAL!"

"Out of this world!"

"Crazy! What a crazy player, what a crazy goal!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, Lautaro Martinez is in the Spotify Camp Nou!"

This time, Lautaro Martinez did not shirk celebrating as he charged towards the corner flag, waving his arms in sheer excitement and passion for the game as he then slid on his knees, his figure cutting through the grass like an arrow head.

His teammates swarmed him, celebrating excitedly.

While the Inter Milan players celebrated, the FC Barcelona defenders were baffled as they stared at each other, not knowing exactly what went wrong.

'How?!' The same question rang in their minds.

And not just the players, the fans too.

After the ball entered the net a second time within just a few minutes, it was so unexpected that the Spotify Camp Nou briefly became as silent as a church.

It was not till Lautaro Martinez charged away in celebration that the away fans erupted, celebrating their striker at the top of their lungs.

Meanwhile, the FC Barcelona fans remained stunned, frozen, and then they reacted in the only way they could.

"BOOOOOOO...!"

They drowned the celebrating Inter Milan players in an ocean of boos.

And that? That was the catalyst.

This game was an interesting game from the very beginning, an extremely important game for both clubs, a season-defining game, a game of exceedingly high stakes.

But after this? The stakes rose even more, no longer just winning, but pride.

And now, the FC Barcelona players were put on the spot.

It was not an option any longer, they must win!

It was crazy pressure, but none of the players donning the red and blue of Barcelona shirked the responsibility. Rather, they soaked on it, letting it sink in to become fuel that'll push them forward.

The commentators calling it the war in the rain was more of a joke, but after that equalizer, it truly became a war.

A war in the rain.

After that equalizer, Hansi Flick finally left the shade for the first time this game, walking to the touchline on his rain coat as he gesticulated wildly, organizing his players and directing them even as the game restarted.

As for the FC Barcelona players?

They ramped up the pressure.

Those 2 goals were purely moments of individual brilliance from a single player. When it came to team performance, FC Barcelona was the vastly superior side this game and they ramped it up even more.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Passes, dribbles, pressure, everything, FC Barcelona ramped it up, running Inter Milan ragged to the ground even as the black and blue defended valiantly.

For the next few dozen minutes, Lautaro Martinez seemed to have changed occupation, rarely being seen in the striker position as he dropped to midfield to help his team weather the pressure and defend.

It was all Barcelona, and yet, the 3rd goal failed to materialize.

Sam especially was hungry again. Even in the drizzling rain, he was a menace, chasing every loose ball, receiving every pass and making use of it to the maximum, sending the Inter Milan defense shaking in trepidation every time he had the ball.

Lamine Yamal kept on doing his thing, running circles around his marker as he created chance after chance for his teammates.

He also took a few shots of his own, but nothing too much for Yann Sommer to handle. Raphinha was also a menace this game.

The Brazilian was a bundle of energy, running everywhere, leading the up field press as he almost scored the 3rd goal only for it to hit the bar.

In midfield, Pedri helped Barcelona press the opponents.

It was a crazy game, and yet, still no goal.

50 minutes, no goal...

60 minutes, no goal...

70 minutes, no goal...

And then, in the 77th minute, it happened.

It was another pass from Pedri into the 18-yard box where Sam lurked. Calmly bringing the ball down with his chest, Sam took a few touches with his lap before flicking the ball to the side where a certain Raphinha lurked.

The pressure in the Inter Milan box from the defenders was much but this time, the Brazilian's instinctive shot connected.

It was a volleyed shot.

POW!

It flew like a missile, rushing into the net with a shockwave-inducing force.

Yann Sommer could only stagger, falling to his butt and when he looked back, the ball was already inside his net.

That goal..., it made a whole fan base to writhe in joy, the FC Barcelona fan base as they celebrated like mad men and women.

Raphinha celebrated his goal exuberantly, charging towards the corner flag, jumping and pumping a fist at the fans even as the fans responded excitedly.

Then, he pointed at Sam, acknowledging him for the goal.

Sam didn't score tonight, but his mark was in all 3 FC Barcelona goals as he made the assist for all 3 goals.

Surely, the game was over, right?

A certain Inter Milan thought different, precisely a certain Lautaro Martinez.

Just 2 minutes after Raphinha's goal, in the 79th minute, Lautaro Martinez received a pass just outside Barcelona's 18-yard box.

He was in no position to score. He had no right to score from there, and yet the man in form did just that.

Outside the box, with multiple players in red and blue ahead of him, Martinez simply stepped over the ball once with his left foot, shifted the ball to the right with his right foot before using the same leg to rifle a thunderous grounded ball in.

The ball rolled through the wet grass like a missile, making Ter Stegen sleep in green pastures, and yet he never got to the ball.

It tore its way into the bottom left corner.

"GOALLLLL...!!!"

The Inter Milan fans erupted for the 3rd time this game in joy and shock.

They didn't know how their striker did it, but he did, and it gave them endless joy. They celebrated exuberantly.

The game came to an end 3-3.

Sam got a hatrick of assists; Lautaro Martinez got a hatrick.

Lautaro Martinez won the man of the match award.