

Football God 47

Chapter 47: Quarter-final; JS Kabylie vs Enyimba FC

(CAF Champions League!)

(Quarter-final fixtures:)

>JS Kabylie – Enyimba FC<

>Date: 21 April, 2023<

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>Simba – Wydad AC<

>Date: 22 April, 2023<

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>CR Belouizdad – Mamelodi Sundowns<

>Date: 22 April, 2023<

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>Al Ahly – Raja CA<

>Date: 22 April, 2023<

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It was a cool Friday evening.

After the preliminary stages and the group stage football, the CAF Champions League finally progressed directly to the quarter final stage since they didn't have a round of 16 format in the tournament.

The first game of the quarter finals was between Enyimba FC, the footballing giants of Nigeria and JS Kabylie.

The 50,000 capacity Hocine Ait Ahmed Stadium, the home stadium of JS kabylie was almost packed to the brim with enthusiastic home supporters.

Despite the fact that he was already playing professional football for 4 months already, faced against the hostile atmosphere created by so many fans gathered in one place, Sam still felt the pressure.

It was amplified pressure, but it was not too different from what he was regularly subjected to by Enyimba FC rivals in the Nigerian league.

Sam grinned. 'It matters even more when I can do it in hostile atmospheres like these'.

'Come on, bring it on, I'll show you who's boss!'

FWEEEEEE!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded, like the drum beats of war were just sounded, JS Kabylie took the battle to their opponents, dominating possession from the first minute and launching raids of attack on their box.

With their home fans fervently behind them, it felt like they had an extra man on the field, an advantage that made Enyimba FC suffer.

But this was the quarter final of the CAF Champions League, and Coach Yemi Daniel already expected his team to suffer. He warned them of it ahead of time, this was why Sam did not complain.

Maybe, during early January, Sam still hated defending but after 4 months of professional playing experience, though it was not much, Sam already gained enough experience to know that in some games, even he had to defend.

And this game was one of those games.

Sam was up for it though as putting his combat boots on, he ran himself to the ground, chipping in with his incredible work rate in the middle of the park that was already becoming one of his trademarks in every game.

His stamina on a football pitch was seriously insane.

Subjected to the roars of the home supporters, none of the Enyimba FC players was able to play at their best, not even Sam, yet one thing he did do at his best was run himself to the ground.

Sam was everywhere, winning tackles, intercepting passes, helping Farouk do his defensive job to perfection as all 3 midfielders shone in this game.

Despite all of JS Kabylie's dominance with the ball, the first half of this intense champions league game ended in a draw, 0-0.

During half-time, Coach Yemi Daniel commended his players and said a few words to them, repeatedly telling them to keep their head in the game, try their best to ignore all the noise and try to play their best football.

When the second half of this game started, that was exactly what Coach Yemi Daniel's boys did on the pitch, doing a great job at keeping the rampaging JS Kabylie's forwards at bay.

Enyimba FC held the most successful Algerian club in their home, showing how much this team improved already compared to last season.

All across the Enyimba FC halfway line, there was yellow and green everywhere as the JS Kabylie players flooded here in numbers yet the Enyimba FC players maintained their defensive shape, putting in great work to keep the ball out.

In the 69th minute of this game though, the situation finally changed.

No one saw it coming, it was a lightning-fast counterattack.

Winning the ball back deep in his half, with his impressive spatial awareness, Sam scanned his surroundings, fending off a nefarious challenge from the nearest agitated JS Kabylie player and then with his vision, he spotted the run.

Since Enyimba FC was defending so deep, Emeka was left isolated up field with a single JS Kabylie defender marking him and at this moment, this center forward started running as soon as his team won back possession.

Sam spotted it, and without hesitation, he hit the ball up field.

A tug of war between 2 hefty men started immediately.

Against the tall and physical JS Kabylie center back, Emeka fought for the ball and in the end, he came out on top, outmuscling his marker as the center back collapsed on the field helplessly.

As the ball descended, Emeka calmly controlled it with his lap, brought it down before charging towards the Kabylie goalkeeper one-on-one.

The center back could not recover, laying down as he stared, waiting for the outcome. The Kabylie goalkeeper charged out but Emeka didn't panic.

Shifting his weight to the left, this center forward hit the ball with the inside of his right foot, calmly curling the ball past the goalkeeper and into the bottom right corner of the net.

The stadium was silenced.

"GOALLL...!" Emeka celebrated exuberantly, charging towards the corner flag before sliding on his knees in celebration.

Sam got his 4th assist of this season's CAF champions league, he was truly in terrific form.

FWEEEE!

When the referee's whistle eventually sounded to continue play, the pressure from JS Kabylie increased exponentially as if fuel was poured into fire.

Run after run, dribble after dribble, pass after pass, shot after shot, the players in yellow and green threatened, creating one chance after the other but Ojo, the Enyimba FC no. 1 and goalkeeper was on top of his game.

Against all odds that were stacked against them, Enyimba FC managed to hold on for the remaining 20 minutes of this game and additional time.

Enyimba FC shocked the world, stealing the win from the Algerian giants in the first leg game of the quarter finals right in their backyard in front of their home fans. It was the greatest upset of the champions league so far.

And again, a familiar name won the man of the match award, Samuel Moses.

The name, Samuel Moses was already being broadcasted beyond Nigeria.

Sam's rise to the top was finally lifting up from its baby steps.