

Greatest 681

Chapter 681 Season-Opening Game against West Ham

The moment Zachary found out he wasn't on the squad for Liverpool's upcoming match against West Ham United on Sunday, August 12th, it felt like a punch to the gut.

Being the dedicated footballer that he was, the news hit him hard. He couldn't help but feel frustrated as Jürgen Klopp revealed the squad during the team's tactical meeting on Saturday evening. After giving it his all in training and pushing himself to the limit, not making the cut was a tough pill to swallow.

Despite the disappointment, Zachary understood Klopp's decision. He recognized that he was still new to the club and had only been able to participate in a few training sessions. He understood why the head coach could doubt his match fitness for the big game.

Sighing, Zachary quickly pushed the disappointment behind him, setting new objectives. He resolved to continue training hard and aim to make the squad for the next game.

After the tactical meeting, he said his goodbyes to his new teammates and prepared to leave Melwood. However, Coach Jürgen Klopp called him aside for a private conversation.

"Zachary," Klopp began, his voice gentle yet firm, "I know you put in a lot of effort over the past two days, and it's tough not making the squad for tomorrow."

Zachary nodded, meeting Klopp's gaze. "I'm disappointed, but I get it, Coach. My main challenge is fitting into the squad, especially since I missed the preseason."

Klopp nodded and placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder. "You'll eventually make the squad and cement your place in this club. I have no doubt about that. But you've only had a couple of training sessions with us. Remember, we only left you out this time to allow you an opportunity to settle in and adapt to our style. Your talent and potential are unquestionable, and you're a vital part of my plans for this season."

The words eased Zachary's disappointment, replacing it with renewed determination. "Thank you, Coach. I'll keep working hard."

"That's what I want to hear," Klopp said with a smile. "Now, get some rest. We'll need you ready and sharp next week."

Feeling more motivated after the talk, Zachary left Melwood. The bodyguards arranged by Liverpool drove him back to his new mansion in Woolton, where he spent the night peacefully, his mind now focused on the future.

The following day, the morning of Liverpool's season opener against West Ham, Zachary woke up early. He went through his usual morning routine with a sense of purpose. Yoga, a refreshing shower, and a light, nutritious breakfast set the tone for the day. He then headed to Melwood for a light training session focused on fitness maintenance.

As Zachary stepped onto the grounds of Melwood, he sensed the crackling energy in the air as everyone hustled and bustled about, feverishly preparing for the upcoming game. The anticipation was palpable, lighting a fire in Zachary's belly and propelling him forward with renewed determination.

In the gym, he went through a series of light exercises designed to keep his body in peak condition without exhausting him. He kicked things off with a brisk treadmill warm-up, swiftly moving on to agility drills and light strength training. Throughout the session, Zachary locked into a steady groove, honing his every movement and technique with unwavering focus.

Zachary's mind remained clear and centered on his routines. The only distraction was the occasional glances at the clock that reminded him of the match scheduled to kick off at 2:30 PM. He could almost hear the roar of Anfield and feel the vibration of the stands under the feet of thousands of Liverpool fans, even though the stadium was close to 4 miles away from Melwood.

After completing his session, he showered and changed, feeling invigorated. Although he wasn't part of the squad today, he was still part of the team. So, as the hours ticked down to the match, Zachary spent some time reviewing tactical notes and watching footage of West Ham's recent games, immersing himself in Liverpool's strategy.

As noon approached, Zachary finally stopped reviewing West Ham's recent games as the atmosphere around Melwood grew tenser. He could already feel that the final preparations for the match were in full swing.

Players began arriving, each wearing expressions of intense focus and determination. The first-team players, like Sadio Mané, Roberto Firmino, Mohamed Salah, and the rest, all exuded powerful auras, like warriors preparing for battle.

Zachary greeted them warmly, wishing them luck. "Good luck out there, Sadio," he said, patting Mané on the back.

"Thanks, Zach," Sadio replied with a smile. "We'll bring home the win."

As Zachary continued to exchange greetings, he felt a sense of camaraderie building. Though he wasn't playing, he felt deeply connected to the team's journey.

Just before the players began boarding the bus to Anfield, Klopp approached Zachary and patted his shoulder. "Keep the fire, Zachary. Your time will soon come."

Zachary nodded, his heart swelling with resolve. "I'll be ready, Coach."

Klopp smiled, his eyes twinkling with his characteristic warmth. "That's the spirit. Are you planning to watch the game?"

"Of course," Zachary replied without hesitation.

"Good man," Klopp chuckled. "You're more than welcome to join us in the dressing room after the match. You can get a feel of the atmosphere."

"Thanks, Coach. I'd love that."

Klopp nodded, giving Zachary a final pat on the shoulder before boarding the bus. As Zachary watched the bus pull away, he felt a renewed surge of yearning and determination.

He was eager to be on that bus, heading to Anfield to play the game, but he knew he had to remain patient. As the coach said, his time would come, and he would be ready to seize the opportunity.

He turned away from the bus that had just disappeared beyond the gates and headed to the cafeteria. He chose a hearty lunch of grilled salmon, quinoa salad, and steamed vegetables. The meal was light yet packed with the necessary nutrients to keep him energized and focused.

By the time he finished his lunch, it was already 1:15 PM. Ray Haughan, Liverpool FC's player liaison officer, arrived just in time to pick him up. "Ready to go, Zachary?" Ray asked with a friendly smile.

"Absolutely," Zachary responded, eager to experience his first Premier League match day at Anfield.

The drive to Anfield was short but filled with excitement. As they approached the stadium, Zachary noticed the streets lined with fans dressed in red, singing and cheering in anticipation. Some of them caught a glimpse of Zachary in the car and waved enthusiastically.

"Hey, look! It's Zachary Bemba!" A fan's shout caused excitement to sweep through the crowd. More and more supporters turned towards the car, yelling Zachary's name and waving frantically.

Zachary reciprocated, feeling the warmth of the welcoming fans. The car glided through the bustling crowd, eventually pulling into a VIP parking area at Anfield.

Ray then led Zachary through the entrance, navigating past security and heading straight into the stadium's inner sanctum. The pre-game buzz was electrifying, filled with the sounds of chanting fans and the aroma of freshly cut grass drifting through the air.

As they arrived at the VIP section, Zachary settled into a plush seat with an unbeatable view of the pitch. The stadium was a sea of red, pulsating with energy as kickoff loomed. Zachary observed the players warming up, marveling at their agile and energetic movements.

The excitement continued mounting, and just before the match kicked off, the stadium reverberated with the heartfelt anthem "You'll Never Walk Alone." A shiver ran down Zachary's spine as he heard Ray's earnest yet off-key rendition, joining thousands of fans in song.

Despite Ray's slight disharmony, the unity and passion of the Liverpool supporters were evident, leaving Zachary moved by their unwavering camaraderie and devotion to their team.

As the game began, Zachary was fully immersed. He studied every move, every pass, and every tactical shift, absorbing the team's style and strategy. Despite not being on the pitch, he felt every moment deeply, living the highs and lows alongside his teammates.

The match continued, and Zachary cheered, clenched his fists in tension, and celebrated as Liverpool dominated West Ham. The team's fluid play and relentless pressing were a joy to watch, and the goals came in a flurry, each one met with a roar of approval from the Anfield faithful.

The first to score was Mohamed Salah with a right-footed shot after meeting a cross from Andrew Robertson during the 19th minute. The precision of the cross and Salah's positioning left West Ham's defense scrambling, and the stadium erupted as the ball hit the back of the net.

Sadio Mané then made the score 2-0 after getting to the end of James Milner's pass during the 45th minute. It was a well-timed run and a clinical finish demonstrating Mané's sharpness and composure. Then, as the half-time whistle blew, the fans were on their feet, cheering their team's impressive performance.

The second half continued at a similar tempo, with Liverpool pressing high and creating chances. Mané added another to make the score 3-0 during the 54th minute, displaying his incredible pace and finishing skills again. His celebration was a testament to the team's unity and determination.

Finally, Daniel Sturridge completed the thrashing by scoring the fourth goal during the 88th minute. Coming off the bench, Sturridge made an immediate impact, poking the ball in after a corner. The joy etched on his face was mirrored by the ecstatic fans in the stands.

Chapter 682 Zachary's Gradual Integration at Liverpool

When the referee finally blew the final whistle, the stadium vibrated with even more intense explosions of delight. The fans yelled and celebrated Liverpool's resounding 4-0 victory in their season-opening game. As he took in the sights and the atmosphere, Zachary couldn't help but feel an overwhelming sense of pride and anticipation for the season ahead.

A bit later, Ray led Zachary down to the dressing room as Klopp had invited. The atmosphere inside was jubilant, with players celebrating and congratulating each other.

Klopp spotted Zachary almost right away and waved him over. "Welcome to Anfield after a win, Zachary!"

The other players noticed him, too. "Great to have you here, mate!" Henderson said, clapping him on the back.

"You'll be out there with us soon," Firmino added, his smile infectious.

"Thanks, everyone," Zachary replied, his voice full of gratitude. "It was amazing to watch you all play."

As the celebrations continued, Zachary felt a deep sense of belonging. He knew his journey with Liverpool had only begun, but he was already an integral part of the family. Just then, Klopp requested everyone's attention and commenced his post-match address.

"Okay, lads, gather round," Klopp started, his voice carrying authority and warmth. "First off, fantastic job out there today. You were all brilliant. Mo, that first goal set the tone. Well done."

Salah nodded a modest smile on his face.

"Sadio, Roberto, your pressing was relentless. That's what we need in every game. Keep it up."

Mané and Firmino exchanged a nod of acknowledgment.

"And Sturridge, great impact off the bench. That's what we expect from everyone, coming in and making a difference."

Sturridge grinned, clearly pleased.

"But," Klopp continued, "we're not perfect yet. Firstly, we need to tighten up a bit at the back. For instance, there were moments when we could have been punished today. Such moments could jeopardize our season later—when we are up against stronger opponents. And in midfield, we need to move the ball quicker at times. Keep working on those transitions, and let's try to always unlock defenses before they reorganize..."

The players listened intently, soaking in every word.

"Remember," Klopp concluded, "this is just the beginning. It's a long season, and we need to keep this level of performance if we're to have any chance of toppling Man City this season. Stay hungry, stay humble, and keep pushing."

13:14

Zachary listened, feeling a mix of admiration and motivation. Klopp's words were inspiring, and his clear, straightforward feedback resonated with Zachary's desire to improve and contribute.

After Klopp finished his speech, Zachary said his goodbyes to his teammates and left the dressing room under the guidance of Ray. The post-match atmosphere was electric, with fans still chanting and celebrating inside the stadium.

The laughter and the hum of excited conversation among the Liverpool staff and media people echoed through the hallways. The adrenaline from the just-concluded match was still high, and Zachary couldn't help but feel a part of it, even though he hadn't played.

As they exited Anfield, Zachary glanced back at the stadium. He felt determined and eager to contribute to such a winning atmosphere.

He and Ray then made their way to the car, and soon, they were driving through the bustling streets of Liverpool. The city was alive with post-match celebrations, fans in red jerseys flooding the streets, singing and chanting in joyous unison.

Ray, ever caring and attentive, drove him back to his new mansion in Woolton. They didn't talk much as Zachary was still immersed in the game that had just concluded, replaying crucial moments in his mind.

He visualized how he would tackle certain situations, anticipating how he could help Liverpool win even more. The drive gave him time to reflect and strategize, his reinforced mind spinning with ideas and possibilities.

As they neared his mansion, Zachary's phone suddenly rang. He glanced at the caller ID and saw it was Kristin. Answering, he heard her cheerful voice.

"Zachary! I've made all the arrangements in Turin. I'm ready to move your important belongings to Liverpool."

"That's great, Kristin," Zachary replied, his tone filled with gratitude.

"Thank you for handling everything so efficiently. I really appreciate it."

"It's my pleasure," Kristin said. "I've scheduled everything, and I'll oversee the packing myself to ensure nothing is missed. Is there anything specific you want to be done?"

"You can coordinate with Ray, Liverpool FC's player liaison officer. He can help with any logistics here in Liverpool."

"Of course. I'll contact Ray before the day ends," Kristin assured him.

"Thank you, Kristin. You're becoming much more than a PA to me. Your attention to detail is incredible," Zachary said sincerely.

"That means a lot, Zachary. I'm here to make your life easier, and I'm happy to do it," she responded warmly.

After the call, Zachary felt a sense of relief. His complete relocation to Liverpool was finally underway, and he could focus entirely on his new journey. When Ray dropped him off at his mansion, he turned his gaze to Zachary with a smile.

"Do you need the club to organize a chef or any other staff to help you manage the house?" Ray asked.

Zachary shook his head. "No, thanks. I'm starting to get used to staying alone, and I usually eat most of my meals at Melwood. I'm good for now."

Ray nodded understandingly. "Alright, but don't hesitate to ask if you change your mind."

As Ray drove away, Zachary walked into his mansion, exhausted yet contented. That aside, Ray's last question had reminded him of something he had been neglecting.

He needed to decide whether to keep the services of Coach Bjørn Peters, his fitness trainer, and Inger, his chef. The club's professionals were already offering him similar services, so he wondered if he still needed the extra help.

He thought about the high standards of Liverpool's coaching staff and the club's top-notch facilities. It seemed redundant to keep external help when he had access to the best resources. Yet, a sense of loyalty and familiarity with Bjørn and Inger had repeatedly made him hesitate.

While contemplating his next steps, he finally arrived in his kitchen. The kitchen was a modern masterpiece, with sleek granite countertops, state-of-the-art appliances, and an expansive island in the center. The large windows let in the last of the evening light, casting a warm glow over the space.

The place felt luxurious and welcoming—yet there was a sense of emptiness that Zachary couldn't shake off. He was still adjusting to his new mansion in Woolton, Liverpool.

He poured himself a glass of juice, savoring the freshness. Glancing at his watch, he noticed it was just about 5:30 PM. Deciding it was a good time, he picked up his phone and dialed Bjørn's number. Bjørn answered almost immediately, his voice filled with warmth and enthusiasm.

"Zachary! Congratulations on your transfer to Liverpool. I watched the game today. What a fantastic start for the team!" Bjørn said.

"Thanks, Bjørn. It's been quite a journey so far. How are you and Inger doing?" Zachary replied.

"We're doing well and getting used to the new routine without you here in Turin. How are you finding Liverpool?"

"It's been good. The city is vibrant, and the club is amazing. The facilities here are top-notch. I'm really excited to be a part of this team," Zachary said, his voice filled with genuine enthusiasm.

"That's great to hear. Have you decided what you'll do with your mansion in Turin?" Bjørn asked.

Zachary paused, thinking about the spacious villa he had left behind. "I think I'll keep it for now. It's a beautiful place, and who knows? I might need it for holidays or off-season retreats. Plus, it holds a lot of memories," he said.

"That makes sense. It's always good to have a place to return to," Bjørn agreed.

After a few more minutes of chitchatting about Liverpool, Turin, and life in general, Zachary took a deep breath. He was about to bring up the topic of continuing their professional relationship, but Bjørn beat him to it.

"Zachary, there's something I need to tell you," Bjørn began, his tone more serious. "Inger and I have decided to stay in Turin. We've settled well here. We want to start building our family. Relocating to Liverpool at this point would be too disruptive for us."

Zachary felt a wave of relief wash over him. He had been wrestling with the troubling decision of letting go of Bjørn and Inger's services, and now it seemed the decision had been made for him. "I completely understand, Bjørn. You've both been incredible, and I'm grateful for everything you've done for me. I wish you all the best in Turin," he said sincerely.

"Thank you, Zachary. It's been a pleasure working with you. I'm sure you'll do great things in Liverpool. We'll always be cheering you on," Bjørn replied.

They then chatted for a few more minutes, reminiscing about their time together and sharing good wishes for the future. The call ended on a positive note, leaving Zachary feeling lighter and more focused.

Placing the phone down, he looked around his kitchen and exhaled. Now that the matter of Bjørn and Inger was resolved, he could focus entirely on his football. Tomorrow was a day off for the team, but he knew he had to train individually—if he wanted to make the starting lineup as soon as possible.

Chapter 683 A Busy Week at Melwood

The next day, Zachary rose at the crack of dawn, the first rays of sunlight filtering through the windows of his grand mansion in Woolton. Eager to kick off his day, he embarked on the short journey to Melwood, the training ground of Liverpool Football Club.

As Zachary arrived at Melwood, he noticed the hustle and bustle of the past few days was now absent since the players had been granted a well-earned rest after their emphatic win against West Ham the previous night. Only a handful of maintenance staff were present, immersed in their duties, which lent an unusual aura of tranquility to the usually bustling training grounds.

Undeterred by the peaceful surroundings, Zachary maintained his determined focus. He exchanged warm greetings with the few staff members he encountered, their friendly hellos echoing in the quiet air. Then, without delay, he proceeded to the gym to begin his rigorous early morning workout.

The gym at Melwood was state-of-the-art, equipped with everything an elite athlete could need. Zachary started his session with a dynamic warm-up, focusing on mobility and flexibility. He moved through a strict series of stretches, lunges, and rotational exercises to prepare his body for the intense workout ahead.

Next, he hit the treadmill for a steady-paced run, maintaining his endurance and cardiovascular fitness. After a 20-minute run, he transitioned to high-intensity interval training, incorporating sprints and incline runs. This mix ensured he worked on his speed and stamina, all crucial elements for a midfielder in Klopp's high-pressing system.

After a brief water break, Zachary then moved to strength training. He began with compound lifts: squats, deadlifts, and bench presses, which helped build and condition his power and strength.

Each lift was performed with unwavering focus, emphasizing proper form and technique. Following the compound exercises, Zachary targeted specific muscle groups, working through a circuit of plyometric drills, resistance band exercises, and core stability workouts.

The final part of his gym session was then dedicated to agility and balance. He navigated through an agility ladder, performed cone drills, and used a Bosu ball to challenge his stability. Every movement was deliberate, aimed at enhancing his quick footwork and reaction time on the pitch.

The hours passed just like that, and as Zachary finished his individual training later in the evening, he felt accomplished and ready for the team training tomorrow.

After glancing at his watch and noting that it was already close to 6:00 PM, he hit the showers. The hot water was refreshing, washing away the sweat and fatigue from his intense workout.

Changing into a fresh tracksuit, he headed to the cafeteria and enjoyed an early dinner. The meal was an enticing and wholesome spread - succulent grilled chicken, fluffy Irish potatoes, fragrant rice, and an assortment of perfectly steamed vegetables.

Following his satisfying dinner, Zachary ventured into one of the state-of-the-art technical rooms at Melwood, a dedicated space for dissecting game footage. The room boasted enormous screens and cutting-edge playback technology, allowing a deep dive into match analysis.

Settling into a comfortable chair, Zachary immersed himself in reviewing the past game footage of Liverpool. His mission was to grasp his new teammates' nuances, strengths, and vulnerabilities on the field. Additionally, he sought to gain new insights into Liverpool's playing style and delve into the intricacies of Klopp's system.

His SS+ Game Intelligence worked wonders as he took meticulous notes while watching the footage of Liverpool's 4-0 win against West Ham.

He observed how Trent Alexander-Arnold exploited the flanks with his pinpoint crosses, how Jordan Henderson dictated the tempo in midfield, and how Roberto Firmino's movement created space for others. Mohamed Salah's clinical finishing and Sadio Mané's relentless pressing were also evident, showcasing the team's attacking prowess.

Zachary also paid particular attention to how the team transitioned from defense to attack, noting the quick, incisive passing and the off-the-ball movements that disorganized West Ham's defense.

He saw how the team pressed high up the pitch, suffocating the opposition and regaining possession swiftly. The footage revealed the intricate patterns and synchrony required to execute Klopp's tactics effectively.

Eventually, he ended the session as the clock hands were about to hit the 8:30 PM mark. Then, with his mind still spinning with ideas from what he saw in the video footage, Zachary headed back to his new mansion in Woolton and spent another peaceful and quiet night there. The sense of progress and purpose filled him with contentment as he drifted into a welcome slumber.

The following days were a blur of intense training sessions at Melwood as the players returned from their day off. Zachary poured his heart and soul into honing tactical understanding, fitness, and technical prowess.

Each morning commenced with invigorating team warm-ups, leading into strategic drills to reinforce Klopp's high-pressing philosophy in the players' minds. The players dedicated themselves to perfecting their pressing patterns, collaborating in small groups to fine-tune their coordination and timing.

Zachary also participated in positional drills, learning to integrate himself into Liverpool's fluid system. He worked on his passing accuracy, one-touch play, and movement off the ball. Klopp and the coaching staff provided constant feedback, helping him adapt to the team's style.

He even spent hours in one-on-one sessions with Klopp and the coaching staff, discussing his integration into the team's strategy. Additionally, assistant coach Peter Krawietz put Zachary through extra drills, honing specific areas of his game identified during his previous matches at Juventus and with Ivory Coast to ensure he would fit into Liverpool's playing system.

Krawietz also designed drills to improve Zachary's defensive positioning, awareness, and ability to break up opposition play. They worked on intercepting passes, making timely tackles, and initiating counter-attacks. Zachary also practiced long-range passing and shooting, adding even more versatility to his game.

The exercises were meticulously planned, and by the end of each day, Zachary was exhausted but satisfied, knowing he was making progress. His dedication and hard work did not go unnoticed by his teammates and coaches, who appreciated his commitment to fitting into the team seamlessly.

The days passed swiftly just like that, and finally, it was Friday, August 17th. Liverpool's next Premier League game was only three days away, and just in time, the focus shifted to full-blown preparations for the upcoming match against Crystal Palace.

The high-intensity training sessions became even more grueling on Friday. But Zachary thrived even under pressure by relying on his SSS-grade physical fitness and SS+ Game Intelligence.

Then, on Saturday, Zachary went through even more on-pitch drills in the morning. The rigorous drills were designed to perfect the team's pressing game and quick transitions.

Zachary found himself in various scenarios, mimicking the possible challenges they might face against Crystal Palace. The coaching staff and the team also meticulously trained set pieces, positioning, and ball movement, ensuring every player knew their role.

Later in the day, Zachary attended tactical briefings, analyzing Crystal Palace's playing style to further prepare for the away game. The Liverpool coaches and staff were thorough, breaking down Crystal Palace's strengths and weaknesses. Zachary appreciated their dedicated efforts, which fueled his determination to be at his best.

Sunday then arrived, and the intensity of training reduced considerably. The players gathered for a light morning session focused on maintaining their match fitness. They engaged in rondos, light jogging, and stretching exercises to keep their muscles loose and ready. The mood among the team was upbeat and focused, a mix of companionship and anticipation for the game the next day.

Amidst the exercises, the players exchanged banter and words of encouragement, further strengthening their connection. For Zachary, it was clear that the team's bond was growing stronger as they prepared for the showdown against Crystal Palace. The light-hearted moments intertwined with the focused mindset highlighted the unity and preparedness of the team.

Chapter 684 Final Preparations for the Crystal Palace Game

Later on, after the light training session, the Liverpool players headed to the tactical briefing room at Melwood, a state-of-the-art facility equipped with the latest technology to aid in game preparation.

The room was spacious, with tiered seating arranged to ensure every player had a clear view of the large screen at the front. The atmosphere was a distinctive one of focused anticipation, with everyone eager to absorb Klopp's insights and strategies.

Klopp stood at the front, next to the screen displaying various tactical diagrams and video clips. He commanded the room's attention with his presence, a combination of authority and encouragement.

"Alright, lads, listen up," he began, his voice carrying through the room. "First, I want to announce the squad for tomorrow's game."

He paused, letting the anticipation build. "Our starting eleven for tomorrow will be Alisson in goal; Virgil and Joe as our center-backs; Robbo and Trent as our full-backs; Gini as our defensive midfielder; James and Naby as our attacking midfielders; Bobby as our center forward, with Sadio and Mo on the flanks. The substitutes will be Simon, Joel, Alberto, Jordan, Adam, Zachary, and Daniel."

Zachary's heart raced as he heard his name. Although he was just a substitute, making the match squad was a promising start. He felt accomplished and excited, knowing he was one step closer to proving himself on the pitch.

Klopp continued, diving into the game plan. "We'll be sticking to our 4-3-3 triangular formation," he said, using a laser pointer to highlight the positions on the screen.

"For the first fifteen minutes, we must control the tempo and dominate possession with our passing. The idea is to keep the ball moving quickly and make them chase shadows. We'll also aim to score an early goal to take the momentum out of Crystal Palace. Their home crowd will be loud, so let's silence them early."

He glanced around the room, making eye contact with each player. "After the first fifteen, we'll start pushing forward more aggressively. Sadio, Mo, Bobby, you'll need to exploit the flanks and create space. Trent and Robbo! Support the attacks, but be ready to track back quickly. We can't afford to be caught out on the counter."

Klopp then focused on the opposition. "Watch out for their key players," he said, pulling up footage of Crystal Palace's recent games. "Christian Benteke is strong in the air; Virgil, Joe, don't let him outmuscle you. Wilfried Zaha will try to use his pace and trickery; Trent, stay tight and don't dive in. Andros

Townsend has a wicked shot from a distance; Robbo, you must close him down quickly. And Aaron Wan-Bissaka is solid defensively and will look to join their attacks; Sadio, make sure you track his runs."

He then mentioned a few details about the other Crystal Palace players before addressing specific players directly. "Virgil, you're our leader at the back. Organize the defense and make sure we stay compact. Gini, you're the pivot; keep the ball circulating and protect the backline. Bobby, press high and force them into mistakes. Sadio, Mo, use your speed to constantly get behind their defense."

Klopp's voice was filled with conviction. "Remember, we need to stay disciplined. Our pressing game has to be relentless and clever, and our transitions must be swift and efficient. Trust in the work you've put in. Stay focused and play with intensity. Every tackle, every pass, every run must count. Let's win convincingly and show all our next opponents that we mean business this season."

With the tactical review complete, the players dispersed, some heading for additional recovery sessions, others seeking quiet reflection. The atmosphere in the room shifted from intense focus to a more relaxed yet anticipatory vibe.

Zachary glanced at his phone and noticed that it was just coming to 4:00 PM. With the evening still young, he followed some teammates and headed for additional recovery sessions.

Melwood, Liverpool's iconic training ground, boasted top-notch recovery facilities to ensure players were in peak condition. Zachary made a beeline for the hydrotherapy area, where a series of pools, hot tubs, and cold baths awaited. This was a typical spot for players to engage in recovery routines, especially on the eve of a big game.

As Zachary entered the hydrotherapy area, he spotted Sadio Mané and Roberto Firmino, who were already undergoing recovery sessions. The room was serene, with the gentle sound of water and the occasional hum of therapeutic jets. The atmosphere was calm but purposeful, with players focused on their routines.

Zachary joined them, easing into one of the cold baths to reduce any possible inflammation and speed up muscle recovery. After a few minutes of silence, he decided to strike up a conversation to pass the time. "So, what's the atmosphere like at Selhurst Park?" he asked, looking at Sadio and Roberto.

Roberto, commonly called Bobby by the Liverpool players and fans, smiled and leaned back in the warm pool. "Selhurst Park? It's intense, man. The fans there are really passionate. They're loud, and always make sure you feel their presence from the first minute to the last."

Sadio nodded in agreement. "Yeah, they're one of the noisiest crowds in the league. The atmosphere can be quite intimidating, especially for new players. But it's also what makes playing in the Premier League special. Every game feels like a big occasion."

Zachary soaked in their words, feeling a mix of excitement and nerves. "Sounds like it's going to be a real test. How does Crystal Palace play?"

"Crystal Palace is a solid team," Bobby replied. "They're physical and like to play on the counter-attack. Players like your Ivorian teammate, Wilfried Zaha, and Andros Townsend can be dangerous, especially if given space."

Sadio added, "And don't forget Benteke. He's a handful in the air. We'll need to be on our toes defensively and ensure we don't give him any easy chances."

Zachary nodded thoughtfully. "It seems quite different from what I experienced in the Italian Serie A. The games there are more tactical, with a lot of emphasis on defense."

Bobby smiled. "Yeah, the Premier League is different. It's faster—more physical, and every game is a battle. But that's what makes it the best league in the world. You'll adapt quickly, Zachary. You've got the talent and the skills for it."

Sadio chimed in, "Exactly. Just keep doing what you're doing. Train hard, play smart, and you'll fit right in."

Their words were reassuring, filling Zachary with confidence. He appreciated the advice and support from his new teammates. As they continued their recovery routines, the conversation shifted to lighter topics, with the trio sharing stories and jokes, further strengthening their bond.

Eventually, after finishing the hydrotherapy session, Zachary felt rejuvenated and vigorous, his body refreshed and ready for the challenges ahead.

He bid farewell to Sadio and Bobby and headed to the stretching area, where he underwent a series of flexibility exercises to ensure his muscles were loose and ready for the following day's game. The routine included dynamic stretches, foam rolling, and some light yoga poses to enhance his range of motion and prevent injuries.

As he stretched, he thought about the upcoming match. The tactical briefing had been thorough, and he felt prepared. The conversations with his teammates had given him valuable insights into what to expect at Selhurst Park and a deeper understanding of the Premier League's unique challenges.

With his recovery session complete, Zachary then hit the showers. The warm water cascaded over him, washing away the day's fatigue and leaving him feeling refreshed. He then changed into a fresh tracksuit and walked to the cafeteria for an early dinner.

The cafeteria was buzzing with activity, filled with the sounds of clattering cutlery and friendly chatter. Zachary grabbed a nutritious meal, focusing on foods to fuel his performance—lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and plenty of vegetables. He joined his teammates at one of the long tables, enjoying the camaraderie and light-hearted banter that helped ease any pre-match nerves.

After dinner, the players began to drift out of the training complex, heading home to rest and prepare for the matchday. As Zachary was new to Liverpool, the club had arranged for a player liaison officer to drive him home. Ray, the very same person who had been guiding him, was waiting for him outside Melwood.

The drive from Melwood to Woolton was quiet and reflective. The streets were calm, bathed in the soft glow of streetlights, with the occasional group of fans still discussing the team's chances.

Zachary looked out of the car window, his mind filled with thoughts of the game. He felt a mix of anticipation and anxiety. Tomorrow could be his chance to prove himself. Even if he was just a substitute, he knew that any opportunity on the pitch was a chance to make a mark.

As they neared his mansion, Zachary's phone buzzed with a message from Klopp, encouraging all the players to rest well and come in with the right mindset for the game. This further reinforced Zachary's determination to be at his best.

Ray pulled up outside Zachary's mansion, and Zachary thanked him before exiting the vehicle. The house loomed grand and quiet, a new but welcoming space. It was coming up to 7:30 PM as Zachary entered, the silence within the house contrasting with the bustling energy of the day.

He eventually settled in the living room and decided to pass the time by watching Premier League highlights. He analyzed the playstyles of various teams and picked up on subtle tactics that could come in handy. Afterward, he unwound by reading a manga, a pastime that helped him relax and clear his mind before bed.

By 10:00 PM, Zachary felt a sense of calm and readiness. He had done everything he could to prepare for the match, and as he climbed into bed, he visualized the game, picturing himself making key plays and helping his team secure a victory.

With those thoughts in mind, he let himself drift into a restful sleep, ready to take on whatever challenges the following day would bring.