

## Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills

### #Chapter 171: Matchday 38 [2] - Read Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills Chapter 171: Matchday 38 [2]

*Chapter 171: Matchday 38 [2]*

(English Pro Alliance:)

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Lionheart Legacy vs Scarlet Rose)

(Time: 7:20pm)

It was 7:20pm..., just 40 minutes to the end of the matchday and when the new league champion of the English Pro Alliance would be crowned.

It was matchday 38 of the English Pro Alliance, and with it, the second to last game of the matchday.

By now, fans of the popular video game across England already enjoyed a feast of exciting games. Different fanbases across England participated in the last matchday festivities. Of them, 3 fanbases were already doomed to pure agony as they watched their clubs being relegated from the English Pro Alliance.

Others were neutral due to their clubs losing their last game of the season, and other fanbases celebrated their final win of the season.

And yet, despite all that excitement already, the thrill caused by underdogs clawing their way from the jaws of defeat, Warstar fans across the country still couldn't calm their nerves and excitement yet, and this was simply because the most important 2 games of the matchday were reserved for last.

The WA executives were smart.

To create the most excitement among the fans in the last push to increase ticket sales in the home stadiums where the pro clubs clashed on the night, they reserved the head-to-head battle between Scarlet Rose and Phoenix Rising for last, just 40 minutes till the end of the matchday by 8:00pm.

The 2 top clubs were not exactly playing against each other, but due to being tied at 88 points each, it felt like it.

And since the time was scheduled cleverly so both clubs could face their battles at the same time, the 2 home stadiums where the battles took place were filled to the brim.

Unlike Scarlet Rose who did not have the privilege of playing at home ground against another bitter rival, at least, the reigning champions, Phoenix Rising had the opportunity of facing Cyber Squad at home.

That in itself was an advantage.

The 2 final games were bound to be drama-filled. Afterall, all 4 clubs involved in the clash had prior history in the English Pro Alliance.

Unlike Scarlet Rose, Lionheart Legacy may not have won the RPG champions league yet but they were staunch contenders every season. And just like Scarlet Rose had a skilled veteran and shameless captain in Jonathan, Lionheart Legacy also had Harvey, another star player in the Pro Scene.

Neutral fans dubbed it the clash of the shameless mongrels.

Another fact was that both clubs thrived due to their singular God-level account Avatars, Crimson Saint for Scarlet Rose and Charging Vale for Lionheart Legacy, both God-level Paladin accounts.

In their long years in the Pro Alliance, both players and Avatars have a long history of always competing every year for the best Paladin award.

It was a clash of shameless mongrels, but it was also a clash of God-tier Paladins.

As for Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose?

Simple. It was a derby game.

Not just that, the 2 London clubs have a lot of history. Cyber Squad fans hated Phoenix Rising's gut. Afterall, the bastards beat them in last year's champions league final, depriving them of a record-extending 6th champions league win.

And to lots of Cyber Squad fans, Phoenix Rising and Dain Ironvalor were the reason for God Noah and the original Cyber Squad team's retirement.

In Phoenix Rising's home stadium in West London, the atmosphere was cracking that night as the game was scheduled to start.

Lionheart Legacy and Scarlet Rose's battle started first with the individual battle.

[First Individual Battle: Crimson Saint vs Charging Vale!]

Neither of the 2 captains shirked the responsibility of starting first, and yet as soon as their Avatars spawned in the arena, their other side was already rearing its head, the shameless side.

The chat exploded even before battle started.

\*Crimson Saint: "You actually started? I thought you wouldn't have the courage to face me".

\*Charging Vale: "Haha, afraid to face a eunuch like you? Nah man, I still got balls, unlike you".

\*Crimson Saint: "Referee! Did you see that? Is that allowed?"

\*Charging Vale: "What do you mean? I've got balls of steel man, guts, what else did you think I was saying?"

\*Crimson Saint: "You shameless bastards, kids are watching!"

\*Charging Vale: "Right back at you".

Charging Vale laughed as he went that last message and yet, the battle already started as he charged towards his opponent, his spear igniting with incandescent light as he activated an augmenting skill.

Charging Vale's weapon is an S-Ranked weapon, a unique one with a transformation enchantment.

The weapon had 2 forms, a long sword and spear form and it was with this weapon that he competed head-to-head against Jonathan, one of the best players in the game at the pinnacle of all other Paladins for years.

And tonight again, these 2 legendary Paladins clashed again at the highest level of the English Pro Alliance, in the final game of the season.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

As elite Paladins, both of them knew the class like the back of their hand; every single skill, every attack sequence, every secret technique, they knew it all and predicted each other's attacks as easily as breathing.

It was an even battle. And so, in the end, it became a battle of trash talking, who of the 2 had the higher mental resilience to out-trash talk the other and make him falter first.

Fortunately or unfortunately, both were also grandmasters in the vile arts of the game.

Even some adults in the stadium could not help their faces turning a bright shade of pink at some of the words these 2 captains spouted in the chat.

At some point, the referee had to intervene, warning Jonathan with a yellow card as he became too unbridled at some point.

Both Avatars hit red health at almost the same time. Still, they couldn't finish the battle. Rather, time was exhausted before their grueling duel could be completed.

---<VICTORY>---

The victory screen flashed.

In the end, the crimson Saint own.

Not due to killing Charging Vale, but due to the simple fact that after the end of 10 minutes allocated to the duel, Crimson Saint had more HP remaining than his opponent.

[Charging Vale: 5% HP]

[Crimson Saint: 6% HP]

Harvey stifled a curse as he briefly left his gaming booth to rest and catch his breath. While he rested, the individual battles continued.

After 2 more individual duels, Scarlet Rose ended up stealing 2 wins to their opponent's 1.

[Scarlet Rose: 2 points]

[Lionheart Legacy: 1 point]

In the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Harvey went all out.

Not just in terms of effort and skill, Harvey also went all out with his trash talking to offset the tempo of his opponents. Not just trash talking either, Harvey went all out in tactical arrangement too, using a radical formation that took advantage of the unique environment of the arena where they clashed.

Harvey truly went all out and maybe against any other team in the Pro Alliance, his team may have won the battle rush, even against Gabriel's Phoenix Rising.

Afterall, no matter how skilled and talented that scary team was, they were less experienced than Harvey.

But Jonathan? Not only was he sufficiently skilled at the game, but he also had as much experience in the Pro Alliance as Harvey if not even more.

Both of them were some of the oldest players still going in the Pro Alliance. And so, Scarlet Rose won again.

(Scarlet Rose: 4 points)

(Lionheart Legacy: 1 point)

Lionheart Legacy was pushed to the wall. Their only hope of turning the tides now was to win the ensuing team battle, the round of the game that would give the most points, but could they even beat their opponents?

Asking if they could was meaningless, Harvey simply approached the team battle with as much shrewdness and treachery that he could, and Jonathan responded in kind.

To the OG Warstar fans, this game was a thriller.

It was a game of vulgar trash talking that involved 5 yellow cards being issued to 5 different players, including a second yellow card to Jonathan's Crimson Saint, culminating in a red card that sent Scarlet Rose's captain out of the game.

But by then, Jonathan already did what he needed to do for his team; he already laid the groundwork for a decisive victory.

As soon as he received a red card, automatically being kicked out of the game, Scarlet Rose's reserve player for this game entered, his successor.

And due to exploiting the changing rules of the game, Chris had the chance to play with Crimson Saint for the first time in the English Pro Alliance. Substituting in, since his personal Avatar was also a Paladin, Jonathan exploited the rules, allowing Chris to pilot his God-level account Avatar.

"I've laid the foundation boy. Now, go show that old man hell!"

"Yes, captain," Chris responded solemnly.

That night, for the first time in a long time, Harvey felt what Noah felt in the champions league final last season.

'Ah... I think I'm getting old'.

Piloting the Crimson Saint, riding the advantage that his captain set for him, Chris showed that he was ready to inherit the legendary Avatar as with his blade and shield, he went on a rampage on the arena, leading his teammates along.

The boy was supremely talented but unlike other newbies with such talent, he didn't let it get to his head.

Mentored by Jonathan himself, Chris had a mature and grounded style centered around teamwork and bringing the best out of his teammates.

Led by his unstoppable charge, they literally pulverized the Lionheart Legacy players!

It was a one-sided massacre.

The atmosphere in the stadium climbed to a fever pitch as the excited fans watched their prodigy cause havoc across enemy lines. And close to the end of the game as the last Lionheart Legacy player was to be killed, a new chant burst out in the stadium.

"Chris!" "Chris!" "Chris!"

Chris chants filled the stadium, rising to the roof, and exploding outside into the atmosphere in a deafening cacophony.

In the Scarlet Rose player booth, Jonathan was grinning from ear to ear like a fool; like a proud father watching his son grow up into a man.

Scarlet Rose won the team battle, and in extension, they won the game.

[Scarlet Rose: 8 points]

[Lionheart Legacy: 1 point]

It was a one-sided rout, a humiliation.

Harvey and his team were humbled.

And with it, Scarlet Rose secured their last 3 points of the season, moving on to 91 points!

What of Phoenix Rising?

What happened to the reigning champions?

*Chapter 172: Matchday 38 [3]*

England, Leeds...

"Chris!" "Chris!" "Chris!"

The gigantic stadium in Leeds, England was a cauldron of noise as Chris chants filled the stadium, cheering on the teenager's MOTM-winning display in the final game of the season against Lionheart Legacy.

For a long time, Scarlet Rose had endorsed Chris' talent before the media, Jonathan especially stopping at nothing to hype the value of his apprentice.

And finally, the apprentice seized his moment in the biggest stage.

What better stage than the final game of the season, tied at the same points against Phoenix Rising, the reigning league champions, what better stage to go all out and announce yourself to the world with a MOTM-winning display?

That night, Chris owned the stage.

And while in Leeds, Chris' name was chanted by the fans, turning it into songs, somewhere else in England...

England, London...

London, one of the biggest cities in England.

And now, in one of the recently iconic stadiums in the magnificent city of London, an epic Warstar league clash was coming to a close.

(English Pro Alliance:)

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Cyber Squad vs Phoenix Rising)

(Time: 7:20pm)

...

[Cyber Squad: 2 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 3 points]

The game was played in Cyber Squad's home stadium.

All season, in the absence of the familiar legends of the biggest Warstar pro club in England, Cyber Squad had struggled all season in the league.

At the beginning of the season, it was a total disaster as they fell agonizingly close to the relegation spots in the table.

And yet, despite how grim it became, despite how hard the criticism came, surprisingly, the young Caster was able to take it all.

The young teenager confessed to have met with God Noah in the game where he received advice from the club legend. Since then, his performances improved significantly in the league.

And yet, it was still a rocky season for Cyber Squad, until this game... tonight.

Cyber Squad reserved the best for last.

Caster reserved his best performance of the season for last.

Unlike earlier in the season when the visage of Stinger of War infused him with foolish pride, affecting his performances; these days, Caster already learned to deal with his pride and fully inherit Stinger of War, inheriting the legacy of the Battle God.

Game after game since his first encounter with Lord Doom in the game, and their subsequent meetings, Caster learned a lot.

And finally, his talent could blossom.

It truly blossomed tonight, on the last game of the season.

For the individual battle round, despite the fact that his pride and the pride of the club was on the line, in the first battle, Caster refused to come out as the first combatant after seeing Dain Ironvalor come out.

Caster was an extremely talented younger. And like most talented youngsters, he had pride, a lot of it but now, reason reigned over his pride.

Caster had very high APM, he was skilled, and yet tonight, he realized that even with Stinger of War, he stood no chance against the current best player of the English Pro Alliance.

This season, Gabriel was on course to winning a 2nd consecutive MVP-award as the best player of the season.

This was why Caster took the sensible decision of throwing the first individual duel against Phoenix Rising. And this was also despite playing in their home stadium.

At first, the Cyber Squad home fans filling the stadium didn't like it, voicing out their discontent with views as another player entered the arena against Phoenix Rising's Dain Ironvalor.



And like expected, Gabriel tyrannically tore his opponent apart in record time. And yet, the fans later learned to love Caster's seemingly cowardly decision.

Despite throwing the first fight, deliberately letting Phoenix Rising win without struggling, in the 2nd individual duel, Caster kickstarted his plan.

For the 2nd duel, he entered the arena against Phoenix Rising's representative, another Combat Mage.

For this duel, not only was Caster's Stinger of War Avatar a better equipped and stronger Avatar, but he also had the home advantage.

Not just that, Caster's determination was unstoppable.

BOOM!

The clash of Combat Mages started, lasting a significant period of time and yet, throughout, Caster never lost the initiative once.

From beginning to end, he hunted and eventually tore his opponent apart.

And just like that, Phoenix Rising's seemingly unstoppable momentum was halted singlehanded by Caster, building the foundation for the 3rd individual duel.

For the 3rd individual duel, Caster sent his Vice Captain up to fight.

Isabelle's Stormborn Valor, the Paladin entered the arena to welcome Phoenix Rising's Warlock.

With Caster having set the tempo already, Isabella was excited. She was ready, and she didn't hesitate, as soon as the duel started she exploded into action.

Against an insidious class like the Warlock clash, Isabella faced a lot of treachery and hidden danger when pursuing her opponent, but in the end, her Paladin proved resilient enough against the deadly tricks of the Warlock.

She cut through all his illusions, pushed through every mirage, and emerged victorious, slaying him down with the edge of her blade.

And so, Cyber Squad did it.

They won the individual battle.

BOOM!

You had to see the atmosphere in the crowd.

The crowd seethed like rippling waves in an ocean, setting off a chain reaction as Cyber Squad fans celebrated excitedly like they already won the game.

The atmosphere in the stadium went haywire.

Caster's radical strategy worked. Cyber Squad was on top, but not for long.

The 3 vs 3 battle rush rolled in, and in this game, with Phoenix Rising pulling out with their captain, their Warlock, and an Elementalist, Cyber Squad's chances were thin to begin with.

Afterall, despite the individual skill of the Phoenix Rising players, the club was better known as a well-oiled machine of slaughter led by Dain Ironvalor.

Their teamwork was seamless like parts of a machine.

And knowing this, Caster continued his scheming. He excluded himself from the 3 vs 3 battle rush entirely, sending in Isabella, his Vice Captain and Paladin, Smith, the Mechanic controller, and Cleon, the team's cleric.

The 3 vs 3 battle rush's mission was simple. By combining a Paladin, a Mechanic, and a Cleric in a team formation, Caster ordered them not to win, but rather to frustrate the hell out of their opponents.

His intentions were clear; he wanted to frustrate and harass the Phoenix Rising players mentally, intending to get into their head.

When Isabella realized it, she shivered.

'W-when did he suddenly become such a frightening strategist?'

If Isabella could understand Caster's intentions, Gabriel could too, but it didn't matter. Understanding his intentions would not change anything.

In the end, Phoenix Rising wanted to win as fast as possible to not waste energy which played right into Caster's plan.

3..., 2..., 1!

FIGHT!

When the clash started, Phoenix Rising went all out in attack to quickly annihilate their opponents but against a team that had a Cleric, a resourceful Mechanic, and a defensive Paladin, there was no chance in hell that this team would be annihilated anytime soon.

The team held against Phoenix Rising's offensive, Isabella leading with skill and experience to frustrate their opponents.

They did everything in their power to stay alive.

In the end, despite the fact that they could not exhaust the time allocated to the 3 vs 3 battle rush, they still did enough to frustrate their players.

Gabriel knew Caster's intentions; he knew exactly what his opponent was planning but he still couldn't help feeling incensed that they actually did it.

Caster's plan worked.

Most of the home fans didn't like it though. It was too passive, and they didn't understand it, but those who did understand knew that they now had a chance.

And finally, the team battle rolled in.

[Cyber Squad: 2 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 3 points]

Phoenix Rising was ahead now but the game was up for grabs.

For the final round of this game, the team battle, Cyber Squad would go all out. This time, Caster was ready to embrace his Avatar's Battle God title.

For the home fans, finally! Their eyes ignited with excitement as they could feel the unrelenting energy now exuded by their captain.

And finally, the clash started.

BOOM!

It was intense, crazy, harrowing.

Led by a rampaging Caster who seemed to have lost all reason, giving in to his rapid APM, no one seemed capable of keeping up with him and yet with him this way, Isabella smoothly took command from him.

She led the team to keep up with Caster.

Cyber Squad fought tooth and nail, giving their all. It was undoubtedly the best team battle of their whole season, each player playing his role to perfection, and yet... they were up against Phoenix Rising.

They were up against Dain Ironvalor, and his team of offense zealots.

The first player to die in the clash was Phoenix Rising's, including the 2nd and yet in one fell swoop, Dain Ironvalor slaughtered 3 players in a sequence of mere seconds, chaining a perfect sequence of low-level Paladin skills.

That deviation, that oversight, that moment of individual brilliance from the MVP-candidate of the season... it decided the game.

Cyber Squad lost.

*Chapter 173: Playoff draw*

---<VICTORY>---

BOOM!

The stadium in London erupted.

Phoenix Rising fans across the stadium exploded, roaring at the top of their lungs as they celebrated their team's victory.

Coming to their city rival's home stadium, Phoenix Rising fans came with outmost confidence in their ability to win. More of their attention was focused on Scarlet Rose's result, but looking down on Cyber Squad almost bit them in the end.

Cyber Squad played its best game of the season, stunning the reigning champions. They almost secured the greatest upset of the season, and yet, Gabriel's disciplined and drilled team ended up edging them.

[Cyber Squad: 2 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 8 points]

It was a massive difference in points but even as their city rivals taunted and celebrated in their home stadium, the Cyber Squad didn't feel ashamed.

Rather, they felt proud.

For the first time all season, they felt proud in defeat. This was because they noticed something in this defeat; they noticed fire, they noticed determination, and the willingness to go the extra mile in their players.

To Cyber Squad fans, that was enough for them.

They were satisfied.

With the end of the game, the English Pro Alliance table was finally finalized as the season came to an end and yet, there was no league champion yet.

After matchday 38, Scarlet Rose and Phoenix Rising were still tied in points.

(English Warstar RPG Pro Alliance Table:)

Phoenix Rising- 91 points) Scarlet Rose- 91 points) Juggernaut- 79 points) Imperium Tyrannus- 77 points) Nightfall- 76 points) Oblivion Knights- 70 points)

Just like expected, there was drama in the final matchday of the season.

Apart from the drama of relegation, and the drama between the top 2 clubs for the league title, another drama was the top 6 battle.

After matchday 37 of the English Pro Alliance, after a grueling season where they punched above their weight all season, Midnight Revenants were the 6th-placed club for a while, a position that sent their whole fanbase reeling in excitement.

Securing a spot in the playoffs was something that every club in the English Pro Alliance strived for, but it was only limited to the 6 most successful clubs.

Midnight Revenant fans dreamed of a spot in the playoffs, but after having such an amazing season throughout, on the final matchday of the season, their team finally stumbled.

The pressure got to them.

Midnight Revenant didn't play against a top 6 club, rather, it was a club that was rated far lower than them, Avalon Sovereign.

To add insult to injury, their final game of the season was played in their home stadium. And yet, all those advantages stacked still wasn't enough.

On their final game of the season, Midnight Revenant lost.

Below them in 7th position in the league table after matchday 37 was Oblivion Knights, another club that was embroiled in the top 6 battle.

Before matchday 38, Midnight Revenant led them by just 2 points.

After the final matchday of the season where Midnight Revenants lost, Oblivion Knights didn't make the same mistake.

When the occasion came, they embraced it like champions.

They fought and won like champions.

And just like that, the top 6 clubs this season in the English Pro Alliance was decided and with it, the regular season officially came to an end.

Off to the playoffs...

...

2 days later after matchday 38, the playoffs draw was broadcasted.

England, London...

Club Echelon's building.

Weeks had passed since Noah's return, yet the novelty didn't wear off yet.

If anything, his presence had settled like gravity in the center of Club Echelon, a force that pulled everything into focus. The war room, once cold and utilitarian, now buzzed with a quiet tension and restrained anticipation.

The large digital display covered nearly an entire wall.

The familiar blue and gold logo of the English Pro Alliance shimmered on the screen. Beneath it, six logos waited in orbit, rotating slowly like planets before their alignment: Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Juggernaut, Imperium Tyrannus, Nightfall, and Oblivion Knights.

The Pro Alliance playoff draw was about to begin.

Everyone was gathered. Noah leaned on the edge of the war table, arms folded, face unreadable. Genevieve sat beside him, calm as ever, sipping warm tea.

Caleb was pacing behind them, his nerves translating into constant motion as he flicked a pen between his fingers.

It seemed weird. Echelon was not even part of the playoff nor even the pro scene this season, but as a seasoned Warstar fan, Caleb and the others were used to following the pro scene, most especially the playoffs.

Afterall, that was where the main excitement was.

The playoffs was the Warstar RPG Champions League.

And so, despite the fact that their club was nowhere in the competition, Caleb could not help his rising nerves as he tried to predict the draw.

On the side, Aria lounged on the armrest of a nearby chair, legs crossed, watching the screen with a smirk that promised blood.

Benjamin was unlike the others though. Maybe he felt tensed too, but he didn't show it. He had a tub of popcorn he'd stolen from the break room, munching dramatically with every new transition.

Nightingale stood by the windows, bathed in dim afternoon light, silent, observing quietly.

Spending weeks with these guys already changed Nightingale's perception of the video game, Warstar, and his interest in it grew even more and hence his first time watching the playoff draw.

"Here we go," Caleb muttered. The draw had started.

A holographic AI host appeared on-screen, its voice smooth and artificial.

"Welcome to the 2037 English Pro Alliance Playoff Draw".

"The top six have clashed through months of intense battles, and now, only one will lift the Champion's Crown".

The first matchup was pulled.

"Quarterfinal One: Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights".

Benjamin whistled. "That's going to be a murder scene. In the playoffs, Nightfall doesn't pull punches".

"Their fans call them the virtual Real Madrid". Aria added with a smirk.

The A.I voice continued.

"Quarterfinal Two: Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus".

Aria clicked her tongue. "I guess that bastard do have a chance of making it to the semifinal after all". She chuckled. "But just imagine making it to the semifinal only to run into Gabriel's team and lose".

She rubbed her chin as if in thought. "Just imagine it, losing not just the RPG Champions League to that unruly junior, but also the league title".

She chuckled. "I think he may just run mad if that happens".

Noah also chuckled. "I'll actually pay to see that".

"Semifinal Seed One Three: Phoenix Rising".

"Semifinal Seed Two: Scarlet Rose".

A murmur went around the room.

Genevieve leaned forward. "Phoenix Rising is currently the best club in the English Pro Alliance, but the rest are no push overs".

"Scarlet Rose are solid challengers this season. Besides, that guy from Juggernaut, Gord, that guy won't give up without a fight. I mean a proper fight".

Aria scoffed. "Let them go clash and explode for all I care".

Noah's eyes never left the screen. It was already a few weeks since he returned to the real world, and yet, it still felt weird to live outside the game.

He sighed. 'It's crazy how the human mind can adapt to any situation'.

He silently looked around. 'If I didn't know better, I'd think this is the fake reality and living in the game is actually my reality'.

Placing those thoughts aside, quietly, he spoke. "It doesn't matter who wins. What matters is what they show us".

He reached to tap the interface, bringing up historical data, key matchups, last-season performances and internal roster changes on each club.

"Every team here is predictable. Juggernaut's the fortress. Scarlet Rose is reactive, while Nightfall is all burst. Imperium Tyrannus relies on midgame tempo, while Oblivion Knights is a momentum-based club".

"As for Phoenix Rising?" Noah shrugged. "You all know and remember, they're offensive monsters".

Noah leaned back on his chair. "I don't know about you guys but I don't just want to return to the English Pro Alliance".

"I want to return and reclaim our throne as Kings". He paused for a few seconds. "I want to return and win it all". Noah's eyes gleamed.

"And to do that, we have to do everything we can".

"Next season may seem far but it's just the mind playing tricks on us. Before we know it, the new season will be upon us already so I say we begin preparations now while we still have the luxury".



"This playoff round, it's not just an avenue of entertainment for us".

"Let's learn as much as we can about our future rivals".

Caleb nodded slowly. "The winner of this becomes the benchmark for the next year. But more importantly," he looked toward Noah. "They're the ones we take down first".

Noah grinned. "You're damn right".

Genevieve glanced at her watch. "Three months till the next season. Enough time to scout, train, prepare..."

Aria grinned. "And sharpen the blade".

The screen faded to black, leaving only the playoff bracken glowing on the wall.

Silence lingered in the room.

Until Nightingale finally spoke, his voice quiet but resolute.

"Let the world watch. Let them crown a new king, because next season..."

He turned to face them; his expression sharp as steel. "Echelon is coming for the throne".

There was silence for a few seconds, then a cough.

Benjamin grimaced. "That was so... cringy".

"Ahem...", Nightingale cleared his throat and looked away.

Noah chuckled and looked at their boss. He thought he noticed a slight shade of pink appearing on his chubby cheeks.

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*Chapter 174: Playoff Round; Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights [1]*

The playoff draw was decided.

And with it, the quarterfinal draws and semifinal seeds were decided.

[Playoff Round:]

[Quarterfinal One: Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights]

...

[Quarterfinal Two: Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus]

...

[Semifinal Seed One: Phoenix Rising]

[Semifinal Seed Two: Scarlet Rose]

The playoff round of the English Pro Alliance was also mostly known as the Warstar RPG Champions League, the esteemed competition where God Noah was King, ruling and winning for 5-straight consecutive seasons.

Cyber Squad was the club with the most playoff wins, with 5 Warstar RPG Champions League trophies attributed to them as a club.

Phoenix Rising was the closest competitor with 3 trophy wins, and if they won this season's trophy, it would make their 4th trophy win.

And with that, Gabriel- Dain Ironvalor, would be just one win away from equaling God Noah's legacy in English's Pro scene.

Then, he would be known as God Gabriel too.

So, Gabriel had a lot at stake in this season's playoff round. Their main challengers for the trophy were the resurgent Scarlet Rose, but Gabriel was not worried. Due to the seed draw, they would only meet them at the final.

The randomization system of the A.I divided the top 6 teams into 2 quarterfinal games between the 4 bottom-ranked clubs in the top 6, while the semifinal seed was occupied by the top 2 clubs.

Making the top 2 of the regular season league table granted Scarlet Rose and Phoenix Rising automatic qualification to the semifinal of the playoff round.

With both clubs forming the different seeds, it was up to Nightfall or Oblivion Knights to rise up to the occasion and meet Phoenix Rising in the first semifinal seed round, while it was up to Juggernaut or Imperium Tyrannus to rise to the occasion and play Scarlet Rose in the second semifinal seed.

Warstar fans had 3 days to temper their expectations and anticipation, building the hype to the first game of the quarterfinal which took place on Saturday.

Within those 3 days, a lot of things happened in England, in the eSports communities but none of it was significant enough to take the heat from the first game of the playoff round.

2 fanbases were at loggerheads, Nightfall and Oblivion Knight fans. In the build up to the game, they were not shy of going at each other.

Afterall, both clubs had a natural rivalry even before the quarterfinal draw.

Both clubs were renowned for their radically opposite martial cultures in the pro scene. While Oblivion Knights was an upright and straightforward club whose players control Avatars of the Blademaster and Paladin classes, Nightfall was a more nefarious club with players who control Avatars of the Assassin and Thief classes.

Oblivion Knight's starting V was comprised of a 2 Blademasters, a Paladin, a Cleric, and an Elementalist. It was a unique offensive formation that set them apart in the English Pro Alliance.

As for Nightfall, their starting V comprised of 2 Assassins, a Thief, a Mechanic, and a Gunner or a Cleric. The Gunner and Cleric alternate in the starting V, depending on the type of game and the type of opponent that Nightfall faced.

In the buildup to the quarterfinal game, the starting V players of both teams was part of the bone of contention as both fans clashed on social media.

Not just fans, Warstar analysts and pundits went all out in popular media shows, showcasing their knowledge of the game and the English Pro Alliance as they gave their different views on how both teams would lineup.

While all this happened, the days moved and in no time, D-day was here.

It came in a flash.

The game was scheduled for 8:00pm in the evening and hours before the time, both pro clubs released their official starting V for the game.

[Warstar RPG Champions League:]

[Oblivion Knights Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Blademaster; Blademaster; Paladin; Elementalist; Thief]

...

[Nightfall Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Assassin; Assassin; Thief; Mechanic, Gunner]

To the shock of the Warstar community, Nightfall didn't take the conservative Cleric approach that almost everyone not a Nightfall fan expected.

Rather, they seemed to have been swayed by the sentiment among their fans, using an ultra-offensive high-risk formation in the Quarterfinal of the Warstar RPG Champions League.

The world of Warstar was left reeling in shock due to the starting V reveal hours before the first quarterfinal game.

Nightfall's captain must be smoking crack when he made the decision!

None of their opinions mattered though. Because in the end, it was decided and as the game approached, what seemed far no longer seemed far.

To both clubs, it was the moment of truth.

Making it to the playoff was already a legendary achievement for most clubs in the English Pro Alliance, but this game?

It would decide if they would just have a great season or a truly great season.

And so, both clubs approached it with only one desire..., to win.

The game was scheduled to be played in a neutral stadium, the popular Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London.

An hour before time, the 2 club buses drove into the stadium with just a few minutes separating their arrival.

Nightfall arrived in a midnight black bus. As soon as they arrived at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, they received a crazy welcome from their fans; bursting fireworks and blazing trumpets blasting in their wake.

It left their blood boiling in the final build up to the game.

Oblivion Knights was no different. Their fans were no different, giving their team a passionate welcome and they even went as far as raising banners motivating their team to tear their opponents apart.

In one of the banners that made it to the internet, it depicted a Knight clad in fearsome stainless-steel armor, standing over an opponent, a Thief in tattered robes, bloodied all over. The Knight's long sword was plunged deep through the heart of the dying Thief.

The significant of the banner was self-evident; the fearsome Knight clad in stainless-steel armor was Oblivion Knights, while the Thief in tattered robes was Nightfall.

These provocations only increased the tension between both clubs.

Before the game started though, the opening show started. Just like the NFL had their Superbowl Halftime Performance, in the Warstar RPG Champions League, there was an opening show before the games started.

For the first Quarterfinal game of the playoff round, Kendrick Lamar was the invited artist and he gave out a captivating performance, giving a live performance of some of his most famous songs, including the iconic 'Not Like Us'.

At the end, both fanbases were left singing at the top of their voices alongside the big rap artist, directing their animosity towards each other.

All of that was still in the buildup to the game.

After all that, the main clash finally started.

The commentator made the announcement, announcing the name of the first team to enter the stage, Oblivion Knights, announcing each player's name to loud cheers from their fans in the stadium.

Tonight, the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium was filled to the brim. Tens of thousands of Warstar fans filled this stadium.

After Oblivion Knights occupied the right player booth, Nightfall finally came out. Their fans seemed lesser than the opposition fans in this stadium, but still, it didn't mean much; their fans were crazy loud nonetheless.

Nightfall's captain had a smug smirk on his face as he led his players to the playing booth on the left.

As soon as they entered, they locked the door behind them.

They already entered the coliseum of glory.

Tonight, they would fight and only one of them would come out alive, victorious, taking all the glory.

They inserted their game cards into the Warstar consoles.

[LOADING...]

A few seconds later, all 10 players loaded into the unique void of the Warstar RPG Champions League, where the sequence of the battle would be decided.

The screen flashed.

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

Both captains didn't hesitate, they made their decision immediately.

Immediately after the screen flashed, both captain Avatars came out. In Nightfall's side, it was one of the 2 Assassins while in Oblivion Knights', it was one of the 2 Blademasters; 2 fearsome star players in the English Pro Alliance.

Now, they were to clash in the most important game of their respective seasons. A clash to the death.

The Arena was a small star-shaped island inside a small body of water.

Players could decide to traverse and fight in the small star-shaped space of the island, or decide to fight in the bigger body of water beneath.

As precision-based classes, an Assassin and a Blademaster, neither of the 2 players decided to enter the water. Rather, brandishing their blades, they rushed at each other with no fanfare.

The Blademaster wielded a single long sword, while the Assassin wielded 2 daggers. As soon as they met, they exploded in a hurricane of steel.

The battle was short, but incredibly intense.

It ended in that one, short, crazy outburst of APM and skill.

After just 48 seconds of non-stop attack, casually mixing defense in here and there, one Avatar was left standing...

---<VICTORY>---

The dark blade gleamed dangerously like a rift in the fabric of reality.

...The Blademaster was left standing.

[Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills #Chapter 175: Playoff Round; Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights \[2\] - Read Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills Chapter 175: Playoff Round; Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights \[2\]](#)

*Chapter 175: Playoff Round; Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights [2]*

---<VICTORY>---

At a corner of the star-shaped island which was the arena for the individual battles, a Blademaster stood, standing victorious over his opponent as he pointed one of his twin daggers at his opponent who slowly faded into motes of light.

This was the 3rd battle of the individual battle round of this playoff round game, and Oblivion Knights secured their 2nd victory of the night.

The screen flashed.

[Nightfall: 1 point]

[Oblivion Knights: 2 points]

After the individual battle round, Oblivion Knights led with 2 points to their opponent's 1 point.

After the clash between captains in the first individual battle, the second battle involved Nightfall's Mechanic and Oblivion Knight's Paladin.

Nightfall won the second individual battle, their Mechanic snatching victory from the jaws of defeat as he used the advantages of his unique class to the maximum, securing 1 point for his team.

The final individual battle was between Oblivion Knight's other Blademaster against Nightfall's Gunner. At first, the Gunner had the advantage as he suppressed his opponent with his superior firepower but as soon as the Blademaster managed to close the distance, the battle ended.

With his twin blades, the Blademaster comboed the Gunner to death.

By that point, the end of the individual battle, the atmosphere in this neutral stadium became even more electric as both fans also engaged in the battle, supporting their team by making loud noise.

After the individual battle round, the game progressed.

[SECOND ROUND: 3 VS 3 BATTLE RUSH]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

Oblivion Knights already had the advantage. If they wanted to claw their way back into the game, Nightfall had to choose a radical lineup.

For the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Nightfall's captain went with an all-offensive lineup of 2 Assassins and a Gunner.

As for Oblivion Knights? They went with an Elementalist, a Blademaster, and their sole Paladin. The Paladin was Oblivion Knights' captain.

The format of the 3 vs 3 battle rush was not like the team battle. It was more like the individual battle; but in this case, a single Avatar can go all the way, fighting the 3 opposing challengers.

The battle rush only ends when 3 of the opponents on either of the 2 sides are obliterated, gifting the last team standing the win.

As soon as both teams finalized their 3-man lineup for the battle rush, they more or less had an idea about the strategy that their opponent was about to use for this stage. But it didn't matter, they went ahead either way.

For Oblivion Knights, the Blademaster stepped up first and the Gunner joined him for Nightfall.

The first battle was a methodically entertaining clash.

CRAKSH!

From the beginning, Oblivion Knight's captain and Blademaster used his movement skill, chasing after his opponent to close the distance.

In response, Nightfall's Gunner used a large impact shooting skill as with the shockwave, he rapidly retreated, buying more distance to attack.

And as he flew through the air, his attack started.



Machine gun fire reverberated as he unleashed a torrent of bullets at his opponent. In response, the Blademaster showed his skill, flickering in and out as he ran in a zig zag pattern, dodging as much bullets as he could to limit the damage.

The Gunner managed to wear the Blademaster's HP below 50% before the shrewd Blademaster caught up, and then, all hell broke loose.

The Blademaster erupted into a hurricane of steel.

The Gunner could not escape, he knew and so he focused on dealing as much damage as possible even as the blade carved his Avatar's skin out.

The Gunner died, but the Blademaster's HP was now below 40% HP.

[LOADING...]

The Gunner faded into motes of light, and shortly after, Nightfall's next Avatar entered the arena, the Assassin, Ghost Ring; Nightfall's captain.

Whoosh!

As soon as he spawned in the arena, the Assassin erupted with speed, leaving a ghostly crimson blur in his wake as he charged after the weakened Blademaster.

{Come on coward!}

The Blademaster typed in the chat.

But then, something unexpected happened.

{Assassination=}

The Assassin opened the battle with his most self-destructive move.

If the Blademaster dodged, he would have inflicted more harm on himself and yet, it didn't matter because even Oblivion Knight's captain, Roaring Thunder did not expect such recklessness from his rival.

Ruthlessly sacrificing 20% of his HP with his Assassination, the Assassin appeared behind his opponent in a blur and struck.

One strike, one kill.

40% HP was wiped out in one attack!

This was the embodiment of Nightfall's strategy for the 3 vs 3 battle rush; a radical high-risk offensive strategy.

Oblivion Knights realized, and thankfully, they already knew this earlier when their opponent's made their Avatar decisions for the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

This was why Oblivion Knights sent their Paladin yet.

A tank class like the Paladin is the worst combination for an Assassin.

And when the battle started, it was clear, it was a mismatch, and yet, Nightfall's captain played with shrewdness born from years of experience playing Warstar at the very highest level.

{Backstab=}

{Crippling Stab=}

{Poison=}

{Shadow Clone Technique=}

The arena turned into a blur as both Avatars clashed.

In the chaotic cadence of this intense battle, amid the rapidly changing elements of battle, the Assassin managed to find order in the chaos.

He hit the zone; he entered the flow state.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

His hands hit the keyboard as if beating a talking drum, his other hand moving his mouse with the accuracy of an A.I.

Time seemed to warp before this player, everything becoming easier.

On the arena, the Assassin erupted into a hurricane of blurry darkness. Only the movement of his daggers reflected light in the darkness of his movement.

His movements were swift, smooth, flowing, almost like a dance.

A dance of death.

He won!

---<VICTORY>---

The victory screen flashed.

While a certain fanbase in the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium erupted in joy, another fanbase was silent, too petrified to make noise.

Incredulously, the Assassin had more than 30% HP remaining.

And in the final team battle, with that 30% HP, he managed to whittle the Elementalist's HP to below 50% before dying.

It was a workover for Nightfall's last Avatar, the Assassin.

He completed the work, securing the win for Nightfall.

[Nightfall: 4 points]

[Oblivion Knights: 2 points]

The comeback was on.

In the regular league games, the 3 vs 3 battle rush is worth just 2 points but at the beginning of the season, the English WA already agreed to use the new points format that was used in the World Championship in the playoff round.

And so, the 3 vs 3 battle rush was worth 3 points here. This was to prevent a situation where both clubs play to a 5 – 5 draw.

After the 3 vs 3 battle rush, the momentum switched in Nightfall's favor.

And they never let go of it after that.

Nightfall's captain carried his flow state to the team battle.

Thankfully, he already took the radical decision of going with an all-offensive starting V lineup of 2 Assassins, a Thief, a Mechanic, and a Gunner for the team battle instead of a Cleric which now played to his advantage.

The arena for the team battle was called Ancient Auburn Forest. It was an ancient wilderness teeming with dangerous Auburn trees that are all carnivorous, and could devour Avatars that encroach on their territory.

3..., 2..., 1!

FIGHT!

As soon as the counter hit 0, 10 professional players and their Avatars exploded in a dance of violence in one of the biggest stages of professional Warstar.

In the team battle, Nightfall's captain was a menace.

Oblivion Knight's captain tried to hunt him down, recognizing the threat of the state that his opponent was in but unwilling to entangle himself with the best player of the opposing team this early, the Assassin evaded him with his superior speed and went on a solo rampage.

By the end of the team battle, the Assassin successfully completed a legendary 3v1 in the quarterfinal round of the Playoff round.

He singlehandedly slaughtered the enemy Thief, Elementalist, and the Paladin. Ending the Paladin was aided by some help from his teammates.

But still, it was a legendary 3v1.

The Tottenham Hotspur Stadium turned into a cauldron of noise as excited Nightfall fans cheered their captain on at the top of their lungs.

The nasty Avatar singlehandedly won his team the game.

With 3 players dead from the opposition team already, cleaning off the 2 others didn't take too much effort.

The synergy between the 2 surviving Avatars of Oblivion Knights was admirable, especially the tenacity of the club captain, and yet it could not stop the unstoppable momentum of Nightfall led by the in-form Assassin captain.

It took a long time of clashing steel, a lot of effort, and yet, in the end, the 2 Blademasters fell to the blade of their opponents.

---<VICTORY>---

The victory screen flashed.

Nightfall won. It became the 3rd team to progress to the semifinal of the Warstar RPG Champions League.

*Chapter 176: Playoff Round; Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus*

[Playoff Round:]

[Quarterfinal One: Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights]

[Winner: Nightfall]

...

[Quarterfinal Two: Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus]

[Winner: Undecided]

...

[Semifinal Seed One: Phoenix Rising vs Nightfall]

[Semifinal Seed Two: Scarlet Rose vs Undecided]

The first clash of the English Pro Alliance playoff round came to an end.

Nightfall won; Oblivion Knights was eliminated.

After an impressive run all season, making it to the playoff round, the journey of the popular English club this season came to an end.

It was a heartbreaking event to Oblivion Knights, but their sorrow was lonesome. This was because most fans of the English Pro Alliance were too excited, they did not linger in the defeat of a single club.

Rather, their sights were already set on the next quarterfinal game between Juggernaut and Imperium Tyrannus.

This was the ruthless nature of the playoff round, the Warstar RPG Champions League; it was the ruthless nature of any playoff tournament.

The first quarterfinal game was scheduled for Saturday, and the second quarterfinal game was scheduled for Sunday, in the same stadium.

Fans of the English Pro Alliance had a little more than 12 hours to digest the result of the first quarterfinal game, while anticipating tomorrow's game.

...

England, London, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium...

It was a cool Sunday night.

Just like yesterday's game, the quarterfinal game was scheduled for 8:00pm and an hour before the game, the stadium stands were filled to the brim with tens of thousands of fans.

The fans of both popular clubs were evenly matched, fully represented for the occasion as Juggernaut fans donned their iconic yellow and red jerseys, while Imperium Tyrannus fans donned their iconic auburn color jerseys.

Hours before time, both pro clubs released their official starting V for the epic quarterfinal game.

[Warstar RPG Champions League:]

[Quarterfinal:]

[Juggernaut Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Paladin; Blademaster; Gunner; Mechanic; Cleric]

...

[Imperium Tyrannus Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Mage; Combat Mage; Summoner; Blademaster, Cleric]

Juggernaut and Imperium Tyrannus started with their regular starting V.

Their starting V was a balanced one, but with emphasis on different main classes depending on the combat philosophy of both pro clubs.

Every Warstar-playing country had a martial culture that they favored. Just like the recently surging U.S.A favored the Psychic class and other ethereal classes, China favored blade-wielding classes, while England mostly favored the Paladin and Combat Mage classes.

Most clubs in the English Pro Alliance were built around Paladins and Combat Mages. This was the martial culture of England's Warstar community.

And yet, Imperium Tyrannus was one of those clubs that broke out of the norm, building their team around a Mage. And they were the most successful English pro club at it.

The atmosphere in the stadium was in no way inferior to yesterday's quarterfinal game. The atmosphere at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium was electric.

For the second Quarterfinal game of the playoff round, another famous artist was invited to grace the occasion. Rihanna graced the occasion, lighting the atmosphere with some of her hits like 'We Found Love' and 'Love the Way You Lie'.

To those music inclined, as soon as the popular Billionaire and actress started singing 'Love the Way You Lie', they exploded into cheers because they knew what followed.

They were right.

Rihanna was not the only artist gracing the occasion for the night.

The sharp, cutting voice of Eminem set the stadium ablaze as he walked into the stage, gesticulating wildly as he took his parts of the song, rapping eloquently and sending the stadium into a frenzy.

"Eminem!"

"We love you!" The excited fans roared.

That performance..., well, it was the perfect prelude to the bloodbath that followed in the virtual screen.

The commentators commenced the occasion, announcing both teams and their players as they went to their opposing player booths, and then...

[LOADING...]

Within just a few seconds, all 10 players loaded into the arena.

The screen flashed.

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

Knowing the importance of momentum, neither of the 2 club captains shirked from the responsibility, stepping into the arena with their Avatars.

On the gigantic 3-way holographic screen that hovered above the stadium, a valiant Paladin stood, wielding his sword and shield against an imposing Mage surrounded by sigils and floating arcane runes.

FIGHT!

The clash started.

The arena was a coliseum surrounded by a burning ring of fire. The fire could deal damage.

As soon as the fight started, neither captain held anything back.

They showed their apocalyptic ability with their elite Avatars, the Paladin charging valiantly with his shield, surrounding himself with a protective halo as his sword gleamed with angry red light, a visual effect of activating an Awakened level skill. The Mage responded in kind.

{Hellflame=}

The sigils surrounding the Mage exploded, calling forth bright-red flames from the depths of hell as he assaulted the Paladin with ranged attack.

KABOOM!

It was a titanic clash.

To most of the viewers, all they saw were 2 Avatars, moving so fast that they left blurs in their wake, rampaging in a chaotic conflagration of light.

But every move was calculated, every skill was insidiously weaved together to fit the cadence of the battle to deal the most devastating damage.

In the end, Juggernaut's captain, the Paladin never caught his opponent.

Closing the distance was the key to his victory, but he never did.

Maintaining his distance flawlessly, the Mage weaved sigils of death, bombarding him with AOE attacks. He suffered some damage, but in the end, he won. The first individual battle ended in Imperium Tyrannus' favor.

The second individual battle was a blitz, the 2 Blademasters taking on each other in a battle to the death.

It was a swift, straightforward battle of pure skill and APM.

Both player's HP hit red (10%) at almost the same time, and yet, the Blademaster representing the auburn color team won by a tiny margin.

Tyrannus clinched another victory.

The third individual battle was longer, between Juggernaut's Gunner and their opponent's Combat Mage.



This time, the Combat Mage was able to do what Juggernaut's captain could not do. He closed the distance to the Gunner, and that was the end.

Unlike other ranged classes, the Gunner class has a few close-combat skills but not quiet enough in a battle of this level. Once he closed the distance, the battle was over. The Combat Mage pulverized his opponent!

[Juggernaut: 0 point]

[Imperium Tyrannus: 3 points]

Incredulously, Tyrannus won all 3 points from the individual battle round!

That performance rattled Juggernaut; it was evident from their body language in the player booth. Not just them, but their fans too.

And then the 3 vs 3 battle rush came.

[SECOND ROUND: 3 VS 3 BATTLE RUSH]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

[LOCATION: CATACOMBS]

For the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Catacombs was the location.

Catacombs is an old and unique arena. Like its name suggested, it's a mausoleum, a subterranean cemetery of galleries with recesses of tombs.

At 12:00am and 6:00pm, undead skeletons and wraiths crawl out of the tombs.

Nobody can guess the time frame of the Catacombs though, and it was one of its unique traits. 12:00am and 6:00pm could come at any time.

After losing the individual battle round so thoroughly, Juggernaut were determined to redeem themselves in the 3 vs 3 battle rush. Another reason that necessitated their desire was a simple reason, the fear of elimination.

If they also lost the 3 vs 3 battle rush, they won't get to play a team battle.

The same reason that motivated them also motivated their opponents. If they manage to win the 3 vs 3 battle rush, due to the points format being used, Tyrannus won't have to play a team battle too because by then, they would have won.

And so, both clubs approached the game with grim determination.

On Juggernaut's side, led by their captain, the Paladin, the Cleric and Gunner completed the team. It was a stable and solid team, proficient in both defense, close-range, and long-range attack.

As for Imperium Tyrannus? Led by their captain, the Mage, the Summoner and Combat Mage completed their 3 vs 3 battle rush team.

Their team lineup seemed reckless, but on the night, they created history with that reckless lineup.

It was a fearsome battle.

And in the middle of the battle, 12:00am hit.

DONG!

The loud sound of an ancient wall clock reverberated and with it, the undead rose; both undead skeletons and wraiths, haunting the living.

Imperium Tyrannus' Summoner took advantage of the situation, taming some of the wraiths and skeletons, adding them to his summons to become the most terrifying presence in the battlefield.

But that was not what helped Tyrannus win.

The Combat Mage started the battle, followed by the Summoner who took advantage of the arena, but the battle ended with their captain.

At the critical stage of the battle, their captain, the Mage showed his versatility. And in this case, that versatility was his ability to heal.

Just like the Paladin class, the Mage class was one of the few classes in Warstar that has a few healing skills and may replace a Cleric.

That was their gamble, and it worked.

The Mage was the sole Avatar left standing at the end of the brawl.

---<VICTORY>---

Imperium Tyrannus won.

[Juggernaut: 0 point]

[Imperium Tyrannus: 6 points]

It was a flawless victory.

*Chapter 177: Playoff Round; semifinal clash*

---<VICTORY>---

Imperium Tyrannus won.

[Juggernaut: 0 point]

[Imperium Tyrannus: 6 points]

It was a flawless victory.

Hours after the game, the English Warstar community still couldn't believe the result of the 2nd Quarterfinal game of the Warstar RPG Champions League.

Every season, apart from the compelling games across the 38-game league campaign, the most exciting part of the Pro Alliance to fans was always the Warstar RPG Champions League.

Afterall, only the best teams make it there.

And the best players in the league play in the best teams.

In the playoff round, there is enough drama, enough rivalry, and enough skill in display to entertain the millions of Warstar fans that tune in to watch the clashes.

This was why the result of the 2nd Quarterfinal game was so shocking.

All 6 pro clubs that made the top 6 did not make it there due to a fluke or something. Literally, they were the best 6 teams in all of England's Warstar Pro Alliance out of a league of 20 pro clubs!

Imperium Tyrannus winning was not what shocked the Warstar fanbase in the country, rather, it was the audacious margin that they won by.

A flawless victory in the playoffs was unprecedented!

Afterall, the English Pro Alliance only employed the new point system used in the World Championship this season.

In all the 11 seasons of the English Pro Alliance, never have a team claimed a flawless victory in the playoff round.

Imperium Tyrannus created history at the expense of their opponents.

Imperium played a thorough game against their opponents, blowing them out of the water with a solid display that immediately catapulted them to the top of the favorite rankings among the teams remaining in the playoff round.

As for Juggernaut?

They were shamed in the biggest stage of England's Warstar pro scene, and even their own fans were not lenient on the pro players.

The fans turned on their players right there at the stadium.

BOO!

Loud boos filled the stadium as they showed their dissatisfaction concerning the performance of their team. Majority of fans trudged out of the stadium immediately after the victory screen flashed.

While Juggernaut fans showed their displeasure to their team, Imperium Tyrannus fans celebrated at the top of their lungs.

In the buildup to the game, they had no way to know that their team could do it. Afterall, Juggernaut was also a powerhouse of the English Pro Alliance.

Not even in their wildest dreams did they expect their team to secure a flawless victory against Juggernaut.

Amid the contrasting emotions at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in the conclusion of the playoff Quarterfinal round, the semifinal draw was finally complete and it was broadcasted on the gigantic 3-way holographic projection in the middle of the stadium.

[Playoff Round:]

[Quarterfinal One: Nightfall vs Oblivion Knights]

[Winner: Nightfall]

...

[Quarterfinal Two: Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus]

[Winner: Imperium Tyrannus]

...

[Semifinal Seed One: Phoenix Rising vs Nightfall]

## [Semifinal Seed Two: Scarlet Rose vs Imperium Tyrannus]

The semifinal round was scheduled to start in 3 days. The first semifinal game would be played on Wednesday, while the other semifinal game would be played the next day on Thursday.

The final of the Warstar RPG Champions League was scheduled to take place on Sunday, officially concluding the 11th season of the English Pro Alliance.

2 clubs were already eliminated from the playoff tournament, and now the best 4 were left to fight it out in the semifinals.

Like expected, Juggernaut and Oblivion Knights were forgotten in no time as the attention focused on the last 4 teams, Phoenix Rising, Nightfall, Scarlet Rose, and Imperium Tyrannus.

The publicity on the wake of the semifinal was massive.

Not just on social media platforms by the Pro Alliance, the fans also did their own form of publicity. In streets across England, banners and murals were made of the best players of the 4 clubs, mostly predominant in the club's home cities.

Among the banners and murals made in the streets, 3 Avatars stole the show.

Phoenix Rising's Dain Ironvalor...

Scarlet Rose's Crimson Saint...

And Imperium Tyrannus' Aeloria Nightflare...

The popularity of Gabriel's Dain Ironvalor and Jonathan's Crimson Saint was no surprise, the big surprise this time was the sudden popularity challenge posed by Imperium Tyrannus' Aeloria Nightflare.

In the English Pro Alliance, the Mage Avatar had always been famous, one of the star Avatars with its controller, and yet its popularity was never on the level of the big guns, the true superstars, until after the Quarterfinal game.

Imperium Tyrannus' victory over Juggernaut was so thorough and eye-catching that the captain responsible for leading them to victory got most of the attention, shooting him to even greater popularity.

Imperium Tyrannus was now acknowledged as one of the favorites among the 4 challengers remaining in the Warstar RPG Champions League.

While the fans did all the fanfare, and the media fanned the flames of the looming war, the 4 clubs locked themselves in their basement, training for the penultimate period of the season like their lives depended on it.

And while they trained, unknown to them, away from the spotlight, a certain Club Echelon also did its preparations, training in the dark, throwing off dust even as they prepared for the new season while predicting who would win the Warstar RPG Champions League this season.

England, London...

Club Echelon's building.

Today, Noah decided to give the club's chef a day off, deciding to take care of the cooking for the team.

In the immaculately assembled kitchen, Noah fiddled with the cooking utensils in wonder, most of them being new to him. He had a subtle smile on his face as he already had an idea of what food he would make.

While he enjoyed himself in the kitchen, his friends sprawled lazily in the player lounge, resting after an intense bout of PKing among themselves.

Benjamin took the remote, switching on the lounge's virtual projector just in time to stumble on another advert of the Warstar RPG Champions League.

Seeing the 4 club emblems that were displayed on the screen, he tsked. "Say, which of the teams do you guys think will win this time?"

"Phoenix Rising". Aria answered without looking.

Genevieve looked at the virtual projection. "This season, Phoenix Rising are even stronger than last season after their experience in the World Championship".

"Scarlet Rose are in form, but I'll bet my money on Phoenix Rising".

Caleb raised his head, piercing the virtual projection with an overly serious expression. "Statistically..."

Benjamin sighed, cutting him off. "Not today man, I mean, come on buddy, can't you relax sometimes?"

"Must it always be statistics and numbers?" He sighed in exasperation.

"Can't you just give a casual answer sometimes?"

Caleb looked at him, slightly confused. "What is the essence of answering if my answer is not statistically correct?"

Benjamin sighed again and palmed his face. "That's the essence of answering, doofus, for the fun of it".

Caleb frowned. "You answer a question for the fun of it?"

He hesitated. "But you'll fail the question".

Benjamin looked at his friend some more, not knowing if he should make a pun joke or not. In the end, he just waved his arms tired. "Nevermind, forget I asked".

Seeing both of them, Aria chuckled.

Benjamin trudged into the kitchen, leaning on the wall as he looked into the kitchen. Noting that Noah just started cooking, he asked. "Who do you think will win?"

Noah answered without looking up.

"I think Scarlet Rose can win".

"Oh..."

...

After 3 days of speculation, hype, and anticipation in preparation for the big day, finally, the D-day was here.

England, Manchester, Etihad Stadium...

The venue for the first semifinal game of the Warstar RPG Pro Alliance was the Etihad Stadium in Manchester City, one of the best stadiums in England.

That night, the stadium was filled to the brim with tens of thousands of Warstar fans, either supporting Phoenix Rising or Nightfall.

When the 2 team buses drove into town, it created a frenzy on the streets.

The yellow bus was for team Phoenix Rising, while the black bus was for team Nightfall. The yellow bus arrived first and Phoenix Rising fans went haywire, flooding the streets of Manchester as they escorted their players to the stadium.

The Nightfall team bus came sometime later.

After both teams entered the stadium, a few minutes later, the music entertainment started and like before, it was another famous artist.

The music artist was Jeon Jung-kook, better known as Jung Kook.

The popular South Korean singer and songwriter's identity was hidden till the last moment. And when he climbed the stage, the fans went haywire in excitement.

Jung Kook performed some of his biggest hits, exciting the fans to no end, and setting the stage for the epic video game clash that was about to follow.

And then, after the performance, the big 3-way holographic screen finally lit up in the middle of the stadium.

[CLUB PHOENIX RISING]

[CLUB NIGHTFALL]

The players of both teams took the stage.

*Chapter 178: A clash of titans; a brawl of the Phoenix and Night*

"Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Etihad Stadium, one of the best stadiums in England, and the venue for one of the most exciting games of this season's Warstar RPG Champions League".

"They call it the brawl of the Phoenix and the Night".

"Phoenix Rising and Nightfall, 2 of the best pro clubs in the English Pro Alliance are finally about to put their credentials to the test".

"Which of the 2 shall claim victory?"

"Phoenix Rising?"

"Dain Ironvalor?"

"Nightfall?"

While the commentators started, bringing the attention of the tens of thousands of fans in this stadium from the performance of the artist back to the main reason of the night, the game, the players of both teams took the stage.

Phoenix Rising came out first.



As soon as the players in yellow attire came out of the tunnel, climbing the podium, the Etihad exploded.

BOOM!

Excited Phoenix Rising fans screamed at the top of their lungs, waving banners depicting their club logo, their club captain, and most importantly, the God level Avatar, Dain Ironvalor.

"Valor!"

"Valor!"

"Valor!" They chanted excitedly.

Gabriel already built a reputation for his easy going smile while climbing the podium even in the most important games, but not tonight.

The last playoff tournament game that Gabriel played was the World Championship, and in that tournament, he didn't the best time. He would rather not remember his memories of the World Tournament.

And that was why, tonight, for the first time in his career, Gabriel broke his unspoken rule, entering the podium without smiling.

Maybe his poker face had a significance, maybe it had none.

But the fans didn't care.

"Gabriel!" "Gabriel!" "Gabriel!"

They chanted nonetheless, roaring the name of their captain at the top of their lungs as the poker-faced Gabriel led his teammates to their playing booth.

After they entered, Nightfall finally moved.

There was another loud cacophony of noise following their appearance from the tunnel, but the difference was vivid. The noise was nowhere close to what the countless Phoenix Rising fans made.

Tonight, Nightfall was the underdog.

Did it affect them?

Maybe, but Nightfall's captain did not show it on his face as in their black attire, the captain led his players to their playing booth also with a poker look on his face. No one knew what he was thinking.

Last time out, with his Assassin Avatar, this guy created a miracle, singlehandedly eliminating Oblivion Knights from the tournament with one of the most memorable performance of the playoff round in years.

Could he do it again tonight?

[LOADING...]

There was no time to speculate, because the players of both teams already logged in with their account cards, loading into the game.

As for the starting V of both teams?

Like usual, it was released hours before the game time. Both pro clubs went all out, lining up with their most formidable players.

[Warstar RPG Champions League:]

[Phoenix Rising Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Paladin; Elementalist; Elementalist; Warlock; Combat Mage]

...

[Nightfall Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Assassin; Assassin; Thief; Mechanic, Gunner]

Phoenix Rising's starting V was no news in the English Pro Alliance, and yet, seeing it every time never failed to leave a deep impression.

Afterall, Phoenix Rising's success broke the algorithm.

In the world of video gaming, there are some absolute rules that have ruled the eSports scene for decades across the world.

In video gaming in the pro scene, it was no news that a winning team had to have a suitable DBS class to deal damage, a suitable Tank class to handle pressure, and most

importantly a Cleric class to heal damage; a healer. Maybe an AOE damage class too but it was less important.

In the video gaming world, this was the norm; DBS, Tank, and Healer.

And yet, Phoenix Rising broke this algorithm.

Compared to OG English Pro Alliance clubs like Cyber Squad and Scarlet Rose, Phoenix Rising was relatively new and yet, with their unconventional formation that left no space for a Cleric, they were now dominating the game.

Phoenix Rising was an enigma, but when the lineup of both teams was released, theirs was not the one that caused the most frenzy.

Rather, Nightfall's starting V caused a frenzy.

For the 2nd consecutive game of the Warstar RPG Champions League, Nightfall decided to employ the radical all-out offensive lineup like the reigning champions, deciding to forfeit a Cleric entirely.

The starting V of both clubs added even more fire to this game.

Afterall, this meant that it was going to be an all-out mayhem battle, which directly translated to a guaranteed exciting clash.

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

For the first round, the 2 captains stepped up.

When Dain Ironvalor flashed in the screen, the Etihad erupted again.

The big question was, did Nightfall's captain carry his form in the Quarterfinal to the semifinal?

The answer was... no.

On the arena, it was like a bug was squashed against a wall.

Nightfall's captain stood his ground, playing an almost perfect game but against Dain Ironvalor, it was like he was fighting against the Ancient Wall of China itself. Gabriel's Paladin control was flawless.

The fight lasted 6 minutes, but from beginning to end, the best Paladin controller in the world had total control over the fight.

He demolished his opponent.

[Phoenix Rising: 1 point]

[Nightfall: 0 point]

The second individual battle was between Nightfall's 2nd Assassin vs Phoenix Rising's Combat Mage.

Due to Phoenix Rising's focus on their God level Avatar and his controller, Gabriel, people tended to put little attention on the other players, especially the Combat Mage which coincided with their big rival's God level Avatar.

Despite the bias, Phoenix Rising's Combat Mage controller was an elite.

As soon as the battle started, both Avatars exploded in a whirlwind of steel. After 2 minutes, the Combat Mage was tattered and haggard but... it was the only Avatar left standing.

The Assassin was dead.

Phoenix Rising secured another point.

For the 3rd individual battle though, Nightfall finally did it, the Gunner securing a narrow victory over Phoenix Rising's Warlock after an intense duel.

At the end of the individual battle round, the atmosphere in the stadium was electric as the stakes rose even higher for Nightfall.

Could they orchestrate a comeback?

[SECOND ROUND: 3 VS 3 BATTLE RUSH]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

Gabriel- Dain Ironvalor led his champions into battle, accompanied by one of the Elementalists and the Combat Mage.

What followed was another dominating performance from the number 1. Paladin in the world.

Dain Ironvalor once again beat Nightfall's captain, reducing the confidence levels of his rival to below sea level.

Not stopping at that, he ruthlessly went on to complete a 2v1, almost completing a 3v1 as Nightfall's 3rd Avatar was left at barely 50% HP.

The Elementalist entered the battle rush next and simply spammed AOE attacks everywhere, obliterating the poor Mechanic to oblivion.

[Phoenix Rising: 5 points]

[Nightfall: 1 point]

By the end of the 3 vs 3 battle rush, there was a contrasting atmosphere in the Etihad stadium.

On one side, excited Phoenix Rising fans sang at the top of their lungs, already celebrating their victory while on the other side was somber silence as Nightfall fans absorbed the reality of the situation in this semifinal.

It was not even the score line, they still had a chance of winning if their team won the team battle, and yet that was the thing.

Phoenix Rising demolished their team so thoroughly that these fans could not even bring themselves to keep on believing.

Not just the fans, it also affected the players.

Psychologically, Nightfall already lost. And that psychological advantage snowballed, causing a stampede that flowed to the team battle.

[THIRD ROUND: TEAM BATTLE]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

10 players entered the arena, filled with contrasting energy.

One party entered with absolute confidence, an overbearing presence, and a palpable determination pursuing nothing but victory.

As for the other party, they seemed weak, tame.

3..., 2..., 1!

FIGHT!

It was a massacre.

It was methodical, ruthless, unforgiving.

The Paladin of Valor, Dain Ironvalor led his team to a thorough culling, cutting off the pieces of Nightfall one after the other like the way you cut the tentacles of an Octopus off in a ruthless hunt.

The Thief was cut down first, the killing blow dealt personally by Dain Ironvalor as activating a skill, he smashed his heavy shield against the Thief's head, smashing his skull in.

If Warstar didn't put restrictions, reducing the gore and blood on the screen, it would have been a chilling and ruthless spectacle.

After the Thief, the Paladin of Valor led his team to cut down the Mechanic next, and then one of the Assassins, the captain.

With their captain dead, Nightfall faltered. Not just falter, they collapsed.

The substitute was cut down first, then the Gunner, and then the Assassin.

Throughout the slaughter, Nightfall threatened but, in the end, they failed to kill a single Phoenix Rising player.

---<VICTORY>---

"Valor!" "Valor!" "Valor!"

The brawl of the Phoenix and Night met its promise, presenting one of the most exciting games of the season to Warstar fans.

It was an unforgettable

*Chapter 179: Return of the Crimson Saint [1]*

[Warstar RPG Champions League:]

[Semifinal One: Phoenix Rising vs Nightfall]

[Phoenix Rising: 10 points]

[Nightfall: 1 point]

[Winner: Phoenix Rising]

The first semifinal game of the Warstar RPG Champions League was played on Wednesday, and by the end of it, Phoenix Rising and Dain Ironvalor were the only names left on the mouth of fans of the popular video game.

After Nightfall's impressive performance in the Quarterfinal, precisely the performance of their captain, a lot of fans hoped and expected them to create an upset and yet against the towering silhouette of the reigning champions, they faltered.

A lot of fans expected Phoenix Rising to win, but not so thoroughly.

A 10-1 points win was a humiliation.

And once again, it catapulted Phoenix Rising to the top of the favorites ranking table, ranking the clubs with the best chances of winning the Warstar RPG Champions League this season.

At the end of the game, Gabriel faced the journalists for the post-game interview and there, he was asked a sensitive question.

"Good day Gabriel, just as expected, you played a flawless game tonight".

"Thank you". Gabriel seemed to have regained his effortless composure already as he had an easygoing smile on his face.

"Tonight, Phoenix Rising progressed to the final".

"Tomorrow, the second semifinal game will be played. Which of the 2 pro clubs will you think will progress tomorrow to meet your club in the final?"

Gabriel chuckled. "Simple".

The female reporter raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Of course," Gabriel nodded. "Tomorrow, Scarlet Rose will be knocked out of the Warstar RPG Champions League".

The reporter was taken aback. "You think so?"

"Yes, they don't have what it takes to make it to the final".

Well, that was a juicy interview.

And just like expected, Gabriel's words went viral that night, creating a storm online and also triggering a digital war between Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose fans.

...

After a night of online banter, excitement, speculation, time moved fast and, in a blink, the D-day of the final semifinal came was here.

England, Manchester, Old Trafford...

The venue for the 2nd semifinal game of the Warstar RPG Champions League was also in Manchester, but not the Etihad, rather Football Club Manchester United's home stadium, the iconic Old Trafford.

That night, 2 team buses drove into town; a crimson one which ferried the Scarlet Rose players, and a multicolored one ferrying Imperium Tyrannus players.

The atmosphere in Old Trafford tonight was even more electric than the energy at the Etihad yesternight.

The atmosphere was electric.

The Scarlet Rose team bus arrived first and like usual, fans surrounded the bus, waving at them, cheering their players on.

But then, a reporter managed to squeeze his way into the crowd.

"Jonathan!" The reporter screamed. "What do you think of Gabriel's comments yesterday?"

After that shout, the bus slowed down.

One of the windows came down, and from it, a familiar face came out, Jonathan. He had a gentle smile on his face as he looked at the camera.

Then, he smirked. "His comments? Those are the comments of a cornered beast shaking in fear".

"He's scared of us, so he's praying for an upset".

Jonathan shook his head, a masterfully crafted expression of pity on his face. "I pity him". He said with an exaggerated sigh.

"Sunday right?"

He looked away from the reporter at the crowd. "On Sunday, we'll dethrone Phoenix Rising to claim the Warstar RPG Champions League".

"Can you?" The reporter asked.

Jonathan looked at him. "Who can stop us?"

Leaving those heavy words behind which for some reason sounded so cool, the bus drove off into the stadium.



For the entertainment tonight, Rhema, the popular Nigerian Afrobeats musician took the stage as he set the atmosphere of the stadium aflame by performing some of his biggest hits.

The electric performance set the stage for the main course of the night, the semifinal clash between Scarlet Rose and Imperium Tyrannus.

[Warstar RPG Champions League:]

[Semifinal Two: Scarlet Rose vs Imperium Tyrannus]

The commentators announced the 2 teams, and in a minute or two, they settled in their player booths, the final prelude to the epic clash.

"Both teams are already in their playing booth".

"The atmosphere is cracking with tension. These 2 clubs have fought tooth and nail all season to secure a spot in the playoff round, which of them shall progress to the final?"

"It's been more than 4 seasons since Scarlet Rose last made it to the semifinal of the Warstar RPG Champions League".

"To the club and its fans, this is a pivotal moment in their history".

"They're already calling it the return of the Crimson Saint".

"And since Jonathan is ready to step down to a more peripheral role in the team after this season, giving Crimson Saint to Chris, his successor, it is an especially poignant season for him. A season he'll never forget".

"The last time Scarlet Rose made it to the semifinal of the Warstar RPG Champions League, they also made it to the final".

"Can they do it tonight?"

While the commentators raved, talking about both teams, the proceedings for the epic semifinal clash already started in the 3-way holographic screen.

As for the starting V of both teams? It was released hours ago.

[Warstar RPG Champions League:]

[Semifinal:]

[Scarlet Rose Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Paladin; Paladin; Elementalist; Launcher; Cleric]

...

[Imperium Tyrannus Pro Club:]

[Starting V:]

[Mage; Combat Mage; Summoner; Blademaster, Cleric]

Just like Phoenix Rising was well-known for their unconventional all-out offensive lineup, Scarlet Rose was also famous for their evolved lineup this season that integrated Chris into the team.

Last season, Scarlet Rose routinely featured a lineup led by Jonathan's Crimson Saint, a Paladin, then a Blademaster, an Elementalist, a Launcher, and then a Cleric, a balanced formation of Avatars.

And yet this season, after discovering Chris' talent, Jonathan decisively changed the formation of the team.

Earlier in the season, the captain's radical formation change caused a lot of controversy not just in the media, but also among Scarlet Rose's executives.

Jonathan didn't give in to the pressure though. He kept his belief on the young teenager, and now, nobody doubted Chris anymore.

By now, it was a foregone conclusion that he would be Crimson Saint's heir.

And so, just like Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose now fielded an unconventional lineup of players- Avatars. In almost every club in the English Pro Alliance, there is a proficient close combat class.

Paladins were theoretically close combat classes too, but they were mainly Tanks. Paladins possessed more defensive and even some healing skills, attacking skills were more on the minority.

This was why Scarlet Rose's formation this season was so unconventional, and yet it worked.

Jonathan's philosophy this season?

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

And so, the game started.

[LOADING...]

Within just a few seconds, all 10 players loaded into the arena.

The screen flashed.

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

Without hesitation, Jonathan stepped forth with his Crimson Saint Avatar, bravely entering the individual battle arena to represent his club.

As for Imperium Tyrannus? It was not an easy decision.

Tonight, Scarlet Rose were the overwhelming favorites and it was for a reason. Tyrannus' captain was confident in his skill, but not confident enough to take on one of the biggest clubs in England with the biggest history head on.

And so, he improvised, going for strategy rather than pride.

Imperium Tyrannus' captain forfeited the ritual of captain vs captain in the first battle of the individual round, giving the slot to one of his teammates instead, the Summoner.

Knowing that it was a Paladin and that it was the Crimson Saint, the captain's intentions was not for his teammate to win.

Rather, he wanted to wear Jonathan's energy out with numbers.

And what better class to take on this task than a Summoner, a class capable of summoning a legion of summons to support in a fight?

3..., 2..., 1!

FIGHT!

As soon as the countdown hit zero, Crimson Saint activated a movement skill, turning into a blur as he closed the distance to the Summoner.

Cheers exploded in Old Trafford as Scarlet Rose fans applauded their captain's aggressiveness in this battle.

What would be Imperium Tyrannus' response?

Clearly, this was a blatant challenge and he would take the challenge, right?

Well, in response to Jonathan's aggressiveness, the Summoner calmly turned around... and ran.

"..."

Tens of thousands of fans in Old Trafford watched this subtly comedic scene speechlessly, but the Summoner's controller in question did not feel funny.

Behind his monitor, the player was focused as his fingers rapidly moved, typing furiously on his keyboard while moving his mouse.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He was already summoning a legion to slow his opponent down.

Jonathan was renowned for his slow-burn, steady, and calm approach to combat but tonight, faced against this tactic, Jonathan improvised and changed his combat approach on the spot.

Instead of steady and calm, he went for reckless and aggressive.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

With his glowing sword and shield, he simply tore into the summons with reckless abandon, pulverizing them with aggressive momentum.

As the Paladin moved, swinging, cutting, a haze of blood formed around him.

For some time, Old Trafford was silent as they watched the Paladin's rampage in stunned silence.

4 minutes later...

---<VICTORY>---

Crimson Saint won.

*Chapter 180: Return of the Crimson Saint [2]*

---<VICTORY>---

4 minutes was all it took.

Crimson Saint claimed an obliterating victory for Scarlet Rose.

"Saint!" "Saint!" "Saint!"

Saint chants blasted in the stadium, turning Old Trafford into a cauldron of noise, a rare sight at this stage of the Warstar RPG Champions League in recent seasons.

Scarlet Rose was back.

This season, the biggest club in England, Cyber Squad finally regressed for the first time in 11 seasons, not even making the top 6 in the Pro Alliance table.

While Cyber Squad faltered, regressing, Scarlet Rose soared again.

Jonathan's crushing victory over the Summoner was more than just a victory, it was a symbolic moment in the history of the pro club.

It was a statement, a statement to the rest of the Pro Alliance, and to Phoenix Rising especially... that Scarlet Rose was back.

While the stadium seethed in crimson joy, Scarlet Rose fans celebrating the obliterating victory that was gotten by their captain, and while Imperium Tyrannus fans drowned in shock and despair, their captain didn't feel the same.

'Got you..., Imperium Tyrannus' captain grinned behind his monitor.

Luckily, the cameras didn't focus on him at that moment or a lot of people would have thought he was a mad man.

Well, if a strategist pushed to the wall was a mad man, then maybe he was.

Afterall, his plan was never to win. He knew vividly that none of his players in his team could win against Jonathan's Crimson Saint, even him, and so instead of winning, he aimed for something else, to wear Jonathan's energy down.

Afterall, legends like God Noah and his crew retired for a reason..., their age.

No matter how good a pro player was, they're all vulnerable to the inevitable encroachment of father time.

Jonathan was one of the oldest players in the English Pro Alliance.

His skill was still there.

But his endurance? His stamina? Jonathan was not the same endlessly shameless and energetic player that he was at the begging of the Pro Alliance.

Now, he was a veteran, an aging veteran.

Winning in 4 minutes was still a shocker to this captain though. He didn't expect such aggressiveness from the renowned slow-burn expert, and yet, it only proved that Jonathan already saw through his strategy.

To him, it didn't matter though. Afterall, it forced Jonathan to exert himself.

So, partially, he still fulfilled his objective.

It seemed pitiful, but he had no choice. This was the only choice that the weak got. And tonight, he and his team were the weak.

The 2nd individual battle started.

As soon as Chris stepped up with his Paladin, eliciting another loud wave of cheers in the stadium, on Imperium Tyrannus' side, their Blademaster stepped up.

Just like the first individual battle, this one was another bloodbath.

As soon as the countdown hit zero, both Avatars erupted into action, triggering an explosion of blistering steel.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

On one side, twin blades swung like the herald of an Asura from hell.

And on the other side, not any less aggressive, the Paladin moved with purpose like a Death Knight, methodically blocking with his shield while swinging it at other times in devastating attacks, while complementing it with ruthless strikes with his long sword.

A cacophony of singing steel filled the battlefield, sparks erupting to create a convergence of light in the middle of the arena where both Avatars clashed.

This battle was even faster than the first individual battle.

Just 2 minutes later, the cacophony of violence finally died down.

---<VICTORY>---

On the ground, an Avatar slowly evaporated into motes of light while standing before him, an Avatar remained standing.

His back was as straight as a sword, his actual sword still pointing at the slowly evaporating enemy even as his shield was valiantly held on his left hand.

Even with less than 20% HP, he felt inviolable, untouchable.

For a few seconds at Old Trafford, there was silence, and then...

BOOM!

The stadium erupted with noise.

"Chris!" "Chris!" "Chris!"

Chants of glory and ecstasy filled the stadium as they cheered Chris on.

[Scarlet Rose: 2 points]

[Imperium Tyrannus: 0 point]

For the 3rd and final individual battle, Imperium Tyrannus' captain finally stepped into the arena, his magic staff brimming with unrestrained arcane energy even as a grimoire revolved around him with pulsing magical sigils flaring with energy at every interval.

On Scarlet Rose's side, the Elementalist stepped up.

It was going to be a battle of magic vs the elements, and boy was it explosive.

KABOOM!

Fire swirled and raged like the eruption of a volcano...

Ice and fire mixed in titanic proportions, triggering such violence that sucked all the air, creating enormous vacuums of space on the battlefield.

It was violence untold, DBS at its peak.

And yet, amid the chaos, one of the 2 Avatars thrived, the Mage.

The Elementalist was a veteran with years of experience in the English Pro Alliance, and yet, it was not enough against the equally experienced Mage.

Only one Avatar was left standing at the end of the violence, the Mage.

[Scarlet Rose: 2 points]

[Imperium Tyrannus: 1 point]

This was the Mage's strategy.

He already met his foremost objective, avoid getting eliminated by a flawless victory at all costs.

Finally, his team had 1 point, so they were safe and primed to compete, or so they thought.

[SECOND ROUND: 3 VS 3 BATTLE RUSH]

[CHOOSE YOUR CHAMPIONS!]

For Scarlet Rose, Jonathan led Chris and his Vice Captain, the Cleric to battle.

Clerics were not too useful outside team battles. Afterall, the 3 vs 3 battle rush was an improvised individual battle. But when used correctly, with their skill tree, Clerics had the ability of drawing out battles to a frustrating degree.

On Imperium Tyrannus' side, the Mage led his Summoner and Cleric into battle. But this time, his confidence in his desperate gamble finally faltered.

Jonathan already saw through his strategy.

'That old bastard...!' He gritted his teeth.

After making Jonathan exert himself in the individual battle, his strategy was to enter the 3 vs 3 battle with a strategy to wear their opponents out again.

Afterall, just like the other rounds of the battle, the 3 vs 3 battle rush also had a time frame.

His strategy was to let his Summoner start first, and then wear Jonathan out again, taking as much HP as he could and enough time before dying.

After, he, the captain would enter with his Mage Avatar.

He refused to believe that he could not kill a 50% HP or even 40% HP Crimson Saint. And not just that, his strategy was ambitious; he wanted to complete at least a 2v1 in the 3 vs 3 battle rush after killing the Crimson Saint.

Even if that didn't work, he wanted that by the time the countdown for the battle rush ended, his team would end up having the most HP remaining which would give them an automatic win.

But alas, his plan wouldn't work. Jonathan already saw through it.

There was only one reason why Jonathan would put his Vice Captain, Scarlet Rose's Cleric in the 3 vs 3 battle rush. Just like them, Jonathan was finally ready to embrace his usual style, playing a slow and methodical battle.

And it started.



Crimson Saint started the 3 vs 3 battle rush against the Summoner. Instead of rushing to deal damage, Jonathan took his time.

In the end, he spent almost 12 minutes taking out the Summoner.

It was not just a boring affair without tangible results though. Afterall, Crimson Saint had 82% HP remaining at the end of the clash!

Imperium Tyrannus' captain despaired, but he had no choice but to join the battle.

Against an 80%+ HP Crimson Saint, he had no confidence.

His confidence was further dealt a blow by the fact that Jonathan already saw through his carefully thought-out and orchestrated plan.

Crimson Saint crushed him with just 35% HP!

By then, the commentators were already going crazy as they went haywire with their poetry, describing the Crimson Saint's performance.

With over 40% HP remaining, Jonathan took on the last Imperium Tyrannus Avatar. This time, it was harder and yet, once again, he won.

A 3v1!

Old Trafford exploded!

By the end of the 3 vs 3 battle rush, only one thought reverberated in the minds of the Warstar fans that were present in the stadium.

'The Crimson Saint is back!'

Jonathan orchestrated the return of the Crimson Saint perfectly.

Having wiped out the opposing team singlehandedly in the battle rush, Jonathan already dealt such a severe psychological blow to his opponents that they never recovered from.

The team battle was straightforward.

It was a blitz.

Imperium Tyrannus was disorganized, dispirited, and seemingly leaderless.

On the night, Scarlet Rose broke one of the long-standing records of the English Pro Alliance, completing a team battle at the playoff round in a record time of just 1 minute, 34 seconds.

It was a blistering victory, a massacre.

---<VICTORY>---

Scarlet Rose put out a statement performance and marched to the final.