

Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills

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Chapter 201: A legendary matchday [2]

After a long 2 months break, the English Pro Alliance was back.

Pro Warstar was back.

The fans were excited, and by the end of the 1st round of games in matchday 1, their anticipation and hype was satisfied with thriller games.

There was still a plethora of games to play to complete matchday 1, and yet the matchday was already proving to be an iconic one.

From Phoenix Rising securing a flawless 10-0 victory against their opponents, to the other thriller games, and then to Cyber Squad's statement victory against Lionheart Legacy, all of it set the English Warstar scene ablaze.

What made the Cyber Squad game even more iconic was because of the opponent that they played against... Lionheart Legacy.

Just last season, in Caster's inaugural season with Stinger of War, Lionheart Legacy played against Cyber Squad and Caster was humiliated, not just beaten.

A full season later, facing the same fixture again, it was Caster's chance at revenge and redemption and he didn't waste it.

Not only did he beat Lionheart Legacy, he beat them with style.

He gave the fans an iconic performance.

He gave them a show.

During the post-match interview, when asked what the catalyst that pushed Cyber Squad's resurgence was, Caster smiled and simply replied. "God Noah".

Well, that was another stunning news.

By now, the truth behind God Noah and his friends' retirement was already revealed to the world. It led to catastrophic consequences, the mighty fanbase of the pro club going to war against their own club and executives.

It was not until the club manager was sacked that they felt vindicted.

And still, since God Noah never addressed the topic in public, people expected him to still be angry at the club.

To now hear Caster say that God Noah was the reason behind his and his team's resurgence, it created a social media storm.

Speculations flew like wildfire in harmattan.

God Noah and Caster? The God acknowledged him after all!

Did God Noah train Caster?

Wait, I said it, God Noah is still secretly Cyber Squad's trainer. I knew he won't abandon the club he built with his blood and sweat. I love you God Noah!

Social media was aflame, but only till the time came.

4:00pm.

>Scarlet Rose vs Steel Dominion<

>Time: 4:00pm<

...

>Shadow Dominion vs Echelon<

>Time: 4:00pm<

...

>Cross Guild vs Helix Nova<

>Time: 4:00pm<

These were the 3 games scheduled for 4'oclock.

All 3 games started at the same time, but the main Warstar channel broadcasted the Scarlet Rose vs Steel Dominion clash even as they also broadcasted Phoenix Rising's battle for the 3'oclock schedule.

Compared to last season, Scarlet Rose was a changed club now, having underwent a significant change.

After over a decade at the helm of the big club, Jonathan finally stepped down, relinquishing his Avatar, Crimson Saint and letting Chris inherit it.

This was his last season in the English Pro Alliance. And this season, his job was simple, to focus all his attention on mentoring Chris to make sure that his Avatar was in safe hands when he retired.

His role this season in the team was a peripheral one.

This was why for the first time in over 10 years, the name Jonathan in the Scarlet Rose team roster was not part of the starting V.

For the first game of the season, Jonathan was a substitute player.

He already passed the baton to Chris.

Now, he gave him the space to bloom.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

For the individual battle round, like usual, the legendary Avatar, Crimson Saint came out first to represent Scarlet Rose.

But the guy seated behind the monitor was different this time.

This time, it was Chris.

Chris was the main man of club Scarlet Rose now, but he was not the captain. Jonathan was still the captain.

Steel Dominion's captain didn't shirk away from his opponent's blatant challenge. Compared to fighting against Jonathan himself, this captain believed that fighting against a newbie would be easier.

He believed that he stood a chance.

How naïve he was.

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

FIGHT!

As soon as the battle started, Crimson Saint exploded.

Immediately, staunch fans of the Crimson Paladin felt the difference.

Jonathan's battle style with the Crimson Saint for over 10 years was a staunch one, one that grinded his opponents to death. Jonathan was a patient hunter, rarely aggressive, mostly conservative.

He was a master of the basics of the game, he always played the patient game, most times content with outlasting his opponents on the ring instead of blitzing them to death like maybe the Battle God or even Dain Ironvalor.

But Chris? He was different.

Yes, he was Jonathan's successor, but he was not a carbon copy of his mentor. He was an evolution.

Chris learned from Jonathan, one of the best of the best. He also mastered the basics, he could outlast his opponents, frustrate them, but that was not his preference.

Chris preferred a more solid, proactive, and tyrannical approach.

After all, that was what the Paladin stood for, a Knight.

A valiant warrior who would never retreat nor surrender, who would always keep pushing forward to vanquish his foes no matter what stood before him.

And so, Chris... Crimson Saint surged forward.

The battle lasted just below 6 minutes.

It was intense. Steel Dominion's captain, a Blademaster tried to play tricks, using his experience to win but Chris was too good to be tricked.

He made no mistake. He had a flawless game, bashing and battering his opponent till his HP hit 0%.

---<VICTORY>---

The captain was stunned.

'H-how?'

You don't need to understand how. That is the Chris style.

That is the new Crimson Saint style.

Chilling with a box of popcorn in the playing booth where he idly watched the game, Jonathan had a smirk on his face.

'That's my boy'. He didn't say it but his face said it.

Chris set the marker, winning the first individual battle, and his teammates, the 2 others that stepped up took it from where it stopped.

It started and ended quickly.

It was a blitz.

In the blink of an eye, the individual battle already came to an end, and Scarlet Rose won all 3 battles... a clean sweep.

BOOM!

The stadium exploded, the home fans singing their club songs excitedly.

[Scarlet Rose: 3 points]

[Steel Dominion: 0 point]

The 3 vs 3 battle rush?

It was even more of a blitz. Confidently, Chris led his team to war. This time, he went gaga on the arena, completing a 2v1 and almost completing a 3v1 before succumbing to the third opponent.

Scarlet Rose's vice-captain entered the pitch to continue the war, and against her 43% HP opponent, she won easily.

[Scarlet Rose: 5 points]

[Steel Dominion: 0 point]

And then, the all-important team battle. Worth 5 points, it was the only chance for Steel Dominion to make a comeback and steal something from this game.

The only question was... would Chris allow it?

Chris led his team to battle and boy was he dominant! That evening, all Scarlet Rose fans felt proud to be supporting their club as they saw their new figure-head in action.

Jonathan was the 2nd substitute for Scarlet Rose. He didn't even have to enter the gam before the victory screen flashed.

---<VICTORY>---

[Scarlet Rose: 10 points]

[Steel Dominion: 0 point]

Just like Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose got a flawless victory.

It was a statement performance to Phoenix Rising. We may have lost to you in last season's final, but we're not out yet. We're ready to go again this season; we're ready to dethrone you.

Jonathan didn't even have to lift a finger.

At the end of the game, he was grinning from ear to ear like a fool.

...

Cross Guild vs Helix Nova was a peculiar clash.

It was a clash between one of the new clubs that secured promotion to the English Pro Alliance and a club that barely avoided relegation last season.

It was a crazy, brutal clash between even teams.

Helix Nova had the slight advantage due to their prior experience of the English Pro Alliance which gave them a slight edge. And yet, that edge was enough for them to steamroll their opponents.

Helix Nova got a clean sweep in the individual battle round, winning all 3 games to secure a 3-0 advantage over their opponents.

In the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Cross Guild displayed their ingenuity, choosing a lineup of Avatars that almost gave them the victory and yet, at the last minute, when victory seemed so close, Helix Nova snatched it again.

[Cross Guild: 0 point]

[Helix Nova: 5 points]

It was Cross Guild's home, and yet they were the ones losing.

And yet, when all hope seemed to be lost, in the team battle, Cross Guild who refused to give up showed their ingenuity again.

After a crazy battle that was pushed to the time limit, Cross Guild won, narrowly.

It was a draw. A crazy game.

[Cross Guild: 5 points]

[Helix Nova: 5 points]

Both clubs secured a point each.

And then... Club Echelon.

Chapter 202: A legendary matchday [3]

After the 4 o'clock games, there was a second rest time for the fans.

A few minutes for them to catch their breaths from the intensity of the exciting games, and then...

Club Echelon.

All the attention of the English Pro Alliance turned to one club, Echelon.

During the summer holiday period, despite the fact that Phoenix Rising created history, securing a 4th consecutive Warstar RPG Champions League trophy in pursuit of their city rivals, Cyber Squad, a lot of attention was still given to the new club, Echelon.

The club was yet to play a single Pro Alliance game and yet it already started shattering records, followership records.

Club Echelon attracted Warstar fans like moths to flame.

Club Echelon already broke numerous records as the club with the fastest-growing fanbase in the history of the English Pro Alliance.

With legendary figures like God Noah, Sword Saint Aria all in the same club, Echelon's summer promotion by their boss was a massive success.

Originally, on matchday 1, Club Echelon's game was scheduled among the 4 o'clock games but a last minute change affected the schedule.

Echelon's game was shifted from 4:00pm to the final round games, making it a total of 4 games instead of 3 for the final round.

This was why for the last round of games for matchday 1, instead of broadcasting other clubs, older and more entrenched clubs in the English Pro Alliance, even the crazy derby between Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus, the media decided to broadcast Echelon's game instead.

Maybe this was the reason why the scheduling was shifted in the first place.

What mattered was the hype that it caused.

Besides, unlike the previous break between the 3:00pm and 4:00pm games, the break this time was longer.

After all, the final round of games would be played at 7:00pm.

It gave the fans more than enough time to express their thoughts about the already concluded games, and to also drop their predictions for the 7 o'clock games. The hours moved fast almost as if being devoured by a World Serpent.

And then...

7:00pm.

It came very fast.

[English Pro Alliance- Season 12:]

[Matchday 1:]

>Shadow Dominion vs Echelon<

>Time: 4:00pm<

[Rescheduled]

...

>Crimson Crow vs Nightfall<

>Time: 7:00pm<

...

>Oblivion Knights vs Blazing Gryphons<

>Time: 7:00pm<

...

>Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus<

>Time: 7:00pm<

The atmosphere in London was electric.

In this same city, today, Cyber Squad and Phoenix Rising already wrote their story in a potentially legendary season in their different parts of London, in their respective home stadiums.

Tonight, a different stadium opened in London for the very first time.

Since Club Echelon didn't own a personal stadium of their own yet, the club signed a contract with Chelsea Football Club to use their stadium for games throughout the season.

The game took place in Stamford Bridge.

An hour before the game, the stadium became filled to the brim with tens of thousands of fans, all bellowing war chants at the top of their lungs.

Club Echelon didn't have war chants yet, and so they chanted for their captain and vice-captain, God Noah and Sword Saint Aria.

Once again, Club Echelon broke a record.

They were the first new club in the English Pro Alliance to sell out their home stadium in their first game of a new campaign.

"Battle God!"

"Sword Saint!"

Chants blasted through the stadium in loud decibels.

Their 2 rivals in London, Cyber Squad and Phoenix Rising secured dominant wins against opposition. Could Club Echelon do the same?

Time would tell.

When the time came, Club Echelon climbed the podium first, walking towards their player booth to a deafening cacophony of noise.

Only after did their opponents, Shadow Dominion's players walk into the stage. It was a truly strange situation.

After all, Shadow Dominion was supposed to be the veteran club, more entrenched in the English Pro Alliance. They were supposed to be the favorites and Echelon being the underdogs, and yet, tonight, nothing followed the normal script.

Shadow Dominion felt like the underdogs in away ground.

And then, it started.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

Like expected, despite the prospect of facing a literal legend of the game, Shadow Dominion's captain didn't shirk the responsibility as he brought his Avatar out for the first individual battle.

And yet, his opponent was not who he expected.

Lord Doom didn't enter the arena. Instead, Reckless Storm did.

It wasn't even a debate in the Echelon player booth. Unlike their teenage years and early twenties, as they grew older, the competitive spirit in them waned a bit, but it didn't wane in Aria at all.

Aria would not stop until she could beat Noah consistently. After all, it was why she started Warstar in the first place from the very beginning.

This was why when she asked to play first, Noah didn't even object; he expected it. So, Aria got the spot.

Echelon's vice-captain took the podium in place of the captain. And yet, her opponent's fortune didn't change. Aria was as much of a fearsome opponent as God Noah was.

FIGHT!

As soon as the battle started, the Blademaster's form shimmered, turning into a blur as she exploded forward with speed.

That was Aria's combat style.

During her prime years in the English Pro Alliance, she built a reputation as a devastating Berserker despite playing as a Blademaster. Her reputation was because of her playstyle, an all-out attacking style.

That reckless playstyle was taxing, and many pundits predicted that it was the cause of Aria's decline during her final Cyber Squad years.

After almost a full year of rest though, away from the grueling Pro Scene, Aria was back.

The Sword Saint was back.

BZZZ!

The first individual battle was a blitz.

Aria didn't give her opponent a moment of rest, rush-attacking him aggressively from the very beginning.

The battle lasted just 38 seconds, a new record in the English Pro Alliance.

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 1 point]

[Shadow Dominion: 0 point]

Aria didn't just defeat her opponent, she mutilated him.

As it seemed, Echelon was a club of records. Aria did it even against a veteran of the game, against Shadow Dominion's captain, against one of the best Psychics in England.

The second individual battle was a showdown between Enlightened Flame and Shadow Dominion's Blademaster.

The battle took longer, approximately 3 minutes but once again, Echelon won. It seemed too easy.

[Echelon: 2 points]

[Shadow Dominion: 0 point]

The final individual battle was the last chance for Shadow Dominion to salvage a point in the individual battle round.

The prospects of winning a point in the 2 other rounds of the game seemed unlikely. And yet, they couldn't even get the point.

Benjamin entered the pitch and trolled his opponent, trash-talking him to his wit's end since the poor guy, a Spitfire committed suicide after being engulfed by the explosion of his own bomb after he was at red health.

It was a humiliation.

[Echelon: 3 points]

[Shadow Dominion: 0 point]

As soon as that score line flashed on the big screen, the fans in the stadium agreed on one thing. 'It's over'.

The 3 vs 3 battle rush started.

Reckless Storm started first.

And like the Avatar name indicated, she did create a storm. Once again, Shadow Dominion's captain bravely stepped up to face the rampaging Blademaster and once again, he was killed in ruthless and dominating fashion.

Reckless Storm spent 30% HP to kill her first opponent.

The next Shadow Dominion Avatar spawned on the arena and like a predator, Reckless Storm hunted the poor guy down immediately.

This time, it was the same Spitfire that died against Benjamin.

A Spitfire was deadly against melee classes, but not against Aria, not against Reckless Storm. She cut all his bombs with her sword, evading his landmines, and cut him down in record time.

The Spitfire barely took 13% HP with him.

The final Shadow Dominion Avatar was an Assassin. Against the rampaging Blademaster, this guy proved far more effective than the first two.

He fought a thrilling duel against the Sword Saint, taking out 28% of her HP and yet, it wasn't enough.

Reckless Storm still cut him down.

A 3v1!

Aria completed a team wipe in the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

After that humiliation, the Shadow Dominion completely died. In the team battle, their objective changed. They didn't try to win, rather, they did their best to make sure that the defeat was not embarrassing, dragging it out as long as possible.

Almost 20 minutes later...

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Shadow Dominion: 0 point]

God Noah's return to the pro scene was a perfect one.

Just like Phoenix Rising, Echelon secured a perfect 10 in their debut game of the English Pro Alliance.

God Noah was not the star of the show though, the Sword Saint was.

Aria won the MOTM award.

The game was a thriller, it was worth the time and every penny that the fans paid to watch it live in the stadium.

A few minutes later, the final games of the matchday were played.

Matchday 1 finally came to an end.

Chapter 203: A legendary matchday [4]

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Shadow Dominion: 0 point]

Matchday 1 of the 12th English Pro Alliance... it was a truly legendary matchday.

A matchday where paradigms were broken, where protocols were obliterated, laws of the old order torn down and replaced by a new order.

A new era. A new age of English Warstar.

In the prelude to the much anticipated Echelon debut in the English Pro Alliance, due to the presence of legends like God Noah and the Sword Saint in the team, a lot of fans predicted them to have a winning debut to the English Pro Alliance.

But this? A flawless victory? No one saw it coming.

The commentators went gaga in the passion and excitement for the game.

"ECHELON!!!"

"ECHELON!!!"

"THE CLUB OF THE GODS!"

"THE CLUB OF THE OLD GODS!"

"THE CLUB OF NOAH, ARIA, BENJAMIN, AND CALEB. THE CLUB OF LEGENDS, THE CLUB OF VETERANS!"

"What a debut!"

"They tore Shadow Dominion apart!"

"No one saw this coming. No one!"

"Congratulations to that brother, that fella who must've played Echelon to get a flawless victory against all odds in the betting site".

"Congratulations brother! You just became a millionaire!"

"Oh my word! What a matchday!"

"What a game!"

"My oh my! Aria, what a player! The Sword Saint they call her, and despite being 29 this year, she hasn't lost a bit of that ferocity and aggressiveness that she was known for in her Cyber Squad years!"

"I wonder how Cyber Squad fans would feel watching this team in action!"

"It's like watching ghosts of their past!"

"Today, Aria stole the show but God Noah? He didn't do much, and yet, you could feel that palpable threat emanating from him!"

"That reassurance, that subtle threat that whispered... I'm here!"

"You have no hope!"

"Give up gracefully. Don't try anything funny. If you do, I'll erupt!"

"MY GOD! WHAT A GAME!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is Warstar, professional Warstar, the arena where the best gamers in England come to blows against each other!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the war of men, the war for glory!"

"With that, like a plethora of other clubs who secured 3 points on matchday 1, Echelon secures their first 3 points of the season".

"I wonder how far they'll go this season!"

"Like they say, a season of the English Pro Alliance is not a sprint, rather, it's a marathon. A brutal, grueling marathon where stamina trumps brute strength and obliterating speed".

"It's not the club that plays best, it's the club that plays their best for longest throughout the grueling 38-matchday season!"

"In hindsight, another history was created. This is the first matchday 1 of the English Pro Alliance since its inception where 3 different clubs secure perfect victories in their respective games".

"Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Echelon... is this a sign for the future?"

"Will this season's league race be a 3-peat?"

"Oh man, I'm shivering, I can't wait!"

"This season is shaping out well, hehe, it'll be legendary!"

"Due to their flawless displays, Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, and then Echelon are now the clubs occupying the top 3 spot in the league table".

"My assistant here with me just told me that the other games of the 7 o'clock games already ended too. Jenny, do please tell us the scores".

"Thank you, George".

The female assistant commentator took over, telling the tale of the 3 other 7 o'clock games even as Echelon fans kept on celebrating wildly in the stadium.

That night, Stamford Bridge was not blue.

It was purple.

Yes. Purple was Echelon's color; purple with shades of black.

With that, matchday 1 of the English Pro Alliance came to an end after giving Warstar fans a spectacle of a lifetime.

[English Pro Alliance- Season 12:]

[Matchday 1:]

>Phoenix Rising vs Stormborn Esports<

>Time: 3:00pm<

[Phoenix Rising: 10 points]

[Stormborn Esports: 0 points]

[Winner: Phoenix Rising]

...

>Avalon Sovereign vs Cerberus Core<

>Time: 3:00pm<

[Avalon Sovereign: 4 points]

[Cerberus Core: 5 points]

[Winner: Cerberus Core]

...

>Cyber Squad vs Lionheart Legacy<

>Time: 3:00pm<

[Cyber Squad: 8 points]

[Lionheart Legacy: 2 points]

[Winner: Cyber Squad]

...

>Pendragon Esports vs Exo Genesis<

>Time: 3:00pm<

[Pendragon Esports: 8 points]

[Exo Genesis: 2 points]

[Winner: Pendragon Esports]

...

>Scarlet Rose vs Steel Dominion<

>Time: 4:00pm<

[Scarlet Rose: 10 points]

[Steel Dominion: 0 point]

[Winner: Scarlet Rose]

...

>Echelon vs Shadow Dominion<

>Time: 4:00pm<

[Rescheduled]

[New Time: 7:00pm]

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Shadow Dominion: 0 point]

[Winner: Echelon]

...

>Cross Guild vs Helix Nova<

>Time: 4:00pm<

[Cross Guild: 5 points]

[Helix Nova: 5 points]

[Outcome: Draw]

...

>Crimson Crow vs Nightfall<

>Time: 7:00pm<

[Crimson Crow: 3 points]

[Nightfall: 7 points]

[Winner: Nightfall]

...

>Oblivion Knights vs Blazing Gryphons<

>Time: 7:00pm<

[Oblivion Knights: 5 points]

[Blazing Gryphons: 5 points]

[Outcome: Draw]

...

>Juggernaut vs Imperium Tyrannus<

>Time: 7:00pm<

[Juggernaut: 5 points]

[Imperium Tyrannus: 5 points]

[Outcome: Draw]

This is matchday 1 of the English Pro Alliance in a nutshell.

All the games, 20 different teams clashing in exciting arena battles to the death, and finally the outcome was out.

And with it, the league table for the 12th season of the English Pro Alliance updated for the first time.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Phoenix Rising – MP:1; Points: 3 Scarlet Rose – MP: 1; Points: 3 Echelon – MP: 1; Points: 3 Cyber Squad – MP: 1; Points: 3 Nightfall – MP: 1; Points: 3 Cerberus Core – MP: 1; Points: 3 Pendragon Esports – MP: 1; Points: 3 Cross Guild – MP: 1; Points: 1 Helix Nova – MP: 1; Points: 1 Oblivion Knights – MP: 1; Points: 1 Blazing Gryphons –

MP: 1; Points: 1Juggernaut – MP: 1; Points: 1Imperium Tyrannus – MP; Points:
1Stormborn Esports – MP: 1; Points: 0Avalon Sovereign – MP: 1; Points: 0Lionheart
Legacy – MP: 1; Points: 0Exo Genesis – MP: 1; Points: 0Steel Dominion – MP: 1;
Points: 0Shadow Dominion – MP: 1; Points: 0Crimson Crow – MP: 1; Points: 0

Just like expected, the league table showed a crazy fluctuation.

It was not till later in the season after a few matchdays that the league table would fully solidify, separating the top table teams from the mid table teams, and then from the relegation teams.

For now, the top 3 and top 6 was filled with new faces... crazy.

It was crazy to know that Echelon actually made it to the top 3 of the league table already despite this being their debut season and their debut game.

Of course, maybe it was only temporary, but Echelon fans didn't care. They would relish their position in the league table.

And yet, Echelon's placing in the table was not the most shocking fact.

Rather, it was Nightfall.

Cerberus Core is a solid mid-table team of the English Pro Alliance, but them appearing in the top 6 was not the most surprising placement. The most shocking placement in the top 6 was Nightfall.

Nightfall, just like Echelon played the promotion tournament last season.

After failing the promotion tournament, they bought their way to the English Pro Alliance, buying one of the 2 available spots.

Yes, they showed their prowess in the promotion tournament but this was the English Pro Alliance. No one expected them to win their game; rather, like most promoted teams, they expected them to struggle.

And yet, here it was, a crazy start to the season.

Nightfall didn't struggle at all, comfortably winning their opponents with a 7-3 score line though their opponents was one of the new clubs in the Pro Alliance.

Fans could tell that a new era was dawning in the English Pro Alliance, and they could not wait to see how it would unfold.

Also, the stakes this season were higher simply because a spot to represent England in the World Championship was on the line.

This season was going to be a crazy one filled with excitement.

...

Hours later...

London, Club Echelon building.

In one of the training rooms in the gigantic club building, team Echelon sat around their captain as they all focused on the holographic projection in the middle of the room that Noah controlled remotely.

Noah looked at his teammates. "We played a good game today. Almost perfect, but it was not perfect. We made mistakes".

"And so, we have to address those mistakes".

"We won flawlessly," Benjamin chuckled. "Why be so uptight?"

Noah looked at him evenly. "That is exactly why I'm uptight. We won't have the privilege of playing opponents like Shadow Dominion every time".

"Benjamin, you keep forgetting but this is no longer the game world. This is the pro scene, the English Pro Alliance".

"We have to prepare for every game like it's a final. We can't afford to lose any game," Noah stood up. "That's our main objective for this season".

He grinned. "Let's have a perfect season".

"So, get ready sluggers. Get ready to work your bones out, play, and train like your lives are on the line".

"A World Championship is on the line".

Chapter 204: The marathon starts

That night, before sleeping, Noah oversaw a deep analytical session with Gabriel, Aria's boyfriend providing helpful insights on the bits and dots in between.

They started from the individual battles, Noah digging into Aria's duel especially and critiquing it.

Listening to him, the 2 substitute players in the team felt weird. But they dared not interject.

This was the Sword Saint they were talking about.

And yes, if there was any pro player in the world worthy of critiquing her game, then it was definitely God Noah.

What shocked them even more was the suddenly subservient attitude that was displayed by the domineering Blademaster controller. In the face of Noah's critique, Aria didn't flare up at all, rather seriously listening to him with rapt attention and asking questions when required for clarification.

The 2 newbies were shocked.

But they learned something... humility. If even the strongest and most famous Blademaster controller in the history of the English Pro Alliance was open to learning, being reprimanded, who were they not to learn?

And yet, there was an even crazier part to it. Because, after Noah was done critiquing their performances, including the mistakes that they made in the 3 vs 3 battle rush, when it came to the team battle, Noah was roasted.

Aria critiqued Noah's game, blaming him for taking it half-heartedly simply because the opponents were weaker than them.

Noah didn't complain, he accepted the accusation with a smile on his face.

And wait till you hear Caleb speak. When the mathematician thug started, Benjamin had to groan as he pointed out and identified every single mistake that they made, dissected it, pointing out how it affected the flow of the battle, and also suggesting ideas on how they could improve on it another time.

To the 2 Echelon substitute players, their first official analytics meeting after their first Pro Alliance game was sobering.

'So, these is how pros do it..., ' they thought, filled with awe.

...

The next day...

London, Club Echelon Building.

Early in the morning, there was nothing scheduled and so the players did what they wanted. Most jumped into the game, raiding dungeons solo with their alternate Avatars, others simply doing random activities in the game for leisure.

Benjamin went out though. If Genevieve was to guess, the bastard most likely was out searching for a new gambling den since he was now on a stable salary once again.

They all acted oblivious, they were used to Benjamin's antics.

As for Caleb. He isolated himself from the rest of his teammates, going to the club building library where he was most definitely reading a new novel, or did another episode of that his beloved book 'Shadow Slave' upload again?

Nightingale filled the library with a whole catalogue of the Shadow Slave series simply because of Caleb.

Before the start of the season, Noah drafted a schedule for Team Echelon.

Every day, they had 3 main training sessions except on matchdays; the first, morning session starts by 9 and lasts 2 hours till 11. The second training sessions starts by 2 to 4, while the last, the evening session is from 8 to 10.

For the other time, the players had the freedom to do anything they wanted.

Hours later...

In the strategy room, team Echelon was gathered again but this time, they were not analyzing yesterday's game. Rather, they were preparing for their next game with the knowledge of Echelon's future fixtures.

The fixtures for the 12th season of the English Pro Alliance spanning all 38 matchdays was already released days before matchday 1.

[Club Echelon Fixtures:]

[Matchday 2:]

[Avalon Sovereign vs Echelon]

[Time: 6:00pm]

...

[Matchday 3:]

[Steel Dominion vs Echelon]

[Time: 6:30pm]

...

[Matchday 4:]

[Cyber Squad vs Echelon]

[Time: 8:00pm]

...

[Matchday 5:]

[Echelon vs Cerberus Core]

[Time: 8:00pm]

Today, Noah focused on their next 4 matchdays.

Apart from maybe Avalon Sovereign which was their next immediate opponent, every of the other teams had their strong points. After all, no club that played in the English Pro Alliance could be truly underestimated.

And yet, despite the game against Avalon Sovereign being the most immediate game, the players didn't focus on that.

Rather, they focused on matchday 4.

Matchday 4... it was the matchday that millions of fans have been hoping and praying for since the day the truth of God Noah's retirement was revealed.

It was a Cyber Squad home game, meaning that the game would be played in Cyber Squad's home stadium right here in London.

It was the homecoming of the legend.

It would be the first time that God Noah, Aria, and the others would be stepping foot in a stadium they saw as home for years.

Noah didn't allow his teammates get too sentimental about it though, focusing on matchday 4 as he quickly started the analysis session. This time, he focused on all 4 clubs at once, discussing their basic game strategies and lineups.

From the lineup of Avatars that a team regularly fields, you can predict how they'll play in any given game.

This is a core aspect of how pro teams prepare for each Pro Alliance game.

For the morning training session, Noah focused on just this, presenting a clear overview of the gaming philosophies of all 4 pro clubs, after which he simulated battles against virtual versions of the 4 teams in-game.

With this training, team Echelon would get an initial feel for their opponents.

That was all that they did in the morning training session.

When afternoon came, in the afternoon training session, Noah finally discarded the last 3 fixtures, focusing on the matchday 2 encounter.

[Club Echelon Fixtures:]

[Matchday 2:]

[Avalon Sovereign vs Echelon]

[Time: 6:00pm]

Yes, it was against a weak team.

Yes, Avalon Sovereign was a club that just lost a game that they already had to Cerberus Core despite playing at home.

Yes, Avalon Sovereign was a club that barely escaped the relegation zone last season. And yet, the fact remained that it was a pro club in the English Pro Alliance with a catalogue of bonafide pro players.

This was the reason why Noah would not underestimate them.

If in the morning, all Noah did was a general overview of their next 4 opponents. This time, he went on a detailed analysis of Avalon Sovereign; from their captain to analyzing their strengths and weaknesses.

He literally dissected Avalon Sovereign.

By the end of the training session, they all knew Avalon Sovereign like a book having studied them extensively like one.

They knew their preferences, their style, everything about them.

In the evening training session, Noah finally put his team through a grueling virtual training session against a virtual Avalon Sovereign team.

It was only a facsimile of the original, and yet, it was enough for his goal.

In the training, led by an aggressive Aria embodied by her Reckless Storm Avatar, they crushed Avalon Sovereign over and over again till they got tired. And yet, Noah didn't stop it.

Even while tired and bored of it, they crushed the team some more, and then some more. Only then was Noah satisfied.

The next day, Noah shifted focus, forgetting enemy teams entirely as they focused on themselves... Team Echelon.

Noah focused on building their teamwork, shoring up their weaknesses, working towards making their teamwork telepathic in a chaotic arena.

In the English Pro Alliance, when playing away games, especially in big games or against superior opponents, English fans loved to present such a hostile and toxic atmosphere that it tended to affect players' performance.

This was the unknown factor that Noah aimed to eliminate through teamwork. Most don't believe it was possible to achieve, but Noah believed it.

He believed because he already did it once with Cyber Squad.

The OG Cyber Squad team got to a level of telepathy on the arena where even in the midst of an erupting volcano or a rampaging earthquake, they would still play at their best, tearing teams down with impunity.

This was what Noah aimed to replicate in Club Echelon.

Replicating it was not going to be easy. After all, the team was no longer complete, with 2 substitutes integrated to cover for the others.

And yet, he was not daunted by the difficulty of his task.

'It's only exciting when it's difficult'.

The marathon of an English Pro Alliance season... it was a familiar schedule, and yet one year away from the pro scene already made it seem like a lifetime ago.

But now, Noah and his teammates were recovering what it felt like to train to be competitive across a 38-matchday season.

It was grueling, but they were determined to do it.

They were determined to run the marathon to the end and win. Not just win, but to be the best winning team.

After all, only one reason brought them out of retirement... to win it all.

And so, they trained, trained some more, and trained again.

All the while, time moved fast.

And then, in a blink, it was D-day.

Early in the morning, Club Echelon traveled to Southampton where Avalon Sovereign's headquarters and their hired home stadium was located.

It was a new matchday.

The hype and excitement of matchday 2 already started.

Chapter 205: Vs Avalon Sovereign [1]

A day before the D-day...

By now, matchday 2 already started but Club Echelon was not scheduled to play till the next day.

Only matchday 1 was made to follow the format of the final matchday of every season. After matchday 1, the scheduling of the other matchdays retained their normal style, stretched across days to achieve maximum media coverage.

That way, it would generate more revenue for the English Pro Alliance since more games would be chosen to be broadcasted for each day of the matchday.

As soon as the matchday started, once again, Team Echelon huddled together in a certain room of their club building, the Media Hall.

There, they watched the game that was being broadcasted.

This was another facet that Noah added to the team's training schedule. This season, like every other season of the English Pro Alliance, Echelon didn't have just 1 enemy, 1 club, but rather they had 19 enemies, 19 professional Warstar clubs.

And so, watching enemy games was part of Noah's training.

Since the matchdays are stretched across a period of days, in those days that Echelon are not scheduled to play, Noah implemented part of the training to be watching the opposition games and analyzing it.

After all, a war sage once said to defeat your enemy, you first have to know him. By watching them play, they would be able to understand their playstyles for the new season.

All in all, in pro Warstar, knowledge is power.

That day, Scarlet Rose's game was the broadcasted game as they took on Juggernaut in away ground. The crimson giants of Leeds did it again, winning the game and securing 3 more points in enemy ground.

They started a perfect streak by winning their second consecutive game.

After watching the game, Noah did a short 30 minutes analysis session with his players before sending them off to rest.

They had to sleep early to be fresh for tomorrow's game.

Before sending them off though, he had one final conversation with them.

Noah looked round at his teammates. "Last week, in our first game of the season, I didn't put a format in place yet".

"We went with the flow, following our gut instincts for that game".

"Yes, we won, but we can't continue like that".

"This is a professional club. And if we are to achieve our lofty goals this season, we have to set a structure that we'll follow".

"Last week, Aria wanted to play the first individual battle and that is why I let her. As for Caleb and Benjamin, they've not played in the pro alliance for almost a year and yearned for it, that is why I also let them play".

"The same thing happened for the 3 vs 3 battle rush, only the team battle followed our regular starting V format that we already agreed on".

"But we can't follow such a haphazard pattern in our next game tomorrow".

"We have to create order".

"Do you have a format already?" Caleb asked, looking at his captain.

"As a matter of fact, I do," Noah smiled, inclining his head to look at Aria. "Aria, you remember our last final against Phoenix Rising, right?"

Aria scowled. "I'll never forget it".

Noah grinned. "You know why we lost?"

Her scowl deepened.

Noah laughed. "We lost because we could not manage our energy properly against a young and hungry team just like us when we started".

"They had more hand stamina than us, they outplayed us in APM. And tactically, we were even. That is why we lost".

Noah shook his head. "Experiences happen so we can learn from them. This season, I don't want to repeat the same mistakes that brought us down long ago".

"So, I'm sorry Aria, you won't be the anchor man in the individual battle".

Aria scowled again but she just looked at him, knowing that he had an explanation. She waited for him to explain.

Noah smiled. "By now, it's not a secret that captains of teams like being the anchor man in every individual battle round of a game. It's more of a pride something these days".

"And like we all know, the captains are mostly the best players of their teams".

"I disagree". Aria said strongly.

Noah just looked at her and chuckled. "Anyway, what I want to say is that if you play against the captain in the individual battle, then still play in the 3 vs 3 battle rush, you won't be at your best for the team battle".

His face turned solemn. "This is the true reason why we lost to Phoenix Rising. Gabriel, that turd knew this and used it against us".

"So, yes, I do have a format Aria".

"This is the format".

"In the individual battle round, I'll be the anchor man. You'll follow for the second individual battle, and then Caleb. That is the starting order for each game, while Benjamin is the 4th man in the pecking order".

"In case Caleb faces an opponent whose class counters the Summoner class, we have to adapt. Then, Benjamin will take his place".

"Or if an injury takes place, preventing Benjamin from going in, then Jeff will go in. He is 5th in the pecking order, followed by Rosalind, and then Genevieve".

Looking at Genevieve, he chuckled. "Well, I hope the situation never gets so bad that you have to fight in the individual battle".

"As for the 3 vs 3 battle rush," he looked at Aria and smiled brightly. "You're the most ferocious combatant in our team".

"Your chances of completing a 3v1 are highest, your battle will is still high".

"So yes, you remain the anchor man in the 3 vs 3 battle rush".

"That way, me and you, we'll be rotating the responsibility of the strongest in the individual battle round and the 3 vs 3 battle rush. That way, we'll both be at our best for the team battle".

Noah looked at Aria again. "That is the only way we can go all the way and create a legendary season".

Aria shrugged. "Fine by me".

And so, it was decided.

The next day, early in the morning, Club Echelon traveled to Southampton where Avalon Sovereign's headquarters and their hired home stadium was located.

...

England, Southampton, St. Mary's Stadium.

St. Mary's Stadium is a seated but also safe-standing football stadium in Southampton, Hampshire, England, which has been the home stadium of Premier League football club Southampton since 2001.

When Avalon Sovereign burst into the scene as a pro Warstar club residing in the same city with the football club, Southampton willingly entered an agreement with the Esports club, renting their stadium on win-win terms.

[Club Echelon Fixtures:]

[Matchday 2:]

[Avalon Sovereign vs Echelon]

[Time: 6:00pm]

By 5:00pm, Club Echelon arrived in Southampton.

Southampton... the city is a vibrant port city on England's south coast, known for its rich maritime history, including its connection to the Titanic and the Mayflower. It's a blend of old and new, with medieval architecture, modern attractions, and a thriving cultural scene.

The city offers a mix of green spaces, shopping, dining, and cultural experiences.

This was one of the boons of being part of a pro club, adventure.

Even as they were all English, growing up, Noah and his friends didn't visit most parts of England till they started playing Warstar professionally.

The English Pro Alliance brings adventure in the sense that the 20 pro clubs are not centralized in one region, rather, they are scattered all over the cities of England. And since the league format pits teams against each other in 2 fixtures, home and away matches, pro players always travel.

And with the induction of the World Championship recently, pro players now even had the chance to travel out and socialize with foreigners.

Not just socialize with them, most importantly, to compete with them for supremacy and glory.

Southampton was a beautiful city, but this evening, Noah and his friends didn't see the beautiful side of the city. Rather, they saw the ugly side.

Avalon Sovereign fans prepared a hostile welcome for the visitors.

A mob waited for them at the front of the stadium, drowning them in boos and hate chants, and banners filled with profanities.

All of this was to rattle Club Echelon and its players.

This is Warstar, this is the English Pro Alliance, and this is what home advantage means. Club fans can do anything to make their team win.

The reason why the Avalon fans did all this was because after matchday 1, there was a clear favorite for this game and it was not their club. And since they didn't want to lose, they settled for trying to rattle their opponents' nerves.

The 2 substitutes were affected, but the others? Those guys were shameless oldies, veterans of the English Pro Alliance who have all played in Warstar RPG Champions League finals, won many and lost some.

This atmosphere?

"So cute". Benjamin laughed.

And so, they entered the hostile stadium.

Everything from there progressed fast. The commentators introduced both teams and the pro players entered the player booth, and then it started.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

Chapter 206: Vs Avalon Sovereign [2]

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

Lord Doom stepped into the arena, boldly representing Club Echelon.

There was no reaction among the thousands of fans in the stadium as they kept on booing the enemy players, but among the Avalon Sovereign player booth, there was a reaction, a subtle sense of unease.

This was unexpected.

Last week, during matchday 1, the whole world expected Lord Doom to step out as Echelon's first representative in the individual battle round.

And yet, against all expectations, Aria's Reckless Storm was the one who played first, crushing the enemy captain.

Just like Noah analyzed enemy teams and their games, all the clubs in the English Pro Alliance do the same thing to enemy teams.

Avalon Sovereign also dissected Club Echelon's previous game in the prelude to this game, during their lengthy preparations.

They weren't sure why Aria took the anchor position but after that display, they guessed that she would retain the anchor position. This was why for days, Avalon Sovereign's captain trained especially to counter Aria's Blademaster.

His Avatar is a Berserker and after much targeted training, he was reasonably confident that he had a 60% chance of winning if he fought against Aria.

And yet, now, when the moment of truth came, reality left him shell-shocked.

Reality was so much different from his expectations.

It was not Reckless Storm that came out to play him. Rather, it was Lord Doom... the Lord Doom.

It was too late to look back or even think, the game started.

FIGHT!

As soon as the battle started, without any side talk, without any trash-talk, Lord Doom jerked into action, moving with calm, refined composure.

Aetherforge was in its battle lance form.

With the battle lance trailing behind the already iconic Avatar, Lord Doom progressed, eyes calmly fixated on his prey.

As for the Berserker? He was still, uncertain, hesitant.

Berserkers were created by the developers to embody a certain philosophy, the philosophy of bloodlust, love for combat, and maniacal killing intent.

Berserkers don't show hesitation.

Berserkers don't retreat. They advance, and fight.

By hesitating, Avalon Sovereign's captain already showed weakness and with that, Noah already knew that he would win though he never needed that to know.

BOOM!

He exploded into action, activating a skill as his battle lance flew out like a viper and instantly, the Berserker was compromised.

He reacted though. After all, he was a veteran too.

Clang!

His greatsword sang a lullaby of impending death as soon as it clashed against the blade of the battle lance, and then all hell broke loose.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

The battle started and there was no stopping it as the sound of clashing metal reverberated in loud decibels.

Not once. Not once did the Berserker advance, he only retreated.

Berserkers were supposed to be the bullies, battle maniacs who overwhelmed other big-brained classes, and yet, against Lord Doom, all the ferocity of Berserkers was tamed and contained.

It was not a flawless victory, but it was a dominant one.

The poor Berserker lasted only 3 minutes.

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 1 point]

[Avalon Sovereign: 0 point]

As soon as the first individual battle came to an end, the second followed and the Avalon Sovereign representative's reaction?

The player reacted with despair when he realized who he would be fighting against.

'Why me?'

The look on his face told the story of the thoughts in his head.

He faced Reckless Storm, the new Avatar of the Sword Saint herself. You could not blame him for being terrified.

The battle started and it was even more ruthless, more brutal than the first individual battle as it ended in barely a minute and 30 seconds.

Echelon claimed another point.

For the final individual battle, Caleb took the stage. And once again, his opponent stood no chance because this time, Caleb used Hell's Key.

When the season was about to start, a few clubs in the English Pro Alliance filed complaints to the English FA about the use of an item as overpowered as Hell's Key. They petitioned for its use in the Pro Alliance to be banned, citing reasons like keeping the Pro Alliance competitive.

And yet, all their petitions were rejected. Hell's Key is an S-Ranked item; it was powerful but it was a tool just like other S-Ranked items.

It was not taboo to use an S-Ranked item in the English Pro Alliance. After all, the strength of a team was not just reliant on its players, but its Avatars too.

And so, Caleb was allowed to use Hell's Key.

As soon as Caleb opened the gates of hell, calling forth the demons of Demon's Temple, the battle came to an end.

He crushed the enemy.

Echelon secured a clean sweep in the individual battle round.

[Echelon: 3 points]

[Avalon Sovereign: 0 point]

For the 3 vs 3 battle rush, it followed the format that Noah already created, Aria stepping out first to face the opponents. This time, she could not complete a 3v1 but she killed her opponent and took 87% of the 2nd opponent's HP.

As soon as she died, Benjamin took her place.

With his impressive skill, his powerful Avatar and most importantly his S-Ranked unique skill, Benjamin completed what Aria started.

He completed a 2v1, singlehandedly deciding the outcome of the 3 vs 3 battle rush after Aria's crazy run.

[Echelon: 5 points]

[Avalon Sovereign: 0 point]

If the Avalon Sovereign players were still hopeful before, after the crushing defeat in the 3 vs 3 battle rush, they lost all fighting spirit.

And with it came despair, and death.

In the team battle, it was a massacre. No single Echelon player died and just like that, they secured a 2nd consecutive 10-point game.

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Avalon Sovereign: 0 point]

It was humiliation in Southampton.

Despite the hostile atmosphere that the fans created, after all the shouting, trying to get on their nerves and rattle them, team Echelon managed to secure another famous victory, this time in away ground.

That night, a lot of arguments from critics was shut down.

Club Echelon was not a one-trick pony like they expected, neither was it a team of old veterans who've lost it.

With consecutive perfect 10 points victories in the first 2 matchdays of the season, Echelon was not just winning, it was sending a statement to the rest of the English Pro Alliance.

And the message was clear: we are not just here to participate, we're here to fight and compete with the best of the best.

We're here to win.

After Club Echelon's game, 2 more games were played on the night.

The next day, the final games of matchday 2 were played and with it, the English Pro Alliance table was updated.

Like expected, the table experienced an upheaval, changing massively.

On matchday 2, Echelon was the only club in the English Pro Alliance to secure a flawless 10-point victory.

Phoenix Rising almost did it a second consecutive time too and yet, their opponents managed to snatch a victory in the individual battle round, making it 9-1 in total.

Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad also won their games convincingly.

The battle for the top spot of the table this season already started, and 4 clubs were the greatest contenders; Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Cyber Squad, and Echelon.

Under Caster, Cyber Squad were also playing like elites once again.

...

The fever energy of the new season already ended, and with its end came the competitive edge of a grueling 38-matchday season of the English Pro Alliance.

Clubs and their pro players were busy again.

Players were back with their shithousery and trash-talking, misleading the media all in a quest to unsettle their rivals for their eventual clash in the arena.

Warstar teams were locked in their basements, making game analysis, training, working hard for the new season.

Echelon was not excluded. Under Noah's rigorous leadership, the new team gave their all to doing the basics.

While all that happened, time moved fast.

In a jiffy, it was time again. It was time to face their rivals in the arena.

Matchday 3 of the English Pro Alliance started. And this time, Echelon's game was the first fixture in the matchday, and it was also chosen to be broadcasted by the media. Once again, they were fighting against a veteran team in Steel Dominion.

The game had all the makings of a classic; only time would tell.

Would Steel Dominion halt the Echelon surge or would the new London club prove their prowess, bulldozing through their older opponents?

Only time would tell.

6:00pm on a Saturday evening, York...

In the cathedral city in North Yorkshire, England, with Roman origins, sited at the confluence of the rivers Ouse and Foss, Club Echelon arrived with its players to play their 2nd away game of the season.

Steel Dominion fans gave the London-based club the welcome of a top team; they were chill, outwardly accommodating, but silently hostile.

It was a perfect atmosphere for a classic.

And then...

[LOADING...]

It started.

Chapter 207: Flawless victories

[Matchday 3:]

[Steel Dominion vs Echelon]

[Time: 6:30pm]

Matchday 3 already started.

Once again, Club Echelon took to the stage, traveling to meet their opponents in another away game against a club that was far stronger than Avalon Sovereign ever was.

Could they do it?

Could they secure another win?

And even more importantly to some fans, could they maintain their streak of perfect and flawless victories?

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

The game started, and a few dozen minutes later...

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Steel Dominion: 0 points]

Silence. Shock. Acknowledgement.

These were the reactions that followed the 3rd consecutive Echelon flawless victory in the English Pro Alliance, and their 2nd consecutive away flawless win.

Yes, after the game against Avalon Sovereign, fans of English Warstar already accepted the fact that Echelon was here to stay. This was not a retirement team, rather, it was a competitive team.

They were not here just to participate, but to compete and win.

After Echelon's dominant performances, they were the favorites to win in matchday 3. A lot of fans expected them to win, even the betting companies gave them lower odds, and yet, nobody expected the manner in which they won, not even the staunchest of Echelon fans that have been following Lord Doom all the way from the 11th server.

Another flawless victory? Against Steel Dominion? No one saw it coming.

No Echelon fan could have claimed to have dreamt about this before the game. It shocked the world of the English Pro Alliance.

Once again, Noah started the individual battle and this was when fans noticed a trend. They've long learned about his SSS-Rank unique skills since the Warstar developers used him as part of their advertisement of their SSS-Rank updates.

Every fan knew about Lord Doom's famous Versatile Avatar unique skill, they also knew about Aetherforge, but they noticed a trend in the English Pro Alliance.

In all the battles that Lord Doom and God Noah fought, he was yet to make use of the other forms of his shapeshifting weapon.

He only used Aetherforge's Greatsword form in one of the team battles in their first game of the season to make the team battle easier for his teammates. Apart from that, God Noah never changed Aetherforge's form.

He always kept it in its base battle lance form.

It caused a frenzy on social media when the fans realized why Lord Doom was yet to use other forms of Aetherforge.

None of the opponents had been able to push him to the limit where he had to use other forms of his weapon, forced to adapt.

In essence, they were too easy.

It was a sobering realization.

Not even Steel Dominion was able to force Lord Doom to use more forms of Aetherforge. He dominated the club's captain in their home stadium, setting the stage for his teammates to flourish.

Aria and Caleb did a quick job with their respective opponents. In the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Aria once again went haywire, almost completing a 3v1.

Benjamin entered and ended the last opponent.

And then, the team battle. Team Steel Dominion was more than a combination of the parts, the team was the fiercest part of this club. They gave them problems, forcing Aria to enter the zone state.

They gave their all, and yet it was not enough to win.

After using all their substitutes, Team Echelon had 4 Avatars still alive at the end when Steel Dominion's team was wiped out.

In away ground, they humiliated another opponent in front of their fans.

In the English Pro Alliance, Club Echelon was now like the grim reaper, tearing through every opponent that dared to face them on the arena. Their reputation was almost so fearsome now that it could scare children to sleep.

And yet, their rivals were not behind them.

In matchday 3, Echelon's rivals didn't secure flawless victories like them but they also won; Scarlet Rose, Phoenix Rising, and Cyber Squad, all 3 clubs won their games against their opponents convincingly.

This season was shaping up to be a quadruple team race for the league title.

Another thing was that with their 3rd consecutive flawless victories of the season, Club Echelon matched another record of the English Pro Alliance.

They matched the record that was previously set by Cyber Squad when Noah was still captain, and then later matched by Gabriel's Phoenix Rising, the record of 3 consecutive flawless victories in the English Pro Alliance.

If Echelon managed to get another flawless display in their next victory, they would have broken the record, retaining it for themselves.

But considering that it was against Cyber Squad, their hopes of getting a 4th consecutive flawless victory were not too high.

Noah didn't care about that though.

After the game, he let his team go through recovery procedures to heal the strain on their fingers, and then training started, preparing them for their next game against Cyber Squad.

The days moved fast. And yet, 2 days before the Cyber Squad game, an emergency occurred in the opposition club.

Cyber Squad's chief research analyst, a middle-aged man that Noah and his friends were familiar with met misfortune and died in a road accident.

The Cyber Squad vs Echelon game was postponed due to it.

4 days later, Noah left the club building with his teammates as they paid homage to an old friend and colleague on the day he was put to rest.

It was a somber moment for the English Pro Alliance.

And yet, the season would not stop because an analyst died, it won't stop even if it was a player who died.

And so, the hectic schedule continued.

With their matchday 4 postponed, Club Echelon focused on matchday 5 and in a jiffy, D-day arrived like a thief in the night.

[Matchday 5:]

[Echelon vs Cerberus Core]

[Time: 8:00pm]

This time, it was another home game for Echelon.

They took on the bestial team.

If before they were not aiming for it specifically, simply for the excitement and the record, Genevieve motivated her teammates to go for the flawless knockout to Club Cerberus Core.

The prospects of holding a new record excited her to no end.

After much pestering, her teammates relented, and so they decided to indulge her requests.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

The captain refused to engage Lord Doom in battle, sending the weakest player in his team instead up against God Noah.

It was a tactical decision, but Noah decided to punish him for it.

He showed the newbie no mercy, beating the living hell out of him. He didn't just win the first battle, he got a flawless victory, scarring the boy's confidence and leaving him traumatized.

Noah chuckled.

[No hard feelings man.] He added in chat.

It was a brutal decision from him but Noah knew that it won't leave the boy scarred for too long. If it did, then he was never fit to be a pro player in the first place. Strong mentality was a big requirement to become a pro player.

After that humiliation, Noah expected the captain to recklessly enter the 2nd individual battle to avenge his teammate where he would have faced Aria.

But alas, he was surprised.

'Wow... this guy. He's shrewd'.

The captain swallowed his humiliating, sending another of his teammates in instead as he knew fully well that the Sword Saint would represent Echelon next.

Just like Noah did with the first Cerberus Core player, Aria crushed the opponent that came out to face her with sheer skill and finesse.

She didn't get a flawless victory though. Unlike the first opponent that Noah fought, this guy was actually really good with fast reflexes and APM.

And yet, against a veteran like Aria, he couldn't survive.

For the final individual battle, Cerberus Core's captain finally entered the arena. His plan was clear as day; he wanted to secure a point for his team first to prevent the chances of another flawless Echelon victory.

Noah chuckled. "This guy really rates us a lot".

"He doesn't even want to win, he just wants to prevent us from getting a flawless over his team". He laughed. "Caleb, you can get him right?"

Without a word, Caleb loaded into the arena with his Avatar. His opponent, Cerberus Core captain's Avatar already transformed into a Centaur.

The battle commenced.

BOOM!

It was intense, the enemy captain pushing Caleb to the limit and yet, it was not enough for him to win.

Caleb outwitted him with steady and unerring calculations and skill executions. He was the worst opponent that this captain could have faced; Caleb made 0 mistakes in the game.

After that, everything went swimmingly for Club Echelon.

Aria led the team to another victory in the 3 vs 3 battle rush, and then in the team battle, it was another blitz Echelon performance.

This time, Echelon had 5 Avatars left standing at the end of the team battle.

Just like that, they secured another victory and 3 points. Not just the points though, they broke a long-standing record of the English Pro Alliance.

They increased their tally to 4 consecutive flawless victories in the league.

It was crazy.

It was legendary.

Chapter 208: The homecoming

Club Echelon secured another victory against an opponent in the English Pro Alliance, Cerberus Core this time. Another flawless performance.

And with it, they took their points tally to 12 points for the season, level on points with Cyber Squad while 3 points behind Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose who both won all 5 of their games at the end of matchday 5.

Club Echelon was 3 points behind because their initial matchday 4 encounter against Cyber Squad was postponed due to the emergency that happened.

Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose were at 15 points each.

After matchday 5, the fact that Club Echelon was keeping up with the top 3 clubs in the English Pro Alliance was not what shocked fans more, rather, it was because of the incredible record that they broke with it.

It was already more than a decade since the English Pro Alliance started, and yet, no club had been able to get more than 3 flawless victories in a row.

And yet, Club Echelon just did it, shattering the record.

They doing it was shocking, but it was not the most shocking factor. The most shocking factor was the fact that this season was Club Echelon's inaugural season in the English Pro Alliance, their debut season, and to go on and shatter such a significant record immediately... was just crazy.

After matchday 1, Club Echelon was already highly rated and yet, after each matchday, English Warstar fans kept on realizing that they still underestimated the new London club.

After matchday 5, they no longer predicted. Club Echelon was the dark horse this season, and those guys were out to shatter some crazy records in the league.

Earlier in the season, fans acknowledged that Echelon was good, a top tier club, but not yet at the level of legendary clubs like Cyber Squad, Phoenix Rising, and Scarlet Rose this season.

And yet, after 4 consecutive flawless victories, fans were forced to reevaluate their opinion of the new London club.

In the buildup to matchday 4, Warstar fans still saw Club Echelon as the underdog in first top of the table clash of the season between Club Echelon and Club Cyber Squad.

And yet, after matchday 5, they were no longer as certain.

Cyber Squad was strong, yes.

It was a Cyber Squad home game, yes. But Club Echelon already proved enough times this season that the last thing you could do was underestimate them.

After matchday 5, Cyber Squad and Echelon's clash was rescheduled to take place in 3 days.

The buildup to the D-day was filled with speculation, publicity, and excitement.

To Cyber Squad fans, it meant a lot. They dubbed it the homecoming.

After all, on that night, legends of their club, the ones who wrote the 5-peat history that made Cyber Squad the biggest club in England would be returning to their home stadium. Not as legends though, not as spectators either, rather as players playing for the opposition team.

In a blink, D-day arrived.

...

[Matchday 4:]

[Cyber Squad vs Echelon]

[Time: 8:00pm]

England, London, Cyber Stadium.

The 50,000 capacity stadium was filled to the brim on the night.

Tens of thousands of fans filled the stadium, most in the black jerseys of Cyber Squad, while few in the purple colors of Club Echelon.

And yet, on the night, despite the fact that this was a top of the table clash, there was no hostility in the stadium. Just excitement, nostalgia, and emotion.

Cyber Squad fans were experiencing a whirlwind of complicated emotions. They never got the opportunity to give a proper sendoff for the legends of their club, including the greatest player to ever play for Cyber Squad, God Noah.

Meeting them again in this stadium, they all felt emotional.

This was enemy ground but as soon as team Echelon entered the stadium, the fans in black unfurled a gigantic banner of Sam.

[God Noah]

[Forever a Club Legend!]

It was enemy stadium, and yet Noah chants exploded from the mouths of tens of thousands of fans filling the stadium.

"Noah!" "Noah!" "Noah!"

Climbing the podium in this familiar stadium, hearing this familiar chant, Noah could not help the nostalgia flowing through him like a flood.

Not just him, no matter how nonchalant they tried to be, Aria and the others felt like him. After all, this specific stadium, this specific fanbase, it was what they all called home and family for over a decade.

Connections like this, it could not be severed just because they were separated for a year. It was a connection for a lifetime.

Team Cyber Squad itself paid attention to their legends, Caster leading the line as they hugged their opposition before entering the player booth.

And then...

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

Like expected, Lord Doom and Noah came out to represent Club Echelon for the first individual battle.

As for Cyber Squad? Caster and Stinger of War stepped out.

In the arena, Noah froze, looking at the Avatar that was once such an integral part of his life. An Avatar that was once part of him.

[God Noah] Caster greeted in chat.

Noah grinned behind his monitor, and simply typed.

[Let's fight. Let the best man win.]

BOOM!

Both Avatars exploded into action.

Just like in almost every other game since making his return to the English Pro Alliance, Noah did not utilize the versatile advantage of Aetherforge yet. Rather, he only used the battle lance form of the SSS-Ranked weapon.

And so, it became a battle of Combat Mages.

It was fast-paced, intense, and exceedingly exciting. The fans got a show.

Sparring against his old Avatar, Noah had so much fun. Caster managed to take 78% of his HP, but in the end, Lord Doom was the one left standing at the end.

---<VICTORY>---

[Cyber Squad: 0 point]

[Echelon: 1 point]

Cyber Squad fans experienced a bittersweet feeling.

On one hand, they were glad to see their OG captain win again just like he always did. And yet, to see Stinger of War being the one at the end of his battle lance this time, they could not help the pang of sorrow that overwhelmed them.

And yet, they cheered still.

"Noah!" "Noah!" "Noah!"

They chanted.

For the second individual battle, Aria and her Reckless Storm took the stage, taking on the new Blademaster controller that was used to replace her.

Just like Noah, she faced her old Avatar in battle.

They also cheered for her.

"Sword Saint!" "Sword Saint!" They cheered.

Aria showed no mercy despite the fact that this was the Avatar that she used for over a decade in the English Pro Alliance.

She fought against it ruthlessly, cutting him down with ruthless efficiency.

Reckless Storm won with 38% HP still remaining.

And yet, it was in the 3rd individual battle that Club Echelon finally faltered, Caleb and his Enlightened Flame losing to Cyber Squad's Elementalist.

Benjamin's old Avatar defeated Caleb.

Watching it, Benjamin was all smiles. "That's my boy!" He said like a proud father watching his son shine in his stead.

The 3 vs 3 battle rush was a classic.

Cyber Squad fielded their strongest III lineup, and they showed exactly why they were part of the 5 teams dominating at the top of the English Pro Alliance league table.

Caster did the impossible, using terrain advantage to defeat Aria in the first clash, buying the opening for his team.

Against God Noah who was Echelon's second challenger, he wasted time, kiting Lord Doom and Noah didn't rush him. He didn't want to waste his energy.

He killed Caster eventually but by then, too much time passed already.

Cyber Squad won by Health decision. By the time the countdown hit 0, they had combined overall HP more than Club Echelon.

The team battle was also a tight spectacle.

Both teams held nothing back, putting everything out there on the arena to give the fans a show. Both teams had their time, dominating at intervals, but in the end, one team outlasted the other.

In the most dire moment of the team battle, Aria exploded, truly embodying her persona as the Sword Saint as she completed a 3v1, taking down 3 enemy Avatars with her to oblivion.

That was what gave Club Echelon the advantage.

At the end, Lord Doom simply led his team to ride on the momentum that was given to them by Aria's rampage.

At the end of a truly exciting battle, Club Echelon managed to edge the home side, maintaining their perfect start to the season with another 3 points display.

---<VICTORY>---

[Cyber Squad: 3 points]

[Echelon: 7 points]

Club Echelon's flawless run came to an end, but it didn't matter because they got the even more important 3 points.

At the end of the game, the Cyber Squad players embraced their opponents, showing their respect for their legend in the club.

Cyber Squad home fans lost, but they didn't let the sorrow get to them.

They took advantage of the moment to give their legends the perfect farewell that they deserved as they sang their names in order.

The end of the game was an emotional one.

But with it, the fans felt like a weight that has been burdening them for almost a year was finally lifted.

Chapter 209: Rivalry [1]

Club Echelon's flawless victory streak was broken, but their pride was not. After all, they secured a 5th consecutive victory in their debut season in the English Pro Alliance.

Their 5th victory was even more important because they did it against the biggest club in the history of the English Pro Alliance, Cyber Squad.

Club Echelon was a club in form.

After Cyber Squad and Echelon played their game that was initially postponed, the English Pro Alliance League Table was updated.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 5; Points: 15 Phoenix Rising – MP: 5; Points: 15 Scarlet Rose – MP: 5; Points: 15 Cyber Squad – MP: 5; Points: 12 Juggernaut – MP: 5; Points: 9 Imperium Tyrannus – MP: 5; Points: 8 Nightfall – MP: 5; Points: 7 Lionheart Legacy – MP: 5; Points: 6 Pendragon Esports – MP: 5; Points: 6 Oblivion Knights – MP: 5; Points: 5 Steel Dominion – MP: 5; Points: 5 Stormborn Esports – MP: 5; Points: 5 Blazing Gryphons – MP: 5; Points: 4 Cerberus Core – MP: 5; Points: 4 Exo Genesis – MP: 5; Points: 4 Helix Nova – MP: 5; Points: 4 Shadow Dominion – MP: 5; Points: 3 Cross Guild – MP: 5; Points: 2 Avalon Sovereign – MP: 5; Points: 2 Crimson Crow – MP: 5; Points: 0

This was how the English Pro Alliance table looked after 5 matchdays of entraining games in the new season.

By now, the top 4 position was already solidified after the first top of the table clash between 2 of the 4 most in form clubs.

After matchday 1, despite the fact that multiple clubs secured 3 points after winning their games, some were below others, Echelon included.

But now, at the end of matchday 5, Echelon was the club now leading the summit of the English Pro Alliance table despite sharing the same perfect 15 points with Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose.

The reason why Echelon was ranked higher than the 2 other clubs with perfect 15 points was because of their imperious run of flawless victories.

They were ranked higher than the other two to show their dominance.

And so, Nightingale's club broke another record within the first 5 weeks of their debut in the English Pro Alliance.

They were the first pro club in the English Pro Alliance to top the league table in their debut season.

The season was just beginning, and yet, Club Echelon was already on course for an unforgettable and record-breaking season.

The top clubs of the English Pro Alliance were already feeling the heat that their new rival brought with them.

Club Echelon was a peculiar club.

They were a new club and yet in certain fundamentals, they had a bigger advantage than the biggest clubs of the English Pro Alliance.

First, Club Echelon is the only club in England to have an Avatar with an SSS-Rank unique skill and an SSS-Rank unique weapon. Not just one, but two SSS-Rank unique skills, Lord Doom's Versatile Avatar and 10x Skill Points.

There were only 5 SSS-Rank unique skills in existence!

And yet, Lord Doom had 2 of them.

That alone was already a crazy advantage that made his Avatar seem like a cheat against any other Avatar in the game. And yet, Noah's Lord Doom was not the only broken Avatar in Club Echelon.

During the summer, top clubs like Phoenix Rising finally managed to procure an SS-Rank weapon for their star Avatar.

Dain Ironvalor's primary shield was now an SS-Rank weapon, an upgrade that improved the lethality and defense of the no. 1 Paladin Avatar. And yet, despite how hard it was for Phoenix Rising to procure the weapon, there was another Avatar in club Echelon with the same advantage, Captain Batman.

Captain f*cking Batman had an SS-Rank unique skill!

It was crazy to think about. It was hard to see Echelon as just any new club with all these advantages.

Add their Blademaster's S-Rank unique skill and their Cleric's S-Rank unique skill and Club Echelon becomes a bonafide title contender.

Their position in the league table at the end of matchday 5 proved it.

And now, a rivalry started.

A rivalry between the top 4 clubs; Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Echelon, and Cyber Squad.

Last game, Cyber Squad fans finally managed to rid their hearts of the guilt that's been affecting them for a longtime, giving their captain the farewell that he deserved. Only after that did they accept him as a true opponent, a true rival.

And so, the battle of the big guns started early.

...

Matchday 6...

Like expected, Matchday 6 was a turning point in the English Pro Alliance.

After confirming the steep top 4 race after matchday 5, all top 4 clubs were desperate and determined to get a result and pull ahead of their rivals now. And so, the top 4 clubs rode their ambition taking their opponents as the foil.

The 4 clubs that faced the top 4 clubs sang a song of sorrow and humiliation as they tore them apart with scintillating performances.

Phoenix Rising got their 2nd flawless victory of the season. Scarlet Rose completed a ruthless 9-1 scoreline against their opponents, while Cyber Squad and Echelon both completed an 8-2 against their opponents.

A rivalry was already started this season, and the media was fanning the flames of the budding rivalry.

All 4 clubs were now at loggerheads, and they pushed each other to be better. To neutral fans, it was nothing but exciting.

To supporters of any of the 4 clubs, it was also exciting.

After Matchday 6, Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, and Echelon were at 18 points apiece while Cyber Squad was at 15 points.

...

Matchday 7 followed the same script, the top 4 clubs riding their opponents to death to keep the league race on.

None got a flawless victory, Echelon especially fighting a tough battle against Juggernaut that they eventually won 6-4.

Having studied them and prepared appropriately for the game, Juggernaut, another top club of the English Pro Alliance gave Echelon a lot of difficulty. Winning the team battle was what bailed them out of their opponent's stadium turned fortress as they had to sweat for their victory.

It was the first Echelon victory of the season that seemed hard.

By now, it was clear that opposition teams were already figuring them out, devising strategies with each subsequent matchday to win against them.

In the individual battle, Lord Doom was the only one who won, and this was against overwhelming odds as Juggernaut's captain, one of the oldest veterans in the pro scene came with a targeted battle strategy and tactic to take him out using the terrain of the arena.

For the first time in the English Pro Alliance, Lord Doom let loose, Noah taking advantage of the Versatile Avatar SSS-Rank unique skill to the full as he wreaked havoc with Aetherforge. And that was the only reason why he won.

Aria? She was aggressive and skillful like usual, but against a prepared pro player who trained a whole week to face her, and with perfect use of the terrain, he managed to bring the Sword Saint down.

Juggernaut got 2 points from the individual battle round and they also won the 3 vs 3 battle rush, amassing a total of 4 points.

And yet, their perfect plan could not work to the team battle where the brilliance of team Echelon truly showed.

It was a narrow Echelon victory.

Clubs were already figuring them out, the Juggernaut game made that clear. And in return, Noah was forced to start tweaking his strategies in training sessions. Most importantly was the fact that fatigue was already setting in.

Pro Alliance games were unlike playing against regular players. Even for Noah, he has to exert himself both mentally and physically, his fingers, to win.

And so, fatigue mounted.

When his fingers were younger and fresh, Noah and his teammates recovered fast from finger fatigue but at his age, they were still young but their fingers were not as young anymore.

Recovering from post-game finger fatigue was no longer as fast.

This was one of the reasons why the media put on the propaganda of if they were too old to push through a grueling 38-matchday campaign.

But Noah and his teammates didn't falter before the challenge though.

They came back to do only one thing, to win it all. They were determined, and so, they would push through.

But Noah would not just work hard. After all, he was God Noah, the Godfather of Warstar. It would be a blemish to his name if he was all brawn and no brains.

To adapt, Noah started rotating his team for every game, personally training the Combat Mage Echelon sub and gradually giving him more screen time.

That way, they could manage the fatigue better.

After matchday 7, Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, and Club Echelon were each at 21 points while Cyber Squad was at 18 points.

And yet, when matchday 8 rolled in, the English Pro Alliance immediately knew that all hell was about to break loose.

All hell was to break loose because another top of the table clash was here.

And this time, it was Scarlet Rose vs Cyber Squad.

Chapter 210: Rivalry [2]

[Matchday 8:]

Matchday 8 of the English Pro Alliance rolled in town, and yet the millions of Warstar fans in love with the English Pro Alliance did not pay attention to all of it, rather narrowing their attention to the clashes across the top 4 rival clubs.

Matchday 8 was spread through 3 days, a few games scheduled for each day of the matchday. The English Pro Alliance cleverly spread the game of the top 4 clubs between the 3 days, and for each day, either Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Echelon, or Cyber Squad were chosen as the main event to be broadcasted.

Day 1...

[Exo Genesis vs Phoenix Rising]

On the first day of the matchday, the clash between Phoenix Rising and Exo Genesis was the focus because it qualified as a top of the table encounter.

It qualified not because Exo Genesis was a club on par with Phoenix Rising, but simply because one of the four clubs in the 4-peat title race this season would be taking to the arena.

Besides, it was an Exo Genesis home game.

In the English Pro Alliance, clubs have different levels. The newly promoted clubs were at the bottom of the pile, then the deep foundation teams that were veterans of the English Pro Alliance like Cerberus Core, bonafide mid-table team.

The 3rd level is taken up by clubs like Juggernaut and Steel Dominion, clubs that were veterans of the English Pro Alliance like Cerberus Core but actually challenged for the top 6 playoff spot every season.

And the final level is the top level, the elite level occupied by clubs like Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose and the likes.

The betting sites associated with Warstar dictate their betting odds using algorithms generated by the level each club is located in the 4-scale ranking.

And yet, everything was not set in stone.

It was not set in stone that a top team would win every time that they met a team lower in the ranking.

Warstar was a sophisticated game filled with lots of nuances. Skill is the core selling trait of the game, just like football and in a video game so skill-based, just like football psychological factors like momentum and pressure could affect a game.

The psychological factors that affect games? Just like in football, home advantage when playing in your home stadium played a big role.

The bottom table teams sometimes fight to famous victories against bigger teams in the English Pro Alliance.

This kept the league competitive, and it also fueled the business of the betting companies, making the game unpredictable and interesting.

And yet, Phoenix Rising didn't falter when they visited their opponents in Bradford, the city in Yorkshire, England.

Exo Genesis fans gave the reigning champions of the English Pro Alliance a sufficiently hostile welcome, and they sustained the hostility throughout the game, inducing noise so loud it could rattle bones.

And yet, it was not enough to rattle Phoenix Risings' nerves.

At the end after an hour and a few minutes...

---<VICTORY>---

[Exo Genesis: 3 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 7 points]

Phoenix Rising won convincingly in enemy ground.

Dain Ironvalor started the battle strong, winning the first individual battle and snatching the momentum away from the home side.

Phoenix Rising won the second individual battle too, securing 2 points early and yet in the final individual battle, Exo Genesis did the impossible, rescuing a point in the boisterous atmosphere created by their fans.

That single victory created the switch in momentum, a shift in energy.

Exo Genesis went on to create an upset in the 3 vs 3 battle rush, riding the rush of energy from their sole individual battle win to snatch a narrow victory in the 3 vs 3 battle rush after a legendary performance for their team captain who played last in the battle rush.

They got 3 points in total from the heroic run of form, but it came to an end in the team battle when they faced Phoenix Rising's core.

They dared to dream, but they didn't achieve their core goal.

Phoenix Rising crushed them with sheer skill in the team battle, winning convincingly to steal 3 points away from their stadium.

2 other games were played on the first day of the matchday, one of them ending in a draw while the other ending in a narrow 4-6 score line.

And then...

Day 2.

This time, the clash between Club Echelon and Stormborn Esports was the main event of the English Pro Alliance.

Around 7:00pm in London, the Stanford Bridge bore witness to another exciting game in this season's league campaign.

Club Echelon welcomed Stormborn Esports to their hired stadium in London. Like butchers, Echelon lured their opponents into their stadium, locked them in, and gave them the beating of their life.

After the tough battle against Juggernaut in the previous matchday, Noah made the decision to switch it up a bit this time.

And it led to a rout.

Like usual, he was the anchor man in the individual battle round, taking on his opponent and wiping the floor with him.

And then, instead of Aria taking the stage next like usual, Jeff, Echelon's Combat Mage controller took the stage.

Having been taking consistent lessons from the most accomplished Combat Mage controller in the history of the game for months already, Jeff didn't disappoint. When he got his chance to shine, he seized the moment with an iron fist.

He gave the tens of thousands of Echelon fans at the Stanford Bridge a show, entertaining them with how brutally he fought.

And yes, he did remind them of a certain Battle God.

Echelon won the second individual battle.

And then, Caleb came out last for the team like usual. His opponent was a difficult one as he fought with the enemy's veteran vice-captain.

Caleb dominated though, for a time till he was caught off-guard by a clever strategy his opponent used to take advantage of the terrain.

Caleb's calculation didn't fail, he just never realized the full factors in play to factor them into his calculations.

And so, in a damning moment of realization, he lost. By the time he realized, it was already too late to change it.

That was the only point that Stormborn Esports got in the game.

In the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Noah took another drastic decision that spooked Stormborn Esports, throwing all their prepared plans in disarray.

Aria didn't play in the individual battle round for the first time this season, and so they all expected her to anchor the 3 vs 3 battle rush. But that was not the case, instead, Noah anchored the 3 vs 3 battle rush after just anchoring the individual battle round.

Stormborn Esports trained and prepared to fight a Blademaster, not a Combat Mage with a unique skill and weapon that could switch forms and help him fight as multiple classes in one.

Noah put out an all-time classic performance at the Bridge.

He completed his first 3v1 of the season, using Aetherforge to its full potential as he went on a rampage, tearing through one Avatar after the other till none was left standing.

Till on him... till only Lord Doom was left standing.

---<VICTORY>---

Only after the victory screen did Noah grin behind his monitor. 'Got you'.

By then, his fingers were already aching, but this feeling... the feeling of adrenaline coursing through his veins in the professional stage, he missed it.

'It was worth it'. He concluded.

He didn't join the team battle.

Once again, Echelon shocked their opponents on viewers with their radical strategy that excluded their captain, giving all the power to Aria's Reckless Storm.

In the team battle... the Reckless Storm caused a storm.

Aria led the team to a perfect victory in the team battle in Noah's absence. And just like that, they secured a memorable 9-1 victory against their opponents, taking their tally for the season to 24 points alongside Phoenix Rising.

...

Day 3...

The main event of Day 3 of the matchday was the top of the table clash between Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad.

It was not just the main event of Day 3, but the main event of the whole matchday. After the clash between Echelon and Cyber Squad a few weeks ago, cementing the top 4 rivalry, Warstar fan have anticipated when the next top 4 clash would be and now, it was here.

It was a Scarlet Rose game.

Caster and his team traveled to Leeds where Scarlet Rose fans gave them a hostile welcome befitting a worthy rival.

Thousands of fans manned the side of the road when the Cyber Squad bus rolled into town, waving banners of Crimson Saint, singing their club songs and booing the Cyber Squad players.

There was an especially big banner depicting Stinger of War impaled on the chest by Crimson Saint's knight sword.

Dozens of fans unfurled the gigantic banner, holding it from on top the bridge under which the Cyber Squad bus drove through before entering the stadium.

The fire of a top of the table clash was already ignited.