

Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills

#Chapter 211: Rivalry [3] - Read Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills Chapter 211: Rivalry [3]

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[English Pro Alliance- Season 12:]

[Matchday 8:]

>Scarlet Rose vs Cyber Squad<

>Time: 5:00pm<

The Cyber Squad team bus drove into the maw of the Dragon.

The atmosphere inside the stadium was electric, boiling with passion as tens of thousands of Scarlet Rose fans in the crimson colors of the club jumped around the stadium, waving jerseys, waving banners.

The atmosphere was crazy.

It seemed like a derby game. Well, it was a top of the table encounter.

Having lost a top of the table clash to Echelon already at home, if Cyber Squad lost another one now, they would drop even further from their other rivals in the top 4 club.

This was why Cyber Squad came with only one intention... to win.

But Scarlet Rose would not let them. After all, just like them, this was a team in form. Besides, their pride was on the line; they would not make it easy.

And even more importantly, Scarlet Rose had the home advantage.

The commentators started.

"What a game we have here at the Crimson Arena in Leeds. Scarlet Rose take on Cyber Squad in a top of the table clash!"

"What a season we're having already, Derek".

"If this season continues with this current momentum, it would be the first season of the English Pro Alliance where there are 4 active rivals and challengers for the league title".

"The prospect of such a season alone is so exciting that fans can't get enough of it. They're already calling them the top 4 Dragons".

"Tonight is a clash of Dragons".

"Among the top 4 clubs combined, they already have up to 8 flawless victories this season. That is already a record in the English Pro Alliance, the most flawless victories in a season and we're still just at matchday 8".

"The competition this season is stiff, especially at the top. It feels like one of those season when records are broken. And surely tonight, some will be broken".

"Let's look at the 2 teams".

"Both are in good form, but of the 2 only Scarlet Rose are still enjoying a perfect run of form with 21 points in 7 games".

"In contrast, Cyber Squad have 18 points in 7 games after losing the derby encounter against the underdogs of the season, Club Echelon".

"John, can you really call them underdogs? Echelon have legendary figures of the English Pro Alliance, legends that would definitely be inducted in the English Pro Alliance Hall of Fame whenever it's created".

"To me, they were never underdogs".

The first commentator laughed. "You're right Derek. Echelon were never underdogs, we just underestimated them".

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, it's about to start on the arena".

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

Cyber Squad's captain did not shirk the responsibility like he did against Lionheart Legacy in the beginning of the season for a more tactical choice.

This time, Caster boldly brought his Avatar out first to represent his team in the individual battle and build momentum for his team.

In a stadium this storied and hostile, Caster knew the importance of gathering early momentum. His decision to go first was a tactical decision after all.

In response, not the enemy captain, but their ace stepped out.

Chris stepped out with the Crimson Saint to face him, and then...

BOOM!

The Crimson Arena exploded.

"Crimson Saint!" "Crimson Saint!" "Crimson Saint!"

Scarlet Rose fans roared at the top of their lungs, cheering their star Avatar and its controller on.

Stinger of War vs Crimson Saint...

It was a clash of legends, the oldest legends of the English Pro Alliance. Legendary Avatars with new and younger controllers.

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

FIGHT!

Both Avatars exploded into action as soon as the countdown hit 0.

None held back, activating movement skills immediately in a show of extreme aggression as they rushed at each other, closing the distance rapidly.

And then, they fought... blade to shield, blade to blade.

Both Avatars had some of the best stats and attributes of an Avatar in the English Pro Alliance, both Avatars had a lot of history and legend in them.

And all of that clashed in the arena.

In terms of sheer skill, both were evenly matched. Chris was aggressive but clever enough to still be more defensive because he was fighting against a Combat Mage; not just any Combat Mage Avatar but the greatest of them all.

As for Caster? He was extremely aggressive, but he was also careful, looking out to reading the feints and cunning of the OG Paladin Avatar.

Jonathan built a lifetime and legacy of grinding skill and deceit with his Avatar. Most don't like his playstyle, preferring Dain Ironvalor's, but nobody could deny how effective it was.

This was why opponents who'd faced the Crimson Saint in battle before developed a bias for always looking out for devious tricks and deceit.

Caster did the same, but Chris was no Jonathan. He inherited his Avatar and will, but he didn't inherit the person.

Chris had his own playstyle, he played his own game.

Both Avatars clashed with intensity, and boy was it interesting.

After 6 minutes of the intense clash, Crimson Saint hit 20% HP first but it didn't last because almost immediately after, the Paladin used a minor heal on itself, restoring just 7% HP but it was something.

Stinger of War had lesser HP now but Caster was hanging on, attacking with sheer aggressiveness and seemingly reckless abandon.

But every move he made and skill he used was calculated.

Both Avatars hit red health at the same time.

Badump! Badump!

The tension was palpable, fans of both clubs could feel their hearts pounding in their chest, and then...

BOOM!

Stinger of War struck with his battle lance.

Crimson Saint blocked with his shield, but the strike was a feint.

In the last moment, Caster canceled the skill, switching it for another, a horizontal ground sweep as his battle lance's blade cut Crimson Saint's legs, sweeping him off his feet.

That tiny damage did it.

---<VICTORY>---

So small, so insignificant, and yet that simple feint separated both Avatars.

Cyber Squad secured the first victory of the game.

[Scarlet Rose: 0 point]

[Cyber Squad: 1 point]

Momentum... it was even more pivotal when it played into the hands of truly elite teams.

After that intense battle and the climatic finisher, the pendulum bulb of momentum swung in Cyber Squad's favor in enemy ground.

And the London poachers were not polite, taking advantage with ruthless abandon in the next 2 individual battles as their players played with a sense of superiority and skill, dominating Scarlet Rose.

---<VICTORY>---

[Scarlet Rose: 0 point]

[Cyber Squad: 3 points]

The Crimson Arena was as silent as a church.

'What the...!'

Everyone was shocked.

Nobody expected it, no one saw it coming; nobody predicted Cyber Squad to go to Leeds and claim a clean sweep in the individual battle.

And yet, it was only the beginning.

After the disappointing outing in the individual battle round, Scarlet Rose was rattled and they didn't get time to recover when the 3 vs 3 battle rush started.

At that point, Caster was already in the zone state.

And Stinger of War? The Battle God was the weapon to channel the special state that he was in, a state where all the stars seemed to align in his favor.

Caster once again started the 3 vs 3 battle rush and once again, he beat Chris and the Crimson Saint.

Now, the boy was almost traumatized.

Just as Caster got baptized and humbled as an inception ritual into a big club by Lionheart Legacy last season, now it was his turn to do the same to Chris.

Jonathan's successor was humbled.

And yet, Caster didn't stop at that, going even further to almost complete a 3v1. He didn't complete it, but he took enough HP out of the 3rd Scarlet Rose Avatar to make it a work over for his vice-captain who entered after him.

Isabella made short work of the final Scarlet Rose Avatar.

And then...

[Scarlet Rose: 0 point]

[Cyber Squad: 5 points]

The Crimson Arena was in a state of shock.

No one saw this coming in the buildup to the game. The Scarlet Rose fans were so shocked that they could not react; Scarlet Rose was rattled.

Cyber Squad was on the cusp of history. All they had to do was win the final round of the battle, and not only would they steal 3 points from Leeds, they would have done it by completing a flawless victory against one of their rivals!

And yet, in this moment of need was when the old man reared his head.

"Tsk," Jonathan shook his head with disapproval in the player booth. "You guys really let that conceited bastard do you guys like this?"

He sighed in disappointment. "I get he's no longer as conceited, but still, I was winning champions league trophies when that kid was still sucking his mom's breasts".

His teammates stared at him with humorless eyes.

Jonathan grinned. "Don't look down, we're not out yet".

"We still have the team battle to make a comeback". His eyes gleamed.

"Let's go show that bastard who's boss".

He looked round at his teammates. "We're using the 2-Paladin formation".

"Yes captain".

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The crowd was silent.

The Crimson Arena was still stunned by the happenings in the big screen.

Tens of thousands of fans in the stadium watched in silence and disbelief, millions more tuned in worldwide.

On the other side, the away side, contrasted against the silence of the home fans, Cyber Squad fans chanted and sang exuberantly.

But Scarlet Rose fans didn't stay downcast for long. Jonathan deliberately gestured at the fans from the player booth, waving his hands to rile them up and in just a few seconds, once again, the Crimson Arena became a cauldron of noise.

The roof of the stadium shook from the noise.

To Scarlet Rose fans, the team battle was now do or die. They would settle for nothing but a win. That was the only way to salvage this game, and so they supported their team loudly.

[LOADING...]

[THIRD ROUND: TEAM BATTLE]

[Arena: Ashen Citadel]

[Final Clash: Scarlet Rose vs Cyber Squad]

[Current Points:]

[Scarlet Rose: 0 point]

[Cyber Squad: 5 points]

A single battlefield suspended over a molten abyss pulsed beneath two elite teams. Platforms shifted, lava geysers hissed.

One misstep meant death.

To Scarlet Rose players, it was do or die. And this time, their veteran captain was in their midst, ready to lead them through the storm.

[Caster, do you think you can take me on?]

Jonathan typed in the chat. The trash-talking and mind games already started and Caster didn't even deem it right to answer.

Scarlet Rose stood in formation on the southern platform; two towering Paladins with radiant shields at the front, the Elementalist levitating just behind. The Launcher crouched on a ledge with a grenade chamber.

The Cleric? Robes shimmering with divine light, she stood at the rear.

Across the battlefield on the other side, Cyber Squad loaded into the arena, emerging like war incarnates. Their Combat Mage, the Battle God itself clad in obsidian armor and armed with a spiraling battle lance led the charge.

To his right, the Blademaster, lithe and vicious, blades drawn.

Behind them stood the Paladin, the Elementalist, and then the Cleric in a careful formation they've practiced countless times in training.

Cyber Squad stood at the precipice of history.

If they won, this would be the first Scarlet Rose flawless victory home defeat since the inception of the club.

And now, this incredible history was up to Caster and his teammates to write it.

Could they do it?

It doesn't matter, they would do it.

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

FIGHT!

The battle began with thunder.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Backstage, Caster's fingers flew across his keyboard in a blur.

Stinger of War surged forward in a crimson arc, lance glowing with fire and force. One of Scarlet Rose's Paladins, Jonathan met him head-on.

CLANG!

Shield clanged against blade, sparks flew.

Magic detonated like grenades.

Stinger of War used a Spellstrike Execution, unleashing a flame spiral mid-swing that knocked the enemy Paladin off-balance.

Scarlet Rose's Launcher immediately retaliated.

{Cluster Hellfire=}

A high-level Launcher Skill.

The Launcher launched a series of bouncing grenades that exploded into anti-magic bursts, forcing Cyber Squad's Elementalist to abort her incantation and take cover to avoid taking damage.

From the side, Cyber Squad's Blademaster blurred forward, blades flashing.

He vaulted a gap between platforms and struck Scarlet Rose's Core, Crimson Saint with a six-hit combo.

His footwork was art; spinning, flipping, striking from impossible angles.

It was clear; Cyber Squad's determination and zeal to win and create history tonight was unshakable.

And yet, this was Crimson Saint; Chris.

Originally, after 7 matchdays of the new season, those 2 names alone would have been intimidating to opponents but tonight, Caster already jinxed the magic of Crimson Saint and its new controller, Chris.

Chris still gave his all, but it was clear that he was suffering from confidence issues all of a sudden. He was not decisive enough.

Crimson Saint barely held his stance, absorbing the flurry of attacks with grit and shield-based counterattacks.

The battle intensity increased.

Stinger of War used his Blink Step, blinking behind the Launcher and hurling his battle lance like a railgun.

The projectile clipped the Launcher's shoulder, sending him sprawling. Before the Combat Mage could follow up though, Crimson Saint used the Paladin skill 'Taunt', taunting Stinger of War back into melee and buying precious seconds.

Cyber Squad's Elementalist unleashed 'Thunder Nova', another high-level Elementalist skill, disrupting Scarlet Rose's front.

Scarlet Rose's Elementalist fell to one knee. Her mana flow staggered.

In that window, Isabella, Cyber Squad's vice captain and Paladin charged forward with a Holy Charge, slamming into the enemy Cleric and knocking her off the ledge, but she blinked mid-fall, reappearing on a ledge below just in time.

From the beginning of this team battle, despite what was at stake, or maybe because of what was at stake, Scarlet Rose was under pressure.

And finally, they began to bend.

Scarlet Rose's Elementalist was low on mana, the Launcher's launcher weapon was overheating, Crimson Saint's S-rank shield cracked!

It could be repaired but for this game, the shield was gone!

Cyber Squad pressed in.

Stinger of War went ballistic, unleashing an Awakened Level skill.

{Aether Cataclysm=}

A spiral of stormfire ripped through the arena. The Launcher tried to roll but was clipped, health dropping to red.

But then, Scarlet Rose's Cleric invoked an Awakened Level Skill.

{Divine Reversal=}

BZZZ!

A burst of golden light surged upward, healing all allies and reflecting damage for three seconds.

Stinger of War's own spell backlash nearly killed him.

Cyber Squad's Blademaster tried to retreat, but now he was cornered.

[Time to go out with style.]

The Launcher typed, then...

KABOOM!

{Burst Reign Omega=}

The Launcher launched his final shell, a scattershot missile that targeted every Cyber Squad Avatar.

Explosions lit the battlefield. Cyber Squad's Cleric was annihilated; their Elementalist dropped to a sliver of HP.

Substitutes started entering but it didn't matter.

Scarlet Rose's Elementalist gathered her last mana and cast Volcanic Cascade, summoning a chain of lava eruptions that blocked all exits for the remaining Cyber Squad members.

The Blademaster was cut off.

Stinger of War tried to blink but Chris intercepted with his Crimson Saint, slamming him into a wall with Heaven's Wrath, a high-level Paladin skill.

A moment ago, Scarlet Rose seemed done and out.

They were on the verge of being annihilated.

And yet, due to sheer willpower and determination, they fought back from the despairing jaws of hell, clinging on in the game.

And then, one by one, Cyber Squad fell.

Including the substitutes.

Only Stinger of War remained, bloodied and furious, confused at how his team found themselves in this position despite trying so hard.

As Stinger of War launched himself at Jonathan's Paladin in a last-ditch blitz, he was intercepted by the mentor's student.

Jonathan was the mentor, Chris was the student.

Crimson Saint reappeared, body-blocking the lane. The Elementalist froze the Combat Mage's legs, and then, it was over.

BOOM!

They bombarded him till death.

At the end, the 3 surviving Scarlet Rose Avatars were all below 5% HP but it didn't matter in the grand scheme of things.

In the grand scheme, what mattered was that they were the last men standing.

The game was over.

---<VICTORY>---

Scarlet Rose won the individual battle.

The scoreboard flared.

[Scarlet Rose: 5 points]

[Cyber Squad: 5 points]

BOOM!

The audience exploded.

The Crimson Arena turned into an ocean of noise as excited Scarlet Rose fans screamed at the top of their lungs fueled by raw passion.

It was the passion of watching the club you supported claw themselves out of the very jaws of defeat, defeating 'DEFEAT' itself.

To the fans in the stadium, it was an unforgettable game.

It was by far the most intense game of the matchday. And to most fans who watched the game, it was the most intense game of their lives.

What mattered was that in the end, Cyber Squad did not use them to create history in the English Pro Alliance, winning by a flawless victory.

Heck, Cyber Squad didn't even win. It was a draw.

It was the comeback of the decade.

Scarlet Rose clawed themselves out of defeat to play a draw, snatching a point from the incredibly complicated game.

At the end of the game, even without his mentor pushing him first, Chris went to Caster and acknowledged him for his performance today, showing his respect. Caster was unplayable today.

He was the player of the match.

But Chris was defiant. "Next time, I won't lose".

Caster chuckled. "I can't wait".

And with that, Cyber Squad left Leeds with a point from the dreaded Crimson Arena where most teams hated to play at.

They were this close to creating history in Leeds.

The next day, matchday 8 continued.

At the end of the matchday, while Cyber Squad and Scarlet Rose played to a draw, Phoenix Rising and Echelon won their games comfortably.

The English Pro Alliance table was updated again.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 8; Points: 24 Phoenix Rising – MP: 8; Points: 24 Scarlet Rose – MP: 8; Points: 22 Cyber Squad – MP: 8; Points: 19

The top 4 battle was still on.

The fierce rivalry continued.

Chapter 213: Rivalry [5]

The 12th season of the English Pro Alliance was a 4-club race.

By now, no Warstar fan doubted this truth.

Especially not after Matchday 8.

After what Cyber Squad went to Leeds and did at the Crimson Arena, at Scarlet Rose's home stadium, nobody dared underestimate them anymore.

Echelon silenced their doubters by going 4-straight games with a flawless victory. It was a record, no other club in the history of the English Pro Alliance had ever achieved a feat like that.

As for what Cyber Squad did against Scarlet Rose during the weekend, it was not a record, but no club had ever done it to the Crimson team, not after Jonathan turned the team into a big club a decade ago.

Last season, Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose were jointly tied in points at the end of the season, resulting in them having to play in the playoff round to determine the eventual winner of the league title.

In the end, both clubs met in the Warstar RPG Champions League final.

There, Phoenix Rising won. But it was a narrow victory.

On that final, Scarlet Rose showed to the rest of the English Pro Alliance that they were back to the top of England.

And by passing the baton to his heir, Chris, after the final, Jonathan announced to the world just how ambitious his club was.

This was why Phoenix Rising and Scarlet Rose were voted as the favorites to go all the way and win it this season.

Due to obvious reasons, Echelon and Cyber Squad were also in the conversation, but it was never too convincing until after matchday 8.

After matchday 8, no one doubted them anymore.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 8; Points: 24 Phoenix Rising – MP: 8; Points: 24 Scarlet Rose – MP: 8; Points: 22 Cyber Squad – MP: 8; Points: 19

This was what the English Pro Alliance table looked like at the end of matchday 8. The fierce rivalry was on.

...

Matchday 9.

It didn't take long before matchday 9 rolled into town. And once again, the 20 clubs of the English Pro Alliance clashed in exciting arena encounters.

And once again, 4 clubs were the stars of the show; Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Cyber Squad and Echelon.

All 4 of them won their games convincingly.

The schedule of the season was hot now, games rolling in matchday after matchday and pro players were under pressure to perform at their best.

Despite the pressure, the top 4 clubs stayed consistent as with the help of their analyst team, they analyzed opponents and prepared for every game to the best of their ability to win.

Every club was putting in the hard work but when it came to results, the top 4 clubs were far ahead of every other club.

When matchday 10 rolled into town, it was even easier for the top 4 clubs as they blitzed their opponents again, Cyber Squad securing their first flawless victory of the season against their opponents, Blazing Gryphons.

Cyber Squad under Caster this season was a force to be reckoned.

Scarlet Rose kept their unbeaten run, while Echelon and Phoenix Rising equally maintained their winning run.

And yet, the true excitement came in the next matchday.

Matchday 10 followed the usual script for the top 4 clubs, but matchday 11 was different. It was different because 2 epic encounters took place; Phoenix Rising vs Juggernaut, and Echelon vs Scarlet Rose.

Juggernaut was not part of the top 4 clubs, but this season, they were solid having introduced a new talent to their squad.

They were comfortably the 5th highest ranked team in the table this season after matchday 10, and now they took on another top 4 club.

Having narrowly lost to Echelon already, Juggernaut strived to cause an upset again, this time against Phoenix Rising.

The shocking fact was that they actually did it.

Juggernaut took the bold strategy of abandoning the individual battle and 3 vs 3 battle rush entirely in favor of giving their all to the team battle. Despite that, they managed to clinch a point in one of the individual battles.

But that was never their target, their target was the team battle where they invested all their effort.

It was a battle to the death in Juggernaut's home stadium.

Paired with the staunch support from tens of thousands of fans that filled the stadium, Juggernaut did the impossible, ditching the first team defeat of the season to the reigning champions.

---<VICTORY>---

[Juggernaut: 6 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 4 points]

Juggernaut won!

That night, the stunning underdog victory stopped the internet as Warstar fans in England could not stop talking about it.

And yet, that was not the only exciting clash of the matchday.

The next day, Echelon welcomed Scarlet Rose to Stamford Bridge.

What unfolded at the bridge was not a competitive video game at all, rather, it was war as it started with a God Noah vs Jonathan rematch.

Jonathan did not hesitate to overrule everybody in the team to spar with Noah once again. This time, his old friend was not using Stinger of War anymore. And yet, somehow, he was even more of a menace.

[You annoying bastard!] He typed spitefully in chat just before his Paladin Avatar died, disintegrating into motes of light.

The game was intense, almost like a derby game.

Aria won against her opponent in the 2nd individual battle, and yet, in the 3rd individual battle, Chris showed Caleb levels as he won though by a tiny margin.

In the 3 vs 3 battle rush, Jonathan put his fingers to work, rolling back the years with a vintage MOTM performance as he led his team to victory.

Unfortunately, he could not do the same in the team battle.

This time, in the team battle, Noah embraced Versatile Superstar fully as he utilized all 6 forms of Aetherforge to devastating effect.

He put out a tyrannical performance in the team battle, leading Echelon to victory when it mattered.

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 7 points]

[Scarlet Rose: 3 points]

What a game!

What a matchday!

The English Pro Alliance table updated.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 11; Points: 33 Phoenix Rising – MP: 11; Points: 30 Scarlet Rose – MP: 11; Points: 28 Cyber Squad – MP: 11; Points: 28

The title race was even tighter after matchday 11.

And yet when matchday 12 rolled into town, it came with even greater epic matchups; Phoenix Rising taking on Echelon on a home encounter being the main event of the matchday.

...

Matchday 12.

Phoenix Rising vs Echelon.

The rematch of the century.

It was a blockbuster encounter. After losing the Warstar RPG Champions league final against this same team 2 seasons ago, God Noah and his friends must be hungering for revenge. This became the selling point of the blockbuster encounter; it attracted attention across England.

And when the time came, it didn't disappoint.

It was a classic.

The individual battle was unforgettable.

There was a record that only God Noah held in the English Pro Alliance that gave him a lot of those iconic nicknames, and that record was the fact that he had never lost an individual battle.

This time though, his opponent was against a prime Gabriel and Dain Ironvalor. The odd were clearly against the aging God Noah.

And yet, Noah rolled back the years with a vintage performance.

Dain Ironvalor proved why he was the main attraction of the league now, Gabriel putting out his best and most explosive performance of the season and yet it was not enough.

Lord Doom and its controller seemed inevitable.

Noah let loose once again, using the unique advantages of his Avatar to their full potential in an explosive display of skill, experience, and gaming intelligence.

He floored Dain Ironvalor with 8% of his HP remaining.

The aftermath?

BOOM!

Stamford Bridge exploded from the roar of tens of thousands of Echelon fans celebrating loudly like mad men and women.

The game got even more spice when Aria took on her opponent.

The Sword Saint was merciless.

With her twin blades, she moved and fought like a phantom, cutting everything that stood in her path to oblivion.

She won after an aggressive and dominant performance against her opponent. And when it came to Caleb's turn, he put out an attacking clinic, all his calculations meshing together to form an all-time classic.

He tore his opponent apart, helping Echelon to a clean sweep in the individual battle round.

The 3 vs 3 battle round followed the same script, Lord Doom and Reckless Storm putting out dominating performances in an unforgettable battle.

[Phoenix Rising: 0 point]

[Echelon: 5 points]

All of this happened in enemy ground, in Phoenix Rising's home stadium!

Echelon were on their way to a dominant flawless victory.

And yet, it didn't happen.

In the team battle, Gabriel showed just how versatile he was and why he was the new face of the league. Individually, he admitted defeat to Lord Doom and God Noah but for the team battle, he went all out tactically.

Gabriel and his team performed at 180% efficiency, using the terrain and arena to their advantage in ways that were unseen in Warstar.

Phoenix Rising won the team battle.

At the end, it was a stalemate.

[Phoenix Rising: 5 points]

[Echelon: 5 points]

What a battle it was.

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Matchday 12.

Phoenix Rising vs Echelon.

What a battle it was.

Echelon went to Phoenix Rising's iconic home stadium in London. It was a derby game, so much was on the line, and yet, Echelon performed when it mattered the most to them and their fans.

They didn't outperform Phoenix Rising though.

Phoenix Rising also performed.

And at the end, it was a stalemate.

[Phoenix Rising: 5 points]

[Echelon: 5 points]

Both points shared a point each from the top of the table encounter.

The title race was on, and the rivalry? Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad took advantage of the opportunity, clinching convincing victories in their respective games against inferior opposition.

Once again, the English Pro Alliance table updated.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 12; Points: 34 Phoenix Rising – MP: 12; Points: 31 Scarlet Rose – MP: 12; Points: 31 Cyber Squad – MP: 12; Points: 31

Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, and Cyber Squad were now tied in points.

The title race turned even steeper after matchday 12.

Echelon was at the top of the pile but all they had was a 2-point advantage.

In terms of competitive genius, this was definitely one of the most exciting seasons of the English Pro Alliance's history. Neutral fans not supporting any of the 4 clubs were getting their money's worth.

Even for fans involved in the rivalry, all the banter and trolling turned it into one of the most memorable seasons in their club's history.

And yet, it was still just matchday 12.

While the top 4 battle continued steeply, Juggernaut kept momentum behind them, claiming another victory to solidify their claim at 5th position.

The 6th position spot in the league table changed hands again for the 3rd time in 5 matchdays as Steel Dominion was now the 6th-placed club.

What a season it was already.

...

Matchday 13 rolled into town.

This time, the top 4 clubs all faced mid-table clubs of the English Pro Alliance and pushed by their rivalry, they were ruthless against their opponents.

The top 4 clubs created history in the English Pro Alliance as matchday 13 became the first matchday in the history of the league where 4 different clubs claimed flawless victories in the same matchday.

The previous record was 2 clubs claiming flawless victories in the same matchday.

This showed just how tough and competitive the English Pro Alliance was, but not this season. This season, the top 4 rivalry was pushing the competing clubs to smash records with frightening ease just to keep up the title race.

Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, Echelon, and Cyber Squad all claimed flawless victories, increasing their points tally for the season to 34, 34, 37, and 34 respectively.

They were pushing each other to heights never seen in the English Pro Alliance.

...

The next week, Matchday 14 rolled into town.

None of the big 4 club managed to claim flawless victories against their opponents as they rotated their lineups to manage fatigue, and yet, a flawless victory was recorded on the matchday.

Juggernaut hit their peak, clinching their first flawless victory of the season in dominating fashion.

And with it, their hold on 5th position became even firmer.

Echelon, Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, and Cyber Squad were now at 40, 37, 37, and 37 points respectively.

And then, after 2 matchdays of relatively mundane encounters since the top of the table encounter between Phoenix Rising and Echelon, the English Pro Alliance prepared a new treat in another blockbuster encounter on Matchday 15.

The main event of Matchday 15 was a blockbuster clash between Scarlet Rose and Phoenix Rising.

Scarlet Rose welcomed their archenemies to the Crimson Arena.

...

Matchday 15.

England, Leeds, Crimson Arena.

It was dubbed the Warstar RPG Champions League final II.

After last meeting in the final of the Warstar RPG Champions League, a fiery encounter that Scarlet Rose lost against Phoenix Rising, the two big clubs created history and with it, they became archenemies.

To Scarlet Rose fans, Phoenix Rising was the ultimate villain.

After all, they were the sole reason why they failed to win the 2nd Warstar RPG Champions League trophy of their club's career and another league title.

Fueled by these reasons and more, the media fanned the flames of publicity, sensing a classic and when D-day came, it was a classic.

Leeds became the mausoleum where fans of the crimson club planned to murder and bury the Phoenix Rising emblem.

Scarlet Rose fans went all out.

When the Phoenix Rising arrived in Leeds, they received the most hostile welcome that had ever been conjured by the Scarlet Rose fanbase.

Fans painted in crimson flooded the streets, waving massive banners depicting the death of a golden flying Phoenix... the death of Phoenix Rising.

In other banners, there was an image of the Crimson Saint engaged in a brutal battle against Dain Ironvalor and this time, unlike last season, the Crimson Saint was winning as he already sunk his long sword into his enemy's chest, blood gushing out like a fountain.

The fans didn't stop at just banners, they made noise, a lot of noise.

"The Pheonix is dead!" They chanted.

"Dain Ironvalor is dead!" They roared.

"The Crimson Arena shall be your burial!"

The atmosphere was so charged it felt like literal electricity was crackling through the air. And when the Phoenix Rising players entered inside the stadium, they felt it even more.

The Crimson Arena was already transformed.

Firelights and holographic virtual projections filled the stadium, creating a crimson-themed and intimidating atmosphere of sheer violence and war.

Today's game was no mere game, it was a war.

When the Phoenix Rising players entered the stage, tens of thousands of fans erupted in an avalanche of boos.

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO...!"

The commentators were speechless, the Phoenix Rising players despite their experience could not help being rattled.

The fans fought more than 70% of the battle already.

And when they entered the stage finally, the true war began.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

The first individual battle loaded, and 2 iconic and legendary Avatars of the English Pro Alliance stood opposite each other... Dain Ironvalor & Crimson Saint.

This was the same enemies that faced each other in last season's final of the English Pro Alliance. The same aura, the same history, the same legend... but with one of them having a different controller.

This time, Jonathan didn't take on Gabriel himself.

He let his protégé take the stage.

The battle started.

BOOM!

It was legendary.

These days, after leading his team to 4 consecutive Warstar RPG Champions League wins, Gabriel was what God Noah was a few seasons ago, the man to beat, the face of the league. The man, the myth, the legend.

Nobody expected Chris to win against Gabriel, all they expected to see was how long the youngster could last against the man of the moment.

And Chris lasted. He played the game of his life.

Buoyed by the relentless support and energy of the home fans, Chris played a solid game that ignited home in the hearts of the supporting fans, pushing Dain Ironvalor and Gabriel all the way.

---<VICTORY>---

[Scarlet Rose: 0 point]

[Phoenix Rising: 1 point]

Dain Ironvalor won but the Paladin's HP was at 6%.

Chris managed to fight and beat Dain Ironvalor and Gabriel to 6% HP.

Scarlet Rose lost but the mood in the stadium was like they won. The fans exploded, cheering loudly, chanting their prodigy's name.

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

The atmosphere in the stadium was electric.

And riding this energy, a Paladin took the stage next. Jonathan.

"Well done, you've done your best. Leave it to me". Jonathan told his protégé and took the stage after cracking his knuckles.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

That was the only sound heard in the Scarlet Rose player booth for 8 minutes, and at the end, the Paladin was the one standing.

[Scarlet Rose: 1 point]

[Phoenix Rising: 1 point]

Phoenix Rising clinched the win in the final individual battle but it didn't seem to faze the home fans. They were still loud and energetic.

The 3 vs 3 battle rush came, and Jonathan and his protégé dominated.

Chris shone this time.

He lost a 2nd consecutive time to Dain Ironvalor but this time, Dain Ironvalor was at 12% HP, letting Jonathan kill him in a jiffy before going on to embrace his grind style, stalling the 3 vs 3 battle rush until time elapsed.

Jonathan won because overall, Scarlet Rose had more HP than their opponents when time elapsed.

[Scarlet Rose: 3 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 2 points]

Scarlet Rose was winning!

The stadium was a literal cauldron of noise at this point.

The team battle was going to be the decider. Scarlet Rose entered the arena, carrying the energy of tens of thousands of their home fans along and they played the game of their lives.

18 minutes later, only 2 Avatars were left standing.

---<VICTORY>---

[Scarlet Rose: 8 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 2 points]

"..."

"..."

".....!"

Chapter 215: Rivalry [7]

---<VICTORY>---

[Scarlet Rose: 8 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 2 points]

The English Pro Alliance was stunned.

Millions of Warstar fans watched the game, and at the end, all of them were left in a state of stunned silence. The internet shut down with reactions.

In the stadium in Leeds, the Crimson Arena became a cauldron of noise.

BOOM!

Tens of thousands of Scarlet Rose fans that filled the stadium erupted in ecstasy, enjoying a revenge that they've all fantasied in their dreams and while playing mock competitive battles in the game.

Scarlet Rose fans felt on top of the world.

Scarlet Rose vs Phoenix Rising was the main event of matchday 15 of the English Pro Alliance, and it was worth all the hype that it generated in the buildup to the clash in Leeds.

The team battle was one that Scarlet Rose fans would not forget in a hurry.

With their team leading with a narrow 1 point advantage, Jonathan and his protégé exploded, stealing the moment in tyrannical fashion.

Against Dain Ironvalor and the inevitable Phoenix Rising team that he led, they didn't falter. They fought hard, they fought like hell, and they won.

The game shook Warstar eSports communities across England.

People could not stop talking about it.

And more importantly, the game signified a shift.

During the first 5 seasons of the English Pro Alliance after its inception, Cyber Squad established themselves as the King Club of the league by their 5 consecutive Warstar RPG Champions League wins led by God Noah.

In recent years, Gabriel claimed God Noah's spot as the Warstar King in England, leading his team to 4 consecutive Warstar RPG Champions League trophies.

Phoenix Rising were not just winning, they won brutally.

They seemed unstoppable; inevitable.

Last season was the closest an opposition club came to dethroning Phoenix Rising in the final of the Warstar RPG Champions League, even more than the challenge posed in God Noah's final season with Cyber Squad.

Phoenix Rising had an aura of invincibility in the English Pro Alliance.

But now, this win at the Crimson Arena shattered that armor of protection. That aura of invincibility was torn apart.

For the first time in 4 years, Phoenix Rising seemed vulnerable.

Would this have an effect in the 4-club title race? No one knew for sure, but this win definitely affected Phoenix Rising's aura.

...

A few days later, the last games of matchday 15 were played and the English Pro Alliance league table was updated.

The full table updated, but neutral fans mostly paid attention to the changes among the top 4 clubs.

A lot of crazy things happened on matchday 15.

Phoenix Rising's unbeaten streak in the league finally came to an end, leaving only Echelon as the club with an unbeaten streak. And Echelon proved their credentials when they eventually played their matchday 15 game, demolishing their opponents 7-3 in a dominant home win.

Just like Echelon, Cyber Squad didn't falter either as they won their game convincingly with an 8-2 scoreline to add 3 points to their league tally.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 15; Points: 43 Scarlet Rose – MP: 15; Points: 40 Cyber Squad – MP: 15; Points: 40 Phoenix Rising – MP: 15; Points: 37

For the first time all season, the reigning champions fell to the bottom of the pile among the top 4 rivalry.

It wasn't just a psychological effect, the table proved it. By hovering at 4th position, Phoenix Rising just showed to the rest of the world and the English Pro Alliance that they were no longer untouchable.

...

Matchday 16 approached.

People wondered, what would be Phoenix Rising's reaction after losing their first game of the season and having lost their aura of invincibility?

Good question; Phoenix Rising answered on matchday 16.

This time, the reigning champions went up against Steel Dominion, the current 6th-ranked team in the English Pro Alliance table, just below Juggernaut.

Against this veteran team, Phoenix Rising gave out a statement performance.

They played in away ground for the 2nd straight week but it didn't matter. Phoenix Rising blew Steel Dominion away like a boat lost in a storm.

[Steel Dominion: 0 point]

[Phoenix Rising: 10 points]

It was a ruthless performance.

It was a statement performance from Phoenix Rising and Dain Ironvalor.

'We are not out yet'. They told the rest of the English Pro Alliance.

They got another flawless victory for the season, extending the record even further. The 12th season of the English Pro Alliance was truly a legendary season.

The revolutionary season was redefining the meaning of possible and impossible in the English Pro Alliance.

Phoenix Rising won, what of its rivals?

They also won. None of them quite managed to claim a flawless victory, Scarlet Rose surprisingly being the one to suffer most but it didn't matter much because they claimed all 3 points nonetheless.

Echelon moved on to 46 points; Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad moved to 43 points, while Phoenix Rising moved to 40 points.

A while later, matchday 17 rolled into town and once again, no opponent was able to stop the rampaging charge of the top 4 clubs.

They won another game, taking their points tally for the season to 49 points for Echelon, 46 points for Scarlet Rose, 46 points for Cyber Squad, and 43 points for Phoenix Rising.

Echelon may be ahead of Phoenix Rising by as much as 6 points now, but with Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad right on their heels, the title race was still on.

Matchday 18 also rolled into town, leading to four more victories for the top four clubs.

Echelon moved to 52 points, 49 points for Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad, while 46 points for Phoenix Rising.

At this point, apart from Juggernaut who was still relatively close to them in points tally, the top 4 clubs were practicing social distancing when it came to overall points tally at this point of the season.

Matchday 19 rolled into town and the same thing happened. The top 4 clubs claimed impressive victories, taking their points tally to 55 for Club Echelon, 52 for Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad, while 49 points for Phoenix Rising.

With the end of matchday 19, the first half of the 12th season of the English Pro Alliance officially came to an end.

Due to the imperious performances from the top 4 clubs, by now, Warstar betting sites already lost too much to the 4 clubs that they tightened their odds to the lowest value.

And yet, despite all of this, an upset happened on matchday 20.

On matchday 20, the main event was an epic clash between Steel Dominion and Lionheart Legacy, a clash between the 6th placed and 7th placed clubs in the English Pro Alliance table.

The game eventually ended in a draw, but it was not the big upset of matchday 20. The big upset of the matchday happened in an epic 2nd leg clash between Echelon and Juggernaut.

This time, Juggernaut visited Echelon's stadium at Stamford Bridge.

Having fought to a narrow victory in their first leg encounter, this time, Echelon also aspired to win. But due to having played so many games already, Noah decided to rotate his team a bit to adapt on the spot to challenges.

This decision came back to bite him.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

Like usual, Noah and Dain Ironvalor entered to play the first battle of the individual battle round. He played against Juggernaut's captain; the guy was strong and talented but nowhere strong as him.

The first victory paved the way to a dominant 2-round performance as Club Echelon did a clean sweep of the individual battle and the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

Aria was the MOTM of the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

Buoyed by the loud noise being made by tens of thousands of Echelon fans around Stanford Bridge, Aria felt on top of the world, again. She felt the thrill of being in the spotlight for the first time in what like years though it was just a year.

She cleaved through two opponents with a dominating performance, buying the ticket that gave Echelon a 5 points advantage going into the team battle.

Echelon won the 3 vs 3 battle rush, securing 2 more points to make it the total of 5 points. And then, after a short break, the team battle started.

That was when Juggernaut erupted out of their shell.

They were called Juggernauts for a reason; they are big, unreasonably skilled, and excessively driven. Winning against Echelon seemed impossible, but that was what people thought.

Who are you to talk in absolutes? Nothing is set in stone before the final gong, indicating the end of the team battle.

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

FIGHT!

A crazy fight erupted at the Arena.

Lord Doom and Reckless Storm went ballistic, going on solo rampages in the game and yet, Juggernaut's team-work strategy prevailed.

Juggernaut won the team battle.

[Echelon: 5 points]

[Juggernaut: 5 points]

Chapter 216: Rivalry [8]

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 5 points]

[Juggernaut: 5 points]

Another shocking upset in the English Pro Alliance.

Before matchday 20, this was how the English Pro Alliance table looked like.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 19; Points: 55
Scarlet Rose – MP: 19; Points: 52
Cyber Squad – MP: 19; Points: 52
Phoenix Rising – MP: 19; Points: 49

This was how the first half of the English Pro Alliance ended. And yet, on the first matchday of the second half of the season, the legendary upset happened.

Early in the season, predictions from pundits and betting sites presented only Scarlet Rose and Phoenix Rising as the true challengers in the title race. Cyber Squad was rated a level below the top 2 clubs, and Echelon another step lower.

But as the season progressed, Warstar fans learned to respect and fear the new club in London, Echelon.

By the end of the first half of the season, the narrative changed completely.

Phoenix Rising was at the bottom of the top 4 rivalry and Echelon was right at the top. The narrative was overturned completely.

The rest of the league was forced to respect the club at the top of the league table, fans were forced to bow before the unstoppable momentum that the top club carried this season.

Echelon was the only club with an unbeaten streak at this point of the season, and yet, on the first day of the matchday, an upset of the season occurred.

Having lost their first leg encounter against Echelon in their own home stadium, Juggernaut planned and prepared a coup before going to Stanford Bridge in London. There, they created history.

They drew against Echelon in their home stadium in a stunning comeback when it seemed like they were on the verge of an embarrassing flawless defeat, setting the Warstar fanbase ablaze.

The reactions across the league was crazy.

That night, after the end of the game, the main Warstar broadcasting TV in England addressed the topic on the Warstar matchday night show.

Three pundits and Warstar analysts sat alongside the show's host.

"Welcome to another Warstar matchday night show," the host started with a bright smile lighting up her features. "Here with me tonight is Gab, Paul, and Tom".

She smiled at the men. "Tonight, the English Pro Alliance experienced a big thriller and a major upset. Juggernaut managed to stop Echelon's imperious run".

"They're still unbeaten". Gab, the blonde-haired pundit chipped in immediately.

Paul chipped in next with a subtle smile. "I've always said it, this season, the top 4 rivalry is truly great and all that, but the big surprise is Juggernaut".

"Before any of you interject, just compare their current points tally to last season's point tally. If the top 4 clubs were not pushing each other in the title race so fiercely, with their points, Juggernaut would be the 3rd-ranked team in the English Pro Alliance table last season".

"They're having a truly terrific season".

"I'm not shocked that they managed to draw against Echelon".

"If anything, I think they've been under the radar too much. They're having a terrific season, and the fans finally got to see it and acknowledge it tonight".

The show looked at Tom who shrugged, indicating that Paul had a point.

The show looked at her paper before asking next, focused on Tom this time. "Tom, this season have come with a lot of upheavals. So many records have been shattered, so many clubs are having personal best all-time points tallies, do you think this is the best season that the English Pro Alliance have ever seen?"

Tom stirred in his chair as soon as the question was asked. "Well, the answer to your question depends on the context".

"To many fans, no season of the English Pro Alliance would ever beat God Noah's purple reign with Cyber Squad".

"To some, Dain Ironvalor's reign with Phoenix Rising already eclipsed the Godfather, and that one of those seasons are the best in the league's history".

"It's a matter of perspective, but if you ask me, based on pure entertainment factor and sheer competitive brilliance, all the stats point to the fact that this season is indeed the most entertaining season in the history of the English Pro Alliance".

"So yes, I do think this season is shaping up to become the best season in the history of the English Pro Alliance".

"We can only tell if that's the case come season end".

"You're right Tom," the host, Emily smiled. "What a season we're having".

"The top 4 rivalry, Juggernaut's quietly brilliant run, what a season we're having. I don't know about others, but personally, I won't forget it".

"Before we leave," she looked at the pundits. "Tomorrow, the 3 other clubs in the top 4 rivalry will take on their opponents, what are your predictions?"

"A clean sweep for all 3 clubs". Gab said, smiling.

Emily looked at the others.

Paul smiled. "I agree with him".

Tom nodded, indicating that he also agreed with them.

"And there we have it folks, the prediction from our analysts is that all Cyber Squad, Phoenix Rising, and Scarlet Rose will enjoy victories tomorrow".

"Time will tell if their prediction is right".

"For now, I have to say goodbye".

"Once again, my name is Emily Forst. Do have a good day".

...

Matchday 20 continued.

Echelon stumbled in their matchday 20 encounter, losing 2 points due to it but like predicted, their rivals did not stumble.

All of Phoenix Rising, Scarlet Rose, and Cyber Squad secured dominant victories against their opponents though none of it was a flawless victory.

What mattered was that they secured maximum 3 points.

And with it, the matchday came to an end, and the English Pro Alliance table was updated again.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

Echelon – MP: 20; Points: 56 Scarlet Rose – MP: 20; Points: 55 Cyber Squad – MP: 20; Points: 55 Phoenix Rising – MP: 20; Points: 52

Even after they stumbled, Echelon stayed the club leading the line at the top of the league table.

They were still the club to beat, but it was much tighter now.

Just 1 point separated the top 3 clubs.

What a rivalry it was.

Neutral fans were getting their money's worth every matchday as they bore witness to the greatest season in the English Pro Alliance's history.

...

A week later, Matchday 21 rolled into town.

This time, there was no noteworthy blockbuster encounter. And unlike in previous matchdays, all the attention was no longer focused on the games between the top 4 clubs anymore.

This time, fans paid more attention to the underdogs, Juggernaut.

After troubling the top 4 clubs all season, a performance that was cemented by their valiant display against Echelon in London, Juggernaut entered the limelight.

Fans were forced to pay attention to them.

In some circles, it was no longer just the rivalry of the top 4 clubs, but the top 5 clubs even as Phoenix Rising, the 4th-ranked club towered above Juggernaut by 7 seemingly insurmountable points.

On matchday 21, all top 5 clubs performed.

After stumbling against Juggernaut in the previous week, Echelon came back with anger as they thrashed their opponents with a solid 9-1 scoreline.

Once again, there was no flawless victory on the matchday but the top 5 clubs defeated their opponents convincingly.

With it, Echelon went to 59 points, Scarlet Rose and Cyber Squad to 58 points, Phoenix Rising to 55 points, while Juggernaut rose to 48 points.

Fans paid attention to Juggernaut's placing and points tally now.

While Juggernaut lost though, the 6th-placed team, Steel Dominion stumbled in a derby encounter, losing which made their 6th position in the table a little bit shakier.

...

The next week, the excitement of a new matchday started.

Warstar fans could not wait. Every new matchday brought something new with it, new drama; the anticipation for an upset, the wait for thrilling games and dominating performances made stadium attendances across England to rise to an all-time high in the history of the English Pro Alliance in Warstar games.

This was a new record. Once again, the 12th season of the English Pro Alliance broke a record.

It was a truly record-breaking season.

Matchday 22.

Once again, the top clubs faced their opponents with an iron fist, not giving an inch of space to enable an upset.

And again, Echelon claimed a flawless victory, this time against Cross Guild.

The others didn't claim flawless victories but they won with varying levels of success, Cyber Squad struggling more than the others because they played against Steel Dominion.

Juggernaut also struggled, playing to a draw against their opponents.

And by losing their 2nd consecutive game in the English Pro Alliance, Steel Dominion lost their spot finally, dropping to 7th position in the league table.

The English Pro Alliance table updated.

[English Pro Alliance League Table:]

- 1) Echelon – MP: 22; Points: 62
- 2) Scarlet Rose – MP: 22; Points: 61
- 3) Cyber Squad – MP: 22; Points: 61
- 4) Phoenix Rising – MP: 22; Points: 58
- 5) Juggernaut – MP: 22; Points: 49

Chapter 217: Rivalry [9]

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 9 points]

[Scarlet Rose: 9 points]

[Cyber Squad: 9 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 9 points]

[Juggernaut: 9 points]

The next 3 matchdays of the English Pro Alliance followed a familiar script, a script of one-sided victory, a script of DOMINANCE.

The top 4 clubs continued their reign of terror.

They continued their imperious run of dominance, and Juggernaut kept pace with them.

The story of the English Pro Alliance this season had long evolved past anything that resembled predictable competition.

No longer was this a simple league season, it was a historic saga in the making. And as matchday 23 rolled into town, it became clearer; this was a golden age for Warstar in England.

For the first time in years, it was not one God level player towering above all others. For the first time since the inception of the English Pro Alliance, it was not just God Noah, neither was it just Sword Saint Aria, nor was it the God Paladin Gabriel.

This was a legendary season to never forget.

Even neutral, usually uninterested in weekly club rivalries were now thoroughly enthralled in the rivalry. Ticket scalpers thrived in the black markets surrounding stadiums, media houses across the continent were dedicating exclusive coverage blocks, and online forums and streams buzzed 24/7 with tactical breakdowns and fan wars.

The world had taken notice; this wasn't just the best English Pro Alliance season, it was one of the greatest stories in English Warstar history.

Heck, not just English Warstar, but one of the greatest stories in the history of global Warstar.

Not in Japan, nor China had a season like this ever played out in their respective Pro Alliances. It was always one club, led by one player towering above the others dominating the stage.

Not this time though. Not this season.

This season, multiple clubs were in form, embodied by the dominance of the top 5 clubs.

Phoenix Rising had Dain Ironvalor who was having another terrific individual season, Scarlet Rose had Crimson Saint and its new controller, Chris, who was having the best season of his professional Warstar career.

And then there was Cyber Squad and their Stinger of War, Caster.

Then, the most dynamic of them all, Echelon.

They had Lord Doom and his Aetherforge, and his seemingly endless number of skills. And yet, it was not just Lord Doom in Echelon, there was also Aria and her Reckless Storm. Her unique skill, Last Stand had already saved Echelon in the 3 vs 3 battle rush bouts many times just this season.

And then there is Benjamin, Caleb, even Genevieve, all veterans with their own repertoire of abilities and clutch moments.

And then the new guy, the Combat Mage being mentored by Noah. He was improving at a rapid rate.

The top five clubs had become titans of the league. And now, more than ever, they were determined to prove that they weren't flukes, they were monsters.

Matchday 23.

At the end of the matchday, it was dubbed the Ruthless Execution.

It began with Scarlet Rose opening the weekend with a methodical dissection of their opponents. The game wasn't an explosion of flair, but a controlled masterpiece. Scarlet Rose dominated with aggression, equally fighting with surgical precision in all 3 rounds of the game, and ended the game with a calm but commanding 7-3 victory.

Their Cleric looked as disciplined as ever, protecting the team with diligence with their captain, Jonathan doing more this time from the bench, hailed as 'A living wall' by commentators as he gave a classic Jonathan's grind performance.

Cyber Squad followed with ruthless momentum, hosting Exo Genesis, a club who had shown glimmers of brilliance in recent weeks.

But the home crowd was treated to a nostalgic performance reminiscent of their glory days under God Noah. A masterclass in counter-aggression and clutch moments across 3 rounds led them to a statement 9-1 victory.

Though they conceded a point in the individual battle round, depriving them of another flawless victory in the collection, their attacking Avatars, Stinger of War in particular lit up the matchday and reminded fans why Cyber Squad remained a staple in the title conversation.

Later that evening, Phoenix Rising took the spotlight.

After struggling in earlier stages of the season, they had rediscovered their rhythm. Led by their mercurial captain, Dain Ironvalor, they danced past Cross Guild, winning 8-2 in a match that felt like a statement of intent.

And then came Echelon, playing the late fixture under the lights of Stanford Bridge. Facing Lionheart Legacy, a side known for physical resilience, the league leaders made quick work of their opposition.

It was less of a contest and more of a tactical evisceration, Noah and his Lord Doom leading an utterly dominant 8-2 performance that made the pundits shake their heads in admiration.

Lastly, Juggernaut, no longer considered mere upstarts faced a strong opponent in Blazing Gryphons, an unlike team that was now in form.

It was a tense game marked by gritty and narrow margin victories in the individual battle round, and in the 3 vs 3 battle rush. It was also marked by trash talk and tactical fouls.

But the deal was sealed in the team battle, their captain putting out a classic, and Juggernaut kept pace with the titans again.

...

Matchday 24.

It was a matchday that embodied the stunning consistency of the top 4 clubs this season, including Juggernaut.

The following weekend saw little change in the dominant narrative. Echelon, once considered an underdog at the start of the season, had now become the terror of every opponent.

Facing their opponents, they maintained their unbeaten streak with a measured 7-3 victory. No drama. No slip. Jus clinical brilliance.

Scarlet Rose faced Steel Dominion, a club known for their compact and aggressive play. But the Roses bloomed under pressure. Their attacking Avatars led by Crimson Saint orchestrated play like a conductor on a grand stage, setting up the arena for a dominant 7-3 win.

Meanwhile, Cyber Squad ran riot.

Against their opponents, they showcased electric skill and stunning teamwork, hammering home a flawless 10-0 victory.

Caster, once criticized by Cyber Squad fans for not being up to par and arrogant, was now hailed as a master of adaptive strategy.

Phoenix Rising, still on their upward trajectory, clashed with Cross Guild in a heated affair. It was a high-octane match, but Dain Ironvalor and his support turned the tide in the second half. 6-4 was the final score.

It was tighter than expected, but still, a win is a win.

And Juggernaut? A club once scorned as irrelevant, they blanked their opponents 8-2, dominating from start to finish. The fans cheered wildly. The media started referring to them not as the fifth wheel, but as the dark horse.

...

Matchday 25.

Matchday 25 ended up being the matchday where the top 5 clubs cemented the great divide in the league table.

With three straight matchdays of brilliance behind them, the elite five of the English Pro Alliance marched into the quarter mark of the second half of the season.

The game between the top five and the rest of the league had now become a chasm.

Echelon, on a high, traveled away to Nightfall. Hostile crowd? No problem. Tough weather? Irrelevant. They cruised to an 8-2 victor, led by their clinical warmonger, Aria who secured a dominant 3v1 in the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

This was no longer a Cinderella story. It was an empire in the making.

Scarlet Rose, not to be outdone, unleashed chaos on their opponents, a team fighting for mid-table survival.

The Roses were merciless, registering a 9-1 demolition.

Chris once again pulled the strings, and the rest of the team played support, leading them to victory.

Cyber Squad, grinding through a tough away game at Southampton managed a solid 7-3 win. Though they lost twice in the individual battle round, their resilience in attack kept them in lockstep with the title rivals.

Phoenix Rising, now breathing down the necks of the top 3, showed once more why their fans believed in a late-season miracle. They battled Helix Nova, grinding out a 7-3 win despite a hand injury to Gabriel mid-game.

As for Juggernaut, the crowd that once pitied them now roared their name. Hosting Steel Dominion, a defensively resolute team, they snatched a narrow 6-4 victory in a tough, disciplined match.

No fireworks. Just raw grit.

And with that, another Chapter closed. A Chapter of domination. A Chapter of validation.

The updated English Pro Alliance table after Matchday 25 read:

[English Pro Alliance League Table – Matchday 25]

Echelon – MP: 25; Points: 71 Scarlet Rose – MP: 25; Points: 70 Cyber Squad – MP: 25; Points: 70 Phoenix Rising – MP: 25; Points: 67 Juggernaut – MP: 25; Points: 58

...

The title race was now tighter than ever before. Just one point separated the top three clubs.

Phoenix Rising lurked just behind, dangerous and hungry. And Juggernaut stood firm, still 9 points behind fourth, but with a league of their own to dominate.

The league had never seen anything like it.

And the fans, oh the fans, they couldn't wait for what came next.

Chapter 218: Rivalry [10]

[English Pro Alliance League Table – Matchday 25]

Echelon – MP: 25; Points: 71 Scarlet Rose – MP: 25; Points: 70 Cyber Squad – MP: 25; Points: 70 Phoenix Rising – MP: 25; Points: 67 Juggernaut – MP: 25; Points: 58

It was pure drama in the English Pro Alliance after 25 matchdays. The league had never seen anything like it.

The fans, they couldn't wait for what came next.

As for what came next? Absolute cinema.

Matchday 26 was dubbed the matchday of death. It was dubbed such because there were 3 different blockbuster top of the table clash in the matchday.

3 blockbuster return legs were scheduled for the same matchday.

Having played the first leg in Phoenix Rising's stadium, Echelon and Phoenix Rising were about to play the return leg of the fixture, this time in the same London, but at the Stanford Bridge.

It was a derby game. The stakes were even higher after being fueled by the top 4 rivalry that was still ongoing.

The title race was still up for grabs. And to some fans, they felt like matchday 26 would finally decide who would pull ahead in the important title race.

The result of matchday 26 had the capacity to change the outlook of the title race between the top 4 clubs.

After all, the top 3 clubs were separated by only a point.

The second blockbuster encounter of the matchday was between Cyber Squad and Scarlet Rose. Having played the first leg of the fixture earlier in the season, where Cyber Squad went to the Crimson Arena in Leeds and created a miracle, the return leg was finally here and it would take place in Cyber Squad's home stadium this time.

The third and final blockbuster encounter of the matchday was between Juggernaut and Steel Dominion, fierce candidates for the top 6 playoffs qualification battle.

Warstar fans? They stocked enough popcorn for the matchday.

And then it started.

It started in London, in Stanford Bridge.

Earlier in the season, Lord Doom and his clique tried to get their revenge for the Warstar RPG champions league final 2 seasons ago that they lost against Phoenix Rising in agonizing fashion.

Despite going to Phoenix Rising's iconic stadium, Echelon stunned the English Pro Alliance with a dominant performance across 2 rounds of the game, dominating both the individual battle round and the 3 vs 3 battle round, ending both clashes with a stunning 0-5 scoreline.

Echelon was one step away from claiming a flawless victory till Dain Ironvalor and his team dug deep, going all out in the team battle.

The game ended 5-5, a draw.

It was an epic encounter and yet, Lord Doom and his teammates never quite got the revenge that they sought.

After all, Gabriel and his teammates didn't lost.

Now, in their home territory, they had another chance at getting their revenge. Team Echelon prepared for the game like it was the Warstar RPG Champions League final all over again.

As for the home fans, they gave Phoenix Rising a sufficiently hostile welcome, turning Stanford Bridge into a fortress.

Boos and whistles rang around the stadium as Gabriel led his teammates into the pitch, climbing the stage to enter their player booth.

In contrast, when Noah led his teammates into the pitch, the stadium exploded.

"Lord Doom!"

"Lord Doom!"

"Lord Doom!"

Lord Doom chants reverberated like thunder, turning the 45,000 capacity stadium into a cauldron of noise.

And then, it started.

[LOADING...]

[FIRST ROUND: INDIVIDUAL BATTLE]

[Lord Doom vs Dain Ironvalor]

Personally for Gabriel, the first individual battle held a lot of meaning.

This was because he sought revenge after losing to God Noah and his Lord Doom earlier in the season. Gabriel was eager and extremely motivated to turn the tides, showcasing exactly what he was capable of.

The battle started, and all hell broke loose.

BOOM!

A Paladin vs a Combat Mage with a shapeshifting weapon.

A Combat Mage with access to high level and Awakened level skills of all other classes. Unlike Stinger of War, Lord Doom was not a Battle God but a War Demon. He was unstoppable with Aetherforge.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The rhythmic sound of rapid keyboard tapping filled Phoenix Rising's player booth, and yet it was not enough.

Gabriel broke his official APM record in this epic encounter. He went well and beyond his limits, but against Lord Doom and its controller, God Noah, it was not enough.

After one last clash and a bright flash of light, movement stopped in the 3-way holographic screen.

For a moment, the spectating fans did not realize what happened until the victory screen flashed.

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 1 point]

[Phoenix Rising: 0 point]

Again, Lord Doom won.

Again, God Noah won.

Gabriel could not get his revenge. Behind his monitor, he clenched his fists tightly with bloodshot eyes, losing his cool, something his teammates rarely saw.

He gave his all, and yet, he still lost.

'What the hell!' Gabriel was frustrated.

In the 3-way holographic screen, a familiar Avatar was the last man standing, holding his SSS-Rank weapon that was now in its battle lance state, still pointed at the fading figure of his opponent.

Beneath him, the Paladin gradually faded into motes of light.

"Lord Doom!" "Lord Doom!" "Lord Doom!"

The Lord Doom chants resumed in Stanford Bridge.

Gabriel was rattled, and his frustration also rattled his teammates. This was the reason why Aria won the second individual battle with ruthless efficiency.

It was not even 2 minutes when the victory screen flashed on the 3-way holographic projection, leaving Stanford Bridge briefly stunned.

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 2 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 0 points]

Caleb claimed the last Echelon victory in the individual battle round, making it a clean sweep for Echelon in the individual battles.

Noah prepared for another grueling encounter in the 3 vs 3 battle rush but unlike what he expected, for the first time in 5 seasons, Phoenix Rising changed their battle strategy, taking the back foot in a heated end to end encounter.

Dain Ironvalor and the best Phoenix Rising combatants didn't take part in the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

Immediately, Noah understood Gabriel's plan.

'He wants to focus on the team battle'.

He was surprised.

At the end of the first individual battle, Lord Doom won with 21% of his HP remaining. It was one reason why the defeat hit Gabriel so hard.

After all, he was supposed to be the pinnacle of the English Pro Alliance. Losing already was supposed to be impossible, and yet, losing while his opponent had over 20% HP remaining was just humiliation.

Noah did it deliberately, exerting himself to make it possible.

It was part of his psychological warfare, he wanted Gabriel to be rattled in subsequent rounds of the game. But he seemed to have underestimated Gabriel again; he never expected him to have recovered so fast, already coming up with strategies to counter Echelon's imperious momentum.

Noah didn't make a last minute change though, rather, he let Aria loose.

The Sword Saint was set loose in the 3 vs 3 battle rush.

That night, Warstar fans across England saw the Sword Saint at the peak of her powers again, wreaking havoc in a high-stakes encounter.

Against the weaker players and Avatars of Phoenix Rising, Aria was imperious. With her twin blades, she cut any and every opposition down.

Her first opponent was an Elementalist.

As soon as the battle started, the Elementalist's strategy was clear. She wanted to keep her distance while dealing as much damage as possible but against an opponent of Aria's caliber, and when she was this fresh, such a strategy was a recipe for disaster.

Aria wriggled through the thick forest terrain of the arena like a panther, showcasing her experience and skill at its fullest.

She dodged the most destructive attacks of the Elementalist, letting the others hit and tanking them as she took the fastest and most efficient route to close the distance to the Elementalist.

In the end, all she took to end the battle was a sacrifice of 13% HP.

And all that HP was lost in the process of chasing the Elementalist down. Once she chased her down, the Blademaster was imperious.

Aria cut her opponent down, going on an incredible 53-hit combo till the Elementalist lay dead in a pool of blood.

Phoenix Rising's second representative entered the stage, a Paladin.

Unlike the Paladin, he faced the Blademaster head-on but focused more on defense. He frustrated Aria with his defensive skills and abilities, dragging the fight out as long as he could, but at the end, he died and ended up taking even less HP than the Elementalist.

He took only 8% HP from the Blademaster.

Aria faced Phoenix Rising's final representative in the 3 vs 3 battle rush with almost 80% of his HP remaining.

The last opponent put up a fight, taking the most HP by far, 33% as she pushed her slightly and yet, it didn't matter because Aria won again.

Aria completed a stunning 3v1.

Stanford Bridge was stunned to silence, but then...

BOOM!

The stadium exploded.

Chapter 219: Rivalry [11]

The rivalry between the top clubs of the English Pro Alliance hit a new peak on matchday 26.

The rivalry hit a new crescendo.

It was absolute cinema at Stanford Bridge.

---<VICTORY>---

Club Echelon won the 3 vs 3 battle rush and they didn't just win it, they won it in stunning fashion, Aria and her Reckless Storm claiming a successful 3v1 against the reigning champions.

And yet again, this was a new record in the English Pro Alliance.

Never have the reigning champions of the English Pro Alliance faced a 3v1 humiliation in the 3 vs 3 battle rush. After all, they were supposed to be the strongest and most in form team in the league after just winning the Warstar RPG Champions League.

But tonight, that was not the case.

Tonight, Club Echelon shattered records.

And for the second consecutive game this season when the 2 big clubs in London clashed, Phoenix Rising and Echelon found themselves in a 5-0 situation where one of the two clubs was on the verge of suffering a humiliating flawless victory.

[Echelon: 5 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 0 point]

Both times, Phoenix Rising was the club that was on the verge of suffering a flawless victory.

After Aria's dominant performance, Stanford Bridge was briefly stunned to silence, and then...

BOOM!

The stadium exploded.

"Sword Saint!" "Sword Saint!" "Sword Saint!"

They roared, chanting at the top of their lungs.

For the second time this season in this specific league fixture, Echelon was the club whose fans were loudest because their team was dominating proceedings in the blockbuster game.

Once again, Phoenix Rising were on the cusp of a humiliating defeat.

But this time, they weren't taken off-guard.

They expected it. Gabriel expected it.

Of course, they were a big team with a winning mentality. Gabriel's plan A for this game was for their team to claim a dominant win in Stanford Bridge, and for it to work, the anchor had to do his work in the individual battle round.

Gabriel and his Dain Ironvalor was Phoenix Rising's anchor in the individual battle round. He was the one to go ahead and fight the first battle for his team.

He was the one to go ahead and fight against Lord Doom and its iconic controller, God Noah.

Gabriel trained extensively for the game, making sure that his fingers were in peak condition. He entered the game with exuberant energy, filled with determination that coursed through his veins like molten fire.

And yet, despite all that zeal, he couldn't win.

Despite all that zeal, he lost.

He didn't just lose. Lord Doom had more than 20% HP remaining.

The psychological effect of that defeat hit Gabriel hard, making him doubt himself for some time. But it was only for a time. As soon as the 3 vs 3 battle rush was about to start, Gabriel snapped out of it and switched strategies.

"Plan B". He conveyed to his team.

For the 3 vs 3 battle rush, they sent their substitute players to clash with Aria and wear her down. It played a big role in how she completed a 3v1 against a club of Phoenix Rising's caliber.

But it was all part of Gabriel's plan, and now...

[LOADING...]

[THIRD ROUND: TEAM BATTLE]

Both teams spawned into the arena, and then, all hell broke loose.

With their all offensive lineup of 2 Elementalists, a Paladin, a Warlock, and a Combat Mage, Phoenix Rising went all out on an all-out attacking raid from the beginning, taking the battle to their opponents.

Having rested for the 3 vs 3 battle round while Aria strained herself, Gabriel now led his team on an all-out fast-paced battle.

Noah expected this though having read Gabriel's intentions already after the 3 vs 3 battle rush, and so, he also improvised.

Aria and her Reckless Storm were not part of Echelon's starting V for the team battle, leaving the stadium shocked.

Noah allowed Aria to rest on the bench, a decision that stunned everybody, including Echelon supporters.

That decision resulted in the most intense team battle of the English Pro Alliance all season.

KABOOM!

They clashed and all hell broke loose.

From the onset, one thing was clear; Phoenix Rising were the superior team as their all-offensive lineup pressured their opponents.

If the rest of the season was a precedence, whenever Phoenix Rising went all out in attack like this, no one, no team could weather their offensive.

They were steamrolled, obliterated, destroyed.

But not Echelon.

BZZZ!

Lord Doom erupted, fighting at his peak potential as Aetherforge became a weapon of mass destruction in the hands of the pro player called the Godfather of Warstar.

On the night, Noah transformed Lord Doom into a menace.

The SSS-Rank weapon changed every few intervals, using the Avatar's MP cleverly as it changed forms, unleashing skill after skill, high level skill after high level skill, and even Awakened level skills at some point.

Lord Doom singlehandedly halted the unstoppable Phoenix Rising momentum.

There was a myth that when Dain Ironvalor was in motion, no force made in Warstar could stop him.

Well, tonight, Lord Doom stopped him.

He didn't just stop him, he stopped him with his army of teammates.

By temporarily halting the momentum of their opponents by going all out, Noah bought enough time for the others to step up their game.

And stepping up their game was exactly what they did.

Benjamin erupted, not just with skill, but with trashtalking.

He flooded the chat with naughty messages to mess with the Phoenix Rising players, even as his Elementalist competed against the 2 rivals on the opposition side, taking advantage of his unique skill to the full.

Not just him, Caleb also stepped up his game, devoting all his time and effort towards being a menace.

With Hell's Key, he called forth a legion of Demons from Demon's Tower that flooded the arena, stampeding towards the opposition.

And then the substitute who came in for Aria, the Combat Mage.

Under Noah's tutelage, his protégé already grew enough to take part in a game this big. And now, Jeff stole his moment when he got it.

The Combat Mage fearlessly approached Dain Ironvalor as soon as the opposition team's momentum stopped, bravely clashing with the best Paladin in the English Warstar scene, and he wasn't losing, at least not immediately.

Jeff stood his ground against a legend of the English Pro Alliance. He stood his ground against Gabriel, he stood his ground against Dain Ironvalor.

This allowed Lord Doom to be the free man, taking on others.

Noah targeted the Combat Mage in the opposition team first.

With his teammates temporarily holding the fort, he had the freedom to move. And since the Combat Mage class was the Warstar class he was the most familiar with, he targeted the poor young man first.

BAM!

It was a fearsome clash, but it was one-sided.

Noah schooled his opponents, not just fighting as a Combat Mage with Aetherforge, but randomly switching the weapon's forms to confuse his opponent.

One moment, he was a Berserker; the next he was an Assassin, the next he was Paladin, and the next he was a Combat Mage again.

He was a menace.

Noah killed the poor Combat Mage in 2 minutes.

But in that time, Phoenix Rising also got results as the combined assault of the 2 Elementalists finally managed to take Captain Batman out.

But Benjamin didn't go quietly, he was too fiery to go quietly.

[WITNESS ME!!!] He typed in chat, then...

KABOOOM!

He detonated himself.

{Elemental Self-Implosion=}

It was a high level skill, and its effects were just as its name implied.

It allowed an Elementalist to trigger all the lifeforce remaining inside of him, ranging from his MP to his HP, everything, combining every energy together to trigger an extremely destructive elemental explosion.

And that was exactly what Benjamin did.

He didn't manage to take anyone with him, but he managed to heavily damage both Elementalists.

That was the opening that Lord Doom needed.

BZZZ!

He moved across the battlefield like a mirage, quickly closing down one of the Elementalists but Dain Ironvalor disengaged from his opponent to stop the rampaging enemy.

As soon as the Paladin made the decision, Noah smiled.

By leaving the Combat Mage, Jeff didn't even bother to pursue. Rather, he charged towards the unsuspecting Elementalists.

Jeff was close to death but he could still do something.

While Lord Doom and Dain Ironvalor clashed again, a near-death Combat Mage took one of the Elementalists to death with him.

The substitutes spawned, joining the intense battle, but by then it was already leaning towards Echelon's favor.

2 more Avatars died, one each from both sides.

And then, the final substitutes.

Aria joined the battle.

At that moment, Gabriel knew...

'It's over'.

The Blademaster charged into the chaotic battlefield, and then all hell broke loose once again in this epic battle.

The Sword Saint wreaked havoc.

A few minutes later...

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 0 point]

"..."

"..."

".....!"

Chapter 220: Rivalry [12]

---<VICTORY>---

[Echelon: 10 points]

[Phoenix Rising: 0 point]

"..."

"..."

".....!"

Stanford Bridge erupted.

Social media crashed.

The English Pro Alliance came to a standstill.

History was created.

For the first time in the history of the English Pro Alliance, a top 6 club lost a pro game with a 10-0 scoreline; a flawless victory, a brutal humiliation.

For the first time in the history of the English Pro Alliance, the reigning champion of the league and the Warstar RPG Champions League lost a game with a flawless 10-0 scoreline.

For the first time in the history of Warstar RPG Champions League-winning clubs, one of them lost a game with a flawless 10-0 scoreline.

For the first time in Phoenix Rising's history as a club, they lost a game with a flawless 10-0 scoreline.

And for the first time in the history of the English Pro Alliance, a club managed to secure a flawless 10-0 victory against a top 6 club.

Phoenix Rising created history; Echelon also created history.

The reactions after the game was crazy, both right there in the stadium in Stanford Bridge and on social media.

After the game, Gabriel stood before the media in a post-game interview.

From the look on the rival captain's face, the last place he wanted to be was here but there was nothing he could do. The media showed no mercy.

"Gabriel, your club just created history with Echelon. In just one night, so many records of the English Pro Alliance were broken".

Gabriel tried to keep a poker face as he stared at the reporter.

"Your team lost with a flawless 10-0 scoreline despite being the reigning champions of the Warstar RPG Champions League, how do you feel?"

Despite how prepared he was for it, as soon as he heard the question, Gabriel still scowled. "How I feel?" He chuckled, struggling to believe that he was asked such a question. "Well, I feel great, obviously, right?" He said sarcastically, looking at the reporter.

But then, he snapped. "Of course, I don't feel great. I feel awful. Thousands of our fans were in Stanford Bridge on the night, and they watched their beloved club lose 10-0 to a city rival".

"They looked up to me, their captain to help their cause, but I failed," Gabriel took a deep breath. "For that, I'm sorry".

"It's an unusual feeling for me too, but I promise that it won't happen again. We're a big club, and we have the mentality of a big club".

"Next time, we'll win against Echelon".

"But you won't meet them again". The reporter added.

Gabriel sharply looked at her. "We'll meet in the playoffs".

"Talking of the playoffs, with this loss, you now trail Echelon by 7 points. And taking from past history, most clubs tend to experience a downtime period of poor performances after big psychologically impactful games like tonight".

"Do you think Phoenix Rising can still make the playoffs?"

"YES!" Gabriel said sharply.

The reporter looked at him. "Why?"

"Because we are Phoenix Rising".

Not just Gabriel, Phoenix Rising's vice-captain was also harassed by the media as the reporters wanted to get juicy drama as the outcome of the humiliating defeat. He managed to hold himself though, replying to the questions mostly with grunts and head movements.

And then, time came for Echelon's representatives to face the media. Noah as the captain was the one who represented his team.

"Captain, your team created history tonight. Maybe some believed you could win, but no one expected your team to complete a historic flawless 10-0 victory against the reigning champions, how did you do it?"

Noah grinned. "I told you we'll get our revenge, right?"

Well, he did tell them, posting on his Warstar community account.

"As for how we won," he shrugged. "Just lots of training, preparation, analysis, and then most importantly execution".

The reporter stuttered. "Uhh... ok".

And then the interview came to an end, bringing the main event of the first day of matchday 26 to an end but the discussions and social media reaction did not come to an end. Rather, it only intensified.

While the banter and shock continued, the English Pro Alliance moved on.

That night, when Phoenix Rising's team bus left Stanford Bridge finally to ferry its players home, excited Echelon fans gave them a memorable farewell.

The fans created a holographic projection of Lord Doom stomping down on a beaten and battered Paladin, Dain Ironvalor.

This time, they had the last laugh.

And so they would enjoy it. They would celebrate.

...

The next day...

Cyber Squad vs Scarlet Rose.

It was dubbed the clash of the two OGs. After all, at the very inception of the English Pro Alliance, Cyber Squad and Scarlet Rose were one of the first two clubs to establish themselves as top clubs in England.

The OGs of London and English Warstar welcomed one of their oldest rivals to their stadium in London.

After the epic game yesterday between Echelon and Phoenix Rising, including the repercussions it had in the title race and on Phoenix Rising's reputation, expectations for matchday 26 rose to a new high.

After all, fans of the English Pro Alliance who didn't watch the clash yesterday were still regretting it. Watching it after it already happened, and watching it while it happened were entirely different things. The tension could not be replicated after the outcome of the game was already concluded.

This element of tension and uncertainty was what drove ticket sales for the epic clash between the two OGs to an entirely new high.

This time, fans didn't want their friends and family to tell them about the outcome. They wanted to watch it and witness it for themselves.

While the English Pro Alliance bubbled with excitement and anticipation, it had an effect on the competing clubs.

Due to all the publication and exposure, Cyber Squad and Scarlet Rose were suddenly cautious. They wanted to prevent a similar situation from happening to them, the last thing they wanted was to suffer the same humiliation as their rival. Most especially now after all the publicity.

At the same time as they were cautious, still, they believed; they wanted to win and believed they could do it.

Earlier in the season during the first leg of this league clash, Caster led his team to Leeds at the Crimson Arena where they almost stunned Scarlet Rose with a similar flawless 10-0 defeat like Echelon just did at Phoenix Rising's expense.

That game established a few facts; that Cyber Squad was back this season but most importantly, the fact that Caster was back at his best.

This was why traveling to London to visit the Cyber Dome, one of the most intimidating stadiums in England, Scarlet Rose employed a conservative strategy.

Jonathan was always the conservative guy. He didn't even think about getting revenge, since experience already taught him of how damaging it could be if you didn't have the needed firepower to claim revenge.

Jonathan was not confident in defeating Caster in a classic 1v1 battle in the individual battle round, and Chris could not too, so Scarlet Rose employed the same strategy as Phoenix Rising, but they took it to even greater heights.

Instead of testing the waters first like Dain Ironvalor did by going all out against Lord Doom to see if he could win, Scarlet Rose rejected the possibility from the onset and started with a heavily influenced Jonathan strategy.

Scarlet Rose played conservatively from the onset.

They invested very little in the individual battle round and the 3 vs 3 battle rush, allowing Cyber Squad to sweep their way to an easy 5-0 scoreline just like the first leg scoreline while conserving the energy and freshness of their best players.

And then, just like in the first leg game in Leeds in Scarlet Rose's Crimson Arena, Scarlet Rose exploded in the last half of the game.

They erupted in the team battle, showing their full power.

Caster was aware of it, he knew their plans, he was prepared for it and yet he could not stop it. He was not God Noah who forcibly led his team to defeat Phoenix Rising at their own game, Caster struggled.

Jonathan didn't even need to employ a complicated strategy, since they were fresh, his strategy was to simply separate every single Avatar in the arena into isolated 1v1 duels.

They were fresher, so their chances of winning were higher.

With Jonathan and Chris both leading their Paladins to spearhead the battle line, wreaking havoc, Cyber Squad faltered.

And for the first time this season, Chris got the upperhand over Caster as Crimson Saint's blade slayed Stinger of War after an epic battle in the group stage.

As soon as the first Cyber Squad death happened, it was quickly followed by the second, and then the third.

By then, the battle was already long gone out of Cyber Squad's grasp.

Cyber Squad got their fair share of kills, but against a fully rested and energetic Scarlet Rose team, they could not win.

---<VICTORY>---

[Cyber Squad: 5 points]

[Scarlet Rose: 5 points]

For the second time this season, both clubs played to a draw, sharing the spoils.

And finally, the last epic clash of matchday 26.