

THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME

Chapter 5 - Travelling To Lubumbashi

Hope bloomed inside Zachary after reading the words below the G.O.A.T-skill card.

Without a moment of hesitation, he clicked on the image of the skill card filling up the screen and learned the Zinedine-Visual-Juju. He was looking forward to how it could improve his budding football career.

Instantly, he felt a pang of headache assaulting his brain as the system implanted new information into his mind. But a while later, his head cleared, and he noticed that there seemed to be no perceivable transformation within his body or mind.

He thus opened the user-stats tab that was already blinking red on the system User-Interface to understand the changes in his stats.

*USER STATS

->Physical Fitness: B -

->Soccer Technique: B +

->Game Intelligence: A +

->Mental Ability and Mindset: C -

->X-Factors: F

->G.O.A.T Skills: 1 (1 msg)

Zachary's soccer-technique had once again leveled-up from the grading of B- to B+ in a single evening. His game intelligence had jumped from the C+ grade and was now an A+ after learning the Zinedine-Visual-Juju. His mindset had also experienced a minor improvement from grade D+ to C-.

He was as happy as a kitty in a cream pie.

After suppressing his bubbly emotions, he clicked on the G.O.A.T-skill tab to understand his new skill.

#1 new message

CONGRATULATIONS

->You have learned the G.O.A.T-Skill:

'ZINEDINE VISUAL JUJU'

(1st-level: Progress -> 10%)

(check user stats for more info.)

NB: Watch and play more matches to level-up the skill.

Remarks: Practice makes perfect.

Zachary hurriedly closed the G.O.A.T-skills tab and opened the game-intelligence stat.

->Game Intelligence (Av. Rating: A+)

Spatial Awareness (A+)

Tactical Knowledge (A-)

Risk Assessment (A+)

"Fuck!" Zachary exclaimed out loud. "This is not scientific." He could not help but swear after glancing at his game-intelligence stat. It had experienced the most substantial change and was his highest-rated skill according to the system. From a C+, it had leaped to the A+ grade. Zachary suspected that that was a grading close to the highest ratings by the system.

[One G.O.A.T-skill could improve one of my skills by this much...] He mused. He could not help but daydream.

[What if I managed to learn 5 or 10, or maybe 20?]

[What if I obtained the dribbling skills of Ronaldinho?] He grinned.

[I'd turn into a soccer divine beast? Maybe even another Mighty Steel Leg.]

The changes in his game-intelligence were beyond his expectations.

Zachary understood that highly-rated game-intelligence indicated his ability to make smart decisions on the pitch and make them quickly.

An intelligent player always had good spatial awareness and was able to see spaces clearly across the entire soccer-pitch and utilize them to his advantage.

That was why coaches referred to spatial-awareness as the sixth sense of a soccer player. A player with a sixth sense would remain aware of where his teammates were and anticipate where they would be just by looking at the positioning of the other team.

The skill was not inborn but developed through experience. This was the same for the tactical-knowledge and risk-assessment skills also under the game-intelligence category.

However, the G.O.A.T-system could improve the whole three skills just by implanting obscure soccer knowledge and experiences in his head. Zachary was both mystified and filled with joy.

[With the system, I could become one of the best.] He thought.

He now had to work extra hard towards leveling-up the Zinedine-Visual-Juju. It was a skill that might soon raise his talent above the B grade. Although his talent-assessment had not yet improved from the C grading, he was sure that he might level it up once again before the trials.

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A month later, as the day dawned crisp and clear, Zachary rode a mini-bus over the earth, his eyes on the trees that grew in their infinite patience. He felt the movement of the wheels over the bumpy road, following the curves and greeting each slope in its smooth way.

Zachary had woken up long before dawn to catch the first public transport from Bukavu to Uvira that day. He had said his goodbyes to his grandma last night and departed from the farm before she woke. He was on his way to Lubumbashi City, not to partake in the new school term (like he had told his grandma) but to join the ADTA's soccer trials for this year.

The trials happened once every year in July and August.

At these trials, there were always scouts from the local clubs like TP Mazembe, RC Kinshasha, Lubumbashi Sport, and others in the Linafoot - the top-tier soccer league in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Zachary could have chosen to undergo some other soccer trials at his home town's local team - Olympic Club Muungano back in Bukavu and might have been successful. But he would then miss out on an opportunity to perform in front of the scouts from the French academies.

His goal was not to join the local soccer-clubs, but the high-performance sports academies in Europe.

He understood the importance of joining a good youth training program at an early age if one wanted to make it to the top of the soccer industry as a pro-player. The academies in France were famous for nurturing professional players using cutting-edge technology and methodologies. Students at these academies would train all year round with coaches who were highly experienced in training and developing amateurs into professional players. All *latest novels* on [novelbin/\(.\)com](http://novelbin/(.)com)

Zachary needed to join such academies if he wanted to have a chance at becoming a renowned player. There, he could earn world-class education, develop his ball technique, and gain access and connections to professional coaches all around the world.

In such an academy, Zachary would not have to worry about a shortage of sports equipment like balls and soccer-boots like in his previous life. He would not miss a wink of sleep or training due to an empty stomach. Above all, he would not have to worry about his security while developing his career. There were no rebels and militia groups in Europe to disturb and interrupt his progress.

Zachary was very determined and highly motivated to win a scholarship to one of the academies. The only way he knew how in the short term was through joining the trial in Lubumbashi.

So, he had even decided to miss the first month of school (without his grandma's knowledge) and instead opted to attend the soccer-trials. If he

could earn £ 150,000 a week, like the professional players in the EPL, he would study at the best Universities in the world later in life instead of wasting away in Congo.

The mini-bus to Uvira was anything but luxury, the seats dulled by the grime of over a decade. The metallic seats and windows shook with every small bump in the bumpy road, jostling the passengers back and forth.

As the world slid by the window, there were occasional small movements from amongst the passengers. Zachary could see some of them shifting in their seats and also hear a little cough accompanied by a mild 'excuse me'.

Whenever the mini-bus passed by some of the smaller towns, the brakes would at times squeak before everyone lurched forward as the vehicle came to a stop. Amid the gasps of the passengers, a few locally-dressed men and women would stream into the mini-bus after briefly bargaining with the conductor, and others would exit after paying the fare.

Zachary soon got tired of the scenery and dozed off. He awoke six hours later as the mini-bus pulled into the station in Uvira. He followed the other passengers and alighted from the mini-bus with his metallic suitcase in tow.

He headed to the ticket booking office of the ferry and learned that it was leaving the next day.

Zachary slept the night in a small motel in Uvira (thanks to his ample savings) and departed with the ferry to Kalemie the next morning. He then hired a motorbike from Kalemie to Mulungo and spent two days on the road, traveling close to 300 miles southwards. After that, he alternated between a bus and a motorbike as he traveled through bumpy roads, some glistening with recent rain and others treacherous with portholes.

Zachary was not depressed about the long journey but was brimming with happiness and anticipation the further south he moved. He was slowly but

surely inching towards the city where he would begin his journey towards greatness.

He traveled more than 1000 miles and arrived in Lubumbashi six days after leaving Bukavu. Lubumbashi was the second-largest city in DR Congo, located in the southeasternmost part, along the border with Zambia. It was a city that held a lot of Zachary's painful memories. It was where he had begun and prematurely ended his pro-soccer career in his previous life.

With luggage in hand, Zachary looked for a motel to spend the night and chose to think about everything else the next day. The week-long journey had tired him out.