

## Football 108

### Chapter 108 Ben's POV

[Ben Pov]

Today is the first game of my son that I'm able to see in person and I'm quite proud of him. Although I've seen some of the recordings that my wife convinced the school to allow, saying it can be used to study their mistakes. Sometimes It still baffles me how much emphasis this country places on sports. If it was back home in Munich, they would laugh at me for even suggesting such a thing. Unless you are in a specific sports-centred school something like this is particularly impossible.

However, I can't complain though as this allows me to bond with my son when he tries to break down the match during video analysis. This is another odd thing I've observed in him his ability to critically evaluate his own performance and always striving to better the next game. His constant almost obsessive need to try and improve himself worried me at first but I realised it's better than him being up to something stupid like I was his age.

However, seeing him play on a screen just doesn't give the same feeling as watching him play live. He looks like he's free whenever he touches the ball fully expressing his creativity. It's like his usual curious and joking personality is fully unleashed on the ball and his opponents. I can also notice his self-confidence being expressed whenever he performs a skill move never in doubt when executing them.

Although he has yet to score, he's been outstanding today. Providing two assists and being integral in the team's build-up play. Heck, he even made it a point to actively help in defensive efforts which I know he hates. After all, he spends an hour complaining about it every time we analyse his match videos.

"Hunny looks like the second half is about to kick off," Lisa told me with a cheerful expression as she pointed at our son who was making his way to his position. (sigh) She only acts like this whenever it

comes to our children, even though she has seen them play their sports a lot of time she still gets excited every time.

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"Excuse me are you Mr and Mrs Rex?" a smartly dressed elderly man in a grey suit told us, capturing my attention. I wasn't expecting anyone so professionally dressed to come up to me and start a conversation suddenly.

"Yes, that us and who might you be?" I answered the man with a hint of confusion regaining my composure. The man's smile brightened after hearing my words as he eagerly took the empty seat next to me revealing another man behind him.

"Oh, Mike is that you?" I heard my wife say from the side seemingly recognising the younger of the two men. His name does sound familiar to the one she and my son were talking about; plus, the fact he is here he must be the scout.

"Yes, Mrs Lisa but I'm not here as a PSG Scout but one for the Ace Academy, this here is my dear friend Oscar Wright the head coach of the under 13's," the man named Mike answered as he promptly introduced the elderly man in the grey suit.

Quickly exchanging pleasantries with the two of them my attention was drawn to the pitch as the new Eagles midfielder just won possession with a wicked slide tackle. He slid for almost a meter and a half before scooping up the ball and sending the opposing player stumbling. Although I'm in awe of my son's playstyle which is almost like dancing, but personally I'm more inclined toward this kind of action-packed tackling.

The boy was quick to get to his foot dodging the other opposing midfielder's tackle as he passed the ball to Ben a couple of yards ahead of him. The midfielder quickly brought the ball under his control dribbling forward with gusto. Crossing the halfway line, he was stopped by one of the opposing defenders.

With a quick change of direction, he created a little bit of space using it to send a sharp pass down the right flank. On the wing, Max was in a heated duel of speed with the tiger's left mid who followed him back. They seem equally matched with each other but Max having a head start latched onto the ball first.

Continuing to increase his speed he started approaching the box from the right side whilst using his hand to ward the defender off him. Spotting his teammates entering the box looking for an opportunity he swung his leg sending a sharp cross. The ball drew a sharp arc in front of the six-yard box around waist height as the players battled with each other.

Tom who has been in hot form today used his strength to outmuscle his defensive marker lunging forward to meet the ball with his left foot. Bouncing off his foot the ball changed direction heading for goal, but it was too close to the keeper allowing him to use his arm to deflect it.

The Danger wasn't over though as the ball was sent to the left side of the goal where Rakim and another defender were. The winger seeing the ball served up to him on a silver platter was about to step up to meet it when he felt a push on his right. Before he knew it the defender's weight was loaded on top of him having likely also lost balance.

Still falling the winger was seemingly not contented with losing the chance as he twisted his body. Now with his back to the ground, he peaked past the defender that was falling on top of him and swung his right foot upward to meet the ball. With a soft bang, the ball collided with his foot flying into the net as he and the defender crashed onto the ground.

The fans exclaimed with unbridled excitement at what they had just seen jumping wildly in the stands. The shock of how the goal came to be contributed to their excitement. However, the most shocked was the defender who had landed on top of Rakim. Lost in a daze he only came too when the said winger pushed him off himself to go and celebrate his goal.

Watching him perform some type of goofy-looking dance he felt even more ashamed at his inability to stop him. However, thinking about how he had thrown his entire body when trying to stop his mood dropped to another level. After all what more is he supposed to do? Maybe it's just the defence in strength or luck just isn't on his side.

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"Your son has amazing instincts," Mr Wright commented from the side as we watched Rakim Celebrating with his teammates.

Hearing his words, I finally remembered that they had come to join us. I was so caught up with what was happening on the field that I totally forgot them. Then again it doesn't seem to bother them much since they are here to scout for players.

"He sure does, anyways what is this Ace Academy and why should I let my son join it?" I asked the two men in a serious tone finally giving him my full attention since this will be impacting the future of my child. They seemed to sense my change in demeanour as they involuntarily straighten up.

"Straight to the point, I see," The elder of the men said with a slight smirk on his lips, probably used to having these types of conversations.

"Ace Academy is a youth football development program, the program has many different levels of teams starting from the ages of five to eighteen," he said in an unhurried manner as he started painting a picture of what this Football academy is.

is mind-boggling considering they are quite a new organisation. Their Miami base alone accounts for 300 hundred of those kids which is quite small considering its I was quite surprised by the fact they recruit kids worldwide through forms of scholarships held in camps. They are not directly affiliated with a major team, but they compete with their youth teams. They are part of a Florida league with all the other local academies and youth teams, so kids get a lot of exposure.

The fact that they have over 1,500 aspiring kids currently in their program worldwide is mind-boggling considering they are quite a new organisation. Their Miami base alone accounts for 300 hundred of those kids which is quite small considering its other only branch in America. Although the scale is quite small it does make sense since their main base of operation is in Europe where football thrives. Thinking about it in another way the smaller scale would allow them to be more attentive in their overall training level.

"One thing we are proud of is that our kids get a stage to shine and develop without having to deal with the politics that come with being in youth teams," He continued highlighting the fact that their kids can sometimes find it easier to join the ranks of first-team footballers than those who developed in youth teams.

I frowned after hearing this as it seemed far-fetched but once I realised that the kids in their academy are practically free agents it makes more sense. After all, when you are part of a team's youth program and aren't given a chance to break into the senior team you can only patiently wait. Some might choose to break off their contracts but from what I've heard my dad say about how unfairly high the liquidation fees are for these kids it's unlikely to happen.

They recruit them for their potential in underdeveloped countries or generally poor backgrounds and promise them a chance at glory. However, all this while they get them to sign a contract that makes it almost impossible for them to leave unless another team takes a liking to them. Unless you are from a famous academy like La Masia it's highly unlikely for players from smaller teams to have their contracts bought by another team.

"Let's say my son joins you What difference is your help going to make in his future development? and why should he join your academy rather than going the traditional route as I'm sure his talent and hard work would carry him through?" I finally asked him since I had no interest in further listening to his sales pitch anymore. Especially since it looked like the Eagles are about to launch another attack after regaining possession.