

Football 114

Chapter 114 Ace Academy

"Can I see what your strength and condition menu looks like," Mom suddenly asked making Bob who had mainly been focusing on me stop to answer her. At first, It felt a little weird that he was mainly talking to me but I quickly got used to it. If I'm being honest I prefer this a lot more than those scouts who were only talking to my parents when trying to recruit me.

Maybe it's a little vain but it feels good to be taken seriously when someone is trying to convince you to make a major decision for your future. Then again Bob is an oddball if you ask me. Although being the sporting director of the whole Academy he gives off a vibe of someone who is very enthusiastic about their work.

He's got an accent similar to those actors in western movies but unlike almost everyone in the country, he loves the game of soccer. You can tell how much effort he puts into the academy by how enthusiastically he talks about it. He almost reminds me of Mom when she is bragging about one of our little achievements.

When I say little I mean extremely little like me learning not to drown in the pool or Emma making the cheer team. You see whilst both our achievements are significant in our lives they don't carry the same weight. When Mom recalls the story to someone I question whether it's really me in the story. Because the person in her story is going through all sorts of tribulations before eventually overcoming the odds.

"Yes of course, From what Oscar has told me you handle his conditioning," Bob said with an amiable smile on his face as he led us down a flight of stairs leading to the gym. Arriving at the alpha base he exchanged a couple of sentences with a trainer before he was handed a booklet.

"Hmm, interesting Is there a specific reason why you change the training menu every two months," Mom asked him grabbing my attention that had been captured by a boy whooshing through a cone drill.

Emma next to me also seemed to be enamoured by the majesty of the facility now that we were seeing it up close.

"Yes, actually all the kids are put into groups based on their skills and physical abilities. This not only makes it easier to help them in developing their skills but also allows us to monitor them better." Bob stated calmly as he started going through the ins and outs of how the academy works.

He explained that each age group only has two teams and only those that proved to be the best are able to join them. When tournaments were scheduled for the team's age group selection trials would be held. Only the best players would be selected to travel with the teams to the tournaments.

Although it seems cruel that you don't automatically get a spot on a team, but this also encourages the players to work hard. The Academy only guarantees the best training and getting a spot on the teams has to be earned. Listening to him explain how competitive this environment lit a fire within me. This might be just what I needed to further push me into becoming a truly monstrous player.

"An example of this is our periodic 2-month medical check-ups with our in-house sports physician. The team checks their physical progress and also for hidden injuries that arise before making recommendations to their trainers so they can tailor a new program for them," Bob explained with a hint of pride at their medical facilities and the training set-up.

Mom seemed to be more at ease after hearing his answer and was seemingly won over by the charm of the Academy. If it wasn't for the fact that the tour wasn't over and Dad still had a serious expression I bet she would have already signed me up.

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"Hey Sis, do you think I'll do alright here?" I asked her after seeing how intense the environment is from up close. If it felt like a movie from the view platform a few moments ago it got real, real quick.

Seeing kids around my age fully focusing on every word of their instructors without the hint of goofing around makes me a little nervous. This has a whole different vibe from the Nike camp which is strange if you think about it. The camp was more laid back even throughout the hard training we could still joke a little here and there.

The kids here seemed to want to utilise every little moment out of the time they get to train. When one person is asking for advice on something they are struggling with everyone in the group is paying attention to it. This is entirely different from regular training sessions with the school team where we try to have fun throughout training.

"I'm not sure if you will just be alright but from probably having seen you play the most I know you'll do great things once the ball is at your feet." She told me with a sweet smile on her face as she patted my head making sure not to damage the dreads.

Taken aback by her words and actions a warm sensation rose up within me washing away all the doubts that had sneaked in. Brushing away the moment of self-doubt I started to see the people and area around me in a new light. My fighting spirit and desire to compete with them rekindled a new ambition within me.

"You are definitely my favourite sister," I exclaimed excitedly as I jumped to her side throwing an arm around her shoulder and pulling her into a side hug. A little startled by my show of affection she lost grip of her iPod a good thing I reacted quickly enough to catch it.

"Get off me you are heavy," She complained with a pout as a slight redness appeared on her cheeks. Good to know that she still gets shy easily in social situations. I was worried that she had turned into a mastermind after her calm reaction this morning.

[Ding: One of two Requirements for the Passive skill Calm Heart has been met] The system's cold voice rang out in my head surprising me a little. It has been a good minute since I last got a random notification from the system.

[Before you ask no I will not tell you what you did to fulfil the first requirement, This is a unique way of unlocking rewards from the system so good luck in unlocking it,] Eva commented with a hint of finality having already expected for me to ask her a question. Although slightly disheartened by her unwillingness to answer my question I decided to just leave it up to fate.

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"Alright before I let you leave for lunch let's discuss the costs and what we are prepared to offer," Bob Cooper said in a slightly serious tone causing the amiable atmosphere to turn a little stale.

Although I sensed the change in the atmosphere it didn't really bother me since Dad was here. From what I've gotten to know about him he's quite a good businessman meaning that his negotiating skills aren't too bad. In fact, judging by the fact that he can easily finance our lifestyle I'd say he's doing alright for himself.

After all, it is not every day that your local businessman can afford a yacht whilst also sending his kids to a private school. Anyways until I get my own agent or manager, I'll let him represent me.

"Our usual monthly rate for kids from the ages 5 to 12 is \$1,500 dollars, this package includes the training fees, medical fees, and food rations," Bob stated with a straight face almost making me choke on my thoughts. Giving the guy an apprehensive look, I had the sudden thought of running away from this place.

\$1,500 dollars a month is \$18,000 dollars a year, that is more than the annual minimum wage here. I'd rather not join if they want my parents to pay that. After all just because they are rich doesn't mean I am. Plus it wouldn't sit well with my conscious if they had to pay that much just for me to receive training.

"Considering your son's talent and our belief in his potential we would like to offer him a one-year scholarship with an option to extend it upon revaluation," He continued speaking before anyone could say anything to interject.

The mention of free stuff instantly brightened up my mood which was on the verge of dampening. Dad and Mom who had been calm all throughout the talk seemed to have expected him to offer a scholarship. Then again from the way Mom complains about Dad's spending habits those numbers might not faze him at all.

"How much will your scholarship cover," Dad finally asked interrupting the man who was about to talk about the benefits of the offer they were giving us. Taken aback by Dad's direct question the man remained composed as he pulled out an information sheet.

"We have three levels of scholarships called Cub, Pride, and Ace. Your son will be offered the Pride membership covering 75% of the tuition fees not including tournament and travel fees." He calmly told us explaining the ins and outs of the deal they are offering us.

I'm quite happy with the offer but something tells me that they don't fully trust me as they have led me to believe. One thing that sticks out is the short-term of the scholarships they set themselves. From

what Eva told me the length of a contract a team offers shows how much they believe in you and your talent.

Although he said it is to reevaluate me in a year's time but just seems like they want to make sure that their investment is worth it. They will probably decide to drop the offer a level if I don't meet their expected standards. (sigh) Looks like I've already entered the lion's den of the football world. Ready to chew me up and spit me out the moment I can't handle the pressure.

[Ding]