

Football 128

Chapter 128 First Match At Ace

"Is that your sister?" Akira asked from my side having seemingly just noticed that I've been on a call. To be fair she had been busy talking with the rest of her friends ever since we took our seats in the canteen.

"Yeah, this is my Big sister Emma say hi," I simply answered her handing her my iPod not wanting to play middleman. After all, knowing how nosy Emma can be sometimes it's better to let her ask the questions she wants to know herself.

~Hi who is this? ~ Emma's questioning voice resounded through the speakers allowing me to listen in. Looking over at Akira it was probably the first time today that I've seen this girl being flustered.

"Emm, h-hi my name Akira is, no I mean MY NAME IS AKIRA," She answered with a flustered expression stammering over her words. Trying my best not to burst out laughing I started wondering where that confident girl from earlier went.

~Oh, that is a nice name my name is Emma, how's my brother doing is he causing any trouble? ~ she responded breaking the awkwardness between the two as they engaged in a conversation. Slightly surprised at how easily they started off a conversation I chose to focus on my food.

Food is more important than anything else even if both of them are bad-mouthing me. (Sigh) Guess what they say about girls easily making friends seems to be true. Anyway, my chicken salad is more important and the one they make here is actually pretty tasty.

The two of them spent ten minutes talking about random things which baffled me since they had yet met each other in person. Despite that, they were making plans to have a movie night and a pyjama night. Leaving the two of them to talk about whatever I engaged in light conversation with some of the kids around the table.

Most of them were okay people having aspirations of playing in the Champions League or World Cup. One of the kids even promised to sign his boots for me when he joins Man United in the future. When I asked where his confidence came from, he simply stated that he is left foot just like Romney.

Before I even had the chance to bring the boy back from his delusions another girl stated Maradona is her distant uncle once removed so she is bound to be one of the greats. Her statement set off a competition with the kids around the table making up even more ridiculous backstories for themselves.

It was at this moment that I realised that these kids might just have a few screws loose but somehow, I ended up joining in. What can you fault me it felt like everyone here was picking superpowers and I wanted some of that good stuff. This somehow resulted in me arguing with Maradona's distant niece once removed after saying that he is my grandfather.

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The atmosphere inside the Ace Academy indoor training centre was charged with excitement as players prepared for their 11 vs 11 football match. This match had a special meaning for Rakim with it being his first training match at Ace Academy. He wasn't the only one excited as most of the players were happy at the chance to shine in front of the academy's coaches.

The match wasn't a simple match though as the coach had stipulated specific limitations aimed at encouraging teamwork and off-the-ball movement. with the players only allowed a maximum of three

touches on the ball they had to be careful when receiving the ball or their team could automatically lose possession of the ball.

With the determination to shine spurring them on to do their best both the non-bib and the red bib team eagerly lined up. With the loud piercing noise of coach Carlos's whistle, the match began. With the non-bib team kicking off the match Rakim and his red team swarmed forward to close down their opponents.

Rakim feeling the adrenaline course through his body sprinted along his flank putting pressure on the right back who received a pass from his midfielders. With his incredible speed, he forced the right back to make a hasty pass in order not to lose the ball. His pass was just in time before Rakim had the chance to attempt a tackle on him.

The ball landed at the non-bib's central defender's feet forcing him to react quickly in order to control the ball. Using two touches he managed to barely manoeuvre past Jake who had come charging at him. With the danger still prevalent he sent a sharp pass diagonally up the other flank to his left winger.

The non-bib winger received the ball with his right foot whilst using his body to hold off the opposing winger. Not holding onto the ball, he played a sharp pass backwards linking up with his left back. The left-back calmly received the ball and immediately passed it to one of his midfielders.

The central midfielder didn't bother taking control of the ball seeing it down the left flank for his winger to run onto. The winger who had turned around after dropping off the ball to his left back easily arrived in front of the ball but didn't take his first touch right away. Using a couple step-overs he swayed his body challenging the red team's right back.

Just as the red team's right back gathered up his courage and lunged towards the ball to go in for the tackle, the left winger flicked the ball with the outstep of his right foot. The right-back could only lament

his hasty action as he watched the ball and the winger glided past him. The winger latched onto the ball again hitting it forward down the wing.

With his speed, he quickly reached the ball at the rib of the box sending a curved cross into the box. Like a rocket, the ball zoomed into the box not giving the players a chance to fully prepare and having to instinctively react to it. The non-bib striker rose high into the air looking to put his head to the ball and steer it towards the goal.

However, he was beaten in the aerial duel by Sam who towered above him easily clearing the ball out of his box. With the clearance, the red team breathed a sigh of relief at escaping a dangerous situation. Danger was not over though as one of the non-bib midfielders chested down the ball. The midfielder powerfully swung his leg launching the ball towards the goal.

With a muffled bang, the ball left his foot flying towards the goal sailing above the heads of the player in the box. The players could only crane their necks to see where the ball was going. Luckily for the red team, the ball missed the goal by a hairbreadth sailing past the bar.

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The red team's players clearly rattled by the attack took a second to calm their nerves. However, knowing the importance of showing their best in this training match they brushed this aside opting to focus on the match. Deciding to slow the match down they started pinning precise passes in their own half.

All the players having seemingly come to an understanding decided to take control of the match slowly. This created a weird scene where the red team continued to move back around passing the ball around using two touch passes. Clearly irritated by their opponent's lack of attacking effort the non-bib players started attacking more aggressively.

However, this created the breakthrough opportunity that the red team had been looking for. Such an opportunity arrived when Rakim dropped back on his flank calling for the ball from his Left back. Not hesitating he sent a weighted pass to the winger drilling it along the flank.

Rakim taking a step forward was closely followed by the opposing right back who clung tightly to his back. Letting the ball pass through his legs without receiving it he quickly manoeuvred around the defender behind him using a spin move. Taking a big first touch he raced down the wing in a flash utilising his speed to the fullest.