

## Football 129

### Chapter 129 First Match At Ace

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.

Catching up with the ball he brought it under his control with his second touch side-stepping one of the non-bib midfielders. He didn't continue moving forward though choosing to send a crisp pass to his team's attacking midfielder. The midfielder calmly received the ball but did not hold onto it sending a through ball towards the edge of the box.

Rakim who had continued running forward pierced into the box bringing the ball under his control with his first touch. Performing a fake shot with his left foot he dragged the ball across his body. His abrupt change of direction caused the central defender who had lunged to block his shot to be displaced.

The winger didn't care though as he powerfully swung his right foot sending a shot towards the far-right side of the goal. The ball drew a sharp arc along the air curling around the outstretched gloves of the goalkeeper. Hitting the inside of the post it comfortably curled into the net bringing the winger's action to a crescendo.

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Conceding the first goal of the match did not dampen the mood of the non-bib players as they became a lot more assertive. Their passing became more direct doing their best to head forward with each player's possession of the ball. However, the red team players didn't shrink from the challenge initiating a high-pressing line.

Many times, possession of the ball changed between both teams as they battled for dominance in the midfield. A boy named Tony nimbly stole the ball from one of the non-bib central midfielders by utilising his quick feet. Turning on his axis in an attempt to launch a counterattack didn't bear fruit as the next moment he was knocked to the ground by a slide tackle.

Before Tony even had the chance to complain to the coach for a free kick his midfield teammate stole the loose ball. He attempted to send a long pass to the right flank, but it was quickly intercepted by a non-bib player. This stalemate continued to plague the game for a while until the non-bib striker managed to intercept the ball at the edge of the box.

The boy with a red mohawk quickly turned to face the goal with his second touch looking for an opportunity to shoot. Knowing that he wouldn't get a lot of time to decide where to place the shot he quickly swung his right foot. However, before his foot could connect with the ball, he was brought down by an abrupt tackle by one of the red team players.

Not knowing what happened the striker fell to the ground rolling a few times along the ground to absorb the impact. The defender knowing that his tackle wasn't clean quickly put up his hands in apology walking up to the striker to apologise. Sure enough, coach Carlos blew his whistle indicating that he didn't appreciate the poor tackle giving the non-bib players a freekick.

Luckily, the striker wasn't injured and got up in a matter of moments indicating he was okay. He didn't seem to care much about the red team player's apology as he immediately made his way to the set-piece location. Not long after that, the red team built a four-man wall in an attempt to obstruct the kick taker.

As expected, the boy with the mohawk would be the one to take this set piece confidently standing over the ball. One of his teammates seemed to be trying to convince him against this but he remained headstrong. His teammate could only shake his head lightly walking away whilst muttering something under his breath.

[Wheet]

The piercing sound of coach Carlos's whistle signalled the green light for the striker to proceed with the dead ball situation. As the mohawked striker prepared to take the free kick, a sense of anticipation swept through the training ground. The player took a deep breath taking three steps back before, his eyes locked on the target.

He seemed to be seriously thinking of where he wanted to place this shot as he studied the goalkeeper's position. He didn't contemplate for long though seemingly spotting something he liked as he raised his hand to signal that he was ready. With a sudden burst of energy, he sprang into action taking quick but measured strides to the location of the ball.

The striker's foot connected perfectly with the ball following through on his swing to guide it as the leather on his boots rubbed against it. Sailing through the air, the ball drew a perfect curve that seemed to defy gravity as it cleared the human wall. Before anyone even had the chance to react the ball seemed to remember the effects of gravity as it quickly descended heading to the bottom right corner of the goal.

The goalkeeper on the red-bib team also sprang into action as he leapt across his goal line, stretching his body to its limits in a desperate attempt to make the save. The ball, however, seemed to have a mind of its own, gangling just out of the goalkeeper's reach. Time seemed to slow down as the ball slipped past the keeper's glove.

But before the striker had the chance to celebrate his goal fate intervened as a metallic sound resounded throughout the ground. The ball had collided with the post as a deafening thud echoed. The ball bounced back into play, bouncing over the downed keeper and back into the chaotic box.

The striker, with his hands on his head, couldn't believe his poor luck after witnessing his shot miss by just a single inch. The few spectators at the side of the pitch also shared his sense of disbelief as they took in a deep breath of disbelief.

Whilst those at the side were lamenting the missed opportunity the chaos in the box escalated. Players from both teams scrambled for the ball, their movements a blur of red and blue jerseys. The defenders, spurred by the narrow escape, fought tooth and nail to clear the ball. Bodies collided, and shouts of determination mixed with the heavy breathing of exhausted players.

Among the fighting players, a lanky blond boy dressed in a red bib was the first to reach the ball. Not bothering to take a touch he immediately sent the ball flying to the side clearing the dangerous situation. It was only at this moment that the red team players could finally feel relieved.

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'Haha that was a fun session,' I subconsciously said after slumping down in the changing room. To be honest, today has been quite a fun experience since I got to play football to my heart's content.

I haven't felt like this since the Nike camp and even then, things weren't as relaxed as they were here. Don't get me wrong the intensity is probably on the same level if not higher. However, the pressure to improve in a short period isn't there and the coaches take their time to explain everything.

[The training here should show its effect soon enough since it's surprisingly quite advanced.] Eva commented causing my happy mood to rise even further since I knew how hard it is to raise one of my stats.

She continued to explain that the targeted training here coupled with the match experience from my school team games would go a long way in facilitating that. Happy at the prospect of improving my abilities even faster I quickly dried myself with my towel and changed into clean clothes. Since I take quite long showers most of the other boys had already left with only two others still being in the changing room.

Not minding them though I quickly picked up my duffel bag with my things in it and made my way out of the room. However, I quickly found myself rooted on the spot unable to decide whether to turn right or left. Not wanting to risk getting lost in this complex again I attempted to ask Eva for directions, but she quickly let me know that she isn't Google Maps.

Luckily for me though I didn't have to wait long as fate seemed to want to help me out of my predicament. "You good bro?" a juvenile voice spoke up from behind me causing me to turn around in surprise. The boy in front of me is someone quite familiar to me since he is a part of my training group.

"Yeah, just trying to decide how to get out of this maze," I answered him with a slightly embarrassed smile on my face. He is a head taller than me with long curly locs of hair trickling down his head which accentuate his blue eyes.

If I didn't possess a system, I would think of him as the true main character since everything seems to seemingly gravitate towards him. Not in a reality-bending way but in a weird social way where everyone seems to gravitate to his presence. That may be due to his actual skill, but it is also due to his looks and charisma.

"haha I got lost for like my first week too, come we can walk out together." He told me with a light chuckle as he turned left to lead the way.