

## Football 133

### Chapter 133 Mind Game

The ball took an outward curve completely missing out the crowd around the five-yard line who rose into the air. The eagle's players were disappointed after noticing that they couldn't reach the ball. Whereas the East River players secretly breathed a sigh of relief knowing they escaped a threatening encounter.

However, that sense of relief was quickly shattered when the ball took a quick dip falling close to the back post. Before it could even land Max came sliding in slotting the ball into the net. A sense of confusion spread within the East River players as they questioned who was supposed to be marking him.

All their questioning thoughts didn't matter to Max though as he widely celebrated his goal. The rest of the eagle's players soon joined in on the celebration happy about the fact they were now 2:0 up in this match. The home spectators were also quick to celebrate their players cheering happily.

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With the Eagles now up by two goals the game settled into an eerie calmness as the East River's players seemed to be indecisive on whether to attack or strengthen their defence. This confusion resulted in them being unable to retain possession of the ball as everyone had different ideas on what they wanted to do.

This resulted in a peculiar scene in the twentieth minute when one of the Rivers midfielders played a quick pass to his defenders after stealing it from Ben. The midfielder who was expecting his defensive teammate to hold onto the ball was left enraged when the central defender launched the ball up the field. He seemingly didn't want anything to do with the ball as he warily eyed Tom who stopped a few feet away from him.

The ball was sent flying up the right flank for their striker to chase but this didn't matter to the East River midfielder who angrily approached the defender. "What's your deal Jake stop giving the ball away." he loudly exclaimed walking up to the boy named Jake who was taken aback by the sudden outburst.

However, his shock quickly turned into rage after seeing some of his teammates looking over. "What about you in midfielder? is it so hard to hold onto the ball for more than two seconds?" He retorted with anger as his face took a shade of red displaying just how angry he was.

"I'm doing my job of winning back the ball, but you guys keep letting the two of them just skate past you," The midfielder retorted equally enraged as he stabbed his finger at Jake's chest causing him to take a step back. Just as he was about to respond with his fist his swinging motion stopped after hearing loud exclamations from the spectators.

Turning their attention towards the other side of the field they spotted their team's striker laying on the ground in the eagle's penalty box. Seemingly for getting the little conflict that was about to escalate they quickly ran forward to ask their friends for information. But their queries were quickly answered as they watched the referee point to the penalty spot whilst becoming the number three over to him.

[moment's ago]

The ball rapidly sailed through the air dropping close to the edge of the right flank where the east rivers number 9 picked it up. With a decent touch, the striker guided the falling ball down the wing for him to chase after. Turning on the jets he quickly sped down the flank appearing in front of Ryan Garcia a moment later.

The left-back who is playing as part of a flat three today eagerly stepped forward trying to stop him. His approach was for naught though as the striker knocked the ball past him before circumventing the

defender. Not willing to give up so easily Ryan turned on his axis displaying his superb agility chasing after the striker.

Seeing that the striker was ready to take the shot and he wouldn't be able to get to him on time he decided to take a risk. Lunging forward in a sliding motion he swiped his foot towards the ball whilst trying his best to stop the striker's shot. What he didn't expect though was for the striker's standing foot to make contact with his foot first causing him to tumble to the ground as he cleared the ball.

Ryan on the ground felt quite conflicted at this moment not sure whether to celebrate his defensive stop or dread what was to come. Although he tried his best not to injure the striker, he knew that he made slight contact and judging by the boy's Oscar-like performance he's in trouble. Just like he expected the referee blew his whistle indicating a penalty and called him over.

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"Are you okay? you've already got your penalty you know," Ben the Eagles keeper said to the opposing striker who had managed to roll all the way to his goal line when trying to emphasise the fact he was hurt to the referee. As if a light bulb lit up in the striker's head as he immediately jumped up from the ground hoping on his supposed injured foot.

"Thanks, bro" the striker said to the keeper only to be met with a glare that caused him to jump back slightly. "Jeez, why so angry?" the striker absentmindedly mumbled to himself while he walked to his teammates who gathered at the edge of the box.

"Yo Ben, you gonna save this one?" The striker heard a boy with dreadlocks he's all too familiar with asking the keeper as he walked past him.

The reason he remembered the boy is not due to the fact he played well in today's game but due to something else. He still remembered the weird interaction the two of them had at the start of the game and still didn't want anything to do with him. Ignoring the boy, he quickly met up with his friends celebrating the fact he won a penalty kick.

"Of course, I'll save it, you might as well wait at the halfway line for the counter," Ben responded with a confident smile on his face fist bumping Rakim who came back to check on him.

"I might just do that but if coach gets mad I'll blame, it on you," Rakim responded with a cheeky smile trying to get a reaction out of the keeper. The two went on to talk about random things whilst waiting for the referee to finish dealing with Ryan who ended up getting a yellow card.

Seeing the referee motioning him to leave the box Rakim patted Ben's shoulder before quickly jogging out of the box. Reaching the penalty spot he crossed paths with the striker trying to calm his nerves for the set piece. "Shoot right," he told the striker who had a baffled expression on his face not knowing how to take the advice.

Ben who was in goals getting ready for the set-piece felt a sudden urge to kick his friend after hearing him give advice to the opponent. However, before he could even complain Rakim sent him a teasing smirk as he scurried up the field close to the halfway line. He could only sigh and focus on the striker in front of him who seemed lost in thought.

"You should shoot right," he told the boy with a sly smirk jumping up and down his line trying to make himself as big as possible. Knowing his words had an effect as the frown on the boy deepened, he waited for the referee to signal the start. He didn't have to wait long as the loud shrill of the whistle resounded throughout the field.