

Football 138

Chapter 138 Ole's Determination

Seeing Rakim take the bait he charged past him along the baseline entering the box in a single breath. The winger continued into the box blazing past the Eagles left back ready to shoot at any second. Mike decided to scramble off his line trying to pounce on the winger before he could shoot.

The winger had no thoughts of letting Mike get any closer though as he quickly whipped his foot back letting loose a powerful shot. The ball swished along the ground taking a sharp curve past the outstretched legs of the keeper. With a soft thud, the ball slipped into the net followed by a sliding boot that narrowly missed the ball.

Ole who slid into the goal could only lemony the fact that he was just a second too late in his actions. Their opponents whom they had been easily beating have narrowed their lead to just one goal now. For him who prides himself on his definitive ability, this is quite shameful.

After all his attacking teammates completed their job by scoring goals making sure they stayed ahead. Whilst on the defensive end they let the opponents score 3 times. That is three too many times for his liking especially when he feels like he is one of the best defensive players in the league.

However, he knows that it's not entirely his fault since he can't do everything by himself. But the feeling of always being a step too late is quite uncomfortable which is why he is so frustrated. If he could just get to the attackers first the chances of them getting by him would be zero. Maybe he's a little overconfident in his abilities but facts have proven that he is just that good.

It's too bad that his high defensive awareness is the reason that coach wants him to play the role of a libero. Having the responsibility as the last man in the defensive line is a little useless when most of the attacks are from the flanks. He can't really blame the coach though since his role as the libero has allowed him to lock down the opposing striker.

If he was being truthful he loved the feeling when he shattered an attack's hope at goal after getting past everyone. The responsibility of being the last man doesn't really bother him in fact he relishes the trust placed in him. It is a direct affirmation of his skills as a defender and something he works hard to improve.

Deciding to work harder in training he quietly got up from the ground swearing to not let them score another goal. He didn't even have to fish the ball out of the goal as the crocodiles were more eager than him to get the ball. Glancing across his teammates who all have slight panic written all over their faces he could only sigh and hope the game ends quick.

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The official decided to add an extra 2 minutes to the game giving the Crocodiles enough time to score another goal. However, the Eagles had no plans of letting that happen especially with victory so close at hand. More than that they didn't want their fate to be decided by the luck of a penalty shoot-out. The junior state cup is quite peculiar in the fact that it goes straight to penalties instead of playing extra minutes.

Tom quickly kicked off passing the ball back to Rakim outside the centre circle. The winger calmly received the ball heading wide having no plans to pass the ball back to his defence. He probably didn't want to take the risk of them making a mistake with how shaky their performance has been in this half. But more likely he just wanted to keep the ball at his feet trusting his skills more than anyone else.

He didn't get far as the opposing striker came racing towards him ready to pounce on the ball at any moment. Seeing the striker in front of the winger remained calm turning away from the striker to go back to where his left back was. The striker who hadn't slowed down yet decided to run around him looking to intercept him.

However, the situation of him facing the winger never happened as Rakim seemingly changed his mind mid turn choosing to turn back. Easily avoiding the striker's initial charge, he calmly dribbled the ball forward at a steady pace. The winger seemingly had no plans of going full speed as he made his way across the halfway line.

He wasn't given much freedom though as two opposing midfielders charged his way looking for a pincer attack. Sensing the danger, he knocked the ball forward a little further than usual into the direction of the midfielder coming from his front. The opponent seemed to think he made a mistake as he sped up his run lunging towards the ball looking to block it.

The expected contact with the ball never came though since he had closed his eyes expecting an impact, he didn't see what happened. All he felt was a chilly breeze passing through his crotch as he lost balance due to not hitting anything. Although he did not see what happened doesn't mean that his teammates also missed it.

His midfield teammates who had approached to help him saw everything clearly. The winger had abruptly increased his speed pocking the ball through his teammate's legs as he slipped by him. Having seen this clearly, he quickly adjusted changing his forward motion to the side in an effort to catch up with the winger.

A second later he was side by side with the winger ready to disrupt his run and win the ball for his team. He knew that they didn't have much time before the referee ended the match, so he had to be quick. Just as he was picking up his pace, he stretched out his hand to leverage his strength on his opponent.

However, before he could grasp onto the winger's shoulder he abruptly stopped in his tracks as he kept running. Rakim who came to a stop looked up scanning his surroundings for the first time since he started his run. Having seemingly found a teammate run that was to his liking he pointed a finger gesturing for them to continue their run.

The next second he swung his right foot towards the ball, but the expected long pass never came as he scooped up the ball instead. In one motion he guided the ball back down the flank narrowly avoiding the slide tackle of the boy who had just run past him. Going past the player for a couple steps he swung his left foot sending a high through ball towards the box.

The ball's flight path took on a curved arc completely bypassing the right back that was charging at him heading for the penalty spot. In the box, Tom along with another centre back were the first to switch onto the ball as they raced toward its landing point. Tom who had a slightly superior reaction speed managed to get a slight advantage but not by much as the defender clung to his side.

The keeper was too slow in his reaction hesitating too long on whether to charge out or stand his ground. This indecisiveness is what allowed Tom the freedom to choose where he to send the ball. The prerequisite to this is that he managed to get to the ball first. Not wanting to let the ball land he lunged forward stretching his leg out to the descending ball.

His defensive carryon had the same idea raising his foot in an attempt to interfere with the striker. He was too late though as the striker managed to connect with the ball first redirecting the ball's flightpath towards the goal. The ball picked up speed heading towards the right side of the goal as the keeper leapt after it.

He wasn't able to react quick enough to bring his gloves to the ball, but luck was on his side as the ball deflected off the post heading out for a goal kick. Seeing his shot miss Tom could only defectively sigh as he lamented his bad luck. He wasn't the only one sad about his miss as the crowd of parents, teachers and classmates groaned at just how close he was.

His frustration didn't have a chance to fester though as the referee promptly blew his whistle signalling the end of the match. Realising his team had one he shook off the negative thought as he got up to

celebrate with his friends. They were moving on to the next round keeping their hopes for a cup trophy alive.