

## Football 149

### Chapter 149 Vs St Arthur's Prep (5)

It didn't take long for the referee to give the go-ahead for the Eagles set piece at the edge of the saint's box. The first half clock had pretty much trickled down leaving only the added time to be played. Both teams stood at the ready just waiting for Tom to take his shot. The striker confidently stared down the saint's three-man wall looking for the slightest gap he could exploit.

His usual cheery demeanour was replaced by an angry scowl sending slight shivers at the players standing in front of him. None of the young boys have any desire to get hit which could be seen by the fact some turned their bodies to the side. The set piece is located towards the left side of the D facing the restricted area giving him an opportune route at goal.

With him being right-footed he could easily send a curled shot around the wall allowing him to let loose a dangerous shot. Tom didn't care about any of this though as he calmly took five steps backwards before immediately closing in on the ball. There wasn't too much fineness in his shot as he's not one for trying too many tricks.

A sharp muffled bang reverberated through the ground as the ball left the rubber of his boot. In the next moment, the ball rifled off the ground flying in a straight line towards the goal. The far-right player seemed frightened by the bang of the ball causing him to subconsciously shriek to the side. With a soft whooshing sound, the ball passed between the heads of the two Saints players using the hole that was created as a gateway.

Before the players in the wall had the chance to turn around to check where the ball had ended up, they heard the sound of the ball reverberating in the net. The next moment the jubilant exclamation of the eagle's players could be heard around the park. Eagles supporters chimed in with them celebrating at finally seeing their team get on the scoreboard.

The happiest among the players was Tom who sent a resentful look at the number four that had taken him down. He seemed to be conveying that this was all the defender's fault as he went off to celebrate his goal. Said defender was left to grumble on his own not daring to try and shift the blame.

Not long after the Eagles scored their first goal of the match the referee blew his whistle to signal the end of the first half. With a score of 1:2, the Eagles definitely have their work cut out for them if they want to come out vectorise in this match. However, with the momentum having shifted in the dying minutes of added time coach Bauer sure wished they could have just played on.

He could only sigh at this as his team seemed to have just woken up from their daze looking a lot sharper. Although not following today's match tactics they were actively utilising what they have learned since the start of the season. It was working too as they started to look a lot more dangerous on the ball whenever they gained possession.

It was quite a brilliant sight to watch for the seasoned coach as his players seemed to synchronise in their movements. From the chaotic tension that had been created due to the two-goal deficit to a more united charge. This was evident by the fact that they let loose three shots at goal in the four added minutes. It was only through lady luck and sheer grit that the saints managed to prevail over the impending danger.

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"Lads I'm not sure what to say," Coach Bauer stated with a slight frown as he scanned across his players. locking eyes with each of them to gauge their reaction, he noticed the sense of unease that spread throughout the room.

None of the boys who played in the first half dared to make eye contact with him for too long. Even some of the bench players who had nothing to do with the game averted their eyes. Perhaps the only

one actively making contact with him was Mike the keeper. However, he is intense gaze can be attributed to the fact that he doesn't want to be taken off the field.

"I was planning on scolding you, but you showed me an entirely different team in the dying minutes of the half. So, let's just keep up the momentum, I want you guys to go on an all-out attack for the first ten minutes of the second half." He stated finally ending the uncomfortable silence before it could fully settle. Having seemingly forgotten his frustration at their breakdown halfway through the first half he started explaining tactics.

He emphasized that teams are most vulnerable at the start of the second half, and they should take full advantage of it. He laid out where his team was struggling in the first half making sure they understood where they went wrong. He decided to make a slight change in their formation by pulling Ole forward into the CDM role.

The reason for this change was his desire to bolster his midfield without hurting his team's defensive ability. Ole became the natural choice with him being the most cool-headed player on the team, which is an excellent quality for a captain to have. His on-the-ball ability was the deciding factor of why he chose to move his position forward.

The team's formation changed from a 431 to a 341 bolstering the Eagle's midfield strength as they took on a diamond form. Hopefully, this change in formation would help to boost their gameplay and not come back to bite them. We didn't have to wait long to see whether coach Bauer's changes would prove to be fruitful as the second half kicked off.

Both teams swapped sides with the Saints kicking off the second half as their number nine calmly passed the ball back. They seemed content with the status of the match not looking to launch a desperate attack. Just because the Saints weren't desperate didn't mean the same for the Eagles who rushed forward.

Like a pack of hungry wolves, they flooded forward into the saint's half looking to pick up where they had left off in the first half. Tom was at the forefront using his legs to propel himself forward. In the next moment, his imposing presence appeared in front of the saint's midfielder who had just lazily received the ball.

Panicking at the sudden appearance of the striker in front of him he quickly turned away sending the ball back to one of his defenders. Tom seeing the ball being passed away before he could snatch it didn't stop and continued to chase after it. He wasn't the only one as the rest of his teammates followed suit closing down passing lanes. .