

Football 150

Chapter 150 Vs St Arthur's Prep (6)

With all of the eagle's players swarming forward into the saint's half the defender didn't have much time to deliberate. Deciding to get rid of the trouble he put his foot through the ball launching it up the field. With a soft swoosh, the ball soared past the oncoming striker heading towards the eagle's half.

Seeing the ball sailing towards their opponent's goal the saint's striker sprung into action charging forward. Keeping his head on a swivel he continued racing forward jumping into the air the moment the ball began his descent. Things didn't go as he had expected though as he felt a sudden shadow above him.

Before he knew what happened the hulking figure behind him nocked the falling ball away. He didn't have time to process this though as he collided with Jake and crashed to the ground. The official didn't blow his whistle to indicate a foul and this the play continued.

Ole a few yards ahead of him calmly brought the ball under his control dribbling forward ready to launch a counter. Like a general, he surveyed his surroundings as he brought the ball forward. A quick one-two with Finn on the left flank was all he needed to get past a Saints midfielder and cross the halfway line. Having created himself some space to manoeuvre he dribbled further towards the flank.

He looked as if he wanted to go all the way until he came to a sudden stop pointing forward seemingly to indicate something. In the next moment, he sent a delicate defence-splitting through ball in between the opponent's right-back and centre-back. At the end of his pass was Tom who had been working along the back line of the saints.

Leaving his marker and slipping into the box he comfortably took control of the ball. He didn't have much time to adjust though as he wasn't the only one who was paying attention to the flow of the

game. The Eagle's number one had also paid attention, from the moment Ole began his run he left his line in anticipation of a counter.

His instincts proved to be right as he now stood one-on-one with Tom who had already bested him once. Eager to get his revenge he followed his training and slid on his knees towards the striker's path. With both of his arms spread wide he was confident in his chances of blocking the ball.

Tom seeing this decided to shoot with his next touch in order to leverage the meter of space between him and the keeper. forcefully swinging his slightly weaker left foot he made a crisp connection with the ball. What happened next was unfortunate though as the keeper managed to palm the ball away.

Successfully predicting the ball's flight path from this close a distance he trusted his instincts fully. He was rewarded when his gloves successfully connected with the ball allowing him to palm it out of his box. Exclamations of disappointment could be heard raining down from the stands by the eagle's home fans upon witnessing the outcome of the duel.

They were already celebrating the equaliser from the moment Ole initiated the attack with his superb pass. This was only further reaffirmed upon spotting their striker deftly latch onto the ball after leaving his marker. However, their hopes of a goal were thwarted by the keeper utilising the danger to showcase his ability as a sweeper keeper.

The danger wasn't over though as whilst the keeper and Tom collided with each other two players were racing to the ball. The players were Max and the Saints left back who had been cautiously marking the winger. The race to the ball didn't last more than a few seconds as both players simultaneously reached the ball. They came to clash when both of them stretched out their foot to the ball.

The tension caused by their action was visible on the ball which slightly deformed as both of them pushed it in opposite directions. This equilibrium didn't last long though as Max lost the duel of strength

and tumbled to the ground. The left back didn't bother rushing forward though opting to clear the ball along the flank out for a throw just past the halfway line.

It was only when the ball left the pitch when the away fans dared to celebrate their keepers' achievements. Loudly applauding their player's display of skill and bravery they let their support known. When Tom upon seeing this could only smile wilyly after he got up from the ground. Despite falling down after not scoring he put on a smile and stretched out his hand to the still-down keeper.

Tom would be lying if he said that he wasn't impressed by the keeper's abilities. After all the best keeper he knows is his cousin Ben who's like a dog with a bone when it comes to saving a ball. But even he would have struggled to do anything better than this keeper in front of him.

~~~

"Rakim, how are you feeling?" Coach asked me ten minutes into the second half. Hearing his question, a slight bit of hope crept in as maybe I would get the chance to play.

"I'm fine coach, I can play," I told him jumping up from the bench to show him I was really ready. He gave me an inquisitive look seemingly trying to figure out if I was lying to him or not. That didn't last long though as he seemed to believe me and told me to warm up.

I wasn't the only one warming up though as Blake and Damian joined me. Looks like the coach wanted to bring on some fresh legs and maybe some creativity with me. With Damian being a stamina beast, our midfield would definitely gain a boost.

If not for the fact that his playing style is too close to Finn's, He would probably be starting. That is not to say he is worse than Finn in skill it's just that he is not as offensive-minded as him.

Damian is more like a ball-winning midfielder who gets into the nitty-and-gritty of a chaotic midfield. Whereas Finn is merely like a box-to-box midfielder who is quite versatile when it comes to both attack and defence.

"Hey, do you know who you are going in for?" Damian asked me as we went through some light ladder drills at the side of the field. It looks like he already had an idea that he would be replacing Finn. After all coach rarely played them together especially when he wanted us to attack like in the current situation.

"Hmm not sure probably one of the defenders," I answered him assuming the coach would sacrifice some of the defence for a stronger attack.

My hunch came true in the 45th minute when coach took off Ryan and sent me on. He probably didn't want to risk him getting sent off in such a close game. Getting that silly yellow card really came back to bite him in the end. I didn't go into defence though as Ole dropped back to make it a flat three, and I was sent to my familiar left wing. Finn was subbed off for Damian as expected and Ben came off for Blake.

Other than Ben coming off all other substitutions were as I had expected more or less. The reason I was surprised is by the fact that Ben is a much better player than Blake. No offence on the striker but he is getting too big for his boots. His ego is probably the biggest in the team, but his actual skills are just not there. It's not that he is terrible it's just that he is too inconsistent and often fails to deliver when an opportunity presents itself.

However, for some reason, he still gets regular game time. Maybe the coach sees something in him that I don't. After all, I'm not perfect and can't tell at a glance whether someone has some hidden talent.

Then again It probably helps that his dad is one of the biggest boosters for our school's sports program. .  
...