

## Football 177

### Chapter 177 Lets Talk

[Somewhere in Orlando, Saturday/3rd, April/2010]

The morning sun filtered through the large windows of the gym, casting long shadows on the mats where Rakim and Liam sat. Both boys were drenched in sweat after having completed an hour-long yoga session. Trying their best to catch their breaths all the bustling noises in the gym slowly faded into the background.

The only noise that remained vividly in their mind was their rhythmic breath followed by a steady heartbeat. They had been in that sleeping position for around 3 minutes despite their instructor ending their session. This is largely due to both of them wanting to give their muscles a chance to relax.

Unlike most of the other participants, the two of them had participated in gruelling matches yesterday. Rakim played through the semifinal and was fatigued despite his sporadic involvement in shaping the game. Liam on the other hand took part in a Taekwondo tournament the whole of yesterday suffering quite a few bruises.

Despite their fatigue and bruises both boys followed their schedule and met up this morning for their recovery training. They are extremely competitive with one another which resulted in them doing a light workout before their class. The result of their overconfidence was this particular scene where both boys tried to move as little as possible, relishing the aches of their muscles.

Liam was the first to open his eyes after feeling Zeus's tail whack his face breaking him out of his sleep-like state. He didn't complain already used to the dog doing whatever it wanted whenever it was around his friend. Almost like its playful nature was unleashed whenever it chose to hang around with them.

"Ahh that tasted so good," He exclaimed after chugging down a litre of cucumber and lemon water. Feeling his aching muscles relax with each movement he took he was thankful for suffering through the session.

"That's because mum makes ours fresh," Rakim told him as he followed suit in chugging down the contents of his water bottle. His words held true as Lisa makes a fresh batch of flavoured water every 3 days for the family. It is kept cool in the walk-in fridge allowing it to be kept fresh for the duration.

"Makes sense since the flavoured water from the machines here just don't taste the same," Liam responded remembering the first time he compared one of the machine's waters with the one from his friend. The two were night and day in taste with the latter having a richer taste.

"Anyway, how's your friend?" He suddenly asked after the two of them fell into a momentary silence. There is only so much about a beverage that one can talk about without it becoming awkward.

"Ben is gonna be fine, he has a long road to recovery though," Rakim responded before proceeding to explain what a fibular fracture is. With both of them practicing taekwondo Liam found this particular leg injury interesting. They didn't dwell on the topic though since it was quite depressing talking about possible injuries, they both could sustain.

"Guess coach wasn't joking when he said we need to learn how to fall properly," Liam exclaimed remembering the fact that in every sport he has tried out the right way to fall gets reiterated. Whether it be American football or taekwondo heck even in boxing they teach you to receive a punch properly.

This is called injury prevention, a skill that all professional athletes must master if they want longevity in their sport. "I still remember my first day at the dojo when sensei had us fall in all kinds of ways," Rakim responded with a weird look recounting the unconventional start to his martial arts journey.

This particular start wasn't for everyone only for those who have never practised a combat sport. Since you're likely to take a beating, it only makes sense to train you on how to safely land whilst taking minimal damage.

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[15:30, Liam's House,]

"I've been meaning to ask but what's up with you?" Liam suddenly asked me whilst keeping his focus on the TV in front of us. He casually performed a dunk on with Lebron completely ignoring the guard of Pau Gasol.

We were currently playing 2K10 on his XBO360 with him being the Miami Heat and I the Lakers. I would like to say that I'm a huge Lakers fan but in truth, he got to pick first leaving me to pick the next best thing. Although they are a good team, especially with the black Mamba leading them they just don't compare to the heats.

Ever since the Lebron formed the Big 3 in Miami it just hasn't been fair playing against them on 2K. This roster is just too stacked on paper leaving hardly any room to compete. Ignoring that I try to think about whatever he could be referring to, but I come up empty.

"What do you mean?" I respond after coming up empty not knowing what he was referring to. "You seriously gon make me spell it out for you?" He asks as he attempts a steal but a behind-the-back dribble to doge it and transition into a slashing animation.

A quick step back at the free throw line and I let loose a fade away with Koby before Bosh could close him down. 36:35 The ball sees nothing, but net and I take the lead. "Up to you really, I'm fine with just beating your ass in silence," I responded with a cheeky smile after managing to tip one of his passes forward and immediately launch a fast break.

"Yk the tension with you, (crap) and everybody I guess," he responds between breaths as he desperately tries to stop me from scoring by positioning his player in front of mine. That backfired as I launched the ball in the air for an ally to Paul who was running towards the rim. The guy gradually slams the ball into the net proceeding to hang for an extra second.

"You gon have to be more specific because there a lot of people not feeling me right now," I responded finally grasping what he was referring to as a few faces flash in my mind. Somehow, I've managed to piss off not one but like 80% of my friend group in one way or another.

"Start with the guys since they have been avoiding hanging out with us for the past week and a half," Liam stated with a frown not mentioning the fact, that they would always cancel whenever he tried to include me in their plans. It's normal for him not to know what happened since it happened when he was away on a family emergency.

One of his grandparents in Scotland died so they flew home to attend their funeral staying for a total of 2 weeks. In those weeks he was away a lot of shit happened as things just spiralled. He came back to an entirely different friend group from the one he left but no one has seemingly clued him in yet.

I guess the saying is true 'that a decade can go by with nothing happening, but a decade can transpire in two short weeks.' "(Sigh) let me start from the top then," I told him with slight reluctance, but I didn't pause the game venting my emotions on it.