

Football 185

Chapter 185 Cup Finale (5)

The cleared ball fell at the edge of the box where Rakim and his marker stood. Both boys fought with each other for the best landing spot trying to reach the ball first. As both of them were too busy fighting each other they missed the best chance to take off. Thus the ball sailed past the two of them and a chase ensued as they continued to clash with their shoulders.

Rakim tried to accelerate past his marker but he stuck to him like glue weighing him down. By the time they reached the ball, they were back to battling each other. Rakim managed to get to the ball first but could not extract himself with the ball because of how close his marker was. His Marker seemed to have realised that he would have no chance of stopping him if he gave him space.

Not being able to force his way through due to the physical difference the winger passed the ball back. Lucas was there to receive it having rushed forward after Henric cleared the ball. Knowing he could hold onto the ball he sent a chipped pass over Rakim who circumvented his marker.

Getting around his marker who had relaxed after seeing him pass the ball back he took off. Stretching out his leg he deftly brought the ball down before one of the IMG defenders could close him down. They had kept back two defenders for the setpiece for such a case. One to watch Tom who remains rooted to the halfway line and the other to engage a counter.

So upon seeing Rakim beat his man the blue and white number two charged forward. Seeing this the winger who had just brought the ball down faked cutting right and immediately went left. The simple trick allowed him to get by the defender with only the wide green grass ahead of him.

the number two wasn't done though turning on his axis and quickly reaching the side of the winger. Annoyed at only being able to get five yards past the halfway line, he debated a through ball forward

but came to a stop instead. Scooping the ball with his right foot he turned 360 degrees in one motion reaching the other side of the defender.

Not holding onto the ball he sent a cross across the field, finding the speeding figure of Max. 2 yards ahead of his marker the winger didn't bring the ball under his control instead knocking the ball forward. Putting his speed to use he chased after it quickly reaching the side of the opposing box. Only then did his marker manage to catch up with him but it was already too late.

Max's foot sped across the ball but he didn't shoot performing a quick Ronaldo chop. With that, he managed to get to the other side of the defender who had just reached his side. Dribbling into the box there was only the keeper in front of him as Tom's marker was too far. Not hesitating he fired off a shot across the keeper aiming for the far left side of the goal.

The IMG number 1 wearing a purple kit reacted quickly stretching out his hands wide and doing the same with his legs. Although his right foot managed to graze the ball it wasn't enough as he heard the back of his net bulge. Seeing his shot go in Max wasted no time running to the side and celebrated his goal.

2:2 He equalised the score with his goal and wanted to bask in that glory. Not only he but the rest of the team celebrated at finally being able to equalise the score. In the 42minute the score was level again shattering the tension that had loomed over the Eagles.

Seeing their opponents catch up to them the IMG team finally felt the pressure of the cup final. They had easily won their league coming from a sports institute excellence isn't something they strive for. It is the minimum expectation when they dawn their school colours. So seeing their opponents fight back so much and dominate most of the match is something they haven't experienced.

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'45'

As the clock ticks into the 45th minute the home team launches a swift counter-attack. A figure in a blue jersey races down the left flank, after receiving a sharp through ball from his teams midfielders. Outpacing his marker by less than a year he delivered a low cross into the box. His cross met its intended target as their number 9 received it a couple of inches away from the penalty spot.

Taking a quick touch as he fought off the hulking figure of Henric he fired off a powerful shot towards the bottom left corner. Mike who was having the game of his life was there though displaying remarkable reflexes. Diving low to his right, he gets enough of a hand to the ball to push it past his post for a corner.

The IMG's number 9 couldn't believe his poor luck but in the end, had to accept it. His teammates were sending him side-eye glances as they complained that he missed such a good opportunity. No amount of explaining could appease their disappointment as they felt the pressure of the deadlock.

None of the eagles tried to appease him, instead, they hoped he would start doubting himself and make mistakes. Just having him hesitate to pull the trigger is enough for them as it would allow them a chance for a crucial stop. Quickly praising their keeper with pats on the back they regrouped getting ready for the corner.

Sensing an opportunity to take the lead their opponent got set for the corner. This time however they were more cautious of a counter making sure to guard to watch the players at the edge of the box. One of the midfielders whipped that ball in with pace finding one of his player's heads.

The defender who managed to bring his head to the ball directs a bullet header towards the goal. Although fast and hard the ball was just too close to the keeper allowing Mike to plan the ball over the bar. The crowd gasps in amazement, unable to believe the heroics they are witnessing. Even Coach Bauer was surprised at seeing his second-choice keeper playing his heart out.

He had planned to bring in Ben at half-time if things didn't go well but halfway through the first half. However, Mike's performance spiked bringing a present surprise to him. Thus he let him play it out since Ben played the majority of games during the season. His choice proved right as Mike underwent a metamorphosis the longer the game went on.

The more shots and attacks he faced, the faster his improvement speed seemed to be. His instincts were spot on as he evolved as a shot-stopper cutting out all the small mistakes he is prone to make. Almost as if a switch in his brain was clicked and he started performing the best his body would let him.

The second corner didn't lead to much either ending up in the waiting arms of Mike who decided to go airborne and catch the incoming ball. Not wasting any time he skipped past the crowd and threw the ball forward setting in motion a counter. Max already sprinting down the right flank after seeing his catch, latched onto throw.