

Football 188

Chapter 188 Cup Finale (8)

His header was sharp as he directed the ball to the back post with only Mike to beat. The keeper who had been great throughout the match was quick to react to the header. The moment he saw the number 9 connect with the ball along the penalty spot he shimmied across his line and dived to his left.

He stretched his hands out as far as he possibly could trying to bring even a single fingertip to the ball. His effort bore fruit as he managed to connect his fingers with the ball, but the header was too powerful for him to deflect it out way from his goal. With a soft thud, the ball impacted the inside of the net causing an avalanche of cheers from the IMG school spectators.

None of that matters to those on the pitch though as the boys in blue run to the side to celebrate. They were in high spirits after equalising the score in the last minute of regular time. With the score at 3:3, their hope of lifting the trophy was alive again boosting their morale.

The Eagles on the other hand had disheartened looks on their faces as they watched them celebrate. A moment ago they were champions and now everything was up in smokes. The most agitated of all was Mike who angrily kicked the ball into his net to let out his frustration. No one bothered to ask whether he was angry at being back on level terms or conceding another goal.

"Boys come over here quickly," Coach Bauer called them over to the sidelines as their opponents celebrated. None dared to delay quickly gathering around their coach. "I know you're frustrated but I need you to dig deep, We still have a chance to decide this in extra time," He said as he continued to encourage his players looking to motivate their fighting spirit.

It seemed to work as their sad faces that were threatening tears quickly cleared up. Replacing them with eyes filled with determination, they would give it their all during the added minutes of the game. They didn't want their fate to be decided through a penalty shout-out so they vowed to give it their all.

"I want you to play attacking football for the rest of the game, No matter how dangerous our opponents are we fight back with more firepower," Coach Bauer told them before giving them some tactical advice for the rest of the game. He couldn't give them more advice as the official motioned for the match to restart.

Their opponents had already rushed back to their side of the field prompting the Eagles to set up quickly. (Fweet) With the ref's whistle, the match resumed as Tom played the ball back to the waiting feet of Blake. The striker-turned-midfielder didn't hold onto the ball and passed it back to Damian as he made his way forward.

Their goal was to score as soon as possible so he wasted no time getting into an open position. Damian didn't pass it to him tho laying it off to Ole in the middle. Their captain deftly dribbled the ball forward drawing in the IMG striker, but before they could calm to a clash he passed it to the free Blake.

The midfielder turned on his axis and dribbled the ball forward, He picked out Max on the wing with a pass. His pass didn't have enough power though coming up short and allowing an IMG player to steal it before Max could react. Quickly the boy in blue passed the ball to his midfield partner before dashing into space.

IMG wasn't in a hurry to launch an attack seemingly content with calming things down after finally equalising the score. They started passing the ball around in their half settling their emotion and slowing down the game's pace. Seeing them keep possession of the ball in their half forced the Egalse to press high.

For the next few minutes, red figures could be seen swarming the organised formation of blue figures. Like a pack of wolves, they chased after the ball by closing down their man and passing spaces. Their tenacity paid off in the 64th minute when Rakim chased down a sloppy pass from the IMG right back.

The boy panicked after seeing how fast the winger approached him and hastily passed the ball back to his keeper. Seeing this Rakim immediately changed his target looking onto the keeper and accelerating to another gear. Tom in the middle followed suit forcing the keeper to scramble off his line and clear the ball the first time.

He wasn't about to risk trying to get by two attackers and decided to just shoot the ball out of his box. The ball soared high cutting a parabola in the air, dropping around the halfway line. Henric beat the IMG striker in the air heading the ball towards the free Ole.

The captain calmly chested down the ball bringing the ball under his control. He calmly dribbled the ball forward prompting the midfield players to run into space. The boys in blue were expecting him to pass the ball but he just continued forward quickly reaching the final third. Only then did one of the opposing midfielders step up to mark him leaving his man.

Ole didn't hesitate in passing the ball to the now-open Blake who turned with the ball's momentum. Looking at the defensive line at the edge of the opposing box, he instantly analysed what he wanted to do and let loose a through ball into the box. Tom was quick to react beating his man as he pierced into the box, he latched onto the ball but his touch was off.

Before he could bring the ball under control or shoot the keeper came sliding in. The blue number 1 held onto the ball with cat-like reflexes not letting go as he came to a stop just before the edge of his box. With that, the keeper faulted another Eagles attack which turned out to be their last in this match.

After the keeper's heroics, the IMG team played with much more precision and calmness. They would swiftly move the ball around as a team slowly moving the ball up and down the field. Together as a team, they seemingly managed the flow of the match switching from rapid passes to slower ones when they moved back.

With this tactic, they held the majority possession during the injury time only losing the ball a few times. However, each time they won the ball by maintaining a compact formation and effective pressing. They seemed to have regained the playing form they utilised in the first half. Like that, they had the game in a chokehold causing the Eagles coach to start to worry.

He could be heard shouting for his boys to focus and calm down but it was too late. In the final moment of added time, the IMG centre-back played a pass to his midfielder who had dropped back. Many times in the game the midfielder would receive the ball and then calmly distribute it. Not this time though as he let the ball pass through his legs and slipped around Finn who had followed him.

Getting by him he sent a sharp pass forward precisely meeting the feet of his team's striker. The centre forward merely tapped the ball back into his run and turned on his axis. He met his expectation deftly chipping the defensive line for his striker to run onto. The striker didn't dissa point chesting the ball down as he brought it under his control.

That is where his run ended though as he had taken too long to bring the ball down allowing Ole to latch onto him. Not being able to escape the strong guard of the eagle's libero He sent a weighted pass down his left flank. His pass was so sudden catching almost everyone off guard, and leaving them wondering what he was thinking.

A second later their questions were answered as a Blue number 3 and red number 6 could be seen racing down the flank. Damian was doing his best to chase after the speedy left back but he wasn't a speedy player. It was only through sheer determination and the fact he was well rested that allowed him to stay just a step behind the left back.

The IMG number 3 latched onto the ball at the edge of the final third but didn't push to continue forward. Cutting out all his forward momentum he used it to perform a sudden change in direction.

Damian who had been following after him bypassed him by yard before coming to a sliding stop. None of this matters to the number 3 who ignored him and charged diagonally towards the goal.