

Football 192

Chapter 192 Awards Ceremony

The handshake line was a mixture of contrasting emotions with the Eagles, still buzzing with excitement, as they tried to be respectful. They still offered genuine praise to their opponents to their opponents who had given them a good game. Meanwhile, the IMG players, though defeated, showed commendable sportsmanship as they congratulated the Eagles.

Soon most of the crowd dispersed not wanting to stay to watch another school be crowned as champs. Only the parents and close friends of the IMG players remained as their team still had to receive their second-place medals. As the crowd thinned, the atmosphere became more subdued.

The anticipation for the award ceremony grew among the Eagles who could be seen taking pictures and dancing with their teammates. They ran around the ground relishing in their celebratory mood not willing to come down for their high. The two team's coaches held a discussion praising each other for a good match.

Not long after the relevant officials with the help of the IMG school staff set up a small awards table at the centre of the field. Two rows of medals in small leather casings could be seen gleaming under the sun's light. However, everyone's attention was on a smaller table where a silver cup resembling the Europa League trophy stood.

Upon closer inspection, one could see different types of engravings of past Junior state champions. The Eagles would soon join this coveted list allowing them to share in this glorious history. Seeing that the officials were ready both coaches called their players to gather around them. Now they were just waiting for the announcer to proceed so they could formally accept their hours.

The coaches of both teams gathered their teams in two groups in front of the podium. The anticipation was palpable, the excitement of victory mingling with the bittersweet taste of defeat. The announcer took his place at the microphone, his voice crackling through the speakers.

An elderly man dressed in a navy suit was the one to begin the proceedings. He walked with a reassuring swagger instantly commanding everyone's attention. Despite his greying hair letting his age shine through his spirited demeanour didn't allow anyone to question his youthful spirit.

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us today for this thrilling match. Before we proceed with the awards ceremony, let's take a moment to acknowledge the effort and sportsmanship displayed by both teams." He stated with a warm smile immediately clapping prompting those around him to follow his lead.

A round of applause erupted from the crowd, the sound echoing across the field. The Eagles' crowd cheered the loudest, but there were also heartfelt claps from the IMG supporters, acknowledging their team's effort in the game.

"First I would like to honour this year's Golden Boot recipient for the Junior State Cup, With 17 goals just 1 more than the second place it is the Eagle's number 22 Rakim Rex," He stated causing a loud cheer to erupt from the Eagles' side as Rakim stepped forward, a proud grin on his face.

He nearly managed to process the pats on the back from his teammates and well wishes from everyone. Before he knew it he walked up to the podium, where the elderly man shook his hand before handing him the gleaming Golden Boot trophy. Rakim raised it high, basking in the applause a quick foto with the cup rep and he rejoined his team.

The IMG's number 3 won the best playmaker producing 20 assists during the entire tournament. He beat Ben Millers by two assists causing the boy in crutches to sigh in disappointment. Not lingering on that he still clapped giving the player his flowers already happy at being a champion.

Mike won finals MVP with his superb goal-stopping performance starting in the second half. His crucial save that led to the Eagle's victory during penalties only served to help his case. If not for that Rakim would have won that honour for his goal and assist during regular time.

Not to mention he was involved in most of the Eagles attacking plays plus his converted 5th penalty. He was sad for a long though after winning Player of the Tournament by majority decision based on his stats and match analysis by the reps. The last personal honour of the tournament went to Ben Walker the Eagles keeper who won the golden glove.

"Now with that out of the way, put your hands together for the 2009/10 Junior State Cup runners-up, the IMG Ascenders," the announcer continued naming each player by name as he called them up to receive their medal. The players despite their disappointment, managed to put on brave faces as they approached the podium. Their coach whispered encouraging words as they received their silver medals.

The IMG Keeper, still visibly upset, received a particularly warm cheer from both teams and the crowd. The Eagles players clapped respectfully, understanding the effort and heart their opponents had put into the game. However, most of them were just going through the motions as the moment they had been waiting for finally arrived.

The announcer paused, allowing the applause for the IMG Ascenders to die down before he continued. "Now ladies and gentlemen, it's my great honour to present to you the champions of the 2009/10 Junior State Cup The Red Oak Eagles," He announced with an upbeat voice fully showing his joy at being able to crown this year's winners.

The Eagles crowd behind their players erupted in cheers following his words with some even encouraging him to hurry up and hand them the trophy. The player's faces lit up even more than before pride evident as they were called up the stage. One by one, the Eagles' players made their way to the podium, their smiles wide and their steps light.

Henric was the first to step forward, his heart racing with excitement. He had played a crucial role in the victory, and the weight of his hard work over the season was now lifted by this moment. As he took his medal, the elderly man with the navy suit placed a hand on his shoulder, congratulating him on his achievement.

Henric smiled widely, his eyes shining as he proceeded to take the medal out of its case seemingly mesmerised. He wasn't the only one star-struck by the shine of their medal or were just on cloud 7 by the moment. Especially when their friends and parents continued to cheer for them trying to get their attention.

They didn't leave after receiving their medal instead lined up at the back waiting for the rest of their team. Coach Bauer was late to be called up by the cup reps as he was handed his own medal. With each additional member, the crowd continued clapping not easing up in the slightest.

When everyone was on stage, even Ben with his crutches the rep handed the Eagles captain the trophy. He proceeded to kiss it before turning to his team who were eagerly waiting behind him. He handed the trophy to Max who was the fastest to snatch it from his hands. Not minding him tho held up his hands silencing the crowd who was ready to shout in celebration.

He waved someone over who turned out to be one of their school teachers. It was Principle Oak who walked over with a 70mm silver plate equally as magnificent as the cup they had just won. The Eagles were handed the trophy before the match but hadn't had the chance to celebrate so Ole wanted to do it all at once.

Receiving the plate from his principal he thanked the old man before holding it up light before turning back to his team. Everyone quickly formed a huddle blocking out all outside viewers as everyone put a hand on one of the trophies. They thrust up the trophies twice before they exploded with chants of champions on the third time.

It was then their excitement was unleashed as their school band team started playing the song. They started jumping up and down on the stage for a little while passing around the trophies as their family took pictures. From that moment on everything was a blur for the players who were seemingly on a sugar high.

Not even the sad faces of the IMG players who departed the field could dampen their spirits. Everyone was busy taking pictures with each other and both the major trophies. Rakim, Mike and IMG number 3 were even asked to give interviews by one of the state cup websites and both school's newspapers.