

Football 204

Chapter 204 Pundits Discussion

[25/09/2018, Sky Studio in London,]

Kelly Cates: "Good evening, and welcome to this Sky Sports News special report. Tonight, we turn our attention to the shocking incident at Red Oak Prep in the United States, where a school shooting took place 8 days ago leaving several students injured, including a name that has been on the lips of many in the footballing world—Rakim Rex. The 15-year-old football prodigy finally woke up from his coma last night, but questions remain about his future in the sport. Joining me to discuss this are Micah Richards, Gary Neville, and Thierry Henry. Micah, what do we know about Rakim's condition and the potential implications for his football career?"

Kelly's opening speech was captured by the high-resolution cameras of the studio signalling the start of tonight's broadcast. She was good at her Job and immediately picked a topic of discussion for the other pundits to discuss. As she finished introducing the topic a picture of Rakim appeared on the big screen behind them.

"Thanks, Kelly. Rakim as we all know is a phenomenal talent that we haven't seen come out of the States. He moves with a certain swagger up and down his wing dancing past defenders and making it look easy. It wasn't hard to guess why giants like Barca, PSG, and so on were looking to secure his services early." Micha responded covering a few facts about Rakim as a player. This lets those viewers who didn't know him yet get a better understanding of the 15-year-old winger.

" While I'm an advocate for a wait-and-see approach, the bullet wound he sustained in the shooting was near his shoulder, and while he's awake now, the extent of his recovery is still uncertain. This kind of injury can be particularly problematic for an athlete, affecting everything from strength and mobility to confidence on the field." He continued stating how such a critical injury could mess with the young phenom's play style.

Never mind a bullet wound just a severe sprain can cause a player who performed superbly to experience a drop in performance. Whether players recovering from injuries can reach their potential depends on a lot of factors and not all of them are in the player's control. Kelly understood this and decided to lead the conversation in that direction.

"Gary, you've been involved in the development of young players. How significant is an injury like this for someone at Rakim's stage in his career?" She asked the former Manchester United right back as the camera panned over in his direction. He was sitting in the middle as Micha sat on his left and Thierry at the other end of the table.

"Kelly, it's devastating. At his age, every moment on the pitch is crucial for development. Clubs have been tracking his progress closely, and this injury puts a big question mark on his future. The shoulder is critical for balance and strength, and any limitation there can impact performance." Se stated with a light frown as some videos of Rakim playing were shown on the screen behind him.

He went on to analyse the young winger's play style, talking about how he relies a lot on his agility to circumvent players. They discussed his most recent tapes in the under-17 World Cup leading the team to a win. The fact he was only 14 at the time made the pundits even more amazed and lament this sudden roadblock to his career.

He didn't focus too much on the negatives choosing to try and say something positive. "However, we've seen athletes come back from serious injuries before, but it will take time and immense effort. Clubs will now be assessing not just his physical recovery but also his mental resilience."

Seeing his speech come to a natural end Kelly cut in guiding the conversation forward. "Thierry, as someone who's faced injuries during your career, what advice would you give to Rakim as he begins his recovery?"

The French man simply smiled at the address his charisma shining through. "First and foremost, my heart goes out to Rakim and his family. I've been through serious injuries, and the road to recovery is tough. My advice to Rakim would be to take one day at a time. Focus on your rehabilitation, listen to your medical team, and stay mentally strong."

He started by covering what players going through injuries have to watch out for. The advice didn't just apply to Rakim alone it could also help other players recovering from injuries. "Surround yourself with positive influences and remember why you love the game. It's a long journey, but with determination, he can come back stronger."

"I'm just glad that he is finally awake, I know his family will be glad regardless of his future prospects," Micha chimed in as a picture of Rakim in his hospital gown surrounded by his family and friends was shown. The pictures that appeared caused a few laughs in the studio bringing the conversation to a lighter note.

Kelly interjected on that note deftly manoeuvring the conversation to the next topic of discussion. "Just yesterday Mrs Rex had this to say when asked about her son's future football career," Kelly said as the quote of what Lisa had told reporter Steve Clark appeared on the screen behind them. 'We are more concerned with seeing our child recover than worry about a game,'

"Whilst I agree with that sentiment we are here to talk about football, So Micah, can you give us an idea of which teams were vying for Rakim's signature before this incident, and what this might mean for those potential deals?" She asked pivoting the conversation to the nitty and gritty of what football fans were looking for.

Micah took the queue and started talking about different clubs that had actively contacted Rakim's team. However, they have received reports that most of the clubs have cooled their interest in him after recent events. "Before this tragic incident, Rakim was one of the hottest prospects in football. He was already being compared to some of the best young talents in recent years."

"Micah is right, but now, these clubs will have serious reservations. They'll wait to see how well he recovers and if he can get back to his best." Gary stated adding his two cents to the conversation as they briefly discussed which clubs were close to securing Rakim's signature.

Most of these clubs that wanted to sign him were drooling at his prospect after seeing that he wasn't affiliated with any club. So all they would have to do is pay Ace Academy a nurturing fee that shouldn't exceed 5 million and they would have a Wunderkind in their team. Most of them planned on letting him play for the reserve team or send him out on loan but securing his signature was a must.

"I'm also told that his family has let go of his agent Oliver Burke," Kelly commented noting how the agent had been getting shade from the young wunderkind's 900K Instagram followers. After the leak that he was using his shooting as a selling point to facilitate a move for his other clients, they have been trolling him all over social.

"If you ask me his actions were despicable, but as a business move I must applaud him for the business side of the move," Micha stated with a wide grin as they started talking about how Oliver managed to get Matteo Smith a 3-year deal.

The young Sheffield United striker ended up signing with Atletico Madrid boosting their attacking lineup. Through clever manoeuvring, he managed to secure a lucrative deal of a wapping 25,000 Euros a week. Factoring the prestige and platform to improve his career the young striker can't complain.

Gary Neville interjected, clearly unimpressed. "You can't be serious, Micah. Burke's actions might have been shrewd from a purely business perspective, but using a tragic event like Rakim's shooting for leverage is beyond the pale. It's unethical and shows a complete lack of respect for the player and his family."