

Football 218

Chapter 218 218 1st Training (1)

Rakim glanced at the entrance to the training field as more teammates began to filter in. The once quiet pitch now buzzed with the sound of cleats on grass and lively conversations. The energy shifted from calm anticipation to the buzzing excitement of a new training day.

Karamoko nudged Rakim, nodding towards a group of players who had just entered the field. "Those are some of the first-team regulars. Good guys, but they can be a bit intimidating at first." Before he knew it more than twenty players were already dressed and going through light warm-ups around the pitch as they caught up with their friends.

Rakim observed them with curiosity, noting their confident demeanour. Since they were practically the best players in the country their confidence wasn't unfounded. He knew earning their respect would be best if he wanted to break into the team quickly. He took a deep breath, feeling a mix of nerves and excitement as Karamoko led him towards a group he was familiar with.

Karamoko led Rakim towards a group of players gathered near the centre of the field. As they approached, one of the players, a tall defender with a commanding presence, looked up and greeted them with a nod. Next to him was a shorter guy around the height of 1,78 m exuding a feint charisma.

"Hey, Karamoko," he said upon noticing them approaching the group sending them a friendly smile. The young man is Callum McGregor a talented Scottish midfielder and Scotland international. He came up from the club's youth program only leaving on a loan stint in 2014.

Looking at the group of guys the majority were Caucasians, standing tall, with physiques more muscular and developed than his. There were only 4 African players in the team and one of them was within the group led by the captain. This gave Rakim a sense of reassurance that he wouldn't be alone and that racial discrimination wouldn't be that high.

"What's up cap, you met the new boy yet?" Karamoko stated with a bright smile as he started introducing his new teammate. Most of the guys just nodded with no one going up to warmly greet Rakim.

They seemed to be sizing him trying to assess if he was a threat to them after all they all heard the stories. Although most of them were surprised by the fact he joined the team they didn't linger much on that. However, things quickly changed upon noticing his height of 6'1 and the bit of skill he showcased when warming up with their own underkind.

The most worried was Scott Sinclair who directly competed with him on the left wing. He was the only African player in the group and also the one who was the least friendly. "Welcome to little Scotland Mr superstar, sorry we forgot to roll out the red carpet for you," He snidely commented with a mocking gaze as he sized up the taller boy. His friends at the side immediately chuckled finding his joke amusing.

The closer he got the more he had to look up annoying him that a 15-year-old kid was already taller than him. "All you can make up for it when I score my first goal," Rakim replied with a small smile glaring at the older player showing no intent on backing down.

Since both of them were already competitors for the same position there was no need to force a relationship. That goes especially since these guys were already hostile to him before he could even introduce himself. At this moment Rakim realised that his time at the club wouldn't be as easy as he had anticipated.

Scott's eyes narrowed slightly, but before he could respond, Callum stepped in, his tone calm but firm. "Alright, that's enough. We're all teammates here. Let's focus on training." He turned to Rakim, offering a friendly nod. "Welcome to the team, Rakim. Looking forward to seeing what you can still do."

Rakim nodded back, grateful for Callum's intervention but still caught the slight jab the young captain made. On one hand, they all doubted his skills and on the other, they were afraid he would overshadow them. They were all in the entertainment industry and having fame would help them advance their careers. So having a teammate that receives all the limelight could very well impact their market value despite performing well.

After the captain's words, the tension eased slightly, and the group dispersed to continue their warm-ups. Rakim and Karamoko moved to an open area of the field, continuing their passing drills. Their chatter eased as the young Celtic phenom seemed to be deep in thought not making much conversation.

As they passed the ball back and forth for a while, Coach Andrews who would lead today's training blew his whistle, signalling the start of the session. "Alright, everyone, gather around!" he called out. The players quickly assembled, forming a semi-circle around the coach.

Rakim took his place in the semi-circle, standing beside Karamoko. Coach Andrews stood in the centre, his presence commanding attention. The chatter among the players died down as they focused on their coach. Rakim took a deep breath, feeling the weight of the moment as all the players focused on every word of the coach.

"Alright, everyone, today we're focusing on building our match fitness. We'll start with some intense physical drills and move on to positional play. I want to see maximum effort from each of you."

Coach Andrews divided the players into smaller groups and assigned them to different stations. Rakim found himself in a group with Karamoko, Scott Sinclair, and a few others. Their first drill involved a series of sprint intervals, designed to test their speed and stamina.

As the whistle blew, Rakim exploded off the starting line, his long strides eating up the ground. He focused on maintaining his form and breathing, pushing himself to keep up with the more experienced players. Knowing that Stamina wasn't one of his best traits he focussed on his breathing by compensating for his superior acceleration.

Having an A+ Agility did wonders for his sudden acceleration but his speed still needs a push to enter the next grade. He had noticed that the system liked to add + next to grade until he achieved a qualitative change relating to the stat. His strength and stamina were probably the things holding back the two stats from upgrading further.

Scott Sinclair, running beside him, seemed determined to outpace him and generally outperform him at every turn. With both of them being speedy players they were pretty evenly matched. Sinclair had an edge in overall speed but lost to him when it came to sudden acceleration. How that would translate to actual skills with the ball was yet to be determined as they hadn't used a football yet.

Rakim's competitive spirit kicked in, and he matched Scott's pace, refusing to be left behind. They reached the end of the sprint neck and neck, both breathing heavily. Scott shot him a sideways glance but said nothing, his expression unreadable.

Next up were agility drills, weaving through cones and performing quick directional changes. Rakim's years of training working on his agility and natural balance shone through here. He had even undertaken wide receiver cone drills just to boost his agility after seeing how fast their legs would flash through leaders and past cones.

His ambidextrous skills played a huge role in this especially when it came to weight distribution. This allowed him to explode with a burst of speed no matter which foot he was standing on. He navigated the course with ease, his movements fluid and precise. Karamoko, equally agile, mirrored his performance, the two of them drawing nods of approval from Coach Andrews.

The coach seemed to think the two were just trying extra hard to impress him using competition to spur them on. After several more physically demanding drills, the players moved on to positional play. Coach Andrews set up a small-sided game, with specific focus areas for each position.