

## Football 225

### Chapter 225 Making It look Easy

[11:35 am, Wednesday 30/01/2019, Fir Park Stadium, Motherwell]

The game started off with a high tempo and within the first ten minutes. Rakim made it onto the first team after his stellar performance at Saturday's game and training throughout the week. He instantly made his presence on the field felt causing his opponents to panic whenever he had the ball.

After a failed Motherwell attack one of the Celtic defenders sent a sharp pass his way. Receiving a pass from Ben on the left wing, he executed a quick step-over, leaving the Motherwell right mid-flat-footed. He then burst down the line initiating a quick counter-attack. A switch was flipped and a wave of Celtic players rushed forward overwhelming the boys in yellow-gold jerseys.

Rakim continued to pick up speed the longer he ran but quickly reached a few roadblocks in the form of defenders. One of the Motherwell midfielders came sliding in kicking up quite a bit of grass. The winger had predicted this pulling back the ball before chipping it over the defender. Not losing a single step he circumvented the down-defender continuing his run.

when he reached the edge of the box he scanned the box looking over the green figures racing into the box. Not hesitating his left foot wrapped around the ball sent a whipped cross into the box, which Douglas nodded into the net, giving Celtic an early lead.

In the 35th minute, Rakim found himself surrounded by three defenders second third of the pitch. He remained calm not at all losing his cool as his feet continued to flash over the ball. He used a combination of body feints and a quick Cruyff turn to glide past them. Not heading down the wing he cut into the middle lane quickly breaking into the final third.

No one expected his sudden intrusion into the middle lane, but Rakim didn't care as he continued to eat up yards of grass. Reaching a couple of yards in front of the box he performed a fake kick just as a defender tried to intercept him. Pushing the ball past him he took a step forward and fired off a powerful shot.

The ball cut through the air passing by two players completely blocking the keeper's vision. Before he could even react the ball pierced the right side of his net. 2:0 Happy at their lead they immediately celebrated over the moon and already discussing where they would go to eat after.

As the game progressed, Rakim continued to dominate. In the 70th minute, he picked up the ball near the halfway line and darted past two defenders using a simple step-over. Dashing forward he came to a sudden stop when two more defenders blocked his path.

Using his long legs and feint he executed a reverse elastico causing the two defenders to clash with each other. Not minding them he nudged the ball past them unleashing a curling shot from outside the box. The ball sailed in the air into the top corner, sealing a 3-0 victory for Celtic.

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[11:35 am, Wednesday 04/02/2019, St Mirren Park

In the 15th minute, Rakim received the ball from Scott in the midfield. With a quick flick of his right foot, he performed a swift roll cut confusing the defender sticking at his back. The move was simple but effective as he dragged the ball across his body he pulled it back with the outside of his foot.

In a swift motion, he left his marker in the dust rushing forward quickly eating up yards. The crowd erupted in awe at the graceful skill he had just displayed. With his most recent performances, the number of people coming to watch their matches had increased. More diehard Celtic fans had decided to come to see this promising new addition to their club.

As Rakim continued to eat up yards down the left flank he was quickly marked by a speedy St Mirren right-back. The lanky boy's defensive coverage was quite high as he didn't lunge in a tackle and remained calm. Both made eye contact for a second seemingly daring the other to blink first.

The winger however was waiting for his reinforcement to arrive inside the box and didn't mind this stand-off. Thus when he spotted Douglas on the other flank rushing into the box he made his move. A quick feint to the right followed by a step over with his right foot he forced his marker to step into that direction.

In the same motion as his step over he flicked the ball in front of his left foot seemingly ready to make a cross. However, his marker in a last-ditch effort lunged to his right foot forward trying to block the ball's pass if he were to cross it. Rakim however let the ball roll past his left foot and instead swung his other foot from behind performing a crisp rebona.

The ball left his foot sailing high into the box just outside the six-yard box where Martin was lurking. Capitalising on the opportunity he jumped into the air beating his man and headed the ball into the empty left side of the goal 0:1. The chemistry between Rakim and Douglas was becoming a staple of their games as they started to click during training.

In the 40th minute, Rakim found himself on the right side of the pitch after swapping flanks with his counterpart. He cut inside, dribbling past two defenders with a crisp Ronaldo chop and simple stop-and-go. As he approached the penalty area, he executed a swift La Croqueta, gliding past two defenders.

Shifting the ball from his right foot to his left, completely outfoxing the last defender. With a clear sight of the goal, Rakim unleashed a powerful left-footed shot that rocketed into the top left corner. 0-2 to Celtic. The second half progressed, in a similar manner as he continued to be a thorn in St Mirren's side.

In the 60th minute, he picked up the ball near the halfway line. Using his speed and agility, he performed a series of rapid step-overs, confusing his two markers. Pointing at one of his teammates to make a run past him he suddenly performed a no-look ship over one of the defender's heads.

The ball dropped into the feet of Martin who had been lurking just outside the box. The boy took a deft touch bringing the ball down and turning in one swift motion. Not hesitating he let loose a powerful shot hitting the bar of the goal before nestling itself into the back of the net 0:3. St Mirren's consolation came in the form of a corner where one of their defenders rose above the pack and hammered in a powerful header.

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[13:00 am, Friday 08/02/2019, Pittodrie Stadium, Aberdeen]

Against Aberdeen, Rakim's form continued to shine. The game began with a high pace, and Aberdeen's defenders were keen to mark Rakim tightly, but it didn't take long for him to find a breakthrough.

In the 25th minute, Rakim received a long pass from the defence. He cushioned the ball with his chest and immediately performed a Zidane roulette, spinning past two pressing defenders. With an open field ahead of him, he drove forward. Approaching the box, he executed a quick drag-back before curling a shot with the inside of his right foot into the bottom corner. 1-0 to Celtic.

Before the ball had even reached the Goal the young winger had sprinted off to the sideline. The moment he shot the ball there wasn't a fibre in his body that believed he wouldn't score. He had decided to take the shot after seeing the keepers positioning close to the front post.

This action quickly became a signature of the young winger always ready to punish keepers who position themselves ready to rush out. Not willing to risk more confrontation than necessary already having to deal with defenders trying to RKO him. The saying if they can't stop you break him became a real problem for him, the longer he continued to dominate the league.