

Football 227

Chapter 227 Mini Derby (2)

[12:15 pm, Sunday 15/02/2019, Lennoxtown Training Centre, U20 Glasgow Rangers vs Celtic]

Celtic quickly responded in kind playing more aggressively. In the 15th minute, Rakim received a quick one-two pass from Jaimie one of his midfielders, just outside the penalty box. With two defenders closing in rapidly, he executed a double step-over, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, and then burst forward, nutmegging the nearest defender.

The crowd gasped in unison at the audacity and skill on display. Now entering the box close to the touchline Rakim was faced with a tight angle and the goalkeeper almost hugging his front post. Not having enough time to try and beat the keeper with defenders quickly closing in on him. He swung his foot chipping the ball into the centre of the box aiming for the area near the back post.

Douglas jumped into the air followed by a defender but was unable to bring his head to the ball. A couple of feet behind him was Jack donning the Celtic number six jersey. He found himself unguarded as he watched the ball drop towards him, Seemingly not believing his luck he swung his foot not even waiting to take a touch.

That proved to be a mistake as the moment his foot connected with the ball he knew he had fucked up. The ball had hit the top of his boot taking a wide trajectory the missing the goal completely as it flew off to heaven. Seeing his poor shot the onlookers could only groan in disappointment shaking their heads.

Despite the failed conversion of such an opportune chance, the boys in green didn't lose hope. Their confidence swelled allowing them to make their presence felt in the game. Rakim's presence on the field became quite magnetic as he started becoming more active.

No longer constraining himself on his flank he started drifting into the centre of the pitch. Connect passes with his teammates he was able to help them control the flow of the match for a little while. He became a magnet for the ball and his teammates were keen to get him involved after seeing that he was hot.

His effort culminated in the 25th minute as Celtic mounted another attack. Scott, playing in the centre of the park, intercepted a loose ball and immediately looked up for Rakim. He sent a precise, lofted pass towards the left wing, where Rakim was already sprinting into space.

Rakim received the ball with a deft first touch, immediately turning to face the incoming Rangers' right-back. The defender approached him with an angled form seemingly guiding him towards the corner flag. Seeing this Rakim accelerated when he reached near him, that's when he suddenly used the underside of his right foot to roll the ball across his body.

Before the defender could react he suddenly used his left foot to chop the ball behind his foot and around the defender. Changing direction in the same motion he fought past the defender heading diagonally across the 18-yard box. The crowd erupted after they witnessed this already expecting to see something entertaining.

In that split second, he decides his next move after scanning his surroundings. Coming to a sudden stop he performed a sharp roll croqueta he dodged the slide tackle of a Rangers defender. Not looking back as he left the defender in his wake he nudged the ball forward.

He wanted to take a shot but seeing two more defenders in his path he suddenly came to a stop. Putting his foot in between the ball and the approaching players, scooping up the ball he turned in one fell swoop. In the next moment, he appeared next to them opening up a shooting lane. Without hesitation, he let loose a weighted shot sending it skidding along the ground.

The Rangers keeper performed an acrobatic jump across his line stretching his gloves out to the limit. His effort bore fruit as the tip of his gloves connected with the ball. However, he wasn't able to divert its path by much allowing it to hit the side of his post before entering his goal. 1:0.

Seeing his effort bearing fruit Rakim raced off to the sidelines celebrating his goal with his teammates. With the emphasis put on this Glasgow derby, their celebrations were more animated. Despite Rakim being new to the squad he was also swept up in the atmosphere joining his teammate's antics of dancing the macarena.

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The Rangers Players responded quickly upon falling behind, they pressed hard, looking to bring things back to level terms. In the 30th minute, Cole the Rangers number 10 picked up the ball in midfield and dribbled past two Celtic players before unleashing a powerful shot from 25 yards out. Kyle between the sticks made a spectacular dive across his line and was barely able to push it over his goal.

As the first half drew to a close, both teams continued to create chances. In the 40th minute, Rakim found himself once again weaving through the Rangers' defence before laying off a pass to Scott. The midfielder lurking at the edge of the box didn't hesitate to fire a first-time shot.

The shot carried power as it whizzed towards goal leaving the keeper rooted to his spot. Luck wasn't on his side though as the ball skuffed off the top of the bar flying off into the crowd. The midfielder could only shake his head in disappointment and shock his head with a bitter expression.

His miss marked the end of the first half with a score of 1:0 as Celtic took the lead. Despite the goal separating both teams none of the players were disheartened still seeing hope in scoring more goals.

Both coaches had similar talks with their teams, emphasising a few points and encouraging them to continue where they left off.

The second half started with both teams showing great determination. In the 50th minute, Rangers were awarded a free-kick just outside the box. Cole Mckinnon the recently turned 17-year-old midfielder calmly stood over the ball. He was a local player from a youth club called Drumsagurd Academy whom the club had been courting for a year.

Only upon the completion of the last season were they able to finalise the move. The midfielder has yet to let down the trust placed in him showing a dominant performance throughout the season. Thus it came as no surprise that he was the one to take this set-piece.

Taking three steps back at a curved arc he stood with his hands at his hips calmly reading the wall in front of him. He also scanned the players in the box contemplating a cross but upon seeing Klye's positioning he spotted an opportunity. Upon hearing the ref blow his whistle he took a quick breath before quickly closing in on the ball.

Swinging his foot with all the power he could muster the side of his right foot connected with the ball's sweet spot. His foot wrapped around the ball whipping it around the wall with surgical precision. It bent past the innermost member of the wall as it whipped towards the bottom left corner of the goal.

Kyle found himself in the wrong position too close to the back post not able to react in time. By the time he could even move the soft thud of the ball pierced his net 1:1. He was only brought back to reality by the loud shouts of the Rangers player who celebrated their equaliser.