

## Football 232

### Chapter 232 Explosive Interview

"Congrats on the match and winning yet another Man of the Match," the middle-aged reporter from the Daily Record here in Glasgow asked me after the cameraman was ready. His news outlet is mainly for the morning paper, but they work with the BBC News on some broadcasts, especially the sports portion here in Scotland.

"Thanks, Jim feels good to get the win," I replied politely already used to getting interviewed by him. He has been following our team since I made my debut for the team against Kilmarnock and is quite the friendly guy.

Unlike another journalist who is out to make explosive news by trying to trap players with tricky questions, he is pretty chill. He acts more like a football enthusiast turned report rather than a carrier reporter. Now this other guy with the Sky News I don't like, not in the least since he is the complete opposite of JIM.

He has been actively trying to fish for any controversy he can, constantly seeking to create drama where there is none. His name is David Gibs, and just being around him makes me want to end this interview early. However, the club deems this mandatory as a form of media training for youth players.

Deciding to pay him little mind I continued answering Jim's questions about the match. From talking about the team's performances my state of mind and plans for the future. It felt a little like an expose on Rakim but Jim kept it calm only asking questions related to the game.

"Rakim, another stellar performance. Care to comment on the notion that you should have created more given your pedigree as a player?" David interrupted, his tone slick and calculated getting his questions in before I could ignore him.

Narrowing my eyes at his words I took a breath to compose myself. "I always knew you were a fan Mr Gibbs no matter what my fans say," I started off with a light smile causing the man in question to frown at how I interpreted his words. Jim's small chuckle from the side didn't help matters as his attack didn't seem to have worked.

"However, the last time I checked football is still a team sport no matter how good you think I am, Tonight, we played as a unit and got the result we wanted. That's what matters." I tacked on my answer before he could interject to clarify his words. My answer had its desired effect as his next word got stuck in his throat not knowing how to respond.

David's frown deepened, but he quickly recovered, aiming to regain control of the interview. "Indeed, football is a team sport," he acknowledged, his tone shifting slightly. "But there's no denying that fans and analysts alike have high expectations for you, However, you have come up short of your expected pro debut" he stated shifting his jabs more subtly since his direct approach did not affect me.

"Honestly I'm disappointed too but what can you do, when the management tells you to play you don't ask where you just do," I responded mirroring his disappointed expression as I shifted all the fire up to the club. It's probably not a good thing to do for a player at a club but I don't want to take on the blame for their decisions.

If they are sending me down to the youth league because of some powerplay they should also deal with the media backlash. That's why I've been subtly telling my fans on social that I was ready and was just waiting for the call-up. That added to my performance on the field shifting the focus from me not playing to the senior team.

Upon hearing my answer for throwing shade on the club both reporters were taken aback seemingly not expecting it. After all, I'd been dodging all the pitfalls David had been setting but now I took the bait. David wasn't complaining though as he saw the chance to make this more explosive.

"So are you saying the first team is suppressing your talent and isn't giving you a chance to shine?" He immediately asked trying his best to hold back the evil grin forming but I could still see it. The system's improved vision is no joke allowing me to read facial expressions.

"I'm not saying all that, all I'm saying is I'd love a bigger challenge It's getting pretty boring down here," I calmly replied with a smile letting them know what I was thinking. Mum acting as my agent has been trying to pressure the club into promoting so this might help.

I've seen a lot of players act politely in interviews trying to seem professional but I choose to be myself. Since they wanted to play games I would play along with them and use them for my benefit. What most players don't realise is that they are also celebrities which means controversy raises their worth.

There is a difference between being arrogant and having confidence in your own skills. Bragging about a spectacular goal I scored will help boost the confidence of my fans and irk my haters. Most importantly it will keep my name in their minds creating discussions and thus raising my profile.

The direct benefit for me is that my agent can use my buzz as a weapon in negotiations. In the end, every player has to choose what kind of public image they want to maintain. If you ask me a forward should have the unshakable confidence like Zlatan, CR7, and Balotelli.

David's eyes glinted with interest, sensing an opportunity to stir the pot further. "You mention wanting a bigger challenge. Do you feel the current level of competition in the youth league is hindering your development?" He asked in a confident tone as if he had just found the answer that would allow him to achieve his mission.

"Bro what? haha, have you just not been paying attention or are you just slow," I asked him genuinely confused as to why this guy was just stating the obvious after we had just covered it. Like you got your sound bite don't be greedy and just leave I'm not gonna hand you more on a silver platter.

His green expression after realising my words is quite comical but I should probably end this here. "Anyways let's end things here gentlemen, I got a FIFA tournament to attend too," I told them with a smile before instantly turning around and heading for the locker rooms.

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"There you have it guys these were the player's words when questioned about his status as a youth player," Gary Lineker stated with a neutral expression not knowing what to think of the winger's attitude.

Many of the young players making their mark seemed to be media-trained and would genuinely remain professional. He knew that Rakim was also media trained having given hundreds of interviews whilst coming up in the states. Thus he didn't quite understand what to think of the winger's new attitude but before he could form a thought one of his co-hosts spoke up.

"That's exactly what I'm talking about he is just too immature for the next level," Steve Clark exclaimed with a sense of indignation as he found the ammunition he needed. He has been getting the stink eye from Micha as they watched the interview but no he was in the right.

"Oh give it a rest, as someone who has never played football how would you know whether any player is ready for the next step," Micha shot back leaving no room for his words to even fester in the minds of the viewers.

Steve was immediately incensed after hearing his words as his sore spot was hit. He had never played a sport in his life only watching some occasionally. However, he somehow fell into the path of a reporter and after failing to rise in mainstream media and entertainment he could only follow the path of sports.

It was all good at first as his degree in communications and marketing gave him the advantage. He didn't account for the fact that the majority of sports anchors have a background in the sport. This inadvertently created a barrier that proved insurmountable for him until his interview with Rakim's mother after the shooting.

His controversial, clinical and all business-minded opinion seems to resonate with views. Following this style of reporting he quickly rose within the Sky media group making his fair share of enemies. Mostly players but also a few co-workers, but he started losing his momentum after a certain point as overrated players were hard to find. Thus when he heard about Rakim creating some buzz again he jumped at the chance to bash him.

Before he could retort and assert his dominance again Gary interrupted him. "Rakim's journey is just beginning, and it's worth noting how far he's come despite the setbacks. But for now, let's pivot to another rising star. Micah, what are your thoughts on Matteo Smith's debut with Villarreal?"

Micah, still fuming from the earlier exchange, took a deep breath and shifted his focus. "Matteo's debut was a solid performance, however, a striker needs goals to survive in this business just impacting the match with passes and pressing won't be enough," He stated in a neutral tone sounding rather professional but didn't forget to throw jabs at Steve's chosen player.