

Football 233

Chapter 233 Forced Decision

[16/02/19, Celtic Park stadium 10:00]

The morning sun streamed through the tall windows of the boardroom at Celtic Park Stadium, the air in the boardroom at Celtic Park was thick with tension. The room, lined with portraits of past club legends, bore witness to the many decisions that had shaped the history of Celtic Football Club. It was 10 a.m. and the club's top brass had convened for a crucial meeting.

Ian Bankier, the club chairman, sat at the head of the table, his expression stern but composed. He was a man accustomed to getting his way, his authority was rarely challenged within these walls. Across from him, Brendan Rodgers, the senior team manager, looked less composed. His frustration simmered just beneath the surface, his hands clenched on the table as he awaited the start of the meeting.

Around them, other board members exchanged glances, sensing the brewing conflict. The usual discussions about club finances, future strategies, and player performances had taken a back seat to the pressing matter at hand.

Ian cleared his throat, drawing the attention of the room. "Thank you all for being here today. We have several important issues to discuss, but let's begin with the most pressing one."

Brendan's eyes narrowed slightly, knowing exactly what was coming. He had been preparing for this confrontation ever since the rumors started circulating.

Ian continued, "Our shareholders are pleased with our recent performances and the consistent dominance in the league. However, there have been concerns about the need for fresh talent in the senior team, especially with the recent public outcry for Rakim's promotion."

His words are true as the club had been receiving numerous messages to promote the lad. However, none had come more direct than after last night's interview where the winger put the ball in their court. His admittance that it wasn't his readiness that was in question forced them to have this battle early. Ian would have preferred to wait until the outcome of the second leg against Varreial in the Champions League before inviting Brandon to find greener pastures.

Circumstances have forced him to move things forward when the boy's academy threatened to end the lone contract. They wouldn't allow them to risk their player in their youth system. Thus giving an ultimatum to either ruse him in professional matches or send him back.

Added to the fact that small clubs around the world have shown interest in him again further lit a fire on the issue. As if that wasn't enough The player's own fans have been spamming their club's pages, calling for them to give Rakim a chance.

Brendan couldn't hold back any longer. "With all due respect, Ian, Rakim isn't ready for the senior team. He has potential, but he's too young and inexperienced. Throwing him into the deep end now could be detrimental to his development and the team's performance."

Ian leaned back in his chair, his fingers steepled. "Brendan, Rakim has proven himself time and time again in the youth league. The fans are clamouring for his promotion, and frankly, we need to show them that we are committed to nurturing young talent. This isn't just about Rakim; it's about the future of the club."

Brendan's frustration bubbled over. "The future of the club also depends on proper investment in experienced players. I requested a significant increase in the transfer budget to bring in the talent we need to compete at the highest levels. That request was denied. How do you expect me to build a competitive team without the necessary resources?"

Ian's eyes hardened. "We've been dominating the league for decades with prudent investments and strategic decisions. We don't need to throw money at uncertain transfers when we have promising talent like Rakim within our own ranks. Promoting him will appease the fans and show our commitment to youth development."

Brendan shook his head, exasperated. "It's not that simple. Rakim's promotion is a gamble, and if it doesn't pay off, it could set us back significantly. Say he performed well is the club ready to trigger his buyout clause because let's not forget he is still a lone player," He retorted with a clam expression pouring cold water on the board members.

they had been in support of the winger's promotion but they forgot that they wouldn't be receiving any long-term benefits. Everyone here knew that the club wouldn't be willing to pay that much money for a player this young. Especially given the fact that his performance is uncertain and he is unlikely to sign with them long-term.

Ian's eyes narrowed as Brendan's words hung heavy in the air. The room fell into an uneasy silence, each board member weighing the implications of Brendan's statement. Ian's steely demeanour remained intact, though his patience was clearly wearing thin.

"Brendan, we all understand the risk involved," Ian said, his voice calm but edged with steel. "But we cannot ignore the pressure from the fans, the media, and the potential future revenue Rakim represents. If we're going to maintain our standing and demonstrate our commitment to the club's long-term success, we need to make bold decisions."

Brendan's jaw tightened. He knew Ian was not going to relent easily, but he couldn't shake the feeling that the chairman was not fully appreciating the complexities of his situation. "Bold decisions should be made with careful consideration, not under duress. If we promote Rakim prematurely, and he fails to perform at the senior level, it won't just be a setback for him—it could undermine the entire team's morale and our reputation."

A board member shifted in their seat, breaking the silence. "Brendan, while I understand your concerns, the fact remains that Rakim's performance has generated significant buzz. We're facing a critical moment where our actions will either reinforce or damage our public image."

Another board member chimed in, "Perhaps we should consider a compromise—maybe a limited number of senior appearances for Rakim, coupled with a clear developmental plan and an agreed-upon review period?"

Ian shook his head. "We need to make a decisive move. A limited trial won't satisfy the fans or address the growing pressure from the media and the player's representatives."

Brendan looked around the room, gauging the mood. He saw the weight of the board's collective sentiment and the urgency in Ian's eyes. The prospect of being forced into a corner was palpable, but Brendan knew he had to navigate this carefully.

"Fine," Brendan said finally, his voice carrying a mix of resignation and determination. "If Rakim is to be promoted, I need assurances on several fronts. First, I will have the final say whether he participates in matches. Second, that if the promotion turns out to be detrimental, the board will support me in making necessary adjustments. And third, that we revisit the transfer budget issue to address the balance we need for the team's competitiveness."

Ian's expression softened slightly, though he remained guarded. "I can agree to your first two requests however your third will have to be discussed at a later date." Taking a measured pause after speaking his first sentence knowing he would have to take control of the discussion.

Although he promised to discuss the budget he knew that was an impossibility right now. That's why he has already lined up a replacement manager and was just waiting to finalise the deal. Having a manager who is unable to work under the budget that is set is a headache he no longer wants to deal with.

After all, balancing the club's shareholders, stakeholders and fan's expectations is hard enough. Being the manager for Celtic football is practically a dream job for any up-and-coming coaches to hone their craft so he doesn't understand Brandon's displeasure. If the man is so adamant about competing in major European competitions he should train the players well and plan good enough tactics.

These thoughts ran through the chairman's head as he opened his mouth to speak his next sentence. "The 0:2 loss in the Europa League round of 32 is unacceptable for us, the league is not a threat so you should at least achieve some results. We don't expect you to beat a Laliga side but at least instill some fighting spirit in the lads."