

## Football 238

### Chapter 238 Vs Valencia (2)

[Time stamps in games]

[1] Moments later both teams were ready to begin as Burke stood over the ball waiting for the official's whistle. "Celtic gets the first half underway at the Mestalla." Callum McDonald Stated in excitement as the ball was kicked back into the Celtic half.

The green army immediately charged forward wanting to stamp their mark into the game from the first moment. [2] Their efforts paid off as Burke got into a good position for Celtic down the right wing. He immediately raced past his defender with a nimble nudge of the ball, but he took the ball too close to the byline. However, he couldn't retrieve the ball in time as it rolled out of the byline before he had the chance to cut it back into the box.

[4] Not giving the Valencia squad a chance to settle in they continued to attack creating an attacking chance after an overlap between R.Christi and J.Hayes to slip past Torres. The left-back used some neat footwork to get past Wass cutting into the box from the left wing. Creating enough space from the chasing Wass he let loose a cross into the box. However, the ball was too close to Neto and he didn't waste the chance to stop the attack with a palm sending it out for a corner.

"Celtic sure are seeing a lot of the ball in the opening minutes of the match and have made a bright start to the game," Callum McDonald commentated as he watched Toljan put a cross into the box, but once again, it couldn't escape the grasp of Neto. This time however the keeper held onto the ball tightly allowing the boys in yellow to gain possession for the first time in that match.

Settling his anxious teammates he rolled the ball out to Diakhaby who proceeded to pass it around along his backline. They completely ignored their opponents who fell back into their own half as they got a feel

for the ball. For the next few minutes, they continued to ping the ball around keeping it away from their opponent as they gradually moved forward.

They soon reached their first roadblock as Celtic assumed a tight and compact formation, not allowing them to break through their midfield. Captain McGregor and Scott Brown were particularly active in the middle breaking off any attacks that got too close. The game entered a stalemate for a moment as both teams continued to test the waters.

In a moment of carelessness, Scott Brown and Forest managed to steal the ball from the careless feet of Guedes. Not hesitating Forrest charged down the flank as swift as the wind initiating a counterattack. Lotto Valencia (LB) arrived at his side but remained calm not lunging into an attack as he stood up the winger.

The moment he reached the side of the box, he performed a quick step over feinting a cut into the box. Creating just enough space to charge past Lotto accelerating forward he looked up into the box looking to pick out a cross. He hesitated a little too long that by the time he swung his foot to make the cross the white boots of Lotto sent it out for a corner.

[10] "GREAT CHANCE FOR AJER! Christie's" Roy exclaimed with excitement as Forest corner found the Celtic defender near the penalty spot. Swinging his foot at the descending ball, he connected with it first time for a volley. However, his shot didn't travel far hitting off a nearby Valencia player.

He gets another chance the next moment as it bounces back to him, but he's closed down too quickly and his effort sailed high and wide of the target. The home team's fans seeing these heaved an audible sigh of relief after seeing their team escape another deadly attack. Although at a loss as to why their team was on the back side to a much weaker team, they started chanting trying to encourage their players.

Their efforts bore fruit as the home team started to make their presence felt in the match. Becoming more brave in their attacks Wass was the first to create an opportunity for them. Getting into a good position in the final third the left-back was faced with Hayes ahead of him.

Trying to play a quick one-two with Torres his foot hit the turf sending the ball out of play. Seeing his mistake he could only raise his hand in apology to his nearby teammates. Although emboldened by the fan's cheers they continued to make silly mistakes.

Moments later Guedes ground himself in a good position in the middle of the pitch. Through nimble footwork, he charged down the flank after beating his man. As he dribbled forward he quickly met the defensive pressure of Toljan. Panicking he quickly performed a few stepovers but ended up tripping over his own legs before he could get into the box.

His mistake wasn't something Toljan would miss as he immediately charged forward nimbly steeling the ball. He didn't launch a counter though choosing instead to pass the ball around in their own half. Since they had been under pressure for a while they needed a second to regain composure.

Valencia who had been rushing to score a goal decided to sit back and let the Celtic player keep the ball. Through simple Zonal marking, they managed to keep the defensive-minded Celtic players at bay. Whenever they got close to initiating an attack they faced a wall of players who closed off all attack routes.

[19] Burke managed to create a chance after picking up the ball from the hallway line. Sprinting forward with speed at an angle nimbly went past two players finding himself inside the box. When he looked up into the box for support he was disappointed as no other Celtic players were making runs to support him and he has three defenders around him.

Forced to go at it alone he feinted left as he nudged the ball to his strong right foot and immediately fired off a shot. His shot managed to slip past the two defenders in the path of the goal but a pair of boots appeared. Garra came sliding in with a last-ditch effort blocking the the shoot and sending it out for a corner.

His timely save received a warm reception from the home crowd and the rest of the players. However, the player in question did not get up from the ground and started clutching his leg in pain. His right leg seemed to have clammed up as he performed the sliding manoeuvre.

"Oh he seems to be clutching his hamstring," Roy Townsley observed after seeing how serious the injury seemed to be as the player showed no signs of recovery. Medics soon ran onto the pitch after the official's instruction allowing him to receive treatment.

"It's a shame too since he has been playing quite well," Callum McDonald noted as he started analysing the player's performance in today's match. "He has been solid in the backline an integral member to stopping Celtic breakthroughs."

"Yes Christie has been struggling to sneak past him whenever he beats Wass," Roy chimed in with bright Eyes as they showed a replay of the defender performing a sliding tackle just in time to sweep away the ball. "His positioning in today's game has been bloody brilliant," Callum McDonald spoke up with a smile genuinely impressed with the player's performance throughout the game.