

Football 239

Chapter 239 Vs Valencia (3)

[Time stamps in games]

21st Minute: Garay, the seasoned defender for Valencia, was down on the pitch for the second time within a few minutes, clutching his hamstring. The medical team hurried over to assess him trying their best to ease the pain. However, no matter how much treatment he received using cold sprays the pain wasn't alleviated.

The looks exchanged between the medical staff were grave; Garay couldn't continue. Coach Marcelino Toral quickly prepared a substitute gritting his teeth in annoyance. He wasn't mad at the player but was simply annoyed at the circumstances that would have him miss more crucial matches.

Garay was escorted off the field, limping alongside the medical team. Francis Coquelin was called upon to replace him, adding a new dynamic to Valencia's defence. The player barely got a 2 minute warm up as Garry was on the floor before he had to replace him.

[24] The match's intensity escalated the moment it resumed with scot brown finding himself at the receiving end of a yellow card. It happened when Valencia's Goncalo Guedes skipped by his marker and was on his way to launch an attack. That's when the seasoned midfielder confronted him with a harsh tackle that saw him eating the turf.

There was no hesitation in the refs as he stopped the game and booked the Glasgow man for his offence. His attempt at bringing order to the game and calming the visiting side proved for nought two minutes later. Celtic's Jeremy Toljan found himself in the referee's book as well after yanking at the shirt of Toni Lato, who was making a promising run down the left flank.

The quick succession of cards served as a wake-up call for Sir Brenden Rodgers at the sideline. He immediately shouted for his guys to calm down and bring some composure into their game. His words were effective as Celtic started to enjoy a spell of possession, skillfully passing the ball among their defenders.

However, they struggled to penetrate Valencia's disciplined formation. The home team had tightened up after a shaky start, causing frustration for the visitors who couldn't find a way into the final third.

[30] Hayes was relentless down the left wing quickly becoming the focal attack point for his team. He tried on three occasions to breach Valencia's defence, inching closer to the box each time. His persistence culminated in a cross that was ultimately intercepted by the vigilant Valencia backline.

The Celtic squad remained steadfast as they continued to launch attacks into the Valencia half. In one of those attacks, Burke once again found himself with a lot of space to run into as Celtic won the ball back again. He cuts it back to Christie who had been trailing him looking for an opportunity.

Not hesitating the winger took the shot first time sending it whizzing along the ground. Was anticipated the shot though managing to get a foot in front of the ball sending it back out of the box. His heroics earned him a hearty cheer from the fans as his team's midfielders initiated a counter.

Their attack was swift and precise as Soler liberated Torres on a run down the wing. The winger danced along the wing avoiding the tackle of Hayes before sending a sharp cross into the box. The ball sailed towards the back post looking for the head of Sobrino, however before he could even jump it was headed away by Ajer.

The ball dropped into the path of Simunovic hitting off his thighs forcing him to scramble to regain control of the ball. His scramble put the Celtic team in a precarious position as he almost gave the ball

away in his own box. Luckily he recovered quickly enough from his heavy touch that just took it away from him. He managed to poke the ball past the oncoming Mina keeping him from capitalising on the chance.

[36] Forrest once again put another good cross into the box from the right wing picking out Hayes near the far post. He took a deft touch to set himself up, but he leaned back as he took the shot sending it high over the crossbar. As he stood there in disbelief at missing the opportunity a groan of disappointment descended from the away stand.

Sir Brendan Rodgers at the sidelines couldn't believe his eyes after seeing him miss such a good opportunity. Nevertheless, he couldn't go back in time and settled on giving instructions to the players. He liked the way they were playing and wanted them to just be more clinical.

However, his mood dropped the next moment as two minutes later Valencia launched an attack down the left flank. Guedes bypassed Scott and Forrest with a deft one-two allowing him to accelerate past them. One-on-one with Toljan he displayed a nimble piece of skills and footwork allowing him to slip past him.

However, that's where his run stopped as Toljan backed into him sending him tumbling to the ground and stopping his run. The ref wasn't polite in the slightest as he blew his whistle directly pulling out his cards. "Oh no that's his second yellow," Callum McDonald exclaimed as he watched the proceedings below him.

Just like he said it was Toljan's second yellow meaning he would be sent off ending his Europa League journey if Celtic didn't create a miraculous win. The possibility of that would be even more insurmountable given that they were down to 10 men. The ref's decision to send Toljan off in the 37th minute changed the whole dynamic of the game.

The Celtic side who had been putting on a good battle were now left to defend passively not daring to charge forward. Their already defensive formation became even tighter as Forest on the right flank now acted as a wingback. In one of Valencia's relentless attacks, they managed to create a corner opportunity after a blocked long shot from Soler.

[41] Sobrino was picked out at the far post from a Valencia corner and managed to chest the ball down. However, it was out of his reach not allowing him to capitalise but Mina seemed to smell an opportunity. Picking it up he doges past one then two green jerseys but isn't able to get past Boyata.

Turning on his axis he spots Parejo at the edge of the box and immediately decides to chip the ball in his direction. The ball sailed over the head of McGregor dropping right in front of Parejo giving him enough time to pick out a shot. However, the midfielder didn't bother controlling it deciding to take it on the volley.

His shot was hard and sharp as it flew through the crowd of players. It scuffed off a boot causing it to bounce on the ground creating a couple of problems for the keeper. However, Bain remained composed tipping the ball past his post Brilliantly Denying the Valencia goal.

[44] Things didn't end there as Ferran came close a few moments later! The winger cuts back inside from the right wing and finds himself in some space on the edge of the box. Not hesitating he tries to curl his shot into the far post and comes very close, but his effort is just wide. The groan of disappointment mirrored the feeling of the player who couldn't believe he missed by mere inches.

[45] the last minute of the match became even more chaotic for the Celtic side taking their fans on a rollercoaster of emotions. It was Mina with the attempt this time as the ball rebounded back to him. He was too eager to hit and took it on the volley, but Bain gets a strong hand across to make the save and palm it away.

Under the applause of the away side and the cheering of his teammates, the referee blew the whistle ending the half. His last action gave the away fans hope and frustrated the home team as the score remained at 0:0.

HALF-TIME: VALENCIA 0-0 CELTIC.