

Football 240

Chapter 240 Vs Valencia (4)

[Time stamps in games]

"Celtic need to make a quick start to the second half as they chase a goal that would keep them in this tie and give them a chance to qualify for the next round." Callum McDonald said as the viewers watched the players walk back out of the tunnel and position themselves on the pitch.

He continued highlighting what he thought the Glasgow side had done well throughout the first half. From his tone, you could tell that he was proud that a team from his country was putting on a good fight in the European league. Safe to say he was mostly all praises doing his best to remain neutral until his co-host got the hint to do his job.

Roy Townsley sitting next to him also chimed into the conversation. "Valencia will want to make the most of their one-man advantage though and get the goal that would probably take the game out of their opponent's reach." As his words fell the ref blew his whistle allowing Valencia to get the game underway.

The opening minutes of the second half were what all the viewers had been expecting of his match. Valencia kept control of the ball as they mounted a few attacks when they presented themselves. Soler was doing a superb job connecting his teammates and bossing the midfield.

[49] Torres received a sharp through ball from the said midfielder latching onto it as he skipped past Christie. Dribbling the ball with quite the momentum he took on Hayes, a quick step over he dropped a shoulder to his left as he knocked the ball past Hayes.

Rounding the left back he sprinted forward trying to take control of the ball. However just as his foot was about to reach the rolling ball it was swept away by a slide tackle from Sumunovic. "what a clearance, He had to get everything and he did," Roy exclaimed with genuine excitement as he watched the replay of that slide tackle.

[52] Burke after spotting a good opportunity signals for a through ball the moment McGregor took control of the ball in the midfield. The midfielder stretched out his hand as he swung his foot chipping the ball forward, sending a looping ball over the top of the Valencia defence.

Well ahead of his marker he stretches out his foot bringing the ball down with his first touch. However, before he could charge forward the ref blew his whistle calling out for an offside. Burke wanted to argue but the linesman at the side remained unperturbed with his flag raised.

[54] Wass plays a crisp back-and-forth pass with Francis Coquelin as he moves into the middle. Linking up with more players the right back travels towards the centre as he brings the ball upfield. At the halfway line he dodges a slide tackle from Brown before liberating the ball to the feet of Gudes.

The winger wasted no time manoeuvring down the wing displaying some beautiful footwork as he skipped past Forest. Not holding onto the ball any longer he sent a through ball into the run of Sobrino, as he sprints into the ball. The striker finds himself in a lot of space after his run into the box, and he cuts back inside getting to the other side of Ajer who was tracking back.

He aims to shoot but changes his mind halfway through his swing after seeing Ajer's outstretched foot. Cutting back across him he dribbles the ball down to the touchline deciding to square it across the keeper as Boyata blocks the near post. The ball whizzed across the six-yard box well out of reach from the keeper but none of the nearby forwards can get close to it.

Luckily for Celtic who also missed the chance to clear it on its way through. Gasps of relief and groans of disappointment instantly descended from the stands. Brendon Rodgers especially heaved a sigh of relief as he felt his heart rate calm down again.

Seemingly energised by the sudden scare Celtic launched a quick counter-attack. They seemed to want to regain some control of the match playing out the goal kick quickly. The ball quickly finds the feet of Christie as he cuts into the field forcing Wass to chase after him.

Dodging the feet of Coquelin he sped into the space between the two centre backs. However, he was brought down by Diakhaby before he could enter the box sending him tumbling to the ground. Without hesitation, the ref blew his whistle booking him after his high boot challenge. The set piece was taken quickly but didn't end up amounting to much as Forrest's shot sailed over the bar.

[55] Wass comes close to scoring after Parejo takes a free-kick on the left wing. The shoot loops over all the players in the box sailing towards the back post where Wass was running onto the ball. Not hesitating he takes the shot on the volley, but it's straight at Bain, who catches the shot before falling to the ground.

The game continued similarly as both teams continued to attack each other. Burke was close to scoring a goal after receiving a weighty pass from Boyata. Turning on his axis he dribbled the ball forward but was quickly brought to the ground by a slide tackle from Diakhaby.

Burke on the ground complained to the officials feeling that he should have been given a free-kick. However, the defender got the ball cleanly and it looked like Burke tripped over in the end. Celtic supporters tried to influence the referee's decision with loud shouts and whistles, but the officials remained unmoved. The game pressed on, both teams exhibiting a fierce desire to gain the upper hand.

60] Valencia continued to probe Celtic's defence, with Parejo orchestrating play from the centre of the park. The Spanish captain's vision was on full display as he sent a diagonal ball towards the left wing. Guedes sprinted to meet it, showing impressive speed to beat Lustig to the ball.

He cut inside, forcing the Celtic defender to backpedal, before unleashing a curling shot towards the far post. Bain, however, was alert and dove to his left, palming the ball away with a strong hand. The away crowd erupted in jubilant applause, appreciating the keeper's reflexes and agility.

[64] The game took a dramatic turn when Celtic won a corner kick. McGregor delivered a precise cross into the box, where Simunovic rose highest to meet it. His powerful header seemed destined for the back of the net, but Valencia's goalkeeper, Neto, pulled off a spectacular save, tipping the ball over the bar at the last second. The Celtic supporters, already on their feet, roared in appreciation, while Simunovic held his head in disbelief at being denied.

From then on Valencia continued to crank up the pressure on the Glasgow side playing more aggressively. Feeling the pressure of the match they kept the ball from their opponents using the player advantage to create attacks. Celtic struggled to get on the ball as Valencia just slowed the pace of the game down a little bit.

[68] First change of the game for Celtic now as Edouard comes on to replace Forrest. The right winger had gone missing since the start of the second half and Brendon Rodgers needed a change to revitalise that flank. Not long after Valencia also initiated a change Toral made his second substitution of the match as he brought on Gameiro in place of Sobrino.

[70] Toral change instantly bore fruit as GAMEIRO PUTS VALENCIA AHEAD! The substitute has only been on for two minutes and made use of the first chance he got. Left with a little too much space near the penalty spot as Guedes sent a pass across the box. The ball just bounced off his thigh and slotted through Bain's legs nestling itself into the back of the net 1:0 Valencia! (3-0 aggregate).

As the scoreboard changed to reflect Valencia's lead, the atmosphere in the stadium shifted noticeably. The Valencia fans erupted in celebration, their cheers echoing through the stands, while the Celtic supporters fell silent, the reality of the situation sinking in. The uphill battle the Glasgow side faced seemed to settle in on the Glasgow side.