

Football 256

Chapter 256 Just Another Day

Rakim arrived at the training grounds the day after their 3-1 victory against Hearts with a spring in his step. The adrenaline from the win still coursed through his veins, and he felt more determined than ever to keep the momentum going. The morning sun was just beginning to warm the pitch, casting long shadows across the grass as he made his way towards the locker room.

The training grounds were already buzzing with activity. His teammates were scattered across the pitch, some stretching, others engaged in light banter, but all of them still riding high on the victory. As Rakim walked past, he received a few nods of acknowledgement and claps on the back. His performance in the game had earned him some respect.

After quickly changing into his training gear, Rakim jogged out onto the pitch, joining the rest of the squad. He got a good 20 minutes to warm up before Coach Lennon, blew his whistle to gather the players around. His stern expression softened slightly as he addressed the team.

"Good win against Heats two days ago," he began, pacing in front of them. "But there's no time to rest on our laurels. We've got to stay sharp during the closing stages of the season, lets start with some light drills, focus on recovery, and then work on a few tactical adjustments."

The players nodded in agreement as Coach Lennon finished his brief speech. There was a sense of urgency in the air despite the recent win, everyone knew that the season was far from over, and there were still crucial matches ahead. They needed to prove to themselves and their organisation that they were still a strong team even without Brendon Rodgers.

Rakim felt the familiar flutter of excitement in his chest as he joined his teammates in the warm-up drills. They began with some light passing exercises, designed to keep them loose and in rhythm. The ball zipped around the circle as they played one-touch passes, the crisp sound of boot meeting leather

filling the air. Rakim could feel the soreness in his muscles gradually easing as he got into the flow of training.

As they transitioned into more intense drills, Rakim found himself paired up with Forrest for a series of one-on-one exercises. The goal was to work on ball control under pressure, something Rakim was keen on improving. Since he has to complete the 'EGO Mission' anyway he might as well get some practice with his teammates. After all, they are the best players in the country and would account for the best practice since only in-game accounts for system mission accomplishment.

As Rakim squared up against Forrest, he could feel the tension in his legs easing, replaced by a surge of adrenaline. With Forrest being a quick and nimble player he has to bring his A-game if he wants to get past him. Their first confrontation began with Forrest sending a long pass towards Rakim who was standing near the edge of the third quarter. Watching the ball fly towards him as Forrest raced up to the field to close the distance didn't leave him much time to think as he received the ball.

Calmly chesting it down he brought it under control just as Forrest arrived within 2 meter range. Rakim barely had a moment to think as Forrest closed in on him. The ball was still settling at his feet when Forrest lunged forward, trying to cut off his options. But Rakim was already a step ahead. With a quick flick of his ankle, he sent the ball through Forrest's legs in a sharp nutmeg and sprinted around him to collect it on the other side.

A few of the players watching let out appreciative shouts, and Rakim couldn't help but flash a grin. Charging forward with the ball at his feet he created a little gap between himself and Forrest heading for the goal. Just as he entered the penalty box Forrest managed to catch up with him again applying pressure on him.

As he neared the edge of the penalty area, he shifted his weight away from him with a quick feint to his right causing Forrest to overcommit as he tried to get around him. Just as he did so, In a swift move, Rakim pulled the ball back to his left getting around Forrest and executing a swift cut back. Nocking the ball forward to his left foot he again created the needed separation before swinging his foot in the next moment.

His shot arced beautifully towards the goal, the ball spinning with precision as it met the sweet spot of his foot. Forrest, still recovering from his earlier misstep, could only watch as the ball sailed past him and Corner Hazard in between the sticks. The goal was clean, and the satisfying whoosh of the ball hitting the back of the net brought a cheer from the sideline.

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In the heart of New York City, Lisa Rex and her husband, Ben, were attending their daughter's dance competition. The venue was bustling with excited parents and nervous performers. The soft hum of conversations and occasional bursts of applause filled the air as the competition went on. Despite the festive atmosphere, Lisa's phone was abuzz with notifications, a stark contrast to the vibrant scene around her.

As Lisa made her way through the crowded lobby, her phone rang incessantly. She glanced at the screen and saw it was an unknown number from Berlin. With a sigh, she answered the call. "Hello, Lisa Rex speaking," she said, trying to keep her voice steady amidst the cacophony.

"Lisa, this is Franz from Adidas," the voice on the other end was smooth and confident. "I'd like to discuss a potential endorsement deal for Rakim. His recent interview has stirred quite the buzz, and we believe there's a significant opportunity here for both him and us."

Lisa took a deep breath, the competition unfolding in the background as she listened to Franz's pitch. "I'm currently in the middle of an event," she said, her tone firm. "Can we schedule a meeting to discuss this further?"

Franz's voice carried a note of urgency. "We'd prefer to make this move quickly. The hype around Rakim is substantial, and we want to ensure we capitalize on it before it fades." Lisa promised to consider the offer but she knew that the likelihood of them agreeing on such a flimsy deal was unlikely. If the company does not offer a significant deal with a long-term plan that suits their goal she won't even entertain the idea.

Ending the call with a polite but firm note it didn't take long for her phone to ring again by yet another international call. This time it was a representative from Puma. "Lisa, this is Sam from Puma," the new voice said with a tone of enthusiasm. "We're very interested in Rakim. We believe his potential is undeniable, and we're prepared to make a competitive offer to bring him into our fold. I'd like to discuss how we can make this happen."

Lisa managed a brief response before ending that call, noting that she had several other calls to field. Just as she was about to focus on the next call, her phone rang once more. This time, it was someone from Under Armour.

"Lisa, this is Mark from Under Armour," the voice was steady and professional. "We've seen Rakim's rise and the impact of his recent actions. We'd like to present an exclusive offer that includes not just an endorsement deal but a long-term partnership that aligns with his values." Lisa acknowledged the interest and promised to get back to him. She was starting to feel overwhelmed by the number of calls but knew she had to stay composed.

As she put her phone away for a moment to watch her daughter perform, her thoughts were interrupted by another incoming call, this time from Nike. It was Jason Hart, the Head of the Player Scouting Division. "Lisa, it's Jason from Nike," Jason's voice was tinged with a sense of urgency.

"Lisa, it's Jason from Nike," Jason's voice was tinged with a sense of urgency. "We need to have a serious discussion about Rakim. We realize that our recent decision to distance ourselves might have been premature, and we're keen to reestablish our relationship with him. We're prepared to offer him a new, more attractive deal."

