

## Football 262

### Chapter 262 Vs Aberdeen (2)

The crowd was disappointed yet again but didn't voice it as they saw the ball dropping near the edge of the box where a lone figure stood. Rakim had somehow slipped from the centre of the box to the edge losing his marker in the process. Now he stood alone as he watched the ball descend towards him but his eyes were glued upon the sea of red Aberdeen players rushing out to stop him.

They were about 2 meters away from him as the ball fell to his foot, and inspiration struck him. Not touching the ball down to control it he flicked it up with his right foot sending it to his left side. Dipping his shoulder as if he was about to follow he successfully duked the players into covering that direction.

What happened next was a moment of magic as he took a large step towards his right, his left foot swung backwards towards the still airborne ball like a whip. His heel connected with the ball and flicked it over his own head in the direction he was headed. The on-rushing players were left utterly stunned, scrambling to follow after him but it was already too late.

Rakim had already angled his body and swung his right foot connecting with the ball side-on for a volley. Like a missile, the ball rocketed from his blue Puma boots sailing past the heads of players and nestling itself into the right side of the net.

For a moment, time seemed to stand still. The Aberdeen players, who had moments ago been charging down on Rakim, were now frozen in place, disbelief etched across their faces. The crowd, which had been holding its breath, were spurt to life as they seemed to hear a woman's voice cheer in excitement setting off an avalanche of jubilation.

Lisa jumped up from her seat with a bright smile cheering as loud as she could as her sun ran towards the corner flag. Without breaking a sweat he broke off into the Griddy with much more swagger this time even whipping his shoes in between as he continued to griddy. The home fans who had gotten to

love this dance as it meant a goal for their team immediately started singing the chant they had made up for the boy.

"RAKIM The Dream! RAKIM, RAKIM, RAKIM, Oh he's as fast as lightning," a synchronised clapping ensued before they continued, singing with excitement as the scoreboard changed to 1:0 in the 10th minute.

The celebration in the stands was electric, the fans feeding off the energy that Rakim had ignited with his stunning goal. Lisa, overwhelmed with pride and emotion, continued to cheer loudly as she watched her son bask in the glory of his moment. The rest of the team swarmed him at the corner flag, patting his back and ruffling his hair in celebration, much to the winger's displeasure.

Back in the private lounge, Lisa returned to her seat, her heart still pounding with excitement. She glanced at her phone, quickly snapping a photo of the scoreboard with Rakim's name lit up next to the 1-0 scoreline. It wasn't his first career goal but it was the first she got to see live.

This brought about a feeling of accomplishment in her heart as she had been with his training every step of the way. From early morning runs and custom training plans, she had been there for everything. Even when he got professional help she was still there doing her best to support his growth so she felt quite validated to see their efforts bearing fruits.

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As the match resumed, Celtic's momentum surged. The early goal had shaken Aberdeen's defence, and they struggled to regroup under the relentless pressure. Rakim, now brimming with confidence, became even more involved in the game. He was everywhere tracking back to help in defence, making incisive runs down the right flank, and linking up seamlessly with his teammates.

That first goal seemed to have ignited something within him as he became a menace for his opponents. Not just that the ball seemed to gravitate in his direction more as his entire being demanded to be involved in the play. His spirited gameplay not only boosted him but also the rest of his teammates who did their best to match his energy.

[20]

Celtic continued to dominate possession, with Scott Brown and Nir Bitton dictating the pace from midfield. Aberdeen's attempts to counter were quickly snuffed out, and the home side pressed high, forcing errors and regaining the ball in dangerous positions.

In this particular possession, they found themselves just outside the Aberdeen box looking for a way through. Scott Brown played a one-two with Sinclair allowing him to escape his marker before sending a short pass to Henderson. The cam didn't hold onto the ball as he was quickly closed down by two defenders.

He sent a crisp pass to the right flank right into Rakim's waiting feet. He calmly received the ball just outside the box, faced by two defenders. Not rushing the 3 of them entered a stand-off for a few seconds as Rakim slowly moved the ball back and forth between his feet.

When they finally couldn't stand it and looked ready to lunge in he performed a quick flick dropping his shoulder to the left. Faking a cut inside he immediately cut back to the outside leaving one of the defenders stumbling as he accelerated past them towards the flank. Without hesitation, he swung his foot sending a weighted cross into the box.

The ball bypassed everyone until arriving in front of Sinclair who had darted towards the back post. Sinclair took the ball in stride and fired a low shot towards the goal, going for power rather than

accuracy. To his dismay Lewis, the Aberdeen goalkeeper, put in a last-ditch effort and pulled off a brilliant save, tipping it just wide of the post.

The crowd groaned in unison at the near miss, but the sense of anticipation only grew. Celtic were knocking on the door, and it seemed only a matter of time before they would extend their lead.

From her seat, Lisa watched as Rakim jogged over to take the corner, the crowd roared their approval as he prepared to send the ball into the box. Rakim raised his hand, signalling the set-piece routine they had practised countless times on the training ground.

The corner was delivered with precision, curving sharply towards the near post where Scott Brown had made a darting run. Brown connected lightly with the ball, flicking it on with his head, sending it looping towards the far post. The Aberdeen defence scrambled, but the ball dropped to the feet of Oliver Burke, who was positioned perfectly to slot it home.

This time, there was no miraculous save. The ball nestled into the bottom corner of the net, and the stadium erupted. Celtic had doubled their lead, and the atmosphere was electric. Burke celebrated by running towards Rakim, who had provided the crucial assist. Their celebrations were mirrored by the happy atmosphere of the fans as they chanted club hymns.

[30]

Just before the half-hour mark, Aberdeen managed to create a rare chance. A quick counter-attack saw Greg Stewart break down the right flank, leaving Kieran Tierney trailing behind. Stewart delivered a low cross into the box, aiming for the towering Sam Cosgrove. Cosgrove, using his physical presence, managed to get a header on target, but Bain, reacted quickly, diving to his right to palm the ball away.

The rebound fell to James Wilson, who was poised to take a shot, but before he could connect, Kristoffer Ajer slid in with a perfectly timed tackle, clearing the danger. The Celtic fans responded with applause, appreciative of their team's defensive efforts.

That chance seemed to be the spark that the away side needed to get back into the game. Celtic no longer had it easy to keep control of the ball. Their opponents now made them fight for every inch as they changed their strategy.

Within the next few minutes, they even managed to threaten Bain's goal quite a few times. The only reason for them not scoring yet was the keeper's stellar performance and a little bit of bad luck on their side. This led to the chance they managed to win in the [40] minute when J. Wilson was taken down at the edge of the box.

[40]

The referee blew his whistle, signalling a free kick for Aberdeen. The Celtic fans booed in protest, but the decision stood. Greg Stewart and Lewis Ferguson stood over the ball, discussing their options. Bain adjusted his wall, shouting instructions to his defenders, while the tension in the stadium mounted.

Stewart took a few steps back, eyeing the goal and waiting for the referee's signal. As the whistle blew, he sprinted forward and struck the ball cleanly with his right foot. The ball curled menacingly over the wall, heading for the top corner.