

Football 271

Chapter 271 Vs Dundee (3)

"We should stop them earlier up the field and ensure that we're not giving away any cheap fouls near our box," McGregor added, stepping up to rally the team. "We're dominating possession, so let's make it count. If we keep up the pressure, we'll break them down eventually. We've done it before, and we can do it again." The nearby players nodded in agreement, their focus returning as they began discussing ways to turn the game around.

Coach Lennon entered the locker room at that moment looking quite surprised to find the players already deep in discussion on ways to improve. He had been expecting to meet dejected players upon entering the locker room, needing to motivate them for the fight ahead. So seeing them already looking for ways in which to improve brought a smile to his face.

"(ahem)" He cleared his throat gathering the attention of everyone in the room. "Nice to see that you still have some fight in you lads, I'll keep things simple as we all know what needs to be done." He started, ensuring that everyone else was paying attention to his next words. "We've been the better team out there, but we need to convert our chances. Keep the pressure on, and don't let up. I want more movement off the ball, and for God's sake, be sharper in the final third. All our hard work is useless if we can't rattle the back of their net."

The players exchanged glances with their resolve hardening as they absorbed Coach Lennon's words. The intensity in the room heightened as everyone absorbed the mission ahead of them. There was no need for further elaboration; they all knew what was at stake. "Right, let's get out there and show these cunts what we're made of," McGregor loudly exclaimed his voice resolute as he clapped his hands together.

The rest of the team roared in agreement, the locker room reverberating with the loud sound of their battle cry. They quickly gathered their gear, the sound of boots being laced up and water bottles being snapped shut echoing through the space. The tension from earlier was quickly replaced by determination as the players quickly headed out of the locker room ready to step on the field again.

The muffled roar of the crowd grew louder, as they filed out of the locker room, but they still had to wait a few minutes for the Dundee side before being allowed back on the pitch. Quickly taking their positions on the field all that was left was for the ref to blow his whistle and unleash them onto their opponents.

"Welcome back ladies and gentlemen, to a match that is shaping up to be an exciting meet-up towards the end of the premiership. We're coming live from the Scot Foam Stadium, the score is Dundee 1: Celtic 0, I'm your commentator Callum McDonald and with me is Roy Townsley," Callum McDonald's voice was heard all over the live broadcast on the match as the game resumed with the whistle of the refs.

"This match has been truly surprising, as Lenno's version of Celtic was put on full display before us. Despite controlling most of the ball we have yet to see them score but we can already see the potential they hold," Roy did his part as the commentary team by picking up a topic for them to discuss as both teams started to test each other again slowly. They both seemed to be trying to decide whether they could immediately implement what they had discussed during their halftime talk.

"You're right they came out a completely different team from the one we saw face Aberdeen last weekend." Callum started off following the flow of their conversation talking about the positive changes the away team has made. "let's not take anything away from the home team who managed to keep the more attacking-minded Celtic at bay."

"Indeed they have been cool and collected and were awarded a goal for their efforts," Roy intoned before going on to break down what had allowed the home side to stop the stacked Celtic side in their tracks. "Oh look something is happening," he suddenly called out as he spotted McGregor intercept a pass meant for Woods around the halfway line.

McGregor's interception was clean, and the away crowd's roar swelled as he immediately pushed forward, driving at the Dundee defence with pace. His quick footwork sent one of Dundee's midfielders sliding in too late, leaving McGregor with a clear view of his options upfield. He glanced to his left where Sinclair was making a darting run down the flank, his speed threatening to outpace Dundee's right-back.

McGregor released the ball with precision, sending it skimming over the turf towards Sinclair, who controlled it with his first touch and accelerated toward the byline. Dundee's defence scrambled to close down the space, but he was already cutting inside, eyes darting to find his teammates arriving in the box. In a split second, he whipped in a low, hard cross toward the penalty spot.

Edouard was there, ghosting between two defenders, perfectly timed to meet the ball. He lunged forward, extending his leg, and the connection was solid. Sending the ball flying toward the bottom right corner. "Edouard! This could be it!" Callum McDonald's voice was electric with anticipation.

However, Dieng was still hot from his first-half performance, and reacted instinctively, throwing himself low to his right. His outstretched hand grazed the ball, pushing it just wide of the post. Seeing their chance at an equaliser go amiss the away fans collectively gasped in disbelief at the near miss.

"That's the best chance Celtic's had all game, and what a save by the keeper!" Roy exclaimed as the camera zoomed in on the relieved face of Dundee's shot-stopper.

Celtic's corner was quickly taken, but Dundee's defence, packed into the box, managed to clear their lines. The ball fell to Dundee's captain, who immediately launched a counter-attack, catching Celtic slightly off balance. The crowd rose in anticipation again, as Dundee surged forward with numbers. Their quick, direct play seemed to unsettle Celtic's backline for the first time in the half. McGregor and Brown rushed to cover the gaps, but the ball had already been worked out wide to Dundee's winger, who had space to run into.

"You can feel the tension in the air, Roy," Callum remarked as Dundee's breakaway continued. "This game could turn in a second." The winger delivered a dangerous cross into the heart of the Celtic box. Dundee's striker leapt to meet it, but Bain was equal to it punching it out of his box and inadvertently taking out K. Miller. Luckily the striker was fine and was only thrown off balance by the keeper's actions.

The danger wasn't over, though, as Dundee regained possession at the edge of the box. The ball was worked back to Woods, who unleashed a fierce shot from 20 yards out. All the Celtic supporters held their breath already imagining the worst. However, before the Dundee Midfielder could get the shot off McGregor came to their timely rescue. He slid in like a rally car drifting around a curve directly sweeping the ball woods away.

"Fweet" Without hesitation the official blew his whistle displaying a yellow card to the CDM and awarding the home side a freekick. "Ref I hit nothing but the ball, he's diving," He tried to explain to himself but the official remained resolute saying that the challenge from behind was too dangerous. In the end, he could only sigh in disappointment and accept the decision as he sent an apologetic look at his nearby teammates.

"Don't worry about it, you did good stopping him Bain was down and he would have scored," Johnston told him with a nonchalant smile as he directly pulled his baldy teammate into the 4 man wall their keeper requested. Standing in a wall at a location similar to the one that had caused them to go behind in the first half, everyone on the Celtic side was visibly nervous.

The tension was palpable as Robson once again placed the ball down preparing to take yet another freekick. An eerie silence descended on the Scot Foam Stadium, with every fan on the edge of their seat. Dundee sensed this was a pivotal moment; another goal could be the dagger that would put Celtic on the ropes.

The referee's whistle pierced the air, signalling Robson to take the freekick. Celtic's wall was set, a line of determined faces, with Bain, crouched low, every muscle tensed in anticipation. Robson stepped up winning his foot with all his power and precision sending it rocketing towards the wall. However, the moment he connected with the ball his footing slipped slightly sending the ball to the end of his intended course.

He already knew he had messed up but only knew how much when he heard an audible crunch followed by the shrill scream of Mikey Johnston who fell to the ground clutching his crotch. The player had jumped high into the air much higher than the rest of his teammates in the wall brining his crotch into the path of the ball.