

## Football 274

### Chapter 274 Victory

In the 85th minute, Dundee won a corner after a rare foray into Celtic's half. The ball was swung in dangerously, but Bain came off his line confidently to claim it, immediately launching a counterattack. The ball was played out quickly to Forrest, who sped down the right wing, leaving his marker in his wake.

Forrest cut inside, drawing two defenders towards him before slipping a pass to Rakim who had been keeping pace with him. With space to shoot, he swung his foot the first time only to change his mind in the last second as he picked up a figure in his peripheral. Ralph had been tracking him and was just waiting for the opportunity to become his team's hero.

Thus he didn't hesitate to slide in when he spotted Rakim swinging his foot to shoot already seeing himself scooping the ball away. He was just a foot length away from succeeding when the unthinkable happened. Rakim's foot that had been swinging towards the ball didn't blast it instead choosing to chip it over the incoming Ralph before being swept to the ground.

He managed to move his ankles about of the way in the last moment only being taken down by the player's momentum. The Referee seeing this was just about to blow his whistle but was forced to stop as the figure of Sinclair latched onto the ball charging into the box. One-on-one with the keeper who had been expecting a free kick to be called, Sinclair didn't disappoint by slotting the ball out of his reach.

Sinclair's composed finish sent the ball rolling into the back of the net, sealing the victory for Celtic. The crowd erupted once more, the noise echoing around the stadium as the players celebrated. The scoreline now read 1-3 in Celtic's favour, a decisive lead with just minutes left on the clock.

Roy Townsley commented, "That was a moment of pure genius from Rakim. The way he baited Ralph into committing before effortlessly chipping the ball over him shows just how much confidence he has in his abilities. And Sinclair made no mistake in capitalizing on the confusion."

Callum McDonald added, "Celtic have really turned it up in these last few minutes. Dundee put up a valiant fight, but they just couldn't handle the pressure. You have to credit Celtic for their persistence; they kept probing and eventually found a way through."

As the Two commentators continued to discuss what had led up to the game the official didn't forget to do his job. Having let play continue after Rakim's brilliant move, he didn't forget to book Ralph for his tackle that arrived late. The right-back wanted to argue but knew full well he was in the wrong and simply accepted his yellow card with minimal complaints. "Are you okay," he asked Rakim who was getting up from the turf as he did a couple of stretches after dealing with the ref.

"Yeah, I'm good just saw your tackle a little too late and had to act quickly," he responded with a contemplative smile that confused Ralph but he just accepted the answer and returned to his teammates.

'That was close, I was so excited by the fact I had the goal in front of me that I only saw him when it was too late.' Rakim mused to himself as he watched his teammates celebrate the goal with the fans.

{If you weren't so eager to continue your goal streak you would have noticed him following the moment Forrest initiated the counter,} Eva chided with a matter-of-fact tone as Rakim started replaying the build-up of the counter. The more he thought it over he remembered hearing the player's heavy breathing as he followed after him but he was just too eager to get into an open space for Forrest to play him in.

'You're right he was there all along. If I had angled my run better or performed a feint he wouldn't have gotten so close to injuring me.' He responded as he continued to analyse ways in which he could have avoided having to give the ball away. Despite enjoying his involvement in the game in the CAM position he was a forward first and foremost. A successful forward lives and breathes goals just like a defender lives for that moment when they can end a team's dream of scoring a last-minute winner.

"you good," The voice of Forrest broke his thoughts forcing his eyes open only to be met by the worried expression of the handsome Scots man. "I'm, fine old man, let's go see this game through," He told him with a cheeky smile before quickly jogging back to his own half before the other could react.

"Hey, who are you calling old," he called out instantly chasing after him. "But since I'm your big brother I'll forgive you this time," He said to him as they caught up with each other only to be met by the deadpan look of the younger boy. "A good Big brother would have assisted me,"

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The game resumed with a Dundee side who were now visibly exhausted and demoralized. They knew the game had slipped out of their reach with any hopes of a late equaliser vanishing before them. With the clock winding down, Celtic continued to control the tempo, content to pass the ball around and let the remaining minutes tick away. Dundee drained physically and mentally, could do little more than chase shadows as Celtic calmly saw out the match.

after the 94th minute, the Ref loudly blew his whistle three times ending their torture allowing the Celtic player to celebrate their hard-fought victory. It had required every ounce of their effort to implement Coach Lennon's instructions which bore fruit in their victory. The scoreline of 3-1 didn't fully capture the intensity of the battle, but it was a fair reflection of Celtic's dominance, especially in the second half.

The Dundee players trudged off the pitch, heads held low knowing exactly where they had gone wrong. They still had pride in the fact they managed to pressure the league leaders for an entire half and almost

pulled off a win. Their fans, though disappointed, applauded their effort, knowing they had given their all.

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In the post-match analysis, both commentators praised Celtic's resilience and Rakim's standout performance for the 17 minutes he played. "It wasn't an easy game for Celtic," Roy Townsley noted, "but they showed why they're champions. Rakim was exceptional today, with three assists all the results of his moments of brilliance make for a not-so-bad match report."

Callum McDonald concluded, "Indeed he seamlessly integrated with his role in the number 10 role. Dundee made them work for it though, no doubt, but in the end, Celtic's quality shone through. It's these kinds of performances that win you titles, grinding out results even when the opposition puts up a strong fight."

The post-match scene was a blend of contrasting emotions. Celtic's players, elated by their hard-fought victory, were sharing high-fives and embraces, their faces glowing with satisfaction. Their celebrations were contained maintaining a sense of professionalism until they reached the changing rooms. Before anyone could even react Edouard commanded the speakers and started blasting some French party songs.

Lennon didn't join the boys in their celebrations as he was ushered to the press area by the Dundee staff. Sitting in the press area he couldn't hold back a huge grin from forming on his face as he faced the reporters. "It was a tough match, Dundee made us work for every inch, but the lads showed great character." was his opening statement to the clamouring questions of the different media outlets.

That single statement wouldn't satisfy them though as a reporter with BT Sports stood up to voice his question. "Good afternoon Mr Lennon I'm Mike Jones with BTSports." the handsome man in his thirties

introduced himself with a reassured confidence garnering everyone's attention. "We saw a different Celtic side from what we've seen in the past few games. What would you say went wrong in the first half that it ended with a 1:0 lead for the home side despite your team controlling 78% of ball possession."