

Football 284

Chapter 284 Celtic Vs Rangers

The crowd erupted into a roar of approval as Worrall's timely intervention denied Celtic the opening goal. A mixture of cheers and jeers filled Celtic Park, with the home supporters frustrated by the near-miss but unable to ignore the quality of the defending.

"Fantastic recovery by Worrall," Roy Townsley said, his voice filled with admiration. "That's exactly what Gerrard will have wanted from him, staying alert and making that critical interception."

Callum McDonald was quick to chime in, though clearly still riding the excitement of Rex's dazzling run. "Yeah, credit to Worrall for the tackle, but let's not forget the skill from Rakim there. He's just sliced through Rangers' midfield and defence like they weren't even there! That's the kind of flair that gets fans off their seats."

"Indeed, Worrall will have to put some of that alertness into keeping track of him, he's the type of player to change the momentum of a match." Roy intoned as Rakim jogged towards the corner flag, positioning himself to deliver the set piece. Celtic fans rose to their feet, chanting his name as the wall of green behind him interacted with him trying to give him a boost. He did not disappoint them holding up a thumbs up before whipping away some sweat from his brow silently wishing he could wear his sweat absorbent hood in the match.

Taking a second scan the ruckus developing inside the ranger's box he felt just how much it meant to everyone. The ref had to interfere 3 times breaking up a couple rowdy players who got into pushing matches. Eventually things settled down and he was allowed to proceed with the set-piece. The corner swung in dangerously, whipped to the near post where Boyata rose highest. His glancing header sent the ball flashing across the face of goal, but McGregor, with cat-like reflexes, got down low and parried it away with a strong hand.

"Brilliant save from McGregor!" Callum shouted. "Celtic are knocking on the door, but the Rangers keeper is up to the task!"

The ball bounced out to the edge of the box, where Ntcham was waiting. He took a touch to control it before firing a low drive through the crowded penalty area. The shot seemed destined for the bottom corner, but once again, McGregor was equal to it, diving full stretch to push the ball away for another corner.

"That's two huge saves from McGregor in quick succession!" Roy said, trying to keep his composure. "Rangers are under real pressure here, but their keeper is keeping them in the game."

Rakim jogged back to take another corner as the Rangers defence regrouped, shaken but not broken. McGregor, still catching his breath from the double save, barked orders to his backline, urging them to stay tight and focused.

Celtic fans, sensing their team was building momentum, roared even louder. The green-and-white wall behind Rakim's back felt like it could carry the ball into the net itself. Rakim raised his arm, signalling the play, before curling another fierce cross into the box. This time, it was aimed deeper, towards Ajer, who had peeled away from his marker at the far post.

Ajer jumped high, timing his leap perfectly, but his header lacked power. McGregor, once again, was there to collect it comfortably in his gloves. The Rangers keeper immediately launched a quick counter, sending a long throw to Ryan Kent, who had stayed wide, ready to burst forward.

"And now Rangers are on the counter!" Callum shouted. "Celtic have to be careful here, Kent's got space!"

Kent raced down the left flank, skipping past Lustig, his pace electrifying the Rangers support. The ball stuck to his feet as he closed in on the Celtic penalty area, eyes scanning for Morelos, who was sprinting into position in the middle. Brown and Boyata hurried back, scrambling to get in front of the marauding Kent.

As Kent reached the edge of the box, he hesitated for a split second, drawing Ajer toward him. That was all the time he needed. A perfectly weighted ball slipped between Ajer and Boyata, landing at Morelos' feet. The Colombian striker took one touch to control it, setting himself for the shot.

{Celtic Park held its breath.}

Morelos fired low and hard, but Bain was ready. The Celtic keeper, diving to his left, got a strong hand on the ball, pushing it around the post for a corner. The collective sigh of relief from the home fans was almost as loud as their earlier cheers.

"Great save from Bain!" Callum exclaimed; his voice filled with relief. "Morelos nearly made Celtic pay there, but Bain stood tall."

"That's the danger with Rangers. They might be under pressure, but they've got that ability to break quickly. Celtic will have to be more cautious, or they'll get caught out." Roy responded with a hint of excitement more than happy to see his team bring some fight into this game. The match was only 10 minutes old, and already both teams had shown flashes of their strengths, Celtic's relentless pressure and flair, Rangers' ability to counter with lethal pace.

As Rangers prepared for their corner, the crowd buzzed with anticipation. The intensity of the Glasgow Derby was in full flow, with every touch, every pass, and every tackle felt deeply by the tens of thousands watching. Tavernier stepped up to take the corner, whipping the ball into the crowded box. It was a dangerous delivery, but Boyata rose highest to clear.

The ball bounced out to Arfield on the edge of the box, and without hesitation, he struck it on the volley. The shot was on target, but once again Bain was there, leaping up to firmly grasp it in his hands bringing an end to the chaos in front of his goal. Celtic's defence quickly regrouped after seeing their keeper firmly control the ball as he landed on the ground.

"A fantastic save by Bain again!" Callum's voice rose with excitement. "The man is keeping Celtic in this match right now!"

Roy nodded, impressed. "Bain's been sharp so far. Rangers are testing him, but he's been equal to everything. Celtic need to wake up at the back though, or it won't be long before one of these chances goes in."

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Bain quickly got to his feet, surveying the field before rolling the ball out to Kieran Tierney on the left. Tierney took off down the wing, looking for a quick break to relieve the pressure. Arfield gave chase, but the Celtic full back was too quick, leaving him behind with a sharp burst of speed.

The home crowd surged to life again as Tierney advanced into Rangers' half, linking up with Hayes on the left. A neat one-two between the pair had Hayes driving toward the edge of the box. Tavernier, tracking back, moved in to close him down, forcing Hayes to check his run. With Tavernier tight on him, Hayes shifted the ball back to Ntcham, who was lurking just outside the box.

Ntcham took a touch to set himself, and then unleashed a powerful drive from distance. The ball was swerving viciously as it flew toward goal, but McGregor, who had been Rangers' hero so far, was equal to it once more. He dived to his right and punched the ball away, out for another corner.

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As the corner kick was lined up by Rakim, Celtic fans were urging their team forward, hoping that the relentless pressure would eventually break Rangers' resolve. Rakim sent in another well-placed delivery, this time aiming towards the near post. Brown made a run to get on the end of it, but McGregor read the play perfectly, getting a strong hand to the ball and pushing it away from danger.

The game was becoming increasingly frantic as both teams pushed for the opener. Rangers once again looked to counter quickly. Ryan Kent, still a constant threat on the left, was fed the ball by Arfield. Kent darted past Lustig with ease, making a beeline for the Celtic box. This time, however, he faced a solid challenge from Ajer, who stayed tight to him.