

Football 285

Chapter 285 Celtic Vs Rangers (2)

Kent managed to force a cross in, but it was deflected by Ajer's timely block, allowing Bain to gather the ball comfortably. The Celtic keeper quickly launched it out to Rakim on the right wing. He controlled the ball with grace and immediately looked for options, spotting Forrest making a run into space. Not hesitating he threaded a precise pass in-between two ranger's players and into the feet of Forrest, who had managed to evade his marker. He angled his run and sped down the right flank, his eyes locked on the goal as he approached the edge of the area.

With a quick glance over his shoulder to check for defenders, Forrest cut inside, creating a shooting angle. He unleashed a powerful strike with his left foot. The ball rocketed towards McGregor's goal; However, the keeper didn't have to move as it gained too much air sailing right over his goal.

[19]

With the ball sailing over the bar, the crowd let out a collective groan of frustration, but Celtic didn't let up. They continued to press, their passing game fluid and relentless. Rakim and Forrest quickly linked up again, this time on the right side. Rakim's intelligent positioning allowed him to receive the ball from Forrest, and he squared it to Ntcham, who was making a late run into the box.

Ntcham controlled the ball with a deft touch and looked for options. He saw a slight gap between the Rangers defenders and decided to go for goal himself. He shot with precision, aiming for the bottom corner. McGregor was vigilant though diving in the right direction, but he wasn't needed as Goldson intercepted the ball with a timely slide. Celtic didn't even get the chance to scramble for the ball as Tavernier took control of the loose ball and chose to calmly slow down the game.

He was already breathing a little too heavy for his liking and they were barely 20 minutes in. He knew if they continued at this pace, they would eventually burn themselves out and thus decided to slow the

pace down the best way he knew how. By simply walking the ball forward and shouting a few instructions to his teammates as he played a couple of one-two passes to keep Hayes, and Edouard at bay allowing his teammates to calm down.

"That's the quality of an excellent captain, He reads the game and is able to calmly communicate it with the rest of his teammates." Callum McDonald commented with an impressed tone as he watched Tavernier actions. "Indeed, he's a coach's dream as his ability to read the momentum of the game is quite impressive, A real back field general." Roy intoned equally impressed at how the Rangers captain had managed to easily regroup his teammates.

[24]

Rangers slowly began to regain their composure as Tavernier orchestrated the play from the back. The game settled into a more measured rhythm as they moved the ball around their defensive third, trying to ease the pressure from Celtic's relentless attacking. Halliday and Jack worked diligently in midfield, making quick passes and searching for gaps in Celtic's defensive line.

In the 27th minute, Rangers managed to create a promising opportunity. Kent received a pass from Halliday on the left wing and expertly controlled the ball, evading Tierney's challenge with a quick change of direction. With space opening up, Kent whipped in a dangerous cross into the heart of Celtic's penalty area. Morelos, making a darting run, met the cross with a powerful header. Bain was alert though, diving to his right and pulling off a spectacular save to keep the scores level.

[32]

Celtic responded immediately with a counterattack. Boyata won a header in midfield and played a precise pass to Edouard, who was quick to turn and sprint past McCrorie. Edouard found himself one-on-one with McGregor as he approached the edge of the penalty area. The Celtic striker tried to slip the

ball past McGregor with a delicate chip. McGregor read the situation well, though, and managed to get a hand to the ball, pushing it out for a corner.

From the resulting corner, Celtic looked to capitalize. Forrest delivered a well-placed ball into the six-yard box. Boyata, rising highest among the pack, managed to connect with a header. The effort was heading towards goal, but McGregor reacted sharply once again, catching the ball with both hands to prevent another potential goal.

[38]

As the first half drew to a close, Rangers started to show signs of renewed energy. Candeias received the ball on the right wing and made a decisive run towards the edge of the box. With a clever flick, he sent the ball to Arfield, who was in a promising position. Arfield took a touch to control before unleashing a fierce shot.

Arfield's shot was a powerful one, and it flew towards Bain's goal with intent. The Celtic keeper was well-positioned and displayed excellent reflexes, diving to his left to parry the ball away from danger. The rebound fell to Kent, who was quick to react. He tried to volley the loose ball but couldn't get enough power on it, allowing Bain to gather it safely.

[40]

The game remained fiercely contested as both teams exchanged blows. Celtic were pushing hard, their attacks relentless, while Rangers were working diligently to keep them at bay. With the match approaching the 45-minute mark, Celtic found a breakthrough.

Forrest picked up the ball from Ntcham around the halfway line, before swiftly transferring it onto the flank where Rakim was calling for it. The young winger got loose from Worrall tight making receiving the ball with delight faking a cut inward he drew in the nearby Rangers player who scrambled to close him down. He didn't continue forward though and instead performed a heel pass down the wing into the run of Forrest who had overlapped with him.

Connecting with the ball time seemed to stand still for a second before he turned on the jets quickly eating up yards as the Rangers defence panicked to get back. In this chaos to chase after Forrest who was eating up the right flank, Rakim seemed to go missing. He had turned away from the players who had circled him leaving them to join the chase as he angled his run towards the left edge of the box. It worked in his favour as Hayes cut inwards looking to enter the box.

As the Dominos fell into place Forrest reached the side of the Rangers 18 yard box and swiftly delivered a driven cross into the box. The ball zipped past the Rangers defenders but before Edouard could connect with the ball McGregor came sliding out feet first kicking the ball out of his box. Edouard could only sigh at his stolen chance as he looked back to see where the ball had ended up.

What he saw was a pair of piercing green eyes that appeared so large to him causing him a light shiver as they reminded him of a cat's eyes. Not one of those small house cats either but one of those he had seen when he took his family on Safari just before they pounced for the kill. Almost as if proving his words right a soft thud entered his ears as Rakim's golded boots impacted the ball that was rolling towards him first time.

He could have sworn he heard a (Boom) as the ball rocketed back from hence it came from flickering wildly as it seemed to have almost no spin. Only as the ball neared his head did Edouard realise he should have ducked but it was too late now. Closing his eyes at the last moment he felt the washing of air brush his cheeks and the all too familiar thudding of the ball impacting the net.