

Football 286

Chapter 286 A Beer Between Men

The crowd erupted as Rakim's thunderous strike found the back of the net, sending Celtic fans into a frenzy. It was a brilliantly executed goal, a first-time hit from just outside the box that left McGregor helpless. The boy in question took off to the corner flag with his arm spread wide and a huge grin on his face as the green wall behind the goal erupted in frenzy. He performed his signature Griddy celebration with every bit of swagger when he got up close before jumping into the nearby crowd taking a few selfies with a few.

Not a second later they were joined by the rest of the Celtic players who proceeded to join the photos making a couple fans dizzy. They had been knocking at their door for the entire half looking for a breakthrough and finally got their deserved rewards. Roy Townsley, despite his Rangers loyalties, couldn't help but be impressed. "You have to give credit where it's due. That was an unstoppable hit. McGregor didn't stand a chance."

[43]

As the game restarted, Rangers seemed shaken by the goal, but they tried to push forward, looking for a quick response before the halftime whistle. Kent, who had been lively on the left, received the ball again and charged at Lustig. He danced around the full-back and fired a low cross into the box, hoping to find Morelos.

Morelos, always dangerous in the box, battled with Boyata for positioning. The ball came in low and fast, and Morelos managed to get a foot on it, but his shot was smothered by Bain, who had positioned himself perfectly to make the save. They didn't give up there though as they continued to charge forward looking to level the score once again not willing to be on the losing end.

For the next 2 minutes they put a lot of pressure on the Celtic defence working in overdrive not willing to let their opponents hold the ball for even a second. As the final moments of the first half ticked away, Rangers threw everything they had at Celtic. Morelos, hungry for an equalizer, dropped deep to link up with Jack, who was orchestrating the Rangers midfield. A quick exchange of passes between the two opened up space in front of the Celtic defense, and Morelos made a daring run into the box, shrugging off Boyata.

Jack spotted Morelos' run and threaded a perfect through ball into his path. The striker took a touch to control the ball, steadying himself before unleashing a low drive toward the bottom corner. However, luck wasn't on his side as in his effort to place the shot to the bottom left corner it ended up hitting the post before heading out for a goal kick. Kent tried to follow up with a first time shot on the rebounding ball but his shot was once again deflected out for a corner.

[45+2]

The tension in the stadium was palpable as Tavernier jogged over to take the corner. With the crowd urging them on, Rangers filled the box, packing it with blue shirts. Tavernier swung in an inswinger with precision, aiming for the cluster of players at the near post. McCrorie leapt highest, outmuscling his marker to get a firm header on the ball. It flew toward the far post with Bain left standing on his line but it wasn't meant to be as Forrest who was guarding the back post stuck his head through it sending it out of the box.

As Forrest's header cleared the ball from danger, the referee blew the whistle, signaling the end of a dramatic first half. The referee blew his whistle to signal the end of the first half allowing the boys in green to breathe a sigh of relief. Celtic went into the break with their heads held high, thanks to Rakim's thunderous goal. The crowd buzzed with excitement as the players headed into the tunnel, Celtic having a well-deserved lead but Rangers still very much in the contest.

Roy Townsley commented as the players disappeared from view, "Rangers are still in this, but they'll need to find something special in the second half. Morelos has been a threat, but they need to convert these chances."

Callum McDonald responded, "Celtic's been solid, but they can't afford to get comfortable. Rangers will come out fighting in the second half, and they'll need to stay sharp." As both teams prepared for the second half, the atmosphere inside the stadium remained electric, with the home fans singing in celebration as they went to get a refill of their beer. The away fans on the other hand could only hold onto the hope of a comeback after seeing how the half had ended.

~~~

In one of the stands, far from the chaotic sections where the younger crowd roared, two middle-aged men stood side by side, enjoying a bit of banter while grabbing some halftime refreshments. It was a quieter corner, meant for those who preferred to watch the game without the frenzy of the Old Firm's notorious intensity.

"Yo Charlie, wha'd I tell ye? Our Wunderkind's the real deal!" Samuel declared proudly, slapping his pot belly with a hearty chuckle. He took the last sip of his beer, his ginger beard still glistening from the foam, a grin stretching from ear to ear.

Chris, his blonde, thinner friend, sighed in frustration as he swirled his plastic cup of lager. "(Sigh) You guys have just been lucky, mate. Lucky, I tell you," he replied with a shake of his head.

Samuel's eyes widened in mock disbelief. "Luck?! LUCK?! Did ye no' see Rakim's strike? That was nae luck, Charlie boy. That was pure magic! Like somethin' oot of a dream, aye?"

Chris gave a dismissive wave. "Aye, alright, it was a good hit, but ye've been ridin' yer luck the whole first half. McGregor's kept us in the game. Could've easily been two down if no' for him."

"Aye, he's saved yer bacon a couple times, I'll gie ye that," Samuel admitted, wiping the foam off his beard. "But Bain's no' had it easy either. Yer wee Morelos almost snuck one in. My heart was in my throat wi' that header."

Chris smirked. "He's due one, ye know that. We've got the fight in us, Sammy. Don't get too comfortable. Morelos is like a coiled spring, ready tae snap."

Samuel chuckled and took a sip from his fresh pint. "Aye, but yer boy's as likely tae snap in the wrang way. Morelos'll probably get sent off before he gets on the scoresheet!"

Chris winced. "I swear, if he does somethin' stupid again..." He trailed off, shaking his head. "But you lot... ye've been takin' advantage of that right side. Forrest and Rakim, they've got Halliday and Worrall runnin' around like a headless chicken."

Samuel raised an eyebrow, his grin widening. "That's what good wingers dae, mate. Ye need a wee bit more composure in yer midfield. We're slicin' through ye like a hot knife through butter."

Chris narrowed his eyes playfully. "Don't get too cocky. It's only 1-0. The game's far from over, and Rangers, we're always good for a fight back. Ye'll see."

Samuel leaned in with a mischievous glint in his eye. "Oh, I'm sure. But ye ken this—if we get the next goal, ye might as well call it a night, 'cause we'll be runnin' away wi' it."

Chris stood up straighter, puffing out his chest. "Never count us out. Second half, we'll come back stronger. Tavernier'll sort them out. And Morelos... he'll get that equaliser. Mark my words."

Samuel, chuckling, raised his pint. "Aye, well, here's tae a grand second half then, eh? May the best team win."

Chris clinked his cup with Samuel's, though the look in his eyes said he wasn't quite ready to concede defeat. "Aye, may the best team win... but don't get too comfy up there, Sammy. Ye might not like what's comin'." With that, they returned to their seats, ready to dive back into the chaos of the second half, the friendly rivalry between them burning as bright as ever.