

Football 289

Chapter 289 Smiling Assassin

Whilst the tension in The Brazen Head was electric, the atmosphere at The Original Loudon Tavern a well-known Ranger's pub was much different. Cheers erupted as Joe a die-hard Rangers supporter shouted over the din, "Look at that smile! He thinks it's over! Just you wait, lads!" His mates, beers raised high, joined in a raucous chorus of songs, revelling in the moment, their faces aglow with the thrill of impending victory.

However, all that stopped the moment the winger on the screen began moving. Nudging the ball forward lightly at first, he quickly picked up speed as he got into a rhythm manoeuvring the ball between his legs. Rakim's feet danced over the slick turf, his movements fluid despite the rain-soaked chaos around him. The noise from the pubs and living rooms of Glasgow might as well have been a world away as he zeroed in on the task at hand.

Seeing Rakim start his run the fans at The Brazen Head, who were seemingly ready to fight just moments ago were now breathless with anticipation. Eyes widened, pints were momentarily abandoned, and even the man in the Scott Brown shirt, who'd shouted slurs just moments before, stood frozen, watching the screen. No one spoke.

In the Loudon Tavern, where the Rangers fans had been celebrating, the sudden quiet was almost eerie. A few jeers lingered, but even they were silenced as Rakim danced past the first defender. With the ball glued to his feet, Rakim accelerated down the right wing, his eyes fixed on the path ahead. He quickly faced off against Ryan Jack, who was sprinting to close him down. Rakim shifted his weight, with a quick body feint mixed with a stepover leaving Jack momentarily confused. A deft touch sent the ball gliding past Jack's outstretched leg, and with a low, explosive stride, he burst forward, leaving Jack scrambling behind him.

As he charged into the final third, the Rangers defence quickly adjusted. Joe Worrall was next to attempt to block his path, but Rakim executed slippery reverse Elastico slotting the ball through Worrall's legs. The defender turned, but by the time he spun around, he was only able to glimpse the fluttering the

blonde highlights of his dreads fluttering in the air as Rakim Sprinted past him. Weaving through the chaos on the pitch he continued forward at speed that made one forget the slippery surface.

Celtic fans at The Brazen Head erupted into a frenzy of cheers, their earlier frustrations melting away in a wave of hope. "Come on, Rakim! Go on, son!" they shouted, fists raised, clinging to the belief that he could deliver a miracle in the dying moments of the match.

In the Loudon Tavern, the tension was palpable. Rangers supporters shifted nervously, some beginning to shout at their team to step up. "Get him, boys! Don't let him through!" Joe shouted, clenching his fists as Rakim continued his assault.

As Rakim burst into the final third, he faced off against another defender S. Artfield who came to close him down near the touch line. Pulling the ball to a stop Just as Artfield reached him, he performed a quick Hocus Pocus by dragging the ball behind his right leg feinting a run down the wing before cutting inward breezing past him. Now driving diagonally towards the box as both McCrorie and Kent converged on him from two direction trying to stop him.

Seeing the two approach he performed a quick Ronaldo chop before accelerating back towards the edge of the box at the right flank. McCrorie being an experienced defender stayed hot on his trail making sure to cut off any path into the box. With Kent Joining him in Defence he didn't worry staying composed not willing to take any risk as he stood his ground.

Rakim wouldn't let him relax though as the moment they reached the right edge of the box his centre of gravity shifted. As Rakim approached the right edge of the box, McCrorie kept pace, cutting off any direct route to goal. Kent joined the effort, positioning himself to block a potential cross or pass, creating a two-man defensive wall. But Rakim was far from cornered in fact the smile on his face brightened even more at this moment as the rain continued to fall on his face.

In a fluid motion, his eyes flickered up to the defenders before dropping back to the ball. His right foot hovered, feinting a forward push, but instead of a pass, he executed a quick step-over, dragging McCrorie's attention to the wrong foot. Rakim repeated the step-over, his body swaying left then right the ball seemingly untouched. The moment McCrorie leaned ever so slightly toward his initial step, Rakim's feet danced again.

With Kent closing in, Rakim suddenly pivoted, performing a lightning-fast Rabona Cut. Wrapping his left leg behind his right, he whipped the ball back across his body toward the goal line. The move caught McCrorie by surprise—his weight had shifted for the anticipated drive inward, but now the ball was spiralling away, back toward the edge of the box. Kent was equally stunned, expecting a straight push forward but seeing the ball flick in the opposite direction.

With both defenders momentarily out of balance, Rakim followed up his trickery with an explosive burst of speed. His body was already in motion before either could recover, leaving them a step behind. He angled sharply, regaining control of the ball just outside the right edge of the penalty area, immediately exploding with force as he charged into the box.

Goldson was the nearest Defender, but he was too far to interfere with as he was already facing McGregor. Rakim was now in a position every Forward dreams of—one-on-one with the goalkeeper in the dying minutes of an important match and his shot would decide whether his team would get glory. The roar of the crowd echoed around him, but his focus remained laser sharp.

McGregor, who had been on fire today remained composed as he charged out of his goal Standing tall as he narrowed the shooting angle. His arms were stretched wide as if trying to create a wall out of his body, preparing for the inevitable shot. Time seemed to slow as Rakim took a breath, his eyes not locked on the ball but on the oncoming McGregor trying to read the other. As their distance closed, he shifted his weight ever so slightly making sure to keep the ball firmly under his control.

Seeing McGregor crouched ready to pounce at any moment, he instantly swings his left foot faking a shot drawing McGregor forward. That was all the space he needed as with the keeper committed, Rakim deftly rolled the ball to his right foot and slotted it past McGregor with precision. The ball skimmed

across the slick surface, slipping underneath the diving goalkeeper, and nestling into the bottom corner of the net.

For a split second, the stadium seemed to freeze. Then, an explosion of noise erupted from the Celtic supporters. The equalizer, in the dying moments of stoppage time left the Rangers players in despair. None of this mattered to Rakim though as the speed of the corner flag arms swinging wildly almost for getting to do The Griddy. Seeing the sour faces of The Rangers fans in front of him he quickly sped off again not willing to risk a riot.

Celebrating wildly, he took off his shirt displaying his well-developed physique consisting of lean six back resembling ones of an Olympian swimmer. However as he ran you could easily see the power contained in every fibre of his muscles as he ran towards his team's bench. Before he knew it, he reached Coach Lennon with a bright smile before being lifted up in a bear hug by the Irish man. The rest of the Celtic players joined them in celebration with bright smiles not believing that they were now level as they had already come to terms with losing this old firm.