

## Football 81

### Chapter 81 Eagle's V Beavers (1)

Looking around the locker room, I couldn't help but feel a surge of excitement coursing through my veins. The atmosphere was electric as my teammates, and I prepared for the upcoming game. With each tug of the laces on my boots, I could feel my focus intensifying, ready to give it my all on the field.

Scanning the room, I noticed a few guys who wore worried expressions. Some engaged in light stretches, hoping to alleviate their nervousness. Their anxious whispers filled the air, contrasting with my own attempt to contain my bubbling enthusiasm.

As I battled to keep my composure, I plugged in my earphones and played "Forever" by Drake, hoping to channel my energy into a controlled state. The beat reverberated through my ears, momentarily settling my restless spirit. But just as I began to find my centre, Eminem's rap verse burst through the speakers, catapulting my excitement to new heights.

Unable to contain myself any longer, I anxiously glanced at the door, waiting for Coach Garret to make his entrance. Finally, the moment arrived. Coach Garret strode into the locker room, immediately capturing the attention of everyone present.

He was clutching his clipboard tightly as he strode to the centre of the room, probably concealing one of the secret tactics he had been raving about for the past two weeks. His authoritative presence and stern expression commanded our respect, dispelling any lingering doubts or distractions.

"Listen up, team!" Coach Garret's voice echoed through the room, cutting through the buzz of anticipation. "Today's judgment day, and I expect each and every one of you to leave it all on the field. Remember, we've trained for this moment. The countless hours of practice and hard work have led up to this moment of truth. It's all up to you whether you will crumble under pressure or prove that you

belong on that field." Coach Garret said in a calm tone as he lit a fire for victory within us as a look of determination replaced the worried looks of my teammates.

Coach proceeded to outline the game plan, emphasizing the importance of teamwork, and discipline. Fun didn't make that short list as according to him winning is all the fun you need which I couldn't fault him for. He did however tell us to enjoy every moment and make sure to celebrate all the little successes as they will eventually stack up to something big.

I could tell that he was nervous as well as this would be his first coaching gig. He did however manage to mask it well with his intense desire for the win. With each passing word of motivation and warning, our nerves transformed into a focused state, as a serene silence settled over us slowly brewing a storm. By the end of his speech, our individual goals of what we wanted to achieve in today's game slowly merged into a collective mission of victory.

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[Gen Pov]

Red Oak Eagles VS Orlando Beavers

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[Red Oak Eagles]

Ben Walker (GK)

Henric Eriksson (CB), Ole Wagner (CB), Jake Smith (CB),

Damian Green (CDM)

Rakim Rex (LM), Ben Miller (CAM), Max Taylor (RM)

Tom Walker (ST),

[Orlando Beavers]

John Carter (GK)

Jimmy Love (LB) Ron Carter (CB) Joey Silva (CB) Tim Crowley (RB)

Ryan Shepherd (CM) Leo Stephens (CM) Steve Taylor (CM)

Floyd Douglas (ST)

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The late afternoon sun hung in the sky illuminating the green field below with its glow as the Red Oak Eagles and the Orlando Beavers stepped onto the field. The Eagles dawned red and black kits that gave them a fierce aura. The bleachers were packed with students and parents from both teams holding up banners of support. Their eyes fixed on the green expanse before them anticipating the battle of rivals that was about to unfold. It was the first school game of the new season, and the excitement was palpable in the air.

Rakim could barely contain his eagerness to showcase his dribbling skills as he could be seen hopping on his feet lightly as he walked to disposition. Glancing across the field, he could see the Orlando Beavers, their cross-town rivals who dawned a blue kit, preparing for battle. The tension between the two teams was tangible, fuelled by years of intense competition and a desire to assert dominance. Both squads had undergone changes this year, forming relatively new teams, adding uncertainty to the game.

The referee's whistle pierced through the buzzing anticipation, signalling the start of the match. The ball was set in motion, and the clash of boots echoed as the game commenced. The Eagles found themselves struggling initially seemingly out of sync with each other. With the desire to showcase their individual talents, their chemistry suffered initially as passes went astray and timing faltered. It looked like most of the players had their own plan that just didn't seem to match with other teammates' Ideas.

The Orlando Beavers, sensing an opportunity, pressed forward, their players showing flashes of coordination and skill. Leo Stephens managed to steal the ball from Max Taylor using a clinical tackle that sent the latter tumbling to the ground. Not hearing a whistle, the midfield charged forward with confidence linking some passes to his midfield partners as he quickly charged the eagle's half.

Jake after seeing Max easily beaten by the opponent left his defensive line and charged forward closing down the space. Leo Who was still charging forward with gusto was slightly startled by the force charge of Jake opting to send a hasty pass forward. Floyd who wasn't expecting the pass was left scrambling

into position to receive the ball. However just as he was about to receive the ball the figure of Damian came sliding in hooking the ball as he quickly got control of it.

The Defensive Midfielder quickly sprung up from the ground as he sent a sharp pass up the left flank. Rakim darted down the left flank receiving the ball as he continued to increase his speed. His agile movements captivated the crowd as he nimbly dodged the tackle of Steve Taylor. Showcasing his dribbling prowess, he weaved past the right back with lightning speed. His teammates, sensing an opportunity, began charging forward looking for an opportunity to take the lead.

Entering the box from the side the winger sent a sharp cross into the box. Tom rose into the air fighting for air space with Joey Silva trying his best to get to the ball. Managing to rise above his marker the striker sent the ball toward the top right corner. However, before the ball could impact the netting of the goal a pair of gloves belonging to John Carter sent the ball to the crossbar.

The crowd erupted in disbelief at the opposing team's goalkeeper, who made a stunning save to deny Tom's powerful shot. The stands fell into a momentary silence as the spectators tried to process the incredible athleticism and agility displayed by Carter. It was a breathtaking moment that left everyone in awe of Carter's reflexes and shot-stopping abilities.

However not long after his heroics a loud Ding was heard as the ball deflected off the bar flying back into the field. The ball soared high landing towards the edge of the box, where the figure of Jimmy Love out-muscled Max collecting the ball. Quickly bringing the ball up the field the Left-back set a quick pass to the midfield in an attempt to launch a counter.

tension quickly rose within the Eagle's stands as Leo smoothly brought the ball under his control. Using a quick one-two with one of his midfield partners he when managed to easily bypass Damian who was left grasping for the wind. The midfielder drew closer to the edge of the box ed when Ole stepped up to close him down. Choosing not to engage with the tall defender He slotted the ball forward in that gap that was created by his opponent.

At the end of the pass was Floyd the beaver's lone striker who deftly controlled the ball as he stepped into the penalty box. Ben Walker having seemed the approaching danger opted to abandon his line as he charged forward to close down the striker. Sensing the pressure, the striker came to a slight stop before he hurriedly unleashed a shot towards the goal.

The shot was powerful and at a tricky angle as it soared to the left of the charging Ben. However, that didn't seem to bother the keeper as he displayed a moment of brilliance by using his foot to deflect the shot. The happenings on the field happened so fast that by the time the crowd had enough time to process the impending danger it was already resolved.

The Keepers' actions served to reinvigorate the crowd more as they cheer hard to celebrate his heroics. At the end of the keeper's block was Henric who calmly brought the ball under his control. Seemingly wanting to give his keeper time to recharge he strode forward slowly bringing down the pace of the game drastically. Looking at him from the stands you would almost think he is out for a stroll if it wasn't for the ball at his feet.

Steve Taylor didn't seem content with the slowed-down pace of the game as he came charging in attempting to win the ball. Henric didn't seem unfazed though as he calmly side-stepped his charge with a change of speed. Leaving the opponent trailing behind him he drew his leg back before unleashing a long pass. Like an arrow leaving its strings, the ball drew a high arc across the field into the right flank.

Watching the Defender's actions, the crowd perked up in anticipation as they watched Max racing his defender for a chance to win the ball. The two engaged in a battle of strength as the ball passed over their heads landing a meter in front of them. Through a stroke of luck and speed, Max managed to lose his defenders gaining control of the ball first.

Not wasting a single second, the winger cut back dragging the ball back as he changed directions. His actions forced the defender to come to a sliding stop as he scrambled to catch back up with him. Just as he managed to do so the winger performed another change of direction as he headed for the touchline.

The defender who was still desperately fighting to chase after him suddenly lost control of his legs due to his excessive change of direction. The crowd who watched him fall face-first to the ground exclaimed loudly in sympathy as they watched the winger send a sharp cross into the box.

The ball drew a curved arc in the air as it soared above the heads of the central defenders and Tom alike. Just as the home crowd was about to lament another missed opportunity a boy in a red jersey appeared a couple of yards from the back post. He didn't bother Adjusting his stance as he raised his left foot to meet the ball sending it drilling to the bottom left corner.

Jon Carter was left glued to his line as he could only watch as the ball rattled in the net of his goal. The home crowd of parents and students instantly erupted in cheers after seeing this as the boy in red happily ran to the sidelines to celebrate.

To understand what happened we would have to go back to a few moments ago when Max was still outmanoeuvring his opponent. Rakim who was on the opposite wing seemed to smell the scent of a goal-scoring opportunity as he abruptly started dashing into the box. His marker Tim was left stupefied at his actions as he instantly chose to follow after him.

However just as the winger reached the edge of the D, he abruptly stopped giving Tim enough time to get back in position. Breathing a sigh of relief, the right-back placed a hand on the winger before looking at what the player with the ball was doing. That would prove to be a mistake as Rakim used that opportunity to separate from him with a quick backspin as he run into the penalty box.

In front of the winger, the entire area close to the back post was empty due to his sanctioning of dragging the left back to the edge of the box. "Tim get your man," Joey shouted after noticing the danger but it was already too late as the ball was already soaring into the box.

Through a moment of carelessness by his marker and luck, Rakim suddenly found himself unmarked with a clear line to the goal as the ball descended perfectly for a left-foot volley. Rakim showed no signs of hesitation as he fired the shot with force and control scoring the first goal of the game and his career.