

## Football God 111

Chapter 111 Mamba mentality 2.0! [1]

Back in the semifinal of the FIFA Club World Cup, against Fluminense, the South American giant, Enyimba FC was about crashing out of the tournament when Sam displayed something that was incredibly rare even among elite athletes.

The mamba mentality.

To some, it was real. To others, it was a myth but Sam didn't care about all of that as he jogged into this stadium, all he cared about was making his wish real.

Jogging into the stadium, Sam only had one thought in his head. 'Win!'

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

He chanted it like a mantra, a mantra that made all the electrons in his body flow in an excited state, pushing him into a state of absolute focus.

Sam was introduced into this game in just the 88th minute.

Sitting on the bench since, he was frustrated, angry at his coach even but the moment that he was told to enter the pitch, he forgot all his anger and frustration.

He didn't care that he was being introduced into the game so late, all he cared about was doing what he could to make an impact in that little time.

That was the mamba mentality.

Entering the pitch after replacing Pereira, Sam scanned the pitch, taking everything into his head with his incredible grasp over spatial awareness.

At this moment, he didn't care about being a Kevin De Bruyne, nor did he care about being a Bernardo Silva, all he cared about was being an Erling Haaland.

'I need a goal!'

'I must score a goal!'

'We must get a goal, by all means!'

That last part was very important, Sam entered this pitch with the mentality to snatch the 2nd goal by any means necessary, even if that meant having to drag it from in between the teeth of the devil himself.

His eyes burned like fire, his legs itchy and eager to take part in the proceedings, to impose himself on the pitch.

**FWEEEEEE!**

Thud!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded and Liverpool FC played the ball, Sam erupted like the spawn of an angry Dark Dragon.

He chased after the ball like his life depended on it, like an angry hound.

To the Liverpool players, they already won the game so they tried to pass it around and kill time. The Fulham players felt the same way, so they only did the bare minimum, eager to get it over with and leave the pitch.

Only one player played with the mentality of a Lion on the pitch at this moment, and his name was Samuel Moses.

Sam ran everywhere, chasing after the ball, showing relentless energy and at times, it made the skillful Liverpool players humiliate him by nutmegging him and passing around him in triangles with no teammate to support him.

The commentator laughed. "Damn! What energy being showed by the young Nigerian but the Liverpool players are just toying with him at this point".

"They're telling him, boy, this is our stage, not yours".

Sam heard all of it but he didn't care about all of that.

All he cared about was the one thought ringing in his head like a bell.

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

90 minutes passed and Sam was yet to get his first touch of the game, yet he was not deterred, continuously running and chasing the ball down.

4 minutes of additional time was added to the game by the referee.

The first minute of additional time passed, Sam kept on chasing, the same fiery look like a fire was burning in his eyes still on him.

And in the 2nd minute of additional time, Sam finally touched the ball for the first time since entering this game.

Bam!

As soon as the ball touched his leg, Sam felt like electricity just went through his whole body, electricity that triggered electrolytes all over his body, flooding his body with endless adrenaline.

Sam's eyes widened, burning with fire.

There were 2 Liverpool players shadowing and marking him as soon as the ball touched his leg. Shrugging off Harvey Elliot with his sheer size and physicality, as the second player outstretched his leg, Sam pushed and dragged the ball.

Like a snake bite, he executed the elastico dribble, eliminating Diogo Jota like he was not there and immediately, he pushed the ball forward, chasing after it.

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With his pace, he was incredibly swift.

As soon as Sam caught up with the ball, another Liverpool player blocked him. Reducing his speed slightly even as his fiery eyes watched this player alertly, Sam waited, biding his time, baiting him in.

As soon as this player's leg stuck out, Sam executed the la croqueta, cutting through him like a hot knife through butter.

By now, he was now close to the Liverpool 18-yard box.

He had a few passing options, one in Willian to the left and another in Jimenez who was now running into space, calling for a through ball.

Both were appetizing options, but nothing that Pereira had not tried since. The Liverpool FC defense was on top of its game. If he passed, it would result in the same outcome as when Pereira still played.

That was why at this moment, instead of passing, from outside the box, Sam took a look at goal, then...

POW!

His leg hit the ball with venom, the sound reverberating through the stadium like thunder as the ball rose high into the air towards the top left corner of the post.

"...!" For a moment, Craven Cottage became as silent as a church.

Kelleher went on a full-stretch dive and somehow, as if he became flying superhuman himself, Kelleher managed to pull off an incredible save.

Virgil Van Dijk easily shoved Jimenez aside with his shoulder as the striker tried to run after the loose ball. The imposing Liverpool center back arrived at the ball first, calmly protected it before clearing it upfield.

In that moment when Sam ran with the ball, the Fulham afterburners started burning for a few seconds, but now, all of it died again as soon as they lost the ball, turning cold.

All of it except one player, Sam.

Even after the ball was cleared off, Sam continued his run into the Liverpool 18-yard box because he already calculated that the ball would fall to Palhinha, the Fulham defensive midfielder.

Palhinha took one touch of the ball before clearing it blindly back upfield to the Liverpool half, praying for a miracle.

Sam was the furthest player in the Liverpool box as this ball came back in.

From one side, one of the best defenders in the world shadowed him in Virgil Van Dijk while from another side, another of the best center backs in the world in Ibrahima Konate shadowed him but Sam did not react to any of it, only reacting to the voice in his head.

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

Sam's eyes burned with fire.

His eyes were so focused that drool gathered in his lips.

Sam's wide eyes watched this ball fly through the air, till it started descending, till it finally arrived at his position.

It was a high ball so he jumped, rising into the air after it.

Bam!

The ball hit Sam's chest and like a baby who entered the embrace of its mom, it stopped thrashing about, coming under control.

As soon as the ball hit his chest, Sam's head geared into overdrive, his spatial awareness firing on all cylinders as he accessed his options.

There were no easy passing lanes, all his teammates were ahead of him, away from the Liverpool FC goal and he was with his back towards goal.

There was no easy way of doing it.

But when there is a will, there is a way.

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

And then, the spark of epiphany came like a beacon of light in darkness, completing the puzzle in Sam's head.

He no longer hesitated.

Thud!

As soon as his legs hit the ground again after his jump even as Virgil Van Dijk slammed into him from behind, trying to shove him off the ball, Sam stood his ground even as his left leg raised up, hitting the ball with his lap.

As the ball rose up again, Sam's eyes followed it, wide open, the same fire burning in them and then, against what anyone expected, he jumped.

Jumping acrobatically, Sam pulled off a move that he had never tried in his career before now, he pulled off an overhead kick!

"Woah! Is that what I think it is?"

"Yes! A bicycle kick and OH MY GODDDDDDD!!!!!"

"WHAT A GOALLLLL!"

In the last minute of additional time, Sam pulled off a miracle, bringing his team level with an out of this world overhead kick goal.

Kelleher was rooted to the spot.

Chapter 112 Mamba mentality 2.0! [2]

"Woah! Is that what I think it is?"

"Yes! A bicycle kick and OH MY GODDDDDDD!!!!!"

"WHAT A GOALLLLL!"

"Damn! This came straight right out of the playbook of the football gods!"

"What a goal!"

"What a moment!"

"See how much it means to the fans!"

Craven Cottage erupted loudly.

At some point in time, some of the disappointed Fulham FC fans already started leaving the stadium but when they heard the loud roars tearing through the roofs of this stadium, all of them rushed back in to see the cause of the commotion.

Those that already exited the stadium were not let back in, and these devastated fans could only rue their luck.

"What a moment for the young Nigerian!"

"He has singlehandedly dragged Fulham out of their ruins!"

"Now that I remember, back in Nigeria, they called him the African Zidane, and my God if this was not a Zidane moment!"

"A goal straight out of the top drawer!"

"A moment of magic!"

Right at that moment, they didn't know who started it but a chant immediately started blasting through Craven Cottage.

"Sam!" "Sam!" "Sam!"

The ecstatic Fulham FC fans sang at the top of their voices.

In the 90th plus 4 minutes of additional time, the very last minute of the game, Sam pulled Fulham FC from the very ruins of defeat, bringing the game level.

The final whistle sounded soon after.

The game went to extra-time.

During the short break, an overwhelmed Marco Silva did not know what to say to his players. Heck, he could not even look Sam in the eye. He only said a few words of encouragement before sending them back into the pitch.

FWEEE!

When extra time started, the players of both teams were already tired but determined to win, they continued playing their football.

After that goal from Sam, the spirits of the Fulham players returned but not enough for them to suddenly start dominating the game.

As soon as extra-time started, a rampant Liverpool determined to put in more effort to finish off the game started dominating again.

Diogo Jota was a menace in extra-time, terrorizing the Fulham FC defense but determined not to let another goal in and riding the energy of their fans, the Fulham defenders defended like their lives depended on it.

And no longer under such a tight time limit, Sam finally settled into this game, entering his element as the main Fulham man throughout extra time.

Settling into his attacking midfield role, Sam pursued the 2nd goal like his life depended on it, playing defense-splitting through passes to Jimenez 1 or 2 times only for the Fulham striker to be thwarted by Van Dijk's imposing presence.

With his presence, the level of the Fulham team as a whole improved a notch.

Sam took 1 or 2 outside the box shots too as he tried even more to impose himself, forcing Kelleher into 2 impressive saves.

The midfield battle was like a war, physical and chaotic.

And in this chaotic battlefield in the middle of the pitch, an 18-year-old dominated, rising above all the veterans competing with him on the same battlefield, making his impact known and felt.

The first half of extra-time ended goalless, Fulham FC was still winning 2-1 and the aggregate score was still 3-3.

In the second half of extra-time, despite playing over a hundred minutes already, it was a Liverpool player who came closest to breaking the duck.

Receiving a looping ball that beat the whole Fulham defense from the imposing Netherlands International at the back, Virgil Van Dijk, Luis Diaz beat his man for pace before chasing down the ball and charging towards goal.

It was a one-on-one situation.

For the umpteenth time this game, Craven Cottage became deathly silent, breaths held as Luis Diaz took his shot only for Bernd Leno to pull off an incredible save, keeping his team in the game.

Just 4 minutes later, the same Luiz Diaz was at it again as he went on a mazy dribble through the Fulham FC defense before looping a pass to Diogo Jota.

The Portuguese International did not think, riffling the ball in only for Bernd Leno to make another impressive save. Unluckily for the Fulham goalkeeper though, the rebound fell perfectly for the rampaging Luiz Diaz.

Luis Diaz poked the ball into the net, briefly silencing Craven Cottage again but immediately after, the flag was raised.

FWEEEE!

The call was offside.

The Colombian International ruffled his hair in frustration. The game continued as both sides tried to impose themselves into the game and in the final minutes, a familiar name seemed to have gone anonymous till the 118th minute.

By now, legs all across the pitch were heavy from exhaustion. It was incredibly hard to string a few passes together.

But in the 117th minute, starting another attack, Muniz bombed through the right-hand side of the pitch, charging past Joe Gomez and beating him for pace as he crossed the ball into the Liverpool 18-yard box.

Raul Jimenez jumped but Virgil Van Dijk beat him in the air again, jumping higher as he cleared the ball back into the field only for Alex Iwobi to quickly spray the loose ball to the left side of the pitch where a tired Willian ran.

As the ball went towards Willian was when Sam finally started executing his late run into the Liverpool 18-yard box.

Having been anonymous for the past few minutes of this last half of extra time, no one detected him, he was like a ghost.

Exhaustion in the part of the Liverpool defenders played a part in why he was so elusive like a ghost.

Afterall, football was not just a physical game, it was a mental game too.

The tired Willian didn't even try to take his man on and dribble, simply throwing a blind cross into the 18-yard box again.

As soon as Willian's leg hit the ball, Sam felt his adrenaline levels rise again.

That mantra was still chanting in his head.

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

At the last moment, Virgil Van Dijk saw him move as the alert Liverpool defender reacted to his movement.

But Sam also saw the Liverpool defender move. Even as he paid attention to Virgil Van Dijk, he also watched the incoming ball and this was when Sam noticed that the cross was not a perfect one, it was lower than intended.

But in that moment, Sam used it to his advantage.

Virgil Van Dijk moved, reacting to his movement but Sam changed his movement at the last moment, ducking and rushing underneath the outstretched left arm of the Liverpool defender as the ball floated in.

Sam ducked, rushed, and then he dived after the ball.

Sam jumped, executing a low diving header as his head hit the ball even at the incredible speed that it moved at.

**BAM!**

Kelleher barely reacted, flailing his arms but it was not enough as the ball snuck into the embrace of the Liverpool net.

It was a goal.

Silence, then...

"GOALLLLLLL...!" Craven Cottage exploded!

The commentator exploded with the fans, screaming at the top of his voice. "Zinedine Sam!"

"Zinedine Sam!"

"ZINEDINE SAM!"

"WHAT A GAME! WHAT A GOAL! HE HAS DONE IT!"

"The Nigerian prodigy has done it!"

Chapter 113 EFL Cup finalists- Fulham FC

"Zinedine Sam!"

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"Zinedine Sam!"

"ZINEDINE SAM!"

"WHAT A GAME! WHAT A GOAL! HE HAS DONE IT!"

"The Nigerian prodigy has done it!"

As the commentator roared, the realization of his goal dawned on Sam and his teammates and immediately, all of them went gaga out of sheer euphoria.

Sam felt liberated, emotions that he had been suppressing since finally hit a crescendo as they cascaded like a flood.

Dodging his teammates who tried to hug him, Sam charged towards the corner flag, a look of sheer joy on his face as he dived on the pitch on his belly, sliding forward even as the fans roared his name.

"SAM!" "SAM!" "SAM!"

His teammates did the same celebration as him, diving on the pitch and sliding after him and after they slid to a stop, Sam jumped back on his feet, pupils dilated in euphoria as he roared back at the fans.

"YEAHHHH...!" His vocal cords vibrated, riding the energy wave of the fans.

And finally, his teammates started jumping on him from behind, celebrating the goal excitedly and it was not even just the players.

Having been on the touchline, fidgeting anxiously since, as soon as the ball entered the Liverpool FC net, Coach Marco Silva lost his composure.

Forgetting the rules, this coach removed his black suit top, throwing it away as he charged into the pitch, running as fast as his leg could carry him towards his players as he lost himself in the celebrations.

When the Fulham players saw their coach coming, they moved out of the way, giving him free access to his savior as without giving a damn about the way he looked to the public, this coach jumped on his player.

Sam caught the coach, laughing even as Marco Silva screamed in his ear at the top of his lungs. "Hell yeahhhh!"

"F\*cking yesss Sam!"

Coach Marco Silva was so happy he could not control his emotions, he kissed Sam repeatedly on the forehead as soon as he stood on his feet again and then he whispered into his ear. "That starting spot, it's yours".

Hearing that, Sam grinned and then he muttered. "Thank you, coach".

Coach Marco Silva laughed. "You earned it".

While the Fulham FC players celebrated euphorically alongside their fans, most of the younger Liverpool players collapsed on the pitch, exhausted and tired.

The older players went up to them, consoling them and helping them up, telling them that the game was not yet over.

At that moment, the referee finally ran towards the gathering of Fulham players where their coach was before showing a yellow card to their coach for his misbehavior on the pitch.

Marco Silva did not mind though, laughing even as he hugged the referee before running back out of the pitch to the touchline.

After about a minute more for the chaos to die down, the referee finally blew the whistle to continue the game.

For the remaining 2 minutes, Luis Diaz tried going solo to create something but he was eventually thwarted by the suddenly energetic Fulham FC defense.

That was the only meaningful attack they could create in 2 minutes.

FWEEEEEE!

The semifinal EFL Cup game finally came to an end.

After an incredible game stretched across 2 legs, Fulham FC prevailed over the English footballing giants, Liverpool, beating them with an aggregate of 4-3.

And just like everyone expected, Sam won the man of the match award of this game despite the fact that he was introduced only 2 minutes to fulltime during the normal time period.

Having won his first man of the match award since coming to England, shortly after the final whistle, Sam saw himself standing before English reporters.

"Sam, how do you feel? You just showed off an incredible performance to the whole world, singlehandedly dragging your team to create an off-set against Liverpool and book a spot in the EFL Cup final, how do you feel?"

Sam grinned at the camera, wiping off his sweat even as he breath heavily. "Of course, I feel great".

"For a while now, I've been at the periphery of the team, I didn't even play in the last game against Chelsea so I was eager to prove my worth to the team".

"To come in and score 2 goals to equalize and win the game for my team," he shook his head, smiling. "I couldn't have scripted it any better than this".

"I'm just grateful to my family, they supported me through this difficult period". He grinned at the camera. "Mom, you can calm down now, no need to fight the coach again, your son has done it".

"I love you!" He blew a kiss at the camera.

"And dad, thank you for everything. Sophia, you too, I hope you're seeing this, your brother is close to standing on top of the world". He grinned cheekily.

The female reporter smiled. "How did you feel coming into the game so late and with such a score line? Did you know that you would score that goal ahead of time?"

Sam looked at the reporter incredulously. "Are you for real?" He chuckled. "I believe in myself but I'm no seer. In fact, that goal was purely instinctive, that is my first time scoring an overhead kick goal in my career".

"Congratulations Sam," the female reporter smiled. "I also hear this is your first time scoring a headed goal too".

"Ah!" Sam touched his head. "That too, I didn't even know". He laughed.

The interview continued as the reporter asked him a few more questions about the game, his 2 goals, and his mentality on the pitch. Sam answered everything before he was finally vindicated from the press.

After posing with his man of the match trophy before the camera, he finally returned to the dressing room to join his teammates where they were still celebrating.

None of them thought they could do it, yet here they were.

As soon as he entered, Alex Iwobi walked up to him, hugging him excitedly. "Bro, you're a monster!" He said, laughing.

A few more minutes of celebration later, the players finally left.

All in all, it was an unforgettable semifinal game for Fulham FC.

## Chapter 114 New system perk

As soon as Sam got back home to his hotel room in Fulham, like usual, after meeting his dad who was equally as excited as he was, despite the fact that he was exhausted after putting his all to win today's game, Sam called his mom.

Through the video call, he saw his overexcited mom and sister.

Having watched the game back home on TV, Mrs. Moses was so excited she was literally dancing when the call went through.

She heaped praise on her son, describing his performance with all the superlatives she could despite the fact that she didn't understand 99% of what went on in a football pitch.

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Sam was left blushing due to her praise.

Sam also spoke to his sister, using the opportunity to brag before her, and then he told his family the good news from Coach Marco Silva on the pitch.

He never told his family before now that he confronted his coach. When they heard, they were shocked, especially Mr. Moses who knew a bit more about football and what happened in a football club.

It was risky but, in the end, it paid off. That was all that mattered.

After the video call session, still feeling signs of exhaustion, Sam finally laid down on his bed but he did not sleep immediately.

Lying down on his bed in the hotel room, he accessed his system interface, finally paying attention to notifications that he ignored before.

Immediately after the semifinal game came to an end in Craven Cottage, Sam received a barrage of notifications right there on the pitch while he still celebrated the incredible victory alongside his teammates.

He could not pay attention to the notifications then though due to the moment, but now, he could finally pay attention to them.

A long list of notifications opened before his vision.

~----~

[You have completed EFL Cup game system mission: Win the game!]

[You played over 30 minutes of this game and won the man of the match award!]

[Calculating reward..., please wait...]

[Calculation complete!]

[You have been rewarded with 5 Skill Points!]

...

[Due to the incredible state of mind and body you entered in today's game and due to your unreal man of the match winning performance, real-time game experience accumulation has triggered!]

[Your spatial awareness skill has improved!]

[Your zonal marking skill has improved!]

[Your shot accuracy has improved!]

[Congratulations! Your shooting attribute has improved by +2!]

[You have unlocked a new skill: Overhead Kick!]

[Your mastery over the football skill 'Overhead Kick' has improved to basic!]

...

[You have completed hidden system mission: Do it in England!]

>You've done it in Nigeria in the NPFL for Nigeria, now it is time to prove that you are not just a 1-season wonder and limited to the Nigerian league. Prove your talent in a game that England will never forget<

[Hidden mission completed!]

[Congratulations! The system has awakened to level 4!]

[You have unlocked level 4 perk: Match Analysis A.I!]

>The match analysis A.I is a unique A.I developed by the system and personalized for the host's use. After every game, the A.I breaks down your performance in a game, highlighting your high points and your low points<

>The A.I points out where you did good and where you did bad. It is a great tool for self-reflection and to identify areas of improvements and to know your strengths better than before<

...

[The system perk, Snooping Tool has been upgraded to level 4!]

[You can now access the mental profile of players!]

[Upgrade Snooping tool to level 5 to access real-time mental data to know the real-time mental state of players, both teammates and opponents!]

...

[The system perk, Inventory has been upgraded!]

[The system inventory slots have increased to 16 slots!]

~~~~~

After going through the series of system notifications that were waiting for him, Sam could not help it as a big grim came over his face.

'Yes!'

After months of his system staying stagnant since it's last awakening and upgrade, finally, his system finally awakened to level 4 and with it came a new system perk.

Since getting the system, after the first awakening, Sam got the snooping tool, then the skills market with the second awakening, the inventory with the third awakening, and now he had a 4th system perk.

Reading through the description of the match analysis A.I, Sam's grin widened. To improve, it was important to self-reflect and acknowledge your flaws.

One big problem of professional football players was recognizing their strengths and flaws, this was one major factor that separated truly world class players from the others.

Players like Lionel Messi were short and in football, it was supposed to be a weakness originally but recognizing his weakness, Messi worked his playstyle around it, amplifying his strengths so much that they masked his weaknesses.

You would rarely see Lionel Messi score a headed goal, but that did not make him an average player. He was still one of the best players in the world.

With the help of the match analysis A.I, Sam could do the same, recognizing his strengths and weaknesses and working his playstyle around it to make sure that he played at his best anytime he was on the football pitch.

And even more excitingly, Sam was happy because another of his attributes improved again. To a professional footballer, there was probably nothing more addictive than seeing actual improvement in your skills and ability.

And again, he got a new skill in his repertoire.

Throughout his career, even in his youth days, Sam had never been the flamboyant type of player, preferring to keep it simple and practical.

He had never attempted a bicycle kick until today, and somehow, his instincts were right and he managed to score the equalizing goal from that moment.

That moment clearly left an imprint, and now, the overhead kick skill became part of his repertoire.

After all these new additions, Sam was eager to view his system status again and that was exactly what he did.

~~~~~

[Player status!]

Host: Samuel Moses

Current Career Status: Premier League player, CAF champions league reigning champion

Talent Rating: A+

Player Position: Attacking Midfield

Player Attributes:

\*Pace: 81

\*Shot: 79

\*Pass: 80

\*Dribbling: 74

\*Defending: 38

\*Physicality: 70

\*Stamina: 84

Overall Rating: 80

...

[Owned Football Skills:]

[Basic mastery level: La croqueta; body feint; Power shot; step overs, roulette, knuckle shot, overhead kick]

[Intermediate mastery level: Elastico, Cruyff turn]

...

[Legendary Inheritance: Elastico]

...

[System Remark: An elite young talent playing in one of the best leagues in the world!]

~----~

Compared to the last time he checked; Sam's talent rating already increased from B all the way to A+.

Sam grinned; he was addicted to growth.

Chapter 115 Fulham's new star?

Immediately after the semifinal game between Fulham FC and Liverpool, social media was taken by storm.

In twitter and in all major social media platforms, the news was about Fulham's incredible comeback victory against a star-studded Liverpool team in the EFL Cup semifinal and the game's star, Samuel Moses.

Despite entering the game at just 2 minutes from regular fulltime, Sam still managed to influence the game, singlehandedly winning it for his team.

Clips of his overhead kick goal were all over tik tok and YouTube.

And for the umpteenth time in his still budding career as a professional football player, Sam experienced all his social media accounts experiencing a crazy upsurge in followership as the hype around him in England truly picked up.

After his performance against Manchester City in the FIFA Club World Cup final, he announced his name to the world but even as he got a lot of fans due to it, he also got a lot of doubters and downright haters.

There were questions, was he just a one-season wonder?

Could he do it in a league bigger than the NPFL?

And now, Samuel Moses provided his answer to his doubters with his incredible performance as a super sub in the EFL Cup semifinal game.

All over social media, there was a lot of hype, questions like if Samuel Moses was the newest star of the Fulham FC team.

Questions like if Samuel Moses was the last piece of the puzzle to complete a Fulham team that could go on to shock England.

There were a lot of speculations and hype as Sam's prestige in England truly picked up, but Sam paid very little attention to what happened on social media.

The Liverpool game was not the end of the world.

After spending a full season and a half in Enyimba FC already, Sam already knew this. The life of a professional football player was not easy, it was hectic and if he wanted to stay at the top, he needed to stay focused and dedicated.

This was why Sam shut off all the noise and hype around him, focusing on his football instead.

He knew that if in the next game, he played bad, people would forget all the hype about him mere days ago and start hating him, labeling him a wonder for only one game and this became motivation for him to work even harder.

After the Liverpool game, like usual, even as his players were exhausted and were recovering from the fatigue of the intense game, Marco Silva already started preparation for future fixtures as he sent his players fixtures to 2 games.

(FA Cup- 4th round!)

(Fulham – Newcastle)

(Date: 27th January, 2024)

...

(EFL Cup- Final!)

(Chelsea – Fulham)

(Date: 25th February, 2024)

(Venue: Wembley Stadium)

After Sam's incredible performance in the game against Liverpool, knocking the English giants off the tournament, he booked his team a spot in Wembley Stadium for a blockbuster encounter with Chelsea FC next month.

Alongside the fixture message, Coach Marco Silva also sent a congratulatory message to his players, commending them on their performance and also the need to perform even better in the EFL Cup final.

Making it to the final of any competition in England was not easy, and Marco Silva didn't just want to be a passenger riding along after getting to this stage.

He wanted his team to give their all and win the EFL trophy.

If not anything, it would be the highlight moment of his coaching career.

This was why he sent the congratulatory message which also dubbed as a motivation message to his players. If they were to win against Chelsea come next month, the squad needed to work harder than ever before.

And on that day, they had to give above 100% on the football pitch.

The message didn't change anything to Sam though, it only made him more focused on his goal. 'I intended to win from the very beginning'.

'Against Chelsea is hard but it's not anything I've not experienced before'.

'I've faced Manchester City and I performed'.

'I've faced Liverpool and I performed'.

'I just have to keep working hard and be in my best state, then even against Chelsea or any other team in the world, I can perform too'.

After the Liverpool game, the Fulham players had just 2 days to rest and prepare for their next game in the FA Cup round.

Considering how much energy they put into the Liverpool game, it was literally impossible for all the star players to fully recover before the FA Cup game but they could not complain, it is what it is.

That morning, Sam woke up early like usual, quickly jogging off to complete his daily system quest and when he was done, again, he was the first Fulham player to report to training in the morning.

This time though, Marco Silva no longer ignored his diligence. Once he drove into the stadium, Sam was the first player that he walked up to meet.

He hugged his player, then smiling at him, he commended. "The stadium staff have been telling me about your diligence since you came to the club, keep it up Sam, your mentality is one of a kind".

Thinking of something, he chuckled. "I still can't believe you actually confronted me to let you play, you have balls boy".

Sam laughed. "I just had to do it; you were not seeing me and I had to make you see me".

Coach Marco Silva laughed before patting him on the shoulder.

A few minutes later, the Fulham players made their way to the gym before later entering the pitch as they trained for their next game.

And again, Sam was a stand-out player in training.

With his physical conditioning elixirs that he got from his system every day after completing the daily system quest, Sam had a massive advantage over every other professional football player in the world.

He could recover from match fatigue far faster than other players.

And after training ended that day, when Marco Silva finally revealed his starting XI for the Newcastle game, Sam was left grinning from ear to ear.

For the first time since coming to England, Sam finally made the starting XI formation of Fulham.

He would be starting against Newcastle.

Chapter 116 FA Cup game- against Newcastle United

Due to the fatigue that still lingered from the Liverpool EFL Cup game, Coach Marco Silva heavily rotated his starting XI for the Newcastle United game.

Instead of Bernd Leno starting between the posts for Fulham FC, Rodak, the second-choice goalkeeper started instead.

And instead of Raul Jimenez leading the line, Muniz was given a chance to start at the head of the formation as the striker for this game.

Behind the striker, Pereira was given a rest, making way for the young Nigerian midfielder who stole all the headlines in the last game, Samuel Moses.

Beside Sam on both sides, De Cordova-Reid started on his left, replacing Willian as the left winger for this game while Wilson started as the right winger.

Palhinha was also rested for this game, giving Lukic and Reed the chance to start as the double pivot for the game.

As for the 4-man defense, it comprised of Diop and Ream in central defense, Robinson as the left back, and Tete as the right back.

Compared to the formation that started against Liverpool, it was a weaker formation on paper and considering that Newcastle United was another heavyweight of English football, most prominently in recent seasons, it was going to be a tough game.

After the take-over by Newcastle's new owner, a billionaire, despite the fact that the owner didn't splurge hundreds of millions in the transfer market like predicted, Newcastle United still experienced a big change already.

The team was now a force to be reckoned with in the English premier competition. And today, they clashed against Fulham in Craven Cottage.

With the likes of Aleksander Isak, Anthony Gordon, Bruon Guimaraes, Schar, Burn, Kieran Trippier, and Martin Dubravka all starting, it was clear that Newcastle United came with their strongest lineup and were determined to win.

Despite the fact that Fulham FC managed to pull off such a big off-set against Liverpool, Fulham was still seen as the heavy underdog for this game.

And considering the fact that Coach Marco Silva rotated so heavily, this became even more so but one specific player on the pitch didn't agree to this sentiment.

Donning the no. 11 jersey for Fulham FC, on the pitch, Sam had no other thoughts in his mind but thoughts of winning.

'I have to win, and win again, and keep on winning'.

'That's the only way to keep on improving and get to the very top'.

FWEEEE!

When the game started, Fulham FC started kickoff brightly as for the first few minutes of this game, it was a tightly-contested affair.

The Fulham FC attack was not as bland as in the Liverpool game during the early stages. With Sam at the helm of the Fulham midfield, Sam showed what he could do on a football pitch, orchestrating the play.

Since he was not in a rush this time, he was calm, rotating possession on the pitch between his teammates like a robot that could not make a single mistake.

He kept on threading dangerous passes to his teammates, rising head and shoulders above all his teammates on the pitch but his teammates could not finish the chances that he created.

And now wary of his threat, the Newcastle players marked him tightly, not giving him the chance to try outside the box shots.

It was not all Sam on the pitch though.

Of course, a tightly-contested affair meant that it went both ways. With their star players, Newcastle United imposed themselves on this game as Guimaraes and Aleksander Isak caused problems for the Fulham defense.

Despite the chances that were created by both sides, the game remained goalless until the 39th minute of the game.

After some scrappy defending from the Fulham defense, Longstaff, the Newcastle midfielder pounced on a loose ball, rifling it into the roof of the net and beyond Rodak as he scored the first goal of the game.

That goal definitely roused Fulham FC awake as they put more urgency into their play, despite this, it did not yield fruit.

The first half ended with Newcastle United leading 0-1.

When second half started, Coach Marco Silva made a single change, taking off Reed and introducing Palhinha into the game as immediately, the Fulham team became more solid and compact.

Fulham played with intent in the 2nd half, being the better team as they came close to scoring a few times but then in the 61st minute, they were stunned.

Against the run of play, Danny Burn, the Newcastle left back after an impressive overlapping run played clever interchanging passes between Aleksander Isak and from nowhere, this left back snuck the ball into the bottom left corner.

It was 0-2 to Newcastle United out of nowhere!

That goal definitely set the coals of fire burning down Fulham's ass.

And finally, the urgency got to Sam. By now, most of his teammates were already showing signs of fatigue but unwilling to give up, buoyed by Palhinha's performance since coming on, Sam led the attack, orchestrating play.

5 minutes after the second Newcastle goal, he finally did it, playing a defense-splitting through pass to Muniz.

The Fulham striker got to the ball before Martin Dubravka, and as the goalkeeper charged in, he pushed the ball forward, going around him before poking the ball into an empty net to cut the Newcastle lead by half.

Sam got an assist, and Muniz got his goal.

1-2 by the 66th minute.

Sam kept on trying, giving his best, being Fulham's best player by some margin as he kept on orchestrating play yet his teammates failed to capitalize on the chances that he created a second time.

He tried to take a go personally but the Newcastle United players marked him tightly, preventing him from doing anything tangible with the ball.

Towards the end of the game, Sam cut a frustrated figure as he did so much yet there were no results to show for his effort.

In the end, despite his effort, Fulham FC lost the game 2-1 to Newcastle United to crash out of the FA Cup.

Fulham's journey through the FA Cup came to a heartbreaking end just after they pulled off a miracle in their last tournament game.

The Fulham fans didn't complain though, rather, they applauded their players, Sam chants erupting at some point to acknowledge his stand-out display.

Fulham may have lost, but with this performance, a question was answered.

Yes, Samuel Moses, the young attacking midfielder and no. 11 was Fulham's newest star player.

Chapter 117 Star player

(Premier League fixtures:)

(Fulham – Everton)

(Date: 30th January, 2024)

...

(Burnley – Fulham)

(Date: 3rd February, 2024)

...

(Fulham – Bournemouth)

(Date: 10th February, 2024)

...

(Fulham – Aston Villa)

(Date: 17th February, 2024)

...

(Man United – Fulham)

(Date: TBD)

After the FA Cup game against Newcastle United, despite the fact that Fulham FC lost the game, it announced Sam to the spotlight as Fulham's newest star player.

With his performance against Newcastle United, Sam seized his moment, solidifying his spot as a starting player ahead of Pereira in the Fulham team.

After the Newcastle game, their next game was against Everton in the premier league and just like before, not underestimating their opponents, Sam trained hard in training, preparing to his best ability for the game.

For this premier league game, Coach Marco Silva reverted back to his strongest lineup, starting the likes of Raul Jimenez, Bernd Leno, Palhinha, and Castagne again with the biggest omission being Pereira.

Sam already monopolized the attacking midfield spot for himself.

And again, it was a home game for Fulham FC.

Buoyed by the loud noise being made by their fans and their endless energy, Fulham FC came attacking aggressively from the very first minute of this game but from the first minute, another thing was clear.

Everton approached this game with a defensive mind-set.

For almost 90 minutes, Everton frustrated Fulham, thwarting attack after attack from the team in white, black, and red as they occasionally threatened on the counter.

This game was supposed to end in a draw, but a certain player disagreed.

In the 89th minute of the game, Sam dribbled with the ball into the opposition 18-yard box, wriggling past Everton players and just before he could shoot, he was dragged down in the Everton box and immediately, the referee blew his whistle, awarding a penalty kick to Fulham.

After playing admirably for most of this game already, Raul Jimenez stepped up to take the penalty before expertly sending the Everton goalkeeper the wrong way, converting to give his team the lead and win the game.

Jimenez won the man of the match award for this game.

Fulham's next game was against Burnley on 3rd February, another league game. And this time, it was an away game.

On away ground, Fulham FC dominated the newly promoted team as 2 early goals from Palhinha and Muniz who replaced Jimenez for this game in the 17th and 21st minute set Fulham up for the win until a 2nd half collapse cost them.

2 late goals from Burnley at the 71st and 90th plus 1 minute from Fofana doomed Fulham to a draw, until a familiar defiant player reared his head again.

When the stakes were highest, Sam proved his quality, scoring his first premier league goal when it was most needed.

Sam scored an absolute rocket in the 90th plus 5 minutes, sending Burnley hearts across the stadium to despair as he dragged his team to victory.

The game ended 2-3 in Fulham's favor.

And just like that, after back to back victories, Fulham started climbing the league table after some eye-catching performances.

Fulham was suddenly unrecognizable, they played like an entirely different team to the one that played during the first half of the season.

After the Burnley game, 7 days later, Fulham welcomed Bournemouth in Craven Cottage for another premier league game.

And this time, Fulham didn't fumble, dominating from beginning to end.

De Cordova-Reid opened the scoring early in the 6th minute, sending Fulham ahead and Muniz who started ahead of Jimenez for the second consecutive game sent the dagger through Bournemouth hearts, doubling the Fulham lead in the 36th minute of the game through a Sam assist.

The first half ended with Fulham leading 2-0.

When second half started, Bournemouth improved and after 5 minutes, they were rewarded for their efforts in the 50th minute as they pulled one back through Senesi but Fulham did not lie waiting.

Just 2 minutes later, in the 52nd minute of the game, Sam played an unreal defense-splitting pass, prying the Bournemouth defense open for Muniz to run one-on-one against the Bournemouth goalkeeper and the striker did not make a mistake, scoring the 3rd goal for Fulham.

Sam got his second assist of the game.

And just 8 minutes later, Sam added the nail to the coffin, scoring another rocket from midfield in the 60th minute of the game to make it 4-1 to Fulham FC.

With 1 goal and 2 assists, Sam won the man of the match award of this game.

He was adapting to English football like fish to water.

Fulham's next game was another home game but it was against a difficult high-flying Aston Villa side. The Fulham squad was in good spirits though, they approached the game confidently.

In just an hour though, Aston Villa shattered their hearts after an Ollie Watkins masterclass in Craven Cottage.

Scoring 2 goals in between both halves of the game in the 23rd and 56th minute of the game, giving his team a 2-goal advantage, the game seemed sealed till Muniz reduced the lead by half in the 63rd minute.

For the 3rd consecutive game, he started ahead of Jimenez.

Muniz's goal changed the momentum of the game as the Fulham fans went behind their players, roaring them on to make a comeback and the player at the center of it all was a familiar name.

Samuel Moses orchestrated the proceedings, leading the fight for a comeback.

"Sam!" "Sam!" "Sam!"

The familiar chants blasted through Craven Cottage again.

Sam tried his best, using every trick in his books to try helping his team claw themselves out of defeat but Aston Villa was just too tenacious and most importantly, Dibu Martinez, the Aston Villa goalkeeper put out a goalkeeping masterpiece, keeping the Fulham forwards silent.

The game ended 1-2 in Aston Villa's favor.

Despite the defeat, the feeling in the Fulham FC camp was still positive, the club was still experiencing the best run of their campaign this season so far.

After the Aston Villa game, Fulham FC was supposed to take on Manchester United in another premier league game on the 24th February in Old Trafford, the red devils' home stadium but the game was postponed.

The premier league game was postponed because the next day, 25th February, on Sunday, Fulham FC would be taking on Chelsea FC in Wembley Stadium to play the Carabao Cup final.

Chapter 118 EFL Cup final- Chelsea vs Fulham

(EFL Cup- Final!)

(Chelsea – Fulham)

(Date: 25th February, 2024)

(Venue: Wembley Stadium)

For Sam, it all started on that faithful night, 28th May, 2011, and it commenced in the iconic Wembley Stadium.

Sam still remembered the memory vividly like it was yesterday.

He still remembered the energy in the viewing center as Manchester United and FC Barcelona fought it out in the most important fixture of club football, the UEFA champions league final.

Since that time, it was already 13 years and now, no longer a boy but a man now, Sam was about to play his first game in this very same iconic stadium.

And just like that night, it was going to be a final game.

All these reasons and more made the Carabao Cup final game even more special for Sam. The venue for the game was a stadium that had a special place in his heart, and he was determined to create another unforgettable memory from it.

'We must win!' That was the only thought that dominated Sam's mind in the build up to the game.

After the Aston Villa game, the Fulham players had 8 days to prepare for the EFL Cup final and through these days, in training, Sam trained like a beast.

He put in more than 100% in every training session, pushing himself beyond his limits all in preparation for one of the most important games of his life.

His career was still a short one but Sam already participated in a few iconic games, specifically his run with Enyimba through the CAF champions league, the run through the FIFA Club World Cup, and now the run through the Carabao Cup.

In all 3 of these tournaments, he put in more than 100% effort and despite the fact that the end result was not always what he wanted, he still won 1 out of 2 trophies in these tournaments and the 3rd trophy was now pending.

Sam already made his resolve; he was determined to get the Carabao Cup trophy to cement his first season in England.

It didn't matter if they were going up against Chelsea whose form in the league was inconsistent, or if they were even going up against the mighty Real Madrid, Sam was just determined to win no matter who the enemy was.

What made the game even more important to him was the fact that to motivate his son even more, Mr. Moses took care of the logistics and after a month since he came to England, his mom and sister finally took a flight to meet him here.

Mrs. Moses and Sophia came to watch the game and support Sam live.

With them present, Sam was even more determined to win.

And after 8 days of going at it hard, putting beyond his best in every training session, finally, it was the D-day.

30 minutes before the game, the lineup of both teams was released.

Both teams started with their strongest line up.

Muniz managed to bench Raul Jimenez for this game again, starting at the top of the 4-2-3-1 formation as the striker spearheading the attack.

The 3-man midfield behind him comprised of Sam in the attacking midfield position, Harry Wilson as the right winger as De Cordova-Reid picked up a knock in training, while a surprising name completed the 3-man offense behind Muniz.

After flirting at the periphery of the Fulham starting line-up for months, Alex Iwobi finally made the big step up, convincing the coach through his performances in training to start him ahead of Willian for this important game.

Alex Iwobi started in the left wing.

Behind the 4-man attack, 2 defensive midfielders played as the anchors in Lukic and Palhinha.

The 4-man defense comprised of Robinson in left back, Calvin Bassey who recovered from his injury and Adarabioyo in center defense, while Castagne started as the right back of this team. Bernd Leno started in goal.

It was a strong team on paper, but the Chelsea team was even stronger.

For the Carabao Cup game, Mauricio Pochettino, the Chelsea coach started with his strongest lineup with the same 4-2-3-1 formation.

Nicolas Jackson started up top as the striker, and behind him, Conor Gallagher played directly behind Jackson, flanked on both sides by Raheem Sterling on the left and the scintillating Cole Palmer on the right.

Behind them, anchoring the game for Chelsea were Moises Caicedo and the Argentine world-cup winning midfielder, Enzo Fernandez.

Their 4-man defense comprised of Malo Gusto as right back, Axel Disasi and Levi Colwill in center defense, with Ben Chilwell covering the left back spot.

Petrovic started in between the posts for Chelsea.

That night, Wembley stadium was sold out as tens of thousands of fans in blue dominated, supporting their club energetically. The Fulham fans did not slack though as they also stormed this stadium in the tens of thousands.

It was a clash between blue against white, black, and red.

Even before the game started, as Sam entered the pitch alongside his teammates, he felt the tension in this stadium.

In a final, the stakes were at the highest but Sam was no newbie to this.

He grinned, taking in the energy, and then...

FWEEEE!

The game started.

For the first 10 minutes of this game, it was chaos as both sides went pound for pound at each other, playing physical football as they tried to dominate the proceedings and assert their authority over the game.

For the first 10 minutes, neither team managed to create a meaningful attack as Chelsea and Fulham defended like a team, snuffing out any attack pattern.

And then after 10 minutes, Chelsea asserted their authority over this game.

With Enzo Fernandez calmly ping-ponging the ball around in midfield, helping his team gain control over the game and with his partner, Moises Caicedo playing as the destroyer, shutting off any Fulham attack, the forwards got their chance to shine and Cole Palmer seized it with aplomb.

The English midfielder was the outstanding player of the first half as Cole Palmer torched the Fulham defense time and time again.

His first touch was electric, enabling him to beat the Fulham players time and time again but despite this, he could not find the net.

Calvin Bassey and Adarabioyo were putting out a defensive masterclass.

The first half came to an end 0-0.

It was a cagey game.

Chapter 119 Cold Palmer

During half-time in the dressing room, an agitated Marco Silva walked up and down the dressing room, paying attention to his players.

All of them were tensed, still filled with the adrenaline of the first half.

Despite the fact that the first half ended 0-0 with neither team managing to break the duck, it was a highly intense game full of ups and downs.

After pacing up and down some more, Marco Silva clapped loudly, attracting the attention of his players. "Come on guys!" He stared at them.

"This is the game of our lives!"

"When last did you play in a final?"

"A final is something that comes once in a lifetime for most football careers, that's how important tonight is for us".

"I don't know about you but I definitely don't want to just come and go as a passenger, I want to create a memory that I can proudly tell my grandchildren about, something to brag to my great grandchildren". He grinned.

"All of you did well in the first half, but this second half," he pounded his fists. "I want more".

"Give me more!" He roared.

"Give me enough to win!"

"I don't care whether you have friends on the other side of the pitch. Tonight, there are no friends, only enemies".

"And in war, you don't spare your enemies, you kill your enemies".

"Come on!" He clapped again. "Let's go out there and bury Chelsea!"

By the time Marco Silva was done with his speech, all the players felt their blood boiling hot like they were dumped in a volcano.

Sam felt his brain heating up like it was on fire.

All the Fulham players were fired up, determined to give their all to win the game but they were not the only ones.

Probably Maurichio Pochettino did the same thing with the Chelsea players because when they came out into the pitch for the second half, all of them had eyes burning with fire and determination.

The tension between both teams became palpable, and when the referee's whistle finally sounded, this tension became a supernova.

It exploded.

FWEEEE!

Fulham restarted the game and immediately, the Chelsea players were all over them, pressing aggressively like hungry Pitbulls.

Feeling the energy of the Chelsea players, it ignited a competitive spirit in Sam, pushing him into an otherworldly level of concentration again.

'Win!' 'Win!' 'Win!'

The familiar mantra started in his head again.

Sam was a calm person, respectful and not troublesome, but this personality became a thing of the past when his competitive spirit was triggered.

His competitive spirit was only triggered by football and when it was triggered, he was like an unstoppable Lion who would stop at nothing to get what he wanted and in this second half, Sam was triggered.

Sam utilized his incredible stamina, running all over the pitch, combating against the physical Moises Caicedo and the sturdy Chelsea defense.

Most times, he was outmuscled by the more physically imposing Chelsea players but Sam still managed to get what he wanted, to create chaos.

And in the chaos, he thrived, stealing loose balls and spraying passes left and right as he set his teammates up.

Alex Iwobi was also having an impressive game as he pressured the Chelsea defense from the left, bullying Malo Gusto with his physicality.

On the other side, Raheem Sterling finally switched on, going on mazy dribbles down the left-hand side as he tortured Castagne this second half.

Despite all the eye-catching performances around the pitch, Cole Palmer remained head and shoulders above every other player on this pitch as this midfielder put out a display to remember, threatening every time his leg touched the ball.

In the first 10 minutes of the second half alone, he forced Leno into making an impressive save even as he set up Nicolas Jackson 3 times!

It would have been 3-0 if the Chelsea striker was not so profligate.

Both teams were playing at a high level, thriving in the chaos on the field but despite their performances, a goal failed to materialize in this game.

Muniz personally was having a game to forget as despite chances created by Sam, Wilson, and Alex Iwobi, he failed to capitalize.

All in all, this game was proving to be a horror game for the strikers.

The energy of the fans in the stands never died though as the game wore on, instead, it only increased, rising to a crescendo as their noise rose through the roof.

Their energy buoyed on the players on the pitch.

It was no longer just a game, it was war!

Sam tried his best, trying everything in his repertoire to influence the game and leave an impact, yet the goal failed to materialize.

Cole Palmer did the same for Chelsea and just like that, time passed.

55 minutes passed, still no goal...

60 minutes passed, still no goal...

70 minutes passed, still no goal...

And then, in the 73rd minute of this game, the deadlock was finally broken.

Riding the energy of this stadium, after receiving a long pass from Enzo Fernandez, Raheem Sterling calmly took the ball in his strides in the left wing, controlling it with his lap as he exploded, going on a mazy run.

This Chelsea winger went haywire, utilizing his quick feet and pace to penetrate the Fulham defense like a hot knife through butter.

He turned Castagne inside out, leaving the Fulham right back for dead before cutting into the 18-yard box and curling a shot towards the top right corner.

Leno went on a full-stretch dive but it was not enough.

"Will it? Will it?!"

"And oh! The post comes to the rescue!"

Raheem Sterling grabbed his hair, ruffling it in frustration as his incredible effort rebound off the bar into the field.

And in the chaos as the Fulham players scrambled to clear the ball, that was when the English maverick entered the equation.

Thud!

Eyes narrowed in focus on the rolling ball, legs running in a calculated rhythm one step before the other, Cole Palmer was so focused he entered a state of trance.

And when his left leg hit the ball from just outside the 18-yard box, he hit it with the venom he accumulated for over 70 minutes of this game.

BAM!

The shot was a ground ball, tearing the green grass apart, rotating like a destructive ping pong ball as it snuck past the scrambling legs of Fulham defenders and then past Leno's outstretched arm before nestling into the bottom left corner of the Fulham net.

Wembley Stadium was briefly silenced, then...

"PALMERRRRR...!!!" The English commentator screamed at the top of his voice, and like a dynamite setting off the iconic English stadium as the tens of thousands of fans in blue roared in ecstasy.

While the commentator went all lyrical with his words, drowning the goal with superlatives, Cole Palmer ran towards the corner flag to celebrate.

As soon as he arrived, calmly, this midfielder did his cold celebration.

Chills..., the Chelsea fans felt chills...

The fans worshiped him, screaming at the top of their lungs even as the other Chelsea players came and jumped all over him, celebrating excitedly.

In the 73rd minute, Cole Palmer broke the deadlock, making it 1-0 to Chelsea.

Fulham was put on the backfoot.

Chapter 120 10 minutes of madness!

After putting out such a valiant performance already for 70 minutes, to concede in such a manner, all the Fulham players felt deflated.

All their efforts through 70 minutes was for naught.

All of them felt distraught but even in the distraughtness of this situation was when a certain Fulham player's mentality reared its head again.

When Cole Palmer scored the goal, Sam tracked back, pursuing the English midfielder so he had VIP view of the amazing goal.

Having VIP view of the goal did not crack his spirit though.

Instead, it only provoked his competitive spirit even more.

Sam's eyes were wide again, burning with a fiery zeal to win, a determination to give his all, and an acknowledgement that he could not do it alone.

"Come on!" Sam clapped, roaring at his teammates.

"It's not over yet, we can still do it!"

He pointed at his head. "Keep your head in the game, it's just 1 goal difference, trust me, we'll make a comeback and win today!"

Sam was a youngster, just an 18-year-old, the senior players in this Fulham team were not obliged to listen him at all but at this moment, seeing this player talk, the other Fulham players felt his confidence.

It was crazy how even in the worst of situations on the pitch this boy still managed to regain his confidence, it was almost delusional like a mad man.

But who cares? If that was what it took to complete a comeback this game, the Fulham players decided to believe in a mad man.

And when the referee's whistle sounded again, the Fulham players showed that they were not dead. They were far from dead; they were still alive and kicking!

FWEEEE!

Just before the game started though, after successfully getting into the head of his teammates, making them believe in his confidence, Sam did something.

He made use of one of his trump cards.

~----~

[You have accessed ability card: Thread it like KDB!]

[Card Effects:]

>Once used, for 30 minutes, you gain the incredible playmaking skills of the Belgian midfielder, Kevin De Bruyne. You get the vision and the skill to play penetrative defense splitting through passes just like KDB<

...

[You have made use of an ability card: Thread it like KDB!]

~----~

In recent years in football, in metrics for attacking midfielders, there were attacking midfielders with great vision and who had the technique to play defense-splitting passes, and then there was the Belgian maestro, Kevin De Bruyne.

For the past 5 to 6 years, KDB was by far the best assist-giving midfielder in all of Europe, dazzling game after game with his vision and passing technique.

And at this moment, in this game with his team down 1-0, when the stakes were highest, Sam made use of a trump card that no other footballer other than him could make use of.

He channeled KDB!

Cole Palmer scored in the 73rd minute, and as soon as Fulham restarted play, determined to maintain their lead, the Chelsea players did not let Fulham maintain possession as they returned to pound to pound football.

Led by their destroyer, Moises Caicedo, the Chelsea team went physical, fighting for every ball and disrupting any meaningful Fulham play.

For a few minutes, they succeeded, until the 80th minute of this game.

By then, the atmosphere in this stadium already heated up to a crescendo like a burning fire and in that hell, Sam finally thrived.

For the past few minutes, he took advantage of his incredible stamina, pursuing the ball since and then in the 80th minute, he finally won the pound for pound battle, stealing the ball from Moises Caicedo.

Sam had only 2 football skills that were at the intermediate level, his elastico dribble and Cruyff turn.

And at this moment, immediately after he stole the ball, as Moises Caicedo and Enzo Fernandez pressed, determined to get the ball, Sam executed the Cruyff turn, effortlessly evading the challenge from both players.

He won the ball back in midfield, and now, he charged forward with it.

Conor Gallagher quickly charged him down but with a la croqueta, Sam left the English midfielder for dead and that was when his senses tingled.

Since utilizing the ability card and channeling KDB, Sam developed something like a sixth sense to spot passing lanes and at this moment, viewing all his options, he played a pass that would be impossible to 99% of midfielders in the world.

From midfield, he played a raking pass that cut through the Chelsea defense like a hot knife through butter, through all its defenders, before slowing down in a platter of gold for the onrushing Alex Iwobi.

Alex Iwobi simply decided to run blindly, he never expected such a pass but seeing it, the Nigerian International did not miss his moment.

It was literally served on a platter of gold for him.

As Petrovic rushed out, Alex simply stuck out his leg, tapping the ball into the net in the 81st minute of the game.

"GOALLLLL...!" The Fulham fans erupted like evolved Chihuahuas, roaring at the top of their lungs!

Alex Iwobi scrambled back to his feet, pumped a fist to the fans before rushing into the Chelsea net, picking up the ball and running back to the middle of the pitch to quickly restart play.

In the 81st minute, the game was tied again, 1-1.

Game on.

Bam!

Chelsea restarted play and still, they could not reassert their authority as every authority on this pitch was already taken by a mad man, mad Sam.

Dropping deeper than before to stay more on the ball, Sam became an orchestrator, playing passes that split Chelsea open time and time again.

The Chelsea players tried to wrestle for control but once he was gone, he was gone, he was never looking back.

The final 10 minutes of this game was total madness, madness orchestrated by the mad man, mad Sam.

The tension increased, the stakes dangled, alluring the players on both teams and finally, in the 88th minute, the game was decided by the mad man, again.

At some point, Jimenez already entered this game, replacing Muniz.

Receiving the ball just outside the Chelsea 18-yard box, Sam took 2 touches, 1 to control the ball and the other to chip a delicate cross into the box.

Watching the ball float in the air, Petrovic, the Chelsea goalkeeper hesitated.

Should he stand his ground and wait or should he rush out to punch the ball?

That moment of hesitation was all it took as jumping, Raul Jimenez unleashed a diving header reminiscing of Robin Van Persie's iconic goal in the FIFA World Cup many years ago.

The ball went straight into the roof of the net, leaving Petrovic scrambling.

1-2 to Fulham in the 88th minute of this game.

"MAD MAN!" The commentator screamed.

"The Nigerian Zidane has struck again!"

"What a cross! What a touch! What a goal! What a moment!"

"As soon as the ball touched his leg, you knew that something special was about to happen and oh boy did it happen!"

"2 assists to Samuel Moses!"

"Back in January, he drowned Liverpool with his powers and tonight, we're witnessing him drown Chelsea with the same powers!"

Charging toward the corner flag, Raul Jimenez slid on his knees in celebration even as the Fulham fans roared in ecstasy.

10 minutes of madness turned this game around.