

Football God 141

Chapter 141 Title- Space Interpreter

"What a performance out there today Sam! After the run of form that Fulham has been stuck in for the past few weeks, a lot of people were interested to know how Fulham would respond in today's game".

"Besides, with all the talk about your manager, Marco Silva under the threat of losing his job, your team was under a lot of pressure but despite the pressure, you and your teammates managed to pull through, how did you do it?"

Sam panted heavily, wiping his sweat as he faced the reporter.

It was time for the post-match press conference after the West Ham game and after winning the man of the match award again, he had to face the camera.

He took a deep breath. "First, I didn't do it, we did it". He stared at the reporter. "I am just one part of the machine called Fulham, only with the help of my teammates did we win today's game with such a margin".

"Are you saying you won because of teamwork?"

"Yes," Sam nodded. "Football is a team game".

"That's a nice mentality to have Sam". The male reporter smiled. "Since making the move from the NPFL to the premier league in January, you've achieved a lot of things with Fulham already, including even winning a trophy".

"And today, you crossed another big milestone, scoring your first premier league hattrick. As an attacking midfielder, that is impressive statistics".

"Sam, how do you feel about this?"

Sam stared at the reporter, then he finally smiled. "I feel great, obviously, but I want to thank my teammates".

"Without their effort, I never would have done it alone. Their incredible intensity in today's game helped me elevate my game even higher, this is why we were able to beat West Ham at home".

Smiling, the reporter nodded, asking Sam a few more questions that he answered. After about 5 more minutes, he finally left but the interview was not over yet. Someone took Sam's spot.

Cairney, the Fulham captain stood before the camera to complete the post-match press conference. "Cairney, compared to the beginning of the season, Fulham now plays like an entirely different team".

Fulham's captain smiled. "Of course we play different. Afterall, not every team in the premier league can boast of a prodigy like Sam in their ranks." He chuckled. "I'm privileged to train alongside him every day and play with him".

"Sam is destined for the top. With him, I feel that we can do anything".

The reporter chuckled. "The sense of déjà vu I feel from hearing this is honestly scary. Back in Enyimba, Sam's teammates said the same thing about him".

"Naturally," Cairney laughed. "The boy's work rate is just monstrous".

"So, captain, do you have any piece of advice for the Nigerian prodigy?"

Cairney rubbed his chin before he answered. "My only advice will be for him to keep his head down, to stay humble".

"These days, football is heavily commercialized. We live in the 21st century where it is very easy to get distracted. If Sam wants to fulfill his potential in football, my advice for him is to stay humble and focus on his football".

"Playing football is the most principal thing, everything else comes with it".

The reporter smiled. "Before you leave, one last question. After today's statement victory, what does it mean to Fulham's form?"

"Do you think your team can keep that energy for future games?"

Hearing that question, Cairney grinned; he answered with a straightforward sentence. "Fulham won't lose again!"

The next day, the trending headlines all over news channels and social media was Cairney's words.

(Daily Sun News!)

(Fulham won't lose again!)

(Fulham thrash West Ham 0-7 in away ground!)

That win did not just mean a lot to the fans, it also meant a lot to the Fulham players. It brought their confidence back.

...

After the game, as soon as Sam got home, after ending a video call with his family, he was assaulted by a series of system notifications.

~----~

[You have completed premier league matchday mission: Victory!]

[You played 75 minutes of this game, being the best player on the pitch with 5 goal contributions; 3 goals and 2 assists!]

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

[Calculation complete!]

[You have been rewarded with 25 Skill Points!]

[You have been rewarded with bonus 10 Skill Points!]

...

[You have completed system mission: Win!]

[You have been rewarded with a system boost: Form Boost!]

...

[Congratulations! You have completed a hidden system mission: Hattrick Milestone!]

>Hattrick Milestone: You have met an incredible milestone in the career of an attacking football player, scoring your first hattrick in the premier league. There are multiple milestones in the hattrick series; you have met the first milestone<

[You have been rewarded with a Legendary Inheritance!]

[You have been rewarded with the advanced mastery of the Legendary Football Skill: Spatial Awareness!]

[NOTE:]

>You have inherited the Legendary inheritance of another football legend, the great German and Bayern Munich midfield maestro, Thomas Muller<

>Thomas Muller is a legend of football who not only mastered the spatial awareness skill, but also personalized it, dubbing himself the space interpreter. His command over space on a football pitch is at the legendary mastery level<

>You've awakened the advanced mastery of spatial awareness. To get to the legendary mastery level through your inheritance, all you have to do is train and get better, the other requirements have already been fulfilled since it is an inheritance<

...

[You have gained the football Title: Space Interpreter!]

...

[Owned Football Skills:]

[Passive skill: Stalwart]

[Active skills:]

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

[Intermediate mastery level: Elastico, Cruyff turn]

[Advanced mastery level: Spatial awareness]

...

[Legendary Inheritance: Spatial Awareness]

[Legendary Inheritance: Elastico]

~-----~

As soon as Sam saw these series of system notifications, he felt dizzy.

Laying down on top his bed, he felt like his head was spinning, like his room came alive, dancing a crazy dance step to an even crazier song.

Sam felt a splitting headache assault him.

'What... is going on?!

He was alarmed, but he could do nothing about it; Sam fainted.

...

The next morning, when Sam woke up, he felt different.

The way he saw and interacted with the world changed, forever.

Chapter 142 Imperious form [1]

After the game against West Ham on April 14th, when Sam reported to the next Fulham training session in Craven Cottage, his teammates and his coach could tell that something changed immediately.

Sam's perception of space already underwent a drastic evolution.

With his intermediate mastery of space previously, Sam was already a master of spatial awareness, sensing and manipulating space on a football pitch but after inheriting the great Thomas Muller's inheritance, Sam evolved.

Sam became the next Space Interpreter of football.

In Germany, there was a saying about the Bayern legend. Despite already being on the wrong side of 30, the great German, Thomas Muller still plied his trade with Bayern Munich in the German top flight.

This was not because of his insane physicality, nor even his unreal talent.

Thomas Muller was always talented, but there were far more talented footballers when he first burst into the elite tier of football decades ago.

The reason why Thomas Muller outlasted and outshined all his rivals was because of his football intelligence. His football I.Q was off the charts, and this was what enabled him to become the first true Space Interpreter in football history.

Thomas Muller did not win games by abusing his physicality or speed, not even his dribbling ability. In all these eye-catching traits, he was just above average.

The reason why Thomas Muller stayed at the top of football for almost 2 decades was because of his uncanny ability to interpret space.

The vision to spot openings in enemy formations, to be that 3rd man, drifting into that blind spot, this was Thomas Muller's strength.

And now, Sam became the great German's heir.

In Fulham's next training session, the whole Fulham squad was flabbergasted. To them, Sam was already an elite footballer with his skills, his mentality was just the cherry on top.

But with Sam's suddenly improved understanding over spatial awareness, his teammates truly started seeing him like a monster.

As for Coach Marco Silva, he felt on top of the world.

'Damn! I'm definitely the luckiest coach in the world!'

'Is this what Pep Guardiola felt when he first handled a young Lionel Messi?'

Any comparison with Lionel Messi was the greatest compliment that any young player could get in football. Marco Silva comparing Sam with the great Argentine in his mind only showed how much he rated his young prodigy.

Fulham's next game was not an easy game though.

After demolishing West Ham away from home, in their next premier league game, Fulham would be playing at home in Craven Cottage but they were faced with another tough test in Liverpool.

The merseysiders would be taking a trip to Fulham, London.

In the build-up to the game, Sam trained like mad. His new upgrade in the form of his new inheritance did not get to his head.

Sam already learned to never underestimate his opponents. Besides, he would be a fool to underestimate a team of Liverpool's caliber.

This was why Sam put his all in the build-up to this game.

And of course, he kept on motivating his teammates.

'This brat!'

'We can't let him upstage us like this!'

'Damn! I feel old beside him but I won't give up!'

'Dream on Sam if you think I'll lose to a brat like you!'

'I'll train like mad!'

With this mentality, the 0-7 thrashing in April 14th against West Ham didn't register too much in the Fulham players' minds as they prepared rigorously for their next test in the premier league.

Time moved fast and in no time, the D-day for the test was here.

It was 21st of April.

(Premier league:)

(Fulham – Liverpool)

(Date: 21st April, 2024)

Like usual, both teams started with their strongest lineups.

Fulham started with their regular 4-2-3-1 formation. Muniz started up top and behind him were the trio of Alex Iwobi, Sam, and De Cordova-Reid.

Behind the trio were Joao Palhinha and Lukic, while the 4-man defense comprised Castagne, Adarabioyo, Calvin Bassey, and Robinson.

Naturally, Bernd Leno started in between the posts for Fulham.

On the opposite side, Liverpool started with an imperious lineup in a 4-3-3 formation. The trio of Cody Gakpo, Diogo Jota, and Luis Diaz started up top.

Behind the forward three was another trio of Ryan Gravenberch, Wataru Endo, and Harvey Elliot while the defense was a star-studded lineup of Andy Robertson, Virgil Van Dijk, Quansah, and Trent Alexander-Arnold.

In between the posts stood the reliable figure of Alisson Becker.

After being sidelined by injury for a time, the Liverpool duo, the attacking right back, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Allison were back in the lineup, making Liverpool even more dangerous.

Despite the fact that Fulham were playing at home, the odds were against them. And having been knocked out by them in the Carabao Cup, a rampant Liverpool side was down for a revenge game.

It was going to be a tough test but Fulham was not ready to go down without fighting.

Heck, they were not ready to go down at all.

FWEEEE!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded, Liverpool FC started kick-off, playing the opener to an unforgettable game that soon unfolded.

During the first few minutes of this game, the game was tight as both teams played with incredible energy and intensity.

Liverpool started the game imperiously but like a stubborn Chihuahua, Fulham refused to give up, giving them back pound for pound.

Despite Fulham's impressive gameplay, after a lot of pressure, Liverpool opened the floodgates first and it was their talismanic right back who did it.

After a foul by Palhinha just outside the Fulham 18-yard box, Trent Alexander-Arnold stood before a free-kick and as soon as the ref's whistle sounded, he did it.

After a short run, this right back whipped the ball expertly with his right foot, unleashing a curled shot towards the top left corner.

Bernd Leno jumped but his hand could not reach the ball.

It was a goal.

"GOALLLL...!" The away fans section in Craven Cottage exploded.

In the 32nd minute of this game, Arnold scored to give Liverpool the lead.

The attacking right back with a smile on his face wheeled off towards the corner flag before spreading his arms in a shrug. In a sense, his celebration meant, Arnold never left, I'm back!

After that goal, it seemed like the momentum would finally switch but Fulham didn't give up, digging into this game led by Sam in midfield.

And for the first game, Sam got to show his improved spatial awareness proficiency, showcasing his grand title as a space interpreter.

He was combating in the midfield against seasoned and talented maestros on the Liverpool side but he didn't look out of place at all.

And of course, he was the one who eventually did it.

In the 45th plus 2 minutes, Sam drifted into space where he received a pass from Muniz in the 18-yard box. As Liverpool players quickly closed him down, Sam shifted and shuffled the ball, looking for space, then...

Bam!

With the heel of his boot, he set up Castagne, the marauding Fulham right back who did not hesitate to pull the trigger.

WHOM!

Castagne's shot reverberated like a rocket, leaving Allisson rooted to the spot as the ball tore its way into the roof of the Liverpool net.

"GOALLLL...!" Craven Cottage exploded.

Castagne whirled off away to the corner flag, celebrating wildly.

Just before half-time, Fulham leveled the score. They were still very much in the game.

This was a team in imperious form.

Chapter 143 Imperious form [2]

During half-time, Marco Silva had a smile on his face as he addressed his players. "Congratulations guys, we played like warriors that first half".

"This second half, we have no intention of letting up and giving them the game, let's finish it like warriors just like we started!"

"Get me that winning goal!"

It was a short speech but it made the players' blood boil.

FWEEEE!

After the players made their way back to the pitch, as soon as the referee's whistle sounded again to restart play, the battle between Fulham and Liverpool restarted with the same intensity that they played the first half.

This second half, Sam was already in the zone.

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

The mantra chanted in his head and with it, his focus became narrowed, ignoring every other distraction as all his attention became abstracted to the ball.

Just 3 minutes after restart, Sam came closest to pushing his team ahead in the 48th minute. After winning the ball back in midfield from Wataru Endo, he drove forward a bit with the ball, skipped past 2 challenges, set himself up, before unleashing a thunderous outside the box shot.

The ball just barely missed the post, rushing out for a goal kick.

"F*ck!" Sam cursed, grabbing his head in regret.

He didn't linger on his regret though. After that test shot, his legs felt like more alive they were on fire, he was ready to impose himself on this game.

But as the game progressed though, Sam learned that he was not the only player with the intention and ability to impose himself on this game.

Trent Alexander-Arnold, the maverick Liverpool right back also imposed himself upon this game as he tortured Robinson down the right-hand side, orchestrating clever plays and playing in a few dangerous crosses.

For years in the premier league, Trent Alexander-Arnold has been crowned with the title of the best crosser of the ball in the league and in this game, this Liverpool phenom was showing his skill with the ball at his feet.

In the first few minutes of this second half, Sam and Trent Alexander-Arnold stole all the attention with their incredible plays once the ball was with them.

And in the end, one of them got the result first, Arnold did.

After another Liverpool attack was thwarted, receiving the ball in the right-hand side even as Lukic closed him down aggressively, Arnold swiftly floated a cross into the Fulham box that was still congested by Liverpool players.

The Liverpool players leaped desperately to clear the ball but unfortunately for them, a Liverpool player rose highest.

Ryan Gravenberch rose highest, planting a firm header towards goal.

Leno dived, his hand grazing the ball but it was not enough as the ball snuck through and into the net, breaking the deadlock again.

"GOALLLL...!" The away fan section erupted again.

Gravenberch charged towards the corner flag, sliding on his knees and pumping his fists as he celebrated his goal excitedly.

In the 53rd minute, Liverpool went back on the lead again.

Fulham was on the backfoot again.

"Come on!" Sam clapped, yelling. "We're still in this!"

"One goal to turn the tides!"

"We need just one goal!"

When the referee's whistle sounded again, the Fulham players truly came out of their shells as they took the battle to Liverpool.

And again, Sam was the orchestrator.

With the urgency to score settling in his brain, setting off all his electrons in an excited state, Sam played at an extraterrestrial level.

With the ball, he dribbled, skipping past challenges and when he was about to lose it, he played crazy passes, splitting the Liverpool defense open time and time again and finally, it paid fruit.

In the 60th minute, Sam slipped a pass through the Liverpool defense to Alex Iwobi on the right who did not hesitate, crossing the ball into the box to Muniz.

The cross was not accurate though, going behind Muniz instead of coming at his front, leaving this striker no choice but to improvise but Muniz did it perfectly.

With one hand on his jersey, cleverly pulling, the imposing Virgil Van Dijk kept this striker in check but Muniz was unwilling to give up. With eyes dilated in focus, as the ball floated in, he raised his right leg behind him, then...

BAM!

Muniz improvised, executing a scissor kick as he unleashed a volleyed shot at goal. Allison reacted, diving and touching the ball but again, it snuck past him.

"YEAHHHH...!" Muniz jumped, pumping his fists excitedly as he riled up the Fulham fans who roared with him.

"Damn! What a game this is turning out to be!"

"2 teams that are in form, 2-2, what a game!"

"Muniz, what a goal! Sam is on fire! He played his role on that goal to perfection though it is recorded as an Alex Iwobi assist".

FWEEEE!

The game restarted again as both teams played with even greater intensity.

It was a cagey affair filled with exciting battles all over the pitch, and again, it required a moment of individual brilliance to break the deadlock a 3rd time, and again, it was in Liverpool's favor.

And again, it was the menace, Trent Alexander-Arnold.

"What a pass from Arnold!"

"Straight through the heart of the Fulham defense! Jota gets it but he's sandwiched from both sides by Adarabioyo and Basse, can he wriggle through?"

"Oh! Twinkle feet, Leno is coming out, and ohhhh... GOALLL!"

"Diogo Jota has done it! Liverpool is in the lead again!"

"And that is the 3rd time this game, can Fulham recover from this?"

Having drifted into midfield with the ball at some point, Trent Alexander-Arnold played an accurate slicing pass through the middle of the Fulham team, right into Diogo Jota's legs.

The Liverpool attacker was sandwiched from both sides by Fulham's center back duo but managing to stand his ground, he pushed forward, keeping the ball away from them with his quick feet.

Bernd Leno charged out, closing him down.

And just as Calvin Bassey slid in to clear the ball, like an assassin, Diogo Jota unleashed a whipped shot into the bottom left corner, giving his team the lead for the 3rd time this game.

In the 72nd minute, it became 2-3 to Liverpool.

Could Fulham recover from this?

Chapter 144 Imperious form [3]

Could Fulham recover from this?

The Fulham of earlier in the season would have given up, admitting defeat to this behemoth of English football, succumbing to Trent Alexander-Arnold's freakish brilliance but this was no longer the Fulham of yesterday.

This was the Fulham of Sam's era, and post-Sam Fulham feared no opponent.

They already beat the likes of Liverpool and Chelsea once already, and they could do it again.

The commentator asked if they could recover from this, the Fulham players' inner response?

'Definitely!'

And Sam led this rally.

FWEEEE!

After the 3rd goal, the Liverpool players expected to have broken the Fulham players' spirits. They thought having broken their opponent's spirits, they could finally dominate, riding this game out but they were in for a rude awakening.

After that goal in the 72nd minute, Fulham became even more dangerous, more reckless, and much more assertive.

After the 72nd minute, Fulham played high octane football!

Bam! Bam! Bam!

They pinged the ball around at a rapid tempo, slicing through the Liverpool press again and again while the offensive players ran their defenders ragged, unleashing shot after shot, forcing Allison Becker into impressive save constantly.

For the last 18 minutes of this game, the whole Fulham team played like a tireless monster. The only reason why they didn't score yet was because of 2 Liverpool players, Virgil Van Dijk and Alisson Becker.

Buoyed by the incredible performance level of his attacking midfielder behind him, Muniz played like a man possessed, striving to get his 2nd goal by any means possible.

Virgil Van Dijk's clever defending helped nullified his threat, including Sam's, but more credit was on Alisson Becker's streak of form for the last 18 minutes.

The Liverpool goalkeeper already saved his team from 2 one-on-one situations, and his lightning-swift reflexes helped him save lethal shots, keeping his team on the game and in the lead.

If Liverpool won eventually, it would be a hard-fought one, but the Fulham players had no interest in just making it hard for them.

They wanted to score!

They wanted to equalize!

They wanted to win!

But it was hard...

75 minutes passed, no goal.

80 minutes passed, no goal.

85 minutes passed, no goal.

Then, in the 88th minute, it happened and this time it was all Muniz.

After a bad Liverpool clearance from Quansah after another game-winning save from Alisson, Muniz pounced on the loose ball.

As soon as Muniz pounced on the ball, Quansah recovered, trying to redeem his mistake as he closed the striker down aggressively only to be nutmegged by the striker who was already in the zone state.

"...!" The fans around the stadium gasped at the nutmeg.

Muniz charged after the ball, arriving first but he could not shoot as another enemy shadow outstretched a leg to block his shooting angle.

Immediately, Muniz improvised, cutting the ball to the right to wriggle past again but Virgil Van Dijk got in his way with his other leg, poking the ball away as this imposing defender saved his team again.

But it was a loose ball, and before any Liverpool player could get to it, Pereira who already replaced Alex Iwobi in this game rushed at the ball, then...

Bam!

One-time shot, goal!

Craven Cottage exploded as Pereira charged toward the corner flag, waving his arms wildly as the riled up and excited Fulham fans roared.

"Oh my God!"

"Holy chills! What a super-sub performance!"

"Pereira has done it! It's 3-3, what a thriller! What will the end be like?"

"If it ends like this, then Fulham have succeeded in doing the impossible!"

All the Liverpool players felt deflated after that goal, but they didn't give up. As soon as the referee's whistle sounded again, they regrouped and went again, Trent Alexander-Arnold once again leading the fight-back from the right to get the winner the 4th time in this game.

After 90 minutes, 8 minutes was added to this game.

Those 8 minutes were 8 minutes of war!

It was pound for pound football, both teams trying to impose themselves on the game and then, in the 90th plus 8-minute, mere seconds away from fulltime, Quansah fouled Muniz, bringing him down just outside the box.

FWEEEE!

It was a freekick.

In training, Muniz was the designated Fulham freekick expert but at this moment, this striker felt tense as he stood before the ball.

The freekick would likely be the last play of this game.

It was the game-decider.

Standing before that ball, Muniz felt like the weight of the whole world was on his shoulders. The weight of tens of thousands of Fulham supporters were on his shoulders, hoping that he would score and win them the game.

The tension was fever-high.

And that was when Sam approached the striker. "Please, let me take it".

Muniz looked at Sam. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I'm sure, I want to try it".

Seeing the look in his eyes, Muniz obliged, patting Sam on the back. Nobody saw this coming, not even the other Fulham players as they were perplexed.

"Now, what is going on here?"

"Muniz actually left the chance to Sam, the young Nigerian".

"We know Sam is good, the boy is a prodigy but a freekick? In a game of this importance? In this time of the game? That's just reckless, that's too much pressure on his young shoulders".

Sam ignored the words of the referee as he walked up to the ball. His eyes were wide, fire burning in them, blazing with the fiery zeal to win.

As soon as he stood before the ball, he did it.

~-----~

[You have accessed ability card: Bend it like Beckham!]

[Card Effects:]

>This card can only be used during a set-piece. Once used, for 10 minutes, for every freekick that your team gets, you gain the ability and technique of a prime David Beckham, giving you a +80% scoring buff when taking a free-kick<

...

[You have made use of ability card: Bend it like Beckham!]

~----~

Sam closed his eyes and looked up. He took a deep breath, then he did a short-angled run before doing his thing.

Bam!

Wrapping the inside of his right boot around the ball, Sam unleashed a curled shot towards the top right corner that evaded the wall of players.

"...!" Craven Cottage froze, watching.

Alisson Becker went on a full-stretch dive; and again, his hand grazed the ball but it was not enough. He was just unlucky this game.

The ball nestled into the top right corner.

"SAMUEL MOSESSSS...!!!" The commentator roared.

"WHAT A GOALLLL!!!"

"Zinedine Sam has done it again!"

"What a moment! He's singlehandedly won Fulham the game!"

"All game they've had to chase the game from behind Liverpool, and what a way to end it! Finally going ahead in the last minute of the game!"

Sam charged towards the corner flag amid the roars of the stadium.

Spreading his arms like a King, he embraced the adoration of the fans and once he got to the corner flag, he did the Jude Bellingham celebration.

"Sam!" "Sam!" "Sam!" Chants broke around the stadium.

As the fans chanted his name though, Sam could not help but notice a familiar face in a corner of the stadium stands.

He was surprised. 'Huh? Kayla?'

Fulham won the game 4-3 after an unforgettable thriller.

Despite Sam's clutch moment, there was another player that was just above him through the course of the game.

Despite being on the losing side, with a hand in all 3 of Liverpool's goals including his freekick, Trent Alexander-Arnold won the man of the match award.

Chapter 145 Imperious form [4]

"Sam, you were absolutely incredible today! Despite facing an in-form Liverpool team, you were able to put in the goods for Fulham again, being the stand-out player, pushing your team to win the game".

"Today, you scored the first freekick goal of your career".

"Recently, in every game, it feels like you will soon break one record or another. The other day against Liverpool in the EFL Cup, you broke 2 personal records, scoring your first header goal and a bicycle kick goal".

"Today again, against the same Liverpool, you broke another personal record, scoring your first freekick goal," the female reporter smiled. "Is it that you just have a thing for breaking records or is it a persona beef with Liverpool?"

Hearing that question, Sam smiled bashfully, scratching his black hair. "Nah, I don't think it's as deep as a beef with Liverpool," he chuckled. "I think when playing against big opponents, I just become more determined to win".

"The same thing happened with Manchester City. Despite the fact that I was still playing for Enyimba then, I just wanted to do something, anything".

His smile widened. "Well, I got a hatrick to show for it".

"Against Liverpool the first time, I managed to book a spot in the final of the EFL Cup for my team. As for today," he grinned. "3 points bagged so yes, I feel great, you don't need to ask first".

"Honestly Sam, to majority of premier league ball watchers, the result of this game is a major shocker".

"Nobody saw Liverpool losing, not after the 3-horse race for the title is ramping up at the top".

The female reporter looked at him. "Between Manchester City, Liverpool, and Arsenal, after today's result, who do you think will win the premier league title this season?"

Sam scratched his hair. "This season, Manchester City is still Manchester City, you just can't write them off no matter what period of the season we're in".

"Also, it's clear that Arsenal already built on the failures of last season. This season, they're stronger, it doesn't feel like they'll bottle the title race again".

"As for Liverpool, you just can't write them off too. Under Jurgen Klopp, they've created miracles over the years and with the news that the German coach will be stepping down after this season, I believe the Liverpool players will be even more determined to win the title for their coach".

"Honestly, despite the fact that I acknowledge the effort we put into winning, I still feel that we were favored by a bit of luck".

"Well, I'll accept it though," he grinned. "Like they say, fortune favors the bold and I guess luck is a fortune too".

"What I want to say is that Liverpool has a stake to the title as much as their other 2 challengers. Mohamed Salah is still out injured and they're playing like this".

"Just imagine when the Egyptian King is back, Liverpool will be unstoppable".

"Anyways, I wish all 3 of them luck. All I have to say is that next season," his eyes gleamed. "I promise you; Fulham will be challenging for the title too!"

"Woah Sam! That's a big promise!"

Sam looked at the reporter. "Mark my words! We'll challenge for the title!"

With that, the interview finally came to an end. Somehow, the reporter failed to notice that Sam never answered the question she asked.

Sam didn't take this interview for winning the man of the match award, Trent Alexander-Arnold won it. Rather, he simply represented his team in place of his captain today, facing the media.

After the game, Trent Alexander-Arnold also stood before the media with a glum expression on his face.

"Trent, how do you feel? You played amazing out there today. You contributed to all 3 of your team's goals and somehow, that was still not enough to win the game, do you think this will affect Liverpool's title bid?"

Trent Alexander-Arnold faced the reporter. "To me, it's just a stumbling block in our title bid but we're used to facing obstacles".

"I just want our rivals to know that we won't give up!"

"We will keep on fighting, till the very end".

...

After the game, taking his gray Lexus IS 350, after signing some autographs and taking pictures with fans, Sam finally drove off.

When he arrived at his hotel though, he noticed a familiar car enter through the hotel gate just before him. He recognized that car.

'Is that...?'

As soon as Sam parked his car, coming out, he finally confirmed his guess as someone stood waiting for him just outside his car.

Sam smiled brightly. "Kayla right? I saw you at the game".

"You remember my name, I'm glad". Kayla Banks smiled brightly. "And yes, I was at the game, I promised you I would attend your club's next game, right?"

Sam chuckled. "So, how was it? Did you enjoy it?"

Kayla stared at him incredulously. "Are you serious?!"

Sam laughed. "So?"

"Really funny," she laughed half-heartedly. "I really feel like deflating your ego right now but I can't, Sam, you were amazing!"

"Against Liverpool?"

"I never saw it coming," she gushed. "I just came to watch the game out of curiosity, to see you play, I never expected to be treated to such a thriller".

"In hindsight, I'm glad I went, I would have missed out on such an unforgettable memory".

She looked at him. "Are you busy?"

"Not really, I just need to rest, you know to recover and all that".

"That's fine!" She grabbed his arm. "Come on, I'll celebrate your victory with you! Have you tasted the hotel restaurant's food? They're nice".

"Yeah, but..."

"Don't worry, it's on me! You don't need to be shy!"

In the end, Sam could not reject the act of goodwill from this girl. Kayla dragged him to the restaurant where they enjoyed a good Japanese cuisine, one she personally recommended, stepping it down with a nice wine.

As they feasted, they engaged in a conversation as they got to know each other more. Kayla was a model and having gotten a contract with a cosmetics company here in Fulham, she was here on a modelling photoshoot.

Sam spent up to 2 hours with this girl before finally excusing himself. He didn't want his parents to worry more, it was already long past their video call time.

He exchanged contacts with Kayla before leaving.

And with that, Sam did what he was supposed to do after getting home, bath, have a video call session with his family, and sleep to rest.

When Sam woke up, he got a message from his manager.

Fulham's next fixture.

(Premier league:)

(Fulham – Crystal Palace)

(Date: 27th April 2024)

Chapter 146 Imperious form [5]

(Premier league:)

(Fulham – Crystal Palace)

(Date: 27th April, 2024)

...

(Brentford – Fulham)

(Date: 4th May, 2024)

...

(Fulham – Manchester City)

(Date: 11th May, 2024)

Fulham's next game was against Crystal Palace in the premier league.

After the 2 hours spent alongside Kayla Banks in the restaurant, Sam got a new friend. He didn't think too deeply into it though and when he next spoke with his best friend, he informed Ian about Kayla.

"Hmm, Sam Sam," Ian burst out laughing as soon as Sam was done narrating. "Just friends huh?" He laughed.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing," Ian laughed still. "I just feel like laughing, but just friends?"

"Yeah, just friends".

"Ok, I believe you". Ian stared at his best friend for a few seconds and then, not able to help himself, he burst out laughing again.

"Hey!" Sam complained.

"Honestly, Sam, sometimes, you're just so cute and innocent, you're not like an Abraka bred at all".

"A girl you just met in the hotel, such a beautiful girl for that matter will just approach you, going to the extent of inconveniencing herself just to get that close to you and you think it's just to be friends?"

Sam stared at his best friend. "If it's to not be friends, then what?"

"..." Ian was speechless. 'You don't mean it!'

Ian coughed violently. "Ahem..., never mind, she's just a friend, yeah".

"Right".

Ian coughed again.

...

After that episode involving Kayla and Ian, Sam quickly slept everything off and when he woke up the next day, he was as fresh as freshly baked bread.

'The grind continues'.

Without hesitation, Sam went about his day, starting it with completing his daily system quest like usual before quickly getting set and reporting for training.

After the game against Liverpool, it was clear to the premier league that Fulham FC was back in form and teams were now wary of them again.

Despite their recent form, the Fulham squad was not complacent though, especially Sam. After learning the bitter price of underestimating an opponent, he never dared to make the same mistake a second time.

This was why Sam dived into training again and motivated by his work rate, his teammates strived to go beyond their limits again.

Like this, the days moved swiftly and in no time, it was already 6 days.

It was D-day of Fulham's next game.

Welcoming Crystal Palace to Craven Cottage, under the roar of tens of thousands of Fulham supporters, the Fulham players proved to their fans on the pitch that their form was here to stay on the long run.

From the very first minute, the Fulham players full of energy ran the Crystal Palace players ragged, totally dominating the midfield battle.

Fulham held possession for majority of this game but they found it hard to score a goal, until a moment of individual brilliance from their star.

This time, it was De Cordova-Reid. After receiving a pass from Palhinha, the Fulham winger went on a mazy run, gliding past multiple Crystal Palace players before poking the ball into the bottom corner of the net in emphatic fashion.

In the 38th minute, De Cordova-Reid broke the deadlock.

After that, the Fulham domination only became more absolute but the second goal refused to come till halftime.

Throughout the first half, Crystal Palace's attack was completely nullified.

When second half started, the Fulham intensity reduced a bit but they remained the dominating team and in the 52nd minute, Muniz finally added the nail to the coffin, scoring a screamer to take the game totally from Crystal Palace.

For the rest of the game, Fulham dominated till a Crystal Palace shocker in the 87th minute against the run of play cut the Fulham lead to half.

It was just a consolation goal though, the game ended 2-1 in Fulham's favor.

This was a team in imperious form.

Despite not getting a goal contribution, Sam still had a solid performance.

6 days later, Fulham went on the road, and this time, they played in enemy territory, in Brentford's home stadium, the 17,250 capacity Gtech Community Stadium in Brentford.

In this game, many predicted Fulham to finally lose their winning streak against a dangerous Brentford side and at first, it was truly a tough game.

After an intense first half heavyweight clash that saw 5 yellow cards, including Sam taking his first yellow card of the season, the game ended 0-0.

During second half, both teams came at each other with even more intensity.

With the dangerous duo of Ivan Toney, the English center forward and Mbeumo, Brentford were absolutely devastating on the attack but the Fulham attack did not pale in comparison as they were also menacing.

This was a high-octane game of attacking football. The defense of both teams were stretched, pushed to their limits by the unrelenting attacks from both sides.

And finally, after a tight affair for almost 80 minutes, the deadlock was broken and this time, having missed out on a goal contribution in the previous game, Sam became the decider this time.

And this time, he scored from a header.

Abusing his height as a corner kick was floated in by Willian, Sam outjumped all the other players, heading into the bottom corner to score a bullish goal, once again showing his relentless competitive spirit.

As soon as the ball entered the net, even as the stadium went silent, Sam charged towards the corner and when he slowed down, he pointed his fingers to heaven, doing the iconic Messi gratitude celebration.

For the rest of this game, 10+ minutes, the Brentford players played like men possessed as they chased the equalizer but it was not meant to be.

During the final minutes, Bernd Leno was absolutely immense, turning into a prime Thibaut Courtois as he thwarted all Brentford attacks, helping his team hold on till the final whistle.

With that win, Fulham extended their winning streak to 4 wins.

Fulham was truly in imperious form but after their run of 4 straight wins, finally, after the Brentford game, they faced their greatest test of grit yet.

Fulham's next game, they would be taking on the indomitable Manchester City who already entered their unstoppable title-charging form.

This game was poised to be Fulham's greatest test all season.

Could they perform a miracle and win?

Or more realistically, could they even rescue a point against Manchester City by getting a draw?

Chapter 147 Test of grit; against Manchester City! [1]

(Premier league:)

(Fulham – Manchester City)

(Date: 11th May, 2024)

Grit, what was it?

In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, grit is the firmness of mind or spirit; unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger.

Fulham FC were definitely not in a danger of any kind, but they were definitely in a hard spot; they were facing a hardship called Manchester City.

After winning 4 of the last 5 premier league titles already, in England, Manchester City were notorious and hated just as they were loved.

To most premier league fans, Manchester City was the enduring threat pushing to turn the most competitive league in the world into a farmer's league.

And during these years of domination, Manchester City were known for a certain trait, the late title charge!

Last season, in the 2-peat title race against Arsenal, at some point in the 2022/2023 premier league season, Arsenal led the league table by 11 points but a late charge of 15 straight wins secured Manchester City the title.

Manchester City was not a team of miracles like Real Madrid in the champions league knockout stages, rather, they were a team that never even needed miracles because they almost always get the job done.

In the premier league, they were the no. 1 team to beat.

And finally, after securing their incredible winning streak of 4 games, Fulham faced their greatest test in the form of the league champions.

Getting a single point from Man City was going to be a big challenge.

The Fulham players didn't lose hope though, their mentality already underwent an incredible shift since the beginning of January till now.

Fulham had 13 days after their Crystal Palace game to properly prepare for their greatest challenge all season, and boy, did the boys put in the effort.

In the build up to the game, all the Fulham players trained like their lives were on the line, they trained like they were preparing to play the champions league final and not just a league game.

Physically and mentally, all the Fulham players were in their best state before the game and finally, D-day came.

The star-studded Manchester City team made the trip to Fulham.

In the tunnel, after using his upgraded snooping tool on them, Sam was not surprised to see that half of this Manchester City team all had passive skills.

This was a team of superstars; their full starting XI were international players.

Sam was not deterred by what his snooping system showed him though, rather the provocative sight only left his competitive spirit blazing even more fiercely, and finally, they entered the pitch.

After the toss of the coin to determine the team to start kick-off, the referee's whistle finally sounded, bringing the game underway.

FWEEEE!

Manchester City started kick-off.

From the first minute, the energetic Fulham players charged after the ball, trying to win it back quickly with their incredible press but the Manchester City players stayed extremely composed under pressure.

With Mateo Kovacic and Rodri ping-ponging it around in the midfield, Bernardo Silva dropping deep to help them, Manchester City easily beat the aggressive press, slowing the game down to their desired tempo.

The game was just starting but Manchester City was already showing their superiority. They dominated the game during the first few minutes.

When the Fulham players noticed that their press was not working against the press-resistant Manchester City players, they reduced the intensity just as their coach instructed them, focusing on zonal marking.

For a time, it worked, till it no longer worked.

The deadlock was broken early in the 13th minute of this game.

After receiving a pass on the left-hand side, the silky England forward, Phil Foden went on a mazy run, showcasing his flair and quick feet as he drifted past Fulham players like they were not there.

When Palhinha challenged this forward, Phil Foden nutmegged him, setting himself up and that was when he unleashed a rocket shot with his left foot.

The ball homed into the top right corner like a missile but could only hit the post, rebounding. Having made an overlapping run alongside Foden from the left though, the Man City left back, Josko Gvardiol pounced on the loose ball first, rifling it back into the net.

Bernd Leno was rooted to the spot.

0-1 to Manchester City in just the 13th minute.

When the game restarted, Manchester City threatened to score another one immediately as Erling Haaland scuffed his shot just wide of the post.

Kevin De Bruyne came close a few minutes later, only hitting the post as Manchester City dominated but Fulham stayed in the fight. They were being dominated, but the body language of the Fulham players never stopped being combative. They were determined to cause an upset.

The rest of the first half, Manchester City dominated while Fulham threatened and yet, a second goal failed to materialize in this game.

During halftime, Coach Marco Silva gave his players the most passionate speech that Sam had ever heard from him since joining Fulham.

And when they re-entered the pitch, they entered with the same combative energy, briefly catching the napping Manchester City off-guard.

This time, Sam opened the deadlock.

After beating Manchester City's offside line with a perfectly timed late run, Sam expertly brought the ball under control with his chest from Palhinha's cross and as Ederson charged towards him, he lobbed the ball above the goalkeeper and into the net.

1-1.

Sam brought the game level in the 51st minute of this game.

That goal certainly brought Craven Cottage back to life after the fans' enthusiasm drastically reduced due to Manchester City's domination since.

The fans in black, white, and red regained their energy as they roared their team on. Immediately after getting the first goal to bring the game level, Sam came close again to score an immediate second only to be thwarted by a terrific save from Ederson, the Brazilian goalkeeper.

Muniz came close shortly after too, this time orchestrated by Sam.

It was clear that this second half after being shackled by the superior Manchester City team since, Sam was finally in his element.

Manchester City still dominated possession but Fulham was more threatening now, but against the run of play though, Man City, the English champions were the team to go ahead again.

And again, it was Phil Foden, the English forward.

Chapter 148 Test of grit; against Manchester City! [2]

Again, it was Phil Foden and again, it was another silky-smooth dribble.

Having caused the first goal through his mazy dribbling, Phil Foden went on another of those mazy runs again.

Palhinha tried to hold the English forward down but with his flair, Foden left him for dead, drifting into the Fulham 18-yard box like he was surfing a wave.

Calvin Bassey slid in for an aggressive sliding tackle only for this player to flick the ball above him, jumping after it and as Diop blocked with his leg, Foden unleashed a whipped shot, shooting the ball in between the legs of this defender.

The ball rushed towards the bottom left corner like a missile. This time, Leno dived, almost hitting his head against the post but it was not enough.

Agonizingly, the ball snuck past.

1-2.

Charging towards the corner flag, Foden jumped and pumped a fist in celebration as his teammates swarmed him.

When the game eventually restarted, the situation became cagey again as Manchester City regained their dominance, Kevin De Bruyne occasionally showing his ability even as Erling Haaland was locked all game.

Manchester City dominated for large swaths of the second half after getting the second goal, but 2 minutes of ridiculous brilliance turned the game on its head.

The first happened in the 67th minute.

It was from a corner kick and rising above every player in this pitch, Sam managed to get to the ball, powering a header past Ederson to draw his team level in the 67th minute of the game.

And just a minute later, almost immediately after Manchester City restarted play, Sam managed to steal the ball before driving with it at the Manchester City defense without hesitation.

No one supported him but Sam did not hesitate due to that and already in the zone state, he seemed to turn into a replica of Messi.

Sam skipped past one, beating Rodri with his pace, before obliterating Mateo Kovacic with his technique, skipping past him with a roulette.

And as he approached the defense, Nathan Ake and Ruben Dias shadowing him from both sides, Sam managed to do the impossible, cutting through 2 of the best defenders in the world with an immaculate executed elastico dribble. This was still the most lethal weapon in his arsenal.

With that dribble, he went through the whole Manchester City team and as Ederson rushed out, Sam poked the ball with the outside of his right boot.

It just rolled past Ederson's outstretched legs.

"GOALLLLL...!" The commentator screamed.

"2 minutes of madness!"

"2 minutes of pure Sam magic!"

"My GODDD! Can anything stop Sam?!"

"What a solo run, what a solo goal! Against Manchester City!"

"Damn! He's the sky blues' bane, that's 6 goals in just 2 games against them! What a record!"

"Sam definitely loves playing against City!"

It was 3-2 to Fulham all of a sudden, it seemed like magic.

'Another hatrick!' Sam thought, drenched in euphoria.

Not able to contain his overflowing emotions, Sam charged towards the corner flag and once he got there, he leaped into the air, executing an acrobatic backflip even as the Fulham fans started with the chants.

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

Once Sam landed, acknowledging the fans, he kissed the Fulham badge passionately and then, the game eventually resumed.

Both coaches made changes after that goal, making contrasting attacking and defensive changes as Pep Guardiola turned in the heat.

And on the pitch, after the referee's whistle sounded again to continue the game, the Fulham players felt the heat.

Erling Haaland who had been anonymous for most of this game became bullish, physically torturing the Fulham center back duo and stretching the defense to let those behind him thrive.

And thrive was exactly what those behind him did.

Phil Foden and Kevin De Bruyne led the offense, Bernardo Silva sprinkling salt on top, but then, it was the Man City left back that produced the goods again.

This time, Josko Gvardiol started the play all the way from deep in his half. This powerful left back went on a marauding run with the ball through the left-hand side of the pitch.

Bombing past Castagne with his physicality and technique, the bullish left back managed to hold off the challenge from the Fulham center backs long enough for him to power a shot into the bottom left corner, beating Leno in his corner.

It was uncharacteristic poor goalkeeping from the Fulham no. 1.

But it had massive repercussions, Manchester City were back level just 3 minutes after going behind as Gvardiol drew the game level again in the 71st minute of this game.

This game was proving to be a similar thriller to the one Fulham and Liverpool played almost 2 weeks ago.

With that goal, the tension became even higher.

Manchester City dominated, threatening and constantly forcing the Fulham players to put their bodies on the line to defend.

The Fulham players played like they were in a battlefield.

They defended with their lives and this was when Sam showed his specialty, locking out his area of the pitch completely with his incredible stamina till an error from Ederson, the Man City goalkeeper proved the decider in the 83rd minute.

It was a gamble outside the box shot from Palhinha after trying other means to no avail. No way was that shot supposed to enter the goal, but after catching the ball, handling it, Ederson bounced it on the ground.

Instead of hitting the ground though, the ball hit his boot instead, bouncing backwards instead of back up as it rolled into his net.

"...!"

Craven Cottage was briefly silenced; this was the most inexplicable of own goals but then this stadium erupted again.

"GOALLLLL...!" The Fulham fans celebrated wildly.

The Fulham players also celebrated, even God seemed to be on their side this game.

For the final minutes of this game, it was Man City offense vs Fulham defense. Literally all the Man City players camped in Fulham's half, bombarding them with attack after attack as Fulham defended with their lives.

90 minutes, no goal...

90 plus 1 minute, no goal...

90 plus 2 minutes, no goal...

90 plus 3 minutes, no goal...

90 plus 4 minutes, no goal...

90 plus 5 minutes, it finally happened as Diop took one for the team, dragging Julian Alvarez down in the box who already replaced Erling Haaland at some point.

FWEEE!

The Fulham center back received a straight red card, and then a penalty was awarded to Manchester City.

The fans felt a bit disappointed but they didn't show it as they applauded their center back as he walked out of the pitch.

When Alvarez stood to take the penalty, the Fulham fans drowned him in an ocean of boos, trying to affect his concentration.

The pressure of the moment was immense but having won a World Cup already after playing a starring role, this striker had nerves of steel.

He calmly sent Bernd Leno the other way, shooting towards the left and into the net to score and drag Manchester City back level in the dying minutes of this game.

4-4, and that was it.

After an incredible thriller where both teams played their best football, football won as both teams shared the spoils.

Fulham broke Manchester City's winning streak and vice versa.

But from a Fulham perspective though, it was still a win as they extended their unbeaten streak to 6 games unbeaten.

Chapter 149 Matchday 38 of the premier league

Immediately after the win against Manchester City in Craven Cottage, the Fulham fans stayed behind in the stadium as they celebrated their players.

Fulham threw a mini party immediately after the game.

This was not an impromptu decision though, rather, it was a premeditated one. After the best season of their lives in recent years, with a trophy to go with it, the EFL Cup, Fulham now celebrated their amazing season.

They celebrated because the season was drawing to an end.

The game against Manchester City was matchday 37 of the 2023/2024 premier league season, which meant the next game would decide the season.

Amid loud singing and chanting from the fans around the stadium, together, the Fulham squad ran around the stadium, acknowledging their fans even as champagne and beer were used to spice up the occasion.

Sam didn't partake in the drinking though, his immune system never agreed with alcohol till today.

The celebration did not take too long, this was because the Fulham club already planned an open bus parade to take the celebrations of their first trophy in years to the next gear.

All the Fulham players joined the bus parade, including Sam as they drove around Fulham, jubilating with their fans.

At the end of it all, Sam got back to his hotel room very late.

He was thoroughly exhausted though. He didn't waste time, quickly taking his bath before falling into the cool embrace of sleep.

The next day, when Sam woke up, nothing changed, his regular schedule continued. Fulham was in imperious form but it did not mean he would turn complacent due to the great mood around the club.

Instead of getting complacent, Sam only took it as more motivation to work hard and keep the high standards of his team.

That morning, he completed his daily system quest like usual before taking the rest of the day to sleep and rest properly since Coach Marco Silva gave his players 2 days of rest after the performance against Manchester City.

After the 2 days of rest though, Sam resumed training.

Alongside his teammates, he trained intensely, preparing for their last game of the premier league season against Luton Town, the newly promoted club that was fighting against relegation.

The next game would decide Luton Town's fate, if they would stay in the premier league or if they would be relegated to the lower division league.

This reason made the next game a must-win one for Luton Town. But Fulham also wanted to win, they wanted to end the season with a bang.

On the next matchday, these 2 desires would clash in the last footballing battle of the season for Fulham.

Coach Marco Silva already released the line-up and fixtures to his players some time ago.

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

Your next chapter is on empire

(Liverpool – Wolves)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Sheffield United – Tottenham)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Luton Town – Fulham)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Brighton – Man United)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Man City – West Ham)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Arsenal – Everton)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Brentford – Newcastle)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Crystal Palace – Aston Villa)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Burnley – Nottingham Forest)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Chelsea – Bournemouth)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

It was the final matchday of the 2023/2024 premier league season.

Following the tradition of previous seasons, on the last matchday, all the 20 clubs of the premier league would be playing at the same time, going at it one last time to decide their final position in the league table and most importantly, the winner of the 2023/2024 premier league title.

Not only would it decide the premier league champion, it would also decide the champions league spots, including the Europa league spot, and the clubs that would be relegated out of the premier league entirely.

The days to the build-up of these games was filled with anticipation.

The players themselves felt the same way as they put their all in training every day, and in the blink of an eye, it was D-day again.

The Fulham team went to away ground, Luton Town's home stadium.

Standing on the pitch in the last game of the 2023/2024 premier league season, Sam felt hyped. 'This is my first regular end to a season considering that the last NPFL season was an abridged format'.

'Last game of the season,' he grinned. 'One more chance to shove myself in the limelight'.

Sam approached this game with a winning mentality.

And when the referee's whistle started, with him leading in the middle of the pitch, Fulham quickly asserted their authority over this game.

For this game, an entirely different line-up started with the likes of Raul Jimenez, Adama, Wilson, Reed, Tete, and Ream all starting.

Despite the mix-up, Fulham were still the superior team.

And like expected, Fulham opened the scoring first through Adama after a dangerous cross from Sam after dominating as the best player of this game since.

It came late in the 43rd minute but finally, the floodgates opened.

Just 3 minutes later, in the 45th plus 1 minute, Fulham conceded a penalty as Morris, the Luton Town right winger stepped up to score an emphatic penalty.

But 2 minutes later, Fulham extended their league again through Jimenez this time from a simple tap-in after some scrambling in the Luton Town box.

Half-time ended with Fulham leading.

When second half started, Fulham took it a notch higher and it was all Sam as he extended Fulham's lead, scoring a screamer in the 49th minute.

Luton Town were losing by 2 goals but facing the threat of relegation, this team dug in to score another goal in the 55th minute, reducing the lead.

It was not enough to save them though.

14 minutes later, Sam added the nail to the coffin, going on a mazy run from midfield before rounding Kaminski, the Fulham goalkeeper and scoring an amazing goal to send the away section of this stadium roaring for the umpteenth time this game.

In the 69th minute, Luton Town were trailing 2 goals down again.

For the rest of this game, Luton Town tried their best buoyed by the loud noise being made by their fans as they tried to force a comeback but they could not. The game ended 2-4 in Fulham's favor.

And with that, Fulham's season officially came to an end, spiced up with a win.

Not just Fulham's, the 2023/2024 premier league season officially came to an end and with it, the final league table was decided.

The 2023/2024 premier league champion was decided.

Manchester City were the champions of England again for a record 4th straight time.

Chapter 150 2023/2024 premier league champions; Manchester City

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Liverpool 2-0 Wolves)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Sheffield United 0-3 Tottenham)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Luton Town 2-4 Fulham)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Brighton 0-2 Man United)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Man City 3-1 West Ham)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Arsenal 2-1 Everton)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Brentford 2-4 Newcastle)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Crystal Palace 5-0 Aston Villa)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Burnley 1-2 Nottingham Forest)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

...

(Chelsea 2-1 Bournemouth)

(Date: 19th May, 2024)

(Final premier league table:)

(2023/2024 season:)

1. Man City

2. Arsenal

3. Liverpool

4. Aston Villa

5. Tottenham

6. Chelsea

7. Newcastle

8. Man United

9. Fulham

10. West Ham

11. Crystal Palace

12. Brighton

13. Bournemouth

14. Wolves

15. Everton

16. Brentford

17. Nottm Forest

18. Luton Town

19. Burnley

20. Sheffield United

(Champions: Manchester City!)

After a grueling 38-matchday season of elite football, the English premier league was finally decided and with it, history was made.

Manchester City completed their dynasty under Pep Guardiola as after winning an unprecedented treble just last season, they continued, making it a 4-peat of straight premier league titles won by the Manchester based club as they dethroned their rivals, Manchester United of the record.

Manchester City created history under Pep Guardiola.

After a tight race all season, even as Liverpool dropped out of the race at some point, Arsenal under Mikel Arteta went all the way again this season but unfortunately, they could only settle for second spot again.

Only 2 points separated them from the champions.

Again, an impressive season from Arsenal only ended in misery. They were beginning to develop a reputation as bottlers.

Aston Villa completed the top four spot after a mighty impressive season under Unai Simon, the ex-Arsenal coach. They completed the round-up of 4 English clubs that would be playing in the champions league next season.

The other clubs of the famed big 6 of England settled for lesser European competitions next season having not made the top four spot in the league table.

While the battle up top was fierce, so also was the battle at the bottom.

Despite playing impressive football under their coach, Vincent Kompany, the Man City legend, Burnley could only settle for 19th position in the league.

That position meant relegation.

Sheffield United and Luton Town rounded up the 3 clubs that would be relegated out of the premier league for the 2024/2025 season.

Personally, for Fulham, this was a mightily impressive season.

When Sam just joined this club in January, Fulham hovered between 13th and 14th position in the league. Fast-forward to now, Fulham managed to finish at an incredible position of 9th beneath Manchester United.

Sam did not quite achieve his initial goal of dragging Fulham to a European football spot, but still, he did enough to drag his team as far as he could.

The performances against Liverpool and Manchester City in the league were still highlights that the Fulham fans would not forget anytime soon.

9th position? To Fulham, this was an achievement worth celebrating on its own. Add the EFL Cup trophy into the discussion and Fulham suddenly had so many things to celebrate about.

At the beginning of the season, to most Fulham fans and the media, Antonee Robinson, the American left back was the frontrunner from the start to win Fulham's player of the season award for the 2023/2024 season.

But at the end, things changed.

Despite the fact that Sam joined Fulham only halfway through the season, having missed the entire first half, his impact was felt. Stay updated with empire

Mere weeks after joining Fulham, not only was he able to drag his team to the final of the EFL Cup, he managed to help Fulham win it's first trophy in years.

Not just that, with his addition, Fulham's performances in the league improved vastly compared to the first half of the season.

These reasons and more were why at the end of the season, Fulham FC announced the recipient of their Player of the Season award as Samuel Moses.

The fans were 100% in support of the decision.

Sam took the award from his coach even as Marco Silva hugged him. This coach was emotional as he kissed the young Nigerian on the forehead.

This was definitely the greatest season of his professional football career as a coach.

He was glad that scout recommended Sam to the club.

After the on-pitch celebrations which were made short since they were not in their home stadium, as the Fulham players left the pitch, going to the dressing room to get set to leave the stadium, Sam's system lit up with new notifications.

~----~

[You have completed premier league matchday mission: Victory!]

[You played all 90 minutes of this game, contributing with 2 goals and 1 assist, being named the man of the match!]

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

[Calculation complete!]

[You have been rewarded with 15 Skill Points!]

...

[The 2023/2024 premier league season has come to an end!]

[Your team's final league position: 9th!]

[You have been rewarded with 1000 Skill Points!]

...

[Congratulations! Your performances through the season were recognized and you won the Fulham Player of the Season award for the 2023/2024 season!]

[You have been rewarded with 3000 Skill Points!]

[Congratulation! You have received attribute rewards!]

[Your physicality attribute has increased by +3]

[Your dribbling attribute has increased by +2]

...

Player Attributes:

*Pace: 81

*Shot: 79

*Pass: 80

*Dribbling: 76

*Defending: 38

*Physicality: 76

*Stamina: 84

Overall Rating: 81

~----~

Joining his teammates, jubilating, they returned to Craven Cottage. Through the journey, with his iPhone, Sam watched as the Manchester City celebrations started, celebrating their trophy haul.

Watching them lift the premier league title again, he could not help but smile. 'That's my goal next season!'

After arriving at Craven Cottage, the players eventually separated to their different ways after a long speech from their coach.

It was still just a few months since Sam came to England but it already felt like he was living here his whole life, he adapted like a fish to water.

He didn't leave the stadium yet though, he waited and about a dozen minutes later, someone walked into the park.

"Sam!" A familiar voice called.

Wearing trending tight jean trousers and a vintage polo shirt with nice-looking dark shades, Ian swaggered into the park.

Sam grinned. "Bastard, finally you came".

The 2 best friends laughed.

Yesterday, Ian came to England. He watched Fulham's last game of the season live and now, Sam had all the time in the world to spend with his best friend.

To footballers, it was holiday!