

Football God 261

Chapter 261 Head-to-head battle [4]

26th April, 2025...

The atmosphere in St. James' Park was electric.

The stakes were at its highest in the oldest club competition in the world, a spot in the final of the English FA Cup.

When the Fulham players entered the pitch to incredibly loud noise by the Newcastle home supporters, they felt like they were fighting against the whole world. It almost seemed as if the whole stadium was against them, except the tiny noise coming from the away stands.

"Fulham!" "Fulham!"

The away supporters who traveled for this blockbuster game made their presence known in this stadium, singing songs at the top of their lungs.

The atmosphere was tense, the pressure was palpable and under the perfect ambience of a cool evening, the referee's whistle sounded to kickstart the FA Cup semifinal game.

FWEEEE!

Newcastle United kicked off the game.

Like expected, both teams started with their strongest lineups for this game, making it poised for an incredible game of football.

From the first minute of kickoff, it was clear that this game was going to be a tight game and the players ensured that it stayed that way.

Buoyed by the loud noise being made by their home fans, the Newcastle players played the game of their life, running themselves to the ground and trying every trick in the box known to them but Fulham simply refused to give up.

As a team, the visitors attacked and defended as one.

Newcastle dominated most of the game but Fulham never lost sight of their coach's tactic once as the players kept on executing the game plan.

By half-time, after running themselves to the ground with no tangible result for it, the game still being 0-0, the Newcastle players were already feeling tired.

During half-time, Coach Marco Silva said only 2 sentences to his players.

"Moments like this don't come twice".

"You have to seize it".

That was all his players needed and just like he planned, in the 2nd half when the Fulham players came out, they came out with fire burning in their veins.

FWEEEE!

Boom!

The referee's whistle barely started when Fulham showcased their intent to play with an entirely different energy in the second half of this game.

With their aggressive pressing and attacking style, the second half turned into a game of high-octane football.

They had their chances; Newcastle also had their chances but it was one moment of brilliance that turned this game on its head close to fulltime.

After almost 90 minutes of playing such a tight and amazing game, the Newcastle players collapsed in agony as their net finally rippled.

Most of the players on the pitch were already tired by then, but Sam was yet to be tired as abusing his stamina in the 87th minute of the game, after winning the ball back, he went on a mazy run through the Newcastle defense.

Once he was in their 18-yard box, he showcased his physicality, drawing enough defenders to himself and opening up space to thread a pass through for the unmarked Emile Smith Rowe.

The S factor struck again!

BAM!

Smith Rowe's shot found its way to the back of the net, beating the Newcastle goalkeeper as this massive stadium was silenced.

"GOALLLL...!!!" Only the away stands erupted in joy.

Charging towards the corner flag, Emile Smith Rowe celebrated like a mad man even as at some point, tears started streaming down this winger's eyes.

The Englishman's emotions cascaded.

Why not? He was having the season of his life!

Earlier in the season, his career seemed to be coming to an end as he became totally ostracized in Arsenal. It was clear that the Arsenal coach, Mikel Arteta didn't have him in his plans and there was nothing more heartbreaking than that.

He reluctantly came to Fulham to revive his career without much hope.

When he was forced to make the decision, he never thought that would be what would change his life and career for good.

Coming to Fulham, meeting Sam, becoming good friends with him, and getting to play together on the pitch week in, week out, that was the best thing that happened to him in years.

All of that culminated in this moment, him scoring the decisive goal in the FA Cup semifinal, assisted by his friend.

Hugging Sam, Smith Rowe cried, feeling on top of the world.

"What a moment!"

"You can clearly see how much it means to the Englishman". The commentator said, leaving the stadium silenced.

The Newcastle supporters could not even bring themselves to boo them.

In the end, after 90 minutes of incredible football, Fulham won 1-0, booking a place for themselves in the final of the FA Cup.

After the end of the game, even as the Fulham players celebrated, the first thing that they did was ask around for the result of their archrival's game.

Well, they were shocked, and excited.

On their matchday 34 encounter of the English premier league, Liverpool finally stumbled in the head-to-head battle, dropping points against Tottenham.

It was a miracle that Liverpool managed to snatch 1 point from the game.

Within just 20 unbelievable minutes, Tottenham raced to a 0-2 lead against Liverpool in Anfield!

The footballing world was left reeling in shock, they could not believe it.

The first half ended 0-2 in Tottenham's favor.

But in the 2nd half, the Merseysiders came roaring back with unstoppable momentum, proving their title-charging credentials as they ran Tottenham ragged, equalizing the game before the 70th minute.

But then, all the juice died as no other goal was scored.

Liverpool did an incredible comeback, but it was not a perfect one as drawing the game 2-2, they dropped 2 important points in the title race against Fulham.

To the Fulham players and their supporters, there was no better news in the world. They celebrated Liverpool's loss like a Fulham win.

The hate was real, but it was all just football competition.

Booking a spot in the final of the FA Cup and Liverpool dropping points all in the same day, the day could not have gone better for fans of the Fulham persuasion.

And now, all their attention was on their own premier league matchday 34 encounter against Southampton.

Chapter 262 Head-to-head battle [5]

The FA Cup semifinal game against Newcastle United was a big moment for Sam as with it, he fulfilled one of his big goals of taking Fulham to its very first major tournament final in England.

It was a big moment for the club and its fans.

The reaction of the Fulham fans online showed how much it meant to them. Their reaction did not end online, it also extended to the streets of Fulham.

That night across the streets of Fulham, Fulham supporters in their white and black jerseys swept across the city, celebrating their qualification to the final of the FA Cup with voracious energy.

That night, Sam found it hard to sleep early.

'We did it!' The thought could not just leave his head.

When he made the decision to play for Fulham, Sam had high hopes for himself but not even him scripted this. His career in Fulham went far smoother than he ever expected, of course, it was all because of his hard work.

Only he knew how hard he worked to get to where he was.

The system played a part, but his mentality was the number 1 reason for Fulham's current fortune in the league and the FA Cup.

In recent weeks after recovering from his injury, week in, week out as he played in games, Sam could not help the feeling that he was changing.

It was as if his body was growing again and after the semifinal game against Newcastle, this feeling became even more prominent.

It was while Sam was in his apartment, listening to the loud noise being made by the ecstatic Fulham fans in the streets that he confirmed it. Or better still, his system confirmed it for him.

He did grow though in this premise; it was his ability that grew.

After a while of his attributes being stable, they finally increased again.

~----~

[As a result of recent high-stakes games that you were involved in, pushing you to your limits, real-time game experience accumulation was at work and you have gained a corresponding upgrade in your abilities!]

[Your physicality attribute has increased by +2!]

[Your pace attribute has increased by +1!]

[Your defending attribute has increased by +2!]

[Your stamina attribute has increased by +2]

[Congratulations! Your overall system rating has increased to 84!]

...

[Player Attributes:]

Player Attributes:

*Pace: 82

*Shot: 85

*Pass: 80

*Dribbling: 78

*Defending: 40

*Physicality: 81

*Stamina: 86

Overall Rating: 84

~----~

Sam was not surprised when he saw the system notification.

He had noticed it for some time already, the subtle changes in his physical ability during training sessions, during when he completed his daily system quests, and even during his sessions in the gym.

Approaching the ripe football age of 20, Sam's physicality was finally developing fully, turning him into the complete specimen and it reflected in his ability on the pitch.

Staring at the upgrades, Sam grinned. 'It's long been coming'. He thought.

Since he was finding it hard to sleep that night and since he already spoke with his girlfriend, he decided to check his system status again since it's been a while he last checked it.

After checking his system status, once again admiring how far he had come since he signed his first contract with Enyimba FC, Sam finally focused on the updated premier league table.

Since the FA Cup game was already played, while the fans had the luxury of drowning in the celebrations of securing a place in the final, the Fulham players themselves could not as they had other games to focus on.

Their immediate one was their premier league clash against Southampton to complete matchday 34 of the premier league campaign.

But despite the fact that they were yet to play their game against Southampton since it was postponed, the premier league table was updated already as the other clubs except Newcastle played their games.

Sam paid attention to the fixture results and the table.

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 34 of 38:)

(Arsenal 4-1 Crystal Palace)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Nottm Forest 2-2 Brentford)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Chelsea 2-0 Everton)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Wolves 1-0 Leicester City)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Liverpool 2-2 Tottenham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Newcastle - Ipswich Town)

(Postponed)

(New Date: 29th April, 2025)

...

(Brighton 3-1 West Ham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Bournemouth 0-2 Man United)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Southampton – Fulham)

(Postponed)

(New Date: 29th April, 2025)

...

(Man City 3-2 Aston Villa)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 34/ W:26/ D:2/ L:3/ Pts: 86)

(2. Fulham GP: 33/ W:25/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 81)

(3. Arsenal GP: 34/ W:22/ D:8/ L:4/ Pts: 74)

(4. Chelsea GP: 34/ W:21/ D:9/ L:4/ Pts: 72)

(5. Man City GP: 34/ W:17/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 59)

(6. Nottm Forest GP: 34/ W:15/ D:11/ L:8/ Pts: 56)

(7. Tottenham GP: 34/ W:15/ D:6/ L:13/ Pts: 51)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 34/ W:13/ D:11/ L:11/ Pts: 50)

(9. Newcastle GP: 33/ W:12/ D:11/ L:10/ Pts: 47)

(10. Brighton GP: 34/ W:13/ D:8/ L:13/ Pts: 47)

(11. Man United GP: 34/ W:13/ D:6/ L:15/ Pts: 45)

(12. Bournemouth GP: 34/ W:11/ D:9/ L:14/ Pts: 42)

(13. Brentford GP: 34/ W:11/ D:9/ L:14/ Pts: 42)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 34/ W:10/ D:11/ L:13/ Pts: 41)

(15. West Ham GP: 34/ W:9/ D:9/ L:16/ Pts: 35)

(16. Leicester GP: 34/ W:5/ D:10/ L:19/ Pts: 25)

(17. Wolves GP: 34/ W:5/ D:10/ L:19/ Pts: 25)

(18. Everton GP: 34/ W:5/ D:7/ L:22/ Pts: 22)

(19. Ipswich Town GP: 33/ W:3/ D:10/ L:20/ Pts: 19)

(20. Southampton GP: 33/ W:3/ D:4/ L:26/ Pts: 13)

The highlights of matchday 34 of the English premier league were obviously the thrilling 2-2 draw between Liverpool and Tottenham, and then the 4-1 drubbing that Arsenal dished to Crystal Palace.

There were other exciting matches of the matchday but these 2 were heads and shoulders above the others in terms of entertainment value.

That night, Sam idly surfed online, watching highlights of the 2 games and then finally, with his brain relaxed, he finally slept.

Sam had a strange dream.

He dreamt that Kayla became a professional football player and in a crazy twist of fate, the rules of football were changed, allowing men and women to play in the same league which enabled him to play with his girlfriend.

In the morning, when Sam woke up, he was baffled. "What the hell!"

Chapter 263 Head-to-head battle [6]

29th April, 2025...

The Fulham players had just 2 days of rest to recover from their FA Cup semifinal game against Newcastle and prepare for their premier league clash against Southampton in St. Mary's Stadium.

That evening, just as the Fulham squad took a trip to Southampton, the Newcastle squad also welcomed Ipswich Town in their St. James' Park.

And then, in another cool evening in different parts of Fulham, the referee's whistle sounded, signaling the start of 2 football games.

Southampton vs Fulham was a one-way ticket, premier league fans already knew the outcome of the game from the beginning and 90 minutes later, the outcome did not deviate from expectations.

For this game, Coach Marco Silva had the privilege of resting a few of his star players after the grueling game in St. James Park but still, Fulham went all out, blowing away the team trailing at the bottom of the premier league table.

Sam played only 45 minutes of this game but that was enough time for him to ditch out enough damage, grabbing 2 goals and an assist.

Raul Jimenez grabbed the 3rd goal for Fulham, while Alex Iwobi completed the job with an acrobatic finish in the 2nd half to complete a comfortable routine 0-4 win for Fulham as they secured all 3 points.

The game didn't deviate from expectations, making it just so-so to premier league fans but the other game that was played that evening in the premier league brought a lot of drama and excitement with it.

Seemingly in an anger fit after losing agonizingly last time out to Fulham in the FA Cup, an aggressive Newcastle squad tore Ipswich Town to shreds at home, recording a crazy 7-1 victory against the visitors.

Alexander Isak won the man of the match award after his impressive 4-goal display as his offensive play was just too much for the visitors to handle.

All 4 of his goals came in the first half, dooming Ipswich Town to a humiliating defeat early on.

The first one came as early as the 7th minute as the tall and lanky striker took the ball from an Anthony Gordon lateral pass, showing his quick feet as he teased and dazzled in the box, confusing the Ipswich Town defenders before sneaking a shot into the bottom right corner, beating the goalkeeper.

His second goal came just 6 minutes later in the 13th minute as lashing into an Anthony Gordon cross, he whipped a powerful volleyed shot inside the net with his left foot.

His third goal was another incredible volley that came in the 18th minute.

This time, the lobbed pass came from Joelinton, the Newcastle midfielder and the in-form striker improvised, shifting away from his marker, jumping and throwing himself at the ball as he executed an incredible scissor kick.

The Ipswich Town goalkeeper was left rooted to one spot, left ball-watching as the ball was rifled into his net.

By then, the home supporters in St. James' Park were already screaming their striker's name at the top of their lungs even as they sang praises of him.

The 4th goal took longer before it materialized but in the 41st minute of the game, Alexander Isak rounded up a crazy first half performance, jumping above everyone else in the box to lash into a corner kick, powering a header into the net.

4 goals in 41 minutes!

By then, this striker felt like a god of football.

Charging towards the corner flag, he slid on his knees in celebration, slapping his chest repeatedly as his passion for the game was displayed in its full glory.

In the second half, Isak's influence waned as a player was tasked to man-mark him but not done yet, Newcastle ditched damage through other players.

In the 60th minute, the English winger, Anthony Gordon got his name on the scoresheet after a dizzying solo run from midfield, setting St. James' Park off again.

In the 66th minute, Tonali, the Newcastle midfielder made it 6 nil as he launched a powerful long-range shot into the top left corner, beating the Ipswich Town goalkeeper who was having a horrible game.

And then, in the 78th minute, the substitute, Almiron rubbed salt to Ipswich Town injuries, scoring from a header to make it 7-0.

Ipswich Town scored late in additional time but it was just a consolation, Newcastle still registered a crazy win at home.

After their loss last time out against Fulham right here at home, the Newcastle fans felt vindicated as they were all left happy after the game.

And with that, the premier league table was updated again.

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 34 of 38:)

(Newcastle 7-1 Ipswich Town)

(Date: 29th April, 2025)

...

(Southampton 0-4 Fulham)

(Date: 29th April, 2025)

...

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(2. Fulham GP: 34/ W:26/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 84)

...

(9. Newcastle GP: 34/ W:13/ D:11/ L:10/ Pts: 50)

...

"Max, what do you think about matchday 34 of the English premier league?"

Hearing that question from the show's host, Max, the premier league pundit chuckled. "Like before, the highlight is Fulham".

"Not Newcastle?"

Max chuckled again. "Not the game itself, but the milestone. With that victory against Southampton, Fulham are now within 2 points of the top of the premier league and not just that, it's their total points".

"Fulham have been crazy this season man, that's 84 points. Before the end of the season, they'll surely get at least 90 points".

"I mean, come on, do you know what that means?"

"No matter what happens on final matchday, even if they end up losing the premier league title to Liverpool, Fulham have achieved a feat that's worth respecting. They played an unbelievable campaign!"

"And yes, Newcastle's thrashing of Ipswich Town is a highlight too, Alexander Isak especially. That guy was angry today". He laughed.

"But to me, none of these are the true highlights, the true highlight of football in this period is tomorrow's game," Max grinned. "Tomorrow's UEFA champions league semifinal clash".

"Ah, yes!" Charles grinned at the camera also. "Tomorrow is the much-anticipated semifinal fixture of the champions league!"

"After an incredible season, Liverpool made it to the semifinal of Europe's elite club competition and tomorrow, they'll be playing the first leg of a blockbuster encounter against FC Barcelona!"

Chapter 264 UEFA champions league clash; FC Barcelona vs Liverpool! [1]

(UEFA Champions League:)

(Semifinal fixtures:)

(Real Madrid 2-1 Bayern Munich)

(Date: 29th April, 2025)

...

(FC Barcelona – Liverpool)

(Date: 30th April, 2025)

After 3 rounds of incredible football where the best clubs in Europe came together to play against each other in a contest for supremacy, these were the 4 clubs that remained in the competition.

2 giants of Spanish football, a German footballing giant, and an English footballing giant, these were the 4 clubs to make it to the semifinal of the new UEFA champions league since the format was implemented.

All 4 clubs were elite clubs who dominated their various domestic leagues.

FC Barcelona and Real Madrid were still neck and neck at the top of the La Liga league table which was the name for the Spanish football league, FC Barcelona currently having the edge over their archrivals by just 2 points.

In Germany, a familiar monopoly was back as after Bayer Leverkusen's legendary unbeaten run last season in the Bundesliga, Bayern Munich were back at the top of German football.

And then Liverpool, the leaders in the English premier league.

After having the most impressive season of the 4 clubs still remaining in the competition so far, still leading the pile in their domestic league too, Liverpool was now ready to test their mettle again against some of the best club sides in the world.

Having fought neck to neck at this competition last back in 2019, the historic season where Liverpool blew FC Barcelona's 3 goal lead away, winning in stunning fashion in Anfield, there was bad blood now between these 2 clubs.

And when the fixture was confirmed that they would be playing each other in the same competition, in the same stage where their bad blood was created, it was safe to say that it became a war.

On social media, it became a war of Barca vs Liverpool fans.

The players did not shy away from the controversy either as eager to win, the players of both sides kept on trash talking using the media as a medium.

The build-up to this blockbuster game was absolutely electric as the tension between Liverpool and FC Barcelona hit a crescendo.

All of that tension led to this moment, on 30th of April, 2025.

Having played against Bayern Munich yesterday already, masterminding a 2-1 win in their home stadium, the Estadio Bernabeu, the Spanish giants, Real Madrid were one leg into the final of the UEFA champions league already.

Since their archrivals already got a result against German opposition, the pressure was on FC Barcelona to also get a result against their English opposition in their home stadium, the Spotify Camp Nou.

When the Liverpool players made the trip to Barcelona, they were exposed to the hostile welcome of the FC Barcelona supporters.

The fans didn't become violent though. They knew their limits that the most they could do was make noise and insult them, causing violence would only affect their team in the long run due to rules that were in place.

This was why they refrained from violence.

But still, they did their best to rattle the Liverpool players even as like gladiators, they walked into the den of the Lion called FC Barcelona.

Like expected, both teams started with their strongest lineups.

The prediction online was that Liverpool's results in the premier league dropped in recent weeks mainly because of this game.

They were desperate to win.

On the Liverpool side, starting in a 4-2-3-1 formation, Diogo Jota started as the striker while the 3-man offense behind him comprised Cody Gakpo from the left, Curtis Jones, and Mohamed Salah.

In midfield lined up the 2 stalwarts, Alexis Mac Allister and Ryan Gravenberch while the 4-man defensive quadruple comprised Andrew Robertson, Virgil Van Dijk, Ibrahima Konate, and Trent Alexander-Arnold in right back.

Alisson Becker started in between the posts for the visitors.

As for the home side, FC Barcelona also started in a 4-2-3-1 formation with Inaki Pena starting in between the posts and a 4-man defensive unit of Jules Kounde, Pau Cubarsi, Inigo Martinez, and Alejandro Bandle starting ahead of him.

The 2-man midfield comprised of Marc Casado, the academy player and Pedri. Ahead of them was the 4-man attacking unit of Lamine Yamal, Gavi, Raphinha, and Robert Lewandowski in attack.

This was a clash between 2 star-studded lineups.

FWEEEE!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded, the battle started in Spotify Camp Nou and like expected, Liverpool did not defend.

Having prepared all season for this moment, despite the fact that they were in powerful enemy territory, the Liverpool team did not cower.

Rather, they stood up to their opponents, ready to meet them pound for pound and from the first minute, a certain player set a marker.

The Egyptian King did not give a damn about the fact that he was in such hostile enemy territory and in such an iconic stadium to boot, the Liverpool winger put on his showboating boots on.

The game was even for large stretches in the first half as 2 powerful and star-studded teams slugged it out, and in a game this tight, flashes of individual brilliance shone through from the star players.

For FC Barcelona, Pedri and Lamine Yamal, including Raphinha were electric as they confounded Liverpool with their impressive plays.

Lamine Yamal especially was like a thorn in the England club's side as he turned the veteran Liverpool left back inside out, repeatedly roasting him this game.

For Liverpool on the right and in midfield, Mohamed Salah and Alexis Mac Allister were also having a crazy game but still, a goal failed to materialize.

The 2 defenses and their goalkeepers were playing at an elite level.

Despite the impressive offensive plays from both teams under the loud noise being made by the Catalan fans, the deadlock failed to be broken by either team as they went to half-time with the scoreline still 0-0.

Both teams played an amazing game in the first half.

During half-time, the coaches of both teams seemed to have used all their speech talking powers and ability on their players as they started the 2nd half with a different energy.

As soon as they entered the pitch, it detonated.

BOOM!

The tempo of this game increased!

Chapter 265 UEFA champions league clash; FC Barcelona vs Liverpool! [2]

BOOM!

The tempo of the game and for the spectators, the excitement value of this game increased exponentially, hitting a crescendo.

Liverpool pressed; FC Barcelona pressed...

Liverpool attacked; FC Barcelona attacked...

The game was incredibly end to end as the players of both sides played at an elite level, constantly doing something that made the fans' jaws drop in astonishment even as they felt their hearts beating rapidly in trepidation.

The tension was too much!

It felt like either side could score at any moment and true to that, a goal finally entered 12 minutes after 2nd half started and it was a Liverpool goal.

No one saw it coming.

Having played an amazing game already, constantly torturing the FC Barcelona backline with his crazy crosses, Trent Alexander-Arnold, the Liverpool right back finally decided to take matters into his own hands.

After receiving a back pass from Salah in the FC Barcelona side of the pitch, the right back went on an inverted run through the middle.

Weaving through 2 players, he set himself up before unleashing an absolute rocket of a shot from outside the box.

He unleashed the shot after spotting Inaki Pena, the FC Barcelona goalkeeper slightly off his lines.

BAM!

As soon as the ball was hit, the FC Barcelona goalkeeper charged back towards his goal but it was already too late as the perfect ball nestled into the top right corner of the net, leaving him no chance.

"GOALLL...!" The away stands in this stadium erupted.

Celebrating with exuberant energy, Trent Alexander-Arnold charged towards the corner flag, sliding on his knees in celebration.

That goal... traumatized the FC Barcelona supporters.

In recent years, Barcelona was having such a crazy rut in the UEFA Champions league that even making the round of 16 was like a task too big for them.

When Xavi eventually broke the cycle in the 2023/2024 season, taking FC Barcelona to the round of 16, they ended up losing a first-leg 1 goal advantage despite the 2nd leg being played in their stadium.

Incredibly, they lost to Paris Saint Germain after Ronald Araujo, the star FC Barcelona defender was sent off for a red card tackle.

This season, when Hansi Flick's FC Barcelona made it's debut earlier in the season, thrashing the likes of Real Madrid 0-4 at the Santiago Bernabeu and Bayern Munich 4-1, the good vibes in the club returned.

But as the season progressed, the lack of depth of the team was exposed as the positive results started dropping.

But as the season approached its end, Hansi Flick's FC Barcelona engine picked up again from where it stopped earlier in the season.

They beat everyone in their path, tearing tyrannical trials through the round of 16 to their first champions league semifinal in 6 years!

But now, all of it seemed to be crumbling again just like how it happened last time out back in 2019 against the same opponents.

They seemed to be faltering again.

But no, this was a different FC Barcelona and they were not satisfied with cowering before their formidable opponents again.

This was the time for them to have their revenge!

FWEEEE!

As soon as the referee's whistle sounded again after Liverpool's goal in the 57th minute of this game, FC Barcelona's intensity changed.

Their intensity became god-tier!

And trust a certain player, it was Raphinha, the Brazilian's incredible energy that led as an example as he ran Liverpool ragged by sheer effort.

With Raphinha leading the charge, the other FC Barcelona players soon raised their level, matching his mojo to tear Liverpool apart.

Liverpool was still playing an amazing game as they didn't let up but Barcelona's intensity just got too high, and then it paid off.

Raphinha started it, going on a powerful run down the left-hand side, turning Trent Alexander-Arnold inside out before charging into the box only to meet a formidable road block in the form of Virgil Van Dijk.

The imposing Dutchman awkwardly cleared the ball before the Brazilian could pose a danger with it, but the awkward clearance ended up falling to the right where a certain 17-year-old Lamine Yamal lurked.

Andrew Robertson quickly closed the teenager down but with a drop of the shoulder, and then a kick of the ball, the Liverpool legend was nutmegged.

Andrew Robertson staggered even as Yamal already charged past him.

In that moment, the teenager seemed to turn into prime Neymar, weaving through Liverpool players like they were not there with incredible flair and just as Virgil Van Dijk was about to clash with him, Yamal intelligently flicked the ball.

The teenager flicked the ball into unmarked space where Barca's striker lurked like an assassin in the shadows, waiting for a chance to strike.

As soon as the ball was flicked in his direction, Robert Lewandowski's eyes shone with fire even as he pounced.

Bam!

Hitting the ball on a volley, his powerful shot was rifled into the net, beating Alisson Becker and giving him very little chance.

"GOALLLL...!!!" The Catalan fans roared to life again, screaming and rejoicing at the top of their lungs even as Gavi charged into the net, picking the ball and charging back towards the half-way line to quickly continue the game.

Lewandowski simply pumped a fist to the fans in celebration and then, they continued the game.

In the 73rd minute of the game, a moment of individual brilliance from Lamine Yamal and a lethal striker's hit from Lewandowski leveled the game.

But then, 5 minutes later, Lamine Yamal did it again.

Receiving the ball in the right in the 78th minute of this game, the 17-year-old teenager once again turned Andrew Robertson inside out on the right wing, leading him one way and turning the other, leaving the Liverpool legend on the floor!

Before Andrew Robertson could recover, Lamine Yamal had all the time in the world already as he set himself up before unleashing a perfect cross into the box with his lethal left foot.

That cross... sparked a brawl in the Liverpool 18-yard box.

All the tall and physical players scrambled and brawled for the ball but in the end all of them canceled each other out, allowing the ball to float past them.

But it didn't float away harmlessly.

With all the big players focusing on themselves, restricting each other, it was Gavi, the small but fiery FC Barcelona player who ghosted into space, erupting at the last moment with a diving header.

Even Alisson did not see Gavi until his head already hit the ball.

Bam!

The Liverpool players only reacted when their net already rippled.

"F*ck!" Van Dijk cursed angrily.

There was silence for a second in this stadium in Spain, but then...

"GOALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL...!!!" The ecstatic Catalan fans erupted, singing, screaming, and rejoicing at the top of their voice.

Charging towards the corner flag, Gavi slid on his knees in celebration even as the home supporters roared his name at the top of their lungs.

Standing up, the midfielder pointed at Lamine Yamal, attributing the glory to where the goal originated from and acknowledging it, the fans also started roaring Yamal's name at the top of their lungs.

Back in Fulham, watching this moment, Sam felt goosebumps.

The first leg of the blockbuster UEFA champions league semifinal came to an end with FC Barcelona taking a minor 2-1 lead to Anfield.

Chapter 266 Finale of the 2024/2025 football season [1]

(UEFA Champions League:)

(Semifinal fixtures:)

(Real Madrid 2-1 Bayern Munich)

(Date: 29th April, 2025)

...

(FC Barcelona 2-1 Liverpool)

(Date: 30th April, 2025)

The results of the first leg of the UEFA champions league semifinals left football fans of the Spanish persuasion extremely joyous, and Sam was part of the football fans who felt on top of the world.

Watching the club that he supported demolish Liverpool in the UEFA champions league and watching Lamine Yamal dazzle, there was no better feeling than it.

'I can't wait to play alongside Yamal!' He clenched his fists, thinking.

Sam did not let his emotions linger too much on the result of the first leg though, this was because he knew that there was a second leg before the semifinal clash would be settled and also because he also had his own games to play.

Removing the UEFA champions league semifinals from his mind, alongside his teammates, Sam focused as they prepared for their matchday 35 encounter of the premier league.

With only 2 points separating them from the top of the premier league table, the pressure was on them, they could not afford to make a mistake.

And in no time, it was D-day.

On that same day, 3rd of May, even as Fulham clashed against Aston Villa in Villa Park, Liverpool also clashed against Chelsea in Stamford Bridge, 2 tough away games for the 2 teams competing at the top of the premier league table.

Having dropped points in their last game already, the pressure was on Liverpool to win and Chelsea was out to make it extremely hard for them.

The Fulham players would only know the result of their rival's game though after the end of their own game and so they focused on their game.

It was a tough game in Villa Park, Aston Villa's home stadium.

Despite it being a tough game, Fulham proved their superiority, fighting to a hard-earned 1-2 victory over Aston Villa.

In this game, Sam got neither a goal nor assist but his impact was felt throughout as he helped weather Aston Villa's terrifying offense, leading his team to victory and winning another man of the match award.

Across the other side of England in London, Chelsea did it!

After the end of their game, the Fulham players didn't celebrate until they heard the crazy news that Chelsea made Liverpool drop points again.

"Yessss...!" They celebrated like mad men.

After an incredibly tough and exciting game, Chelsea fought Liverpool to a draw courtesy of 2 genius goals from Cole Palmer.

And with it, the premier league table was updated again.

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 35/ W:26/ D:3/ L:3/ Pts: 87)

(2. Fulham GP: 35/ W:27/ D:5/ L:3/ Pts: 87)

(3. Arsenal GP: 35/ W:23/ D:8/ L:4/ Pts: 77)

(4. Chelsea GP: 35/ W:21/ D:10/ L:4/ Pts: 73)

(5. Man City GP: 35/ W:18/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 62)

(6. Nottm Forest GP: 35/ W:15/ D:11/ L:9/ Pts: 56)

(7. Tottenham GP: 35/ W:16/ D:6/ L:13/ Pts: 54)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 35/ W:13/ D:11/ L:12/ Pts: 50)

(9. Newcastle GP: 35/ W:13/ D:12/ L:10/ Pts: 51)

(10. Brighton GP: 35/ W:13/ D:9/ L:13/ Pts: 48)

(11. Man United GP: 35/ W:14/ D:6/ L:15/ Pts: 48)

(12. Bournemouth GP: 35/ W:11/ D:9/ L:15/ Pts: 42)

(13. Brentford GP: 35/ W:11/ D:9/ L:15/ Pts: 42)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 35/ W:11/ D:11/ L:13/ Pts: 44)

(15. West Ham GP: 35/ W:9/ D:9/ L:17/ Pts: 35)

(16. Leicester GP: 35/ W:5/ D:11/ L:19/ Pts: 26)

(17. Wolves GP: 35/ W:5/ D:10/ L:20/ Pts: 25)

(18. Everton GP: 35/ W:5/ D:7/ L:23/ Pts: 22)

(19. Ipswich Town GP: 35/ W:4/ D:10/ L:21/ Pts: 22)

(20. Southampton GP: 35/ W:3/ D:5/ L:27/ Pts: 14)

After 35 matchdays of the English premier league, Fulham finally did it again, climbing back to within touching distance of the premier league title.

This time, they were on level terms with Liverpool, only separated by goal difference. The situation was now back in their control.

Since their goal difference was not too big, to win the premier league trophy, they simply needed to outscore Liverpool in the last 3 games of the premier league and close the goal difference gap.

To the Fulham players, this was an achievable goal.

After the end of matchday 35, acknowledging how much they've climbed already, Coach Marco Silva organized another mini celebration with his players as they feasted, building more cohesiveness in his team in the process.

They set their eyes on matchday 36 of the premier league to continue their impressive winning run, but even as they set their eyes on that game, they also eyed another game that was outside the bounds of the premier league, a cup game.

After 7 rounds of the English FA Cup were played, only 2 clubs remained in the competition having qualified to the final already.

The 2 clubs were Fulham and Manchester United.

Despite the mixed season that Manchester United had in the league, in the FA Cup, they still played like genuine challengers.

(FA Cup:)

(Semifinal:)

(Man United 2-0 Tottenham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

...

(Newcastle 0-1 Fulham)

(Date: 26th April, 2025)

(Final:)

(Manchester United – Fulham)

(Date: 17th May, 2025)

The final was to be played in May 17th which was still a long time for now to the Fulham players, giving them all the time in the world to focus on their next premier league game and adequately prepare for it.

In matchday 36 of the English premier league, Fulham were to take on Everton, another premier league team that they were confident in dispatching.

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 36 of 38:)

(Fulham – Everton)

(Date: 10th May, 2025)

...

(Liverpool – Arsenal)

(Date: 10th May, 2025)

On the 10th, while Fulham would clash against Everton in their home stadium in Craven Cottage, Liverpool would play another grueling game against Arsenal in Anfield shortly after their blockbuster game in Stamford Bridge against Chelsea.

The past few weeks was just not kind to the Liverpool players.

This feeling was encapsulated even more by the fact that even before the Arsenal game, Liverpool played their return leg of the UEFA champions league semifinal against FC Barcelona in Anfield.

Chapter 267 Finale of the 2024/2025 football season [2]

(UEFA Champions League:)

(Semifinal fixtures- leg 2/2:)

(Bayern Munich 3-1 Real Madrid)

(Aggregate: 3-2)

(Date: 6th May, 2025)

...

(Liverpool – FC Barcelona)

(Aggregate: 1-2)

(Date: 7th May, 2025)

6th and 7th of May 2025, iconic days in which more history was added to the long chronicles of the UEFA champions league...

The whole football world was shocked.

A day earlier, Bayern Munich created the shock of the decade in the UEFA champions league, blowing Real Madrid out of the competition where they were the most notorious despite the Madrid club being the heavy favorites in the build-up to the game.

The French superstar, Kylian Mbappe scored the lone goal for the visitors in the Allianz Arena but Jamal Musiala's man of the match winning display that enabled him chip in with 2 goals and an assist, setting up Harry Kane turned the game on its head in favor of the Germans.

A major upset was recorded in the UEFA champions league the previous day and on 7th of May, more hearts were broken by the results.

Coming to Anfield with a 1 goal lead, once again, history repeated itself as FC Barcelona were doomed to a 2-0 loss in Anfield, knocking them out of Europe's top tier competition for good.

Old traumas for FC Barcelona fans across the world were reopened as with it, they were knocked out of the competition in familiar fashion by the same opposition with a narrow 2-3 aggregate loss.

After the first leg of the semifinal battles in Spain, Spanish clubs seemed to be flying, about to play the first UEFA champions league final El classico but in the second leg, everything came down crumbling like a house built on a weak foundation.

The world of football was left stunned by the result.

And just like that, Liverpool made it to another champions league final in the Mohamed Salah era, perhaps the last of the Egyptian King.

The atmosphere in Liverpool after the game was one of jubilation.

This positive vibe in Liverpool spilled over to the players, infusing them with much-needed confidence that they carried into their next game in the premier league as the D-day for matchday 36 finally came.

Liverpool welcomed Arsenal in Anfield on 10th May and just like was predicted, the game was extremely hard for the Merseysiders.

For 90 minutes, they dueled in an even battle against the Gunners in Anfield until in additional time, the chaotic Darwin Nunez proved the difference maker, scoring an absolute thunderbolt shot in the 90th plus 4 minute.

The moment was created by the Liverpool right back, Trent Alexander-Arnold who floated an accurate shot into the box for the Uruguayan striker to lash on to.

Throwing himself up after the high ball, Darwin Nunez scored with an incredible overhead kick, bringing the game to an end.

Liverpool won 1-0 over their North London rivals.

You had to see the atmosphere in Anfield..., it was electric as the Liverpool fans carried Arne Slot, their coach, parading him round the stadium while the fans sang his name at the top of their lungs.

They created a memorable moment in Anfield.

To their disappointment though, their archrivals this season for the premier league title didn't let up either as Fulham recorded another win.

Fulham literally tore Everton apart, winning 5-2 courtesy of an Emile Smith Rowe hattrick, and a Sam goal and assist.

Emile Smith Rowe won the man of the match award for the game and with it, the premier league table was updated again.

(Updated premier league table rankings:)

Liverpool GP: 36/ W:28/ D:6/ L:3/ Pts: 90) Fulham GP: 36/ W:28/ D:6/ L:3/ Pts: 90)

With the victories in matchday 36 of the premier league, Liverpool and Fulham managed to hit the incredible 90-point milestone for a season.

Both football clubs were having legendary seasons in the premier league.

The only question was, who would win the title eventually at the end?

The race was tight and pulsating.

...

With matchday 36 of the premier league out of the way, both archrivals focused on their matchday 37 encounters and in no time, it was D-day again.

For this matchday, while Brentford welcomed Fulham in the Gtech Community Stadium in Brentford, Brighton did the same in the other side of England, welcoming Liverpool in their American Express Stadium.

Both games were exciting games in the premier league, and the online viewership flew through the roof as the premier league race hit a crescendo.

It was tough away games for both Fulham and Liverpool but their mentality showed as they pushed through by sheer willpower.

Against Brighton, in a tough away stadium, the Merseysiders relied on their Egyptian King again who showed when Liverpool needed him the most as his sole goal was the difference maker, dragging Liverpool over the line to help them win 0-1 against the home side.

They secured 3 more important points.

For Fulham, it was a familiar story as Sam took the game by the scruff of the neck after Fulham went behind earlier in the first half.

In the 2nd half, he turned the gears on, playing an unforgettable game in the Gtech Community Stadium as he scored another hatrick for the season.

With that, Sam's tally for the season climbed up to a ridiculous figure of 36 goals in just 40 games played this season.

He was having a terrific season.

And with it, Fulham also secured 3 more points, keeping the pressure on Liverpool as the premier league title race extended all the way to the last matchday for the season, matchday 38.

(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Liverpool GP: 37/ W:29/ D:6/ L:3/ Pts: 93)

(2. Fulham GP: 37/ W:29/ D:6/ L:3/ Pts: 93)

(3. Arsenal GP: 37/ W:24/ D:8/ L:5/ Pts: 80)

(4. Chelsea GP: 37/ W:22/ D:11/ L:4/ Pts: 77)

(5. Man City GP: 35/ W:18/ D:8/ L:9/ Pts: 62)

(6. Nottm Forest GP: 37/ W:16/ D:12/ L:9/ Pts: 60)

(7. Tottenham GP: 37/ W:17/ D:6/ L:14/ Pts: 57)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 37/ W:15/ D:11/ L:12/ Pts: 56)

(9. Newcastle GP: 37/ W:13/ D:12/ L:12/ Pts: 51)

(10. Brighton GP: 37/ W:14/ D:9/ L:14/ Pts: 51)

(11. Man United GP: 37/ W:15/ D:7/ L:15/ Pts: 52)

(12. Bournemouth GP: 37/ W:11/ D:9/ L:16/ Pts: 42)

(13. Brentford GP: 37/ W:12/ D:9/ L:16/ Pts: 45)

(14. Crystal Palace GP: 37/ W:12/ D:11/ L:14/ Pts: 47)

(15. West Ham GP: 37/ W:9/ D:9/ L:19/ Pts: 35)

(16. Leicester GP: 37/ W:5/ D:12/ L:20/ Pts: 27)

(17. Wolves GP: 37/ W:5/ D:10/ L:21/ Pts: 25)

(18. Everton GP: 37/ W:6/ D:7/ L:24/ Pts: 25)

(19. Ipswich Town GP: 37/ W:4/ D:10/ L:22/ Pts: 22)

(20. Southampton GP: 37/ W:3/ D:5/ L:29/ Pts: 14)

Matchday 38 approached and the 2024/2025 premier league champion was yet to be determined.

Chapter 268 The grand finale; matchday 38 [1]

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Fulham – Man City)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

(Time: 16:00)

...

(Liverpool – Crystal Palace)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

(Time: 16:00)

It was matchday 38, the final matchday of the season.

It was the grand finale of the 2024/2025 premier league season.

On the last matchday of the season, all 10 games in the matchday are played simultaneously at the same time so that the premier league champion could be decided at the same time after all the games were played.

That afternoon in Fulham, Craven Cottage was filled to the brim with tens of thousands of fans.

Tens of thousands of home supporters who were hoping, praying, and pleading for their club to create a miracle.

The atmosphere in the Fulham dressing room was solemn.

The players could not talk, neither could their coach, the gravity of the moment was already getting to them.

They were this close to winning a historic premier league title.

But amid the tension inside the dressing room, a certain player covered his ears with his earpiece, listening to a certain musical classic.

'Look, if you had one shot or one opportunity...'

'To seize everything you ever wanted in one moment...'

'Would you capture it or just let it slip?'

'Yo'.

'His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy...'

'There's vomit on his sweater already, mom's spaghetti...'

'He's nervous, but on the surface, he looks calm and ready...'

'To drop bombs, but he keeps on forgetting...'

'What he wrote down, the whole crowd goes so loud...'

'He opens his mouth, but the words won't come out...'

'He's chokin', how? Everybody's jokin' now...'

'The clock's run out, time's up, over, blaow...'

'Snap back to reality, ope, there goes gravity...'

While the rest of this team were feeling the jitters, various thoughts going through their heads, Sam nodded his head, flowing with the rhythm of the song and once the chorus started, he joined, muttering under his breath.

'You better lose yourself in the music...'

'The moment, you own it, you better never let it go...'

'You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow...'

'This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, you...'

'You better lose yourself in the music...'

As Sam mumbled with Eminem's words, he could feel calmness returning to him, permeating his bones and making him focused.

Lose Yourself, it was a song his dad once recommended to him when he faced a tough period in his football career. This was why on this pivotal day in his Fulham career, as the pressure got to him, Sam decided to listen to this song.

It helped calm his nerves.

And finally, it was time.

Before they left to the tunnel, Coach Marco Silva stood up, looking at his players with a complicated look in his eyes.

In the end he smiled. "We can do it," he laughed. "Let's go make history!"

As soon as the players came out of the tunnel...

BOOM!

Craven Cottage erupted as tens of thousands of home supporters cheered their players on, making their blood burn hot like a furnace.

The commentator started. "It's the moment we've all been waiting for, the final day of the season, the penultimate matchday, matchday 38".

"What an amazing season it has been".

"Fulham have pushed Liverpool all the way to this moment, this final matchday, can they actually do it and win the premier league trophy?"

"It's going to require a miracle".

"Right now, both teams are level on points but Liverpool has the advantage of leading with 4 goals when it comes to goal difference".

"This means, if Fulham are to lift the premier league title today, Liverpool either have to lose against Crystal Palace while they win against City which is honestly crazy, or they hope to score as much as 5 or 6 goals against the reigning champions which is even crazier".

"Man City have been inconsistent for most of the season but in recent months, they look more like their old selves".

"Fulham honestly need a miracle today to lift that trophy".

"Well, we watch it for the drama, let's see how it unfolds".

FWEEEE!

The referee's whistle sounded the next moment to kick-start the game.

Like expected, both teams started with their strongest lineup for this game and as soon as the referee's whistle sounded, a war started on the pitch.

Man City may not have much to be fighting for at this moment since they were already out of the top four, but still, they had no intentions of losing to Fulham and so they played their game.

The game was tight.

Despite the fact that Fulham were the ones playing at home and the fact that they needed the win more, it was the Manchester City players who played with more intent to score as they took the game to them.

At some point in this game, the Fulham players started being run ragged and after relentless pressure, the game finally opened up in the 36th minute.

It didn't open up in Fulham's favor though.

After keeping up the pressure since, Manchester City finally got a reward for their effort as after a mazy run, cutting through multiple Fulham players who kept on making clumsy mistakes, Phil Foden managed to squirm a shot past Bernd Leno's grasp into the net.

"GOALLLL...!!!" The away fans in this stadium erupted as the traveling Man City fans celebrated at the top of their voice.

"What is going on?" The commentator raved. "Fulham look nothing like their usual selves, they look rattled".

"Wow..., what a goal from Phil Foden!"

Charging towards the corner flag, Phil Foden slid on his knees in celebration even as the Fulham players felt all energy drain out of their body.

That goal left this team slightly demoralized.

They were the ones looking for goals, not just one goal but multiple goals, to concede on top of that was just... brutal.

For most of this first half, Fulham did not play like itself at all as they kept on making mistakes but then, just before half-time, Ruben Dias made a mistake which Raul Jimenez pounced on, scoring a lucky goal to draw Fulham back level.

FWEEEE!

The referee's whistle finally sounded, indicating that the first half was over.

Fulham may be drawing the game, but the players walked into the dressing room with ugly looks on their faces.

The players' mood was ruined even more when they got news.

(Premier league:)

(Half-time:)

(Liverpool 1-0 Crystal Palace)

They truly needed a miracle.

Chapter 269 The grand finale; matchday 38 [2]

"Liverpool lead 1-nil in Anfield while Fulham are barely hanging on in Craven Cottage, surely this is the end of the premier league title race this season".

"The West London club fought a good fight".

"They pushed Liverpool all the way to the end, but alas, they just had to play against Manchester City in their final matchday of the season".

"They didn't lack for effort, what they lacked for was luck".

While the commentator kept on talking on the pitch, making the mood of the home supporters even more foul, there was a solemn silence in the Fulham dressing room as they reflected on themselves after their first half performance.

Coach Marco Silva gave his players 1 or 2 minutes for their atrocious performance in the first half to sink in, and then he started his speech.

"Is this how you guys want it?" He placed his hands on his hips akimbo. "After all the effort we put in from matchday 1, after staying in the fight for so long, this is how you want us to end the season?"

He chuckled, shaking his head. "Pathetic". He muttered.

Hearing that term, Sam shuddered, instinctively clenching his fists but he could not say a word as he kept his head down, wondering what went wrong.

Yes, he played 'Lose Yourself by Eminem', yes he already did his best to be calm but he just couldn't stop the pressure from getting to him.

As soon as he stepped into the pitch, it came and overwhelmed him

'So this is the pressure of a premier league title race'. He thought, amazed even as he looked at his trembling hands.

At this moment, Sam felt even more respect for the legendary group of Manchester City players who've competed and won the last 4 straight premier league titles in England.

But his coach was not done yet.

"Is this the extent to your ambitions? 2nd place?" Coach Marco Silva shook his head disappointedly.

"The 300, the battle of Thermopylae, the Spartans are war maniacs but you think they wanted to be stuck in such a losing battle?" He chuckled mirthfully.

"They were forced by the situation, their backs were pushed against the wall and they didn't want to lose, so they fought. They fought, and fought, and fought again, repeatedly, relentlessly till they pushed their enemies against the wall".

"You think it's already over?" He looked round at them. "You think we can't score 4, 5, 6 goals and catch up to Liverpool this second half?"

"Why? Because they're Man City?" He chuckled, shaking his head again. "The moment you begin to think that, you've lost already".

"What is there to not overcome?"

"Unlike the Spartans, you're not outnumbered!" He slammed his fist for emphasis. "It's a game of 11 vs 11, it's a fair matchup and you think you can't blow them away with impunity?"

"Come on guys!" Coach Marco Silva's face twisted in rage. "Is this the mentality of the players that I trained? Is this the limit of your ambitions?"

"F*ck weakness, wake up!" He growled.

Sam was shocked, this was his first time hearing his coach say a swear word.

"Look at me," he pointed at his chest, tapping it aggressively. "We still have 45 minutes in this game, more time enough time to turn it all around!"

"Let's go out there and create history!"

"Let's go and create our own luck!"

"Let's go there and immortalize our names in history!"

"You better not give up on me, you better not, not after coming this far, not after raising my hopes up".

"Come on!"

In that moment, all the Fulham players felt strange, it was like a fire was lit up in their heart and left unattended to.

Now, this fire burned, blazing into a firestorm!

When the Fulham players walked down the tunnel for the second half, their opponents could not help but feel that something was different about them.

It was almost like they had a halo around them.

A halo... of fiery zeal and passion.

FWEEEE!

When the referee's whistle sounded, the game changed immediately.

BOOM!

Like rabid dogs, the Fulham team went all-out attack!

Sam led his team, abusing his stamina and running like a guard dog.

At first, Manchester City were caught off-guard, struggling to cope with the sudden intensity but then they adapted, playing and defending like a team for 10 minutes till a moment of individual brilliance tore the game open.

After receiving a cross from Castagne in the Man City 18-yard box, Sam killed its momentum with his chest and as he landed, his right leg swung.

...knuckle ball shot!

POW!

Ederson only saw an afterimage!

The next moment, his net already rippled even as Craven Cottage exploded in ecstasy in the 55th minute of this game.

55 minutes, 2-1 to Fulham...

Game on!

Manchester City tried to get back into the game but after that goal, Sam decided to be defiant as he was unleashed.

Just 4 minutes later after he scored, channeling his inner Lionel Messi, Sam went on a solo run all the way from the half-way line, dribbling through multiple players and eventually the Man City goalkeeper too as he scored in the 59th minute.

"GOALLLLL...!!!" Craven Cottage was electric.

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

The Sam chants already started blasting out.

Sam was already in the zone state.

59 minutes, 3-1...

5 minutes later, in the 64th minute, Sam cut the Man City defense open like a hot knife through butter with an unreal pass, setting Raul Jimenez to score his 2nd goal and Fulham's 4th goal of this game.

64 minutes, 4-1...

2 minutes later, Calvin Bassey rose highest, planting a powerful header past Ederson to score Fulham's 5th goal of the game.

66 minutes, 5-1...

Fulham's game was unrecognizable from how they played in the first half; they were like an entirely different team.

But then, not willing to roll over so easily, Man City scored again courtesy of an absolute thunderbolt shot from Kevin De Bryune in the 69th minute of the game, dousing the Fulham energy and momentum.

5-2, but just as the Fulham players almost started collapsing on the pitch in tiredness, the referee's whistle sounded.

VAR judged that there was a foul in the build-up to the goal!

"YEAHHHH...!!!" The home supporters roared at the top of their lungs, even God seemed to be favoring them today.

In that moment, all the tired Fulham players felt their exhaustion disappearing with the wind, this was a chance!

"My God, what a moment this is!"

"Fulham have switched it on since the start of the 2nd half, and even lady luck is favoring them now. Can they actually do it?"

"Can they create history?"

"The score is still 5-1 in Fulham's favor, massively boosting their goal difference value but Liverpool have not stayed idle, they've scored again".

"Now, Liverpool leads the race by 2 goals".

"Can Fulham somehow score 2 more goals in this game against the reigning champions to make it level with Liverpool's goal difference?"

"Can the script really be that perfect? I doubt".

FWEEEE!

The game continued, and it was end to end.

Feeling humiliated already, Man City attacked the home side, going on attack after attack as they aimed to reduce their deficit but Fulham's defense stayed like a stalwart, protecting the defense like it was their own life.

Calvin Bassey already went as far as getting injured in his clash against the powerful Erling Haaland, but the Nigerian International did not leave the pitch.

As soon as his eye was bandaged, he continued the game!

This was a game of sweat and blood!

The game continued but just like Fulham, Man City's defense also became extremely tight as the last 2 goals to meet Liverpool were not materializing.

70 minutes, no goal...

75 minutes, no goal...

80 minutes, no goal...

85 minutes, no goal...

But then in the 88th minute, after a scramble in the Man City box, Sam rushed after the loose ball like a hurricane.

He received a dangerous off-ball tackle from Nathan Ake that deserved a penalty but refusing to be stopped and pinning his hopes on a penalty that may or may not be awarded, Sam ignored the pain on his legs and rushed forward, and then, he jumped.

Kyle Walker jumped; Sam also jumped and, in the end, both players ended up hitting their heads against each other but Sam just did more.

Even as he felt concussed from the collision, Sam stayed stubborn, refusing to give up, putting just enough in his diving header to hit the ball, sending it past Ederson.

He collapsed to the pitch, bleeding from his head, feeling dizzy but the ball managed to sneak into the Man City net a 6th time and that was all that mattered.

Ignoring the pain, the bleeding and how dizzy he felt, Sam jumped to his feet with dilated pupils, veins popping all over his body as he pumped a fist excitedly in joy. "COME ON...!!!" He roared, riling up the Fulham supporters even more.

"What a game!"

"Jesus! I can't believe what I'm seeing, what a way to end a premier league season, Fulham are now leading 6-1!"

"They need just one more goal; can they get it?!"

"But Sam's head, can he continue this game?"

The medical staff asked Sam the same question but the young Nigerian simply told them to bandage his head and leave him be.

Sam continued playing this game!

Fulham continued chasing the last goal as they forced Manchester City to defend deep. The pressure in the final few minutes was extremely oppressive, but in the end, Man City did it, they kept the Fulham offense at bay.

FWEEEEEE!

The final whistle sounded..., Fulham failed to score.

The Fulham players were devastated.

Thud!

Sam collapsed on his knees even as some of his teammates directly collapsed to the pitch, totally exhausted and even more devastated.

But then, they heard the commentator scream.

"OH MY GOD!!!"

"OH MY GOD...!!!"

"CRYSTAL PALACE JUST SCORED IN THE LAST MINUTE OF THE GAME IN ANFIELD!"

"THE GAME HAS ENDED; LIVERPOOL AND FULHAM ARE LEVEL ON POINTS!"

Chapter 270 Premier league champions?

'Crystal Palace scored...?'

This was Sam's last thought before all hell broke loose in Craven Cottage.

...

Matchday 38 of the English premier league came to an end...

(Premier league:)

(Matchday 38 of 38:)

(Bournemouth 1-1 Leicester City)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Fulham 6-1 Man City)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Wolves 2-0 Brentford)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Nottm Forest 1-0 Chelsea)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Man United 2-1 Aston Vila)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Southampton 1-4 Arsenal)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Newcastle 3-0 Everton)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Liverpool 2-1 Crystal Palace)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

...

(Ipswich Town 2-1 West Ham)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

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(Tottenham 5-2 Brighton)

(Date: 25th May, 2025)

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(Updated premier league table standings:)

(1. Fulham GP: 38/ W:30/ D:6/ L:2/ Pts: 96)

(2. Liverpool GP: 38/ W:30/ D:6/ L:2/ Pts: 96)

(3. Arsenal GP: 38/ W:25/ D:8/ L:5/ Pts: 83)

(4. Chelsea GP: 38/ W:22/ D:11/ L:5/ Pts: 77)

(5. Nottm Forest GP: 38/ W:17/ D:12/ L:9/ Pts: 63)

(6. Man City GP: 38/ W:18/ D:8/ L:10/ Pts: 62)

(7. Tottenham GP: 38/ W:18/ D:6/ L:14/ Pts: 60)

(8. Aston Villa GP: 38/ W:15/ D:11/ L:13/ Pts: 56)

(9. Man United GP: 38/ W:16/ D:7/ L:15/ Pts: 55)

(10. Newcastle GP: 38/ W:14/ D:12/ L:12/ Pts: 54)

(11. Brighton GP: 38/ W:14/ D:9/ L:15/ Pts: 51)

(12. Crystal Palace GP: 38/ W:12/ D:11/ L:15/ Pts: 47)

(13. Brentford GP: 38/ W:12/ D:9/ L:17/ Pts: 45)

(14. Bournemouth GP: 38/ W:11/ D:10/ L:16/ Pts: 43)

(15. West Ham GP: 38/ W:9/ D:9/ L:20/ Pts: 35)

(16. Leicester GP: 38/ W:5/ D:13/ L:20/ Pts: 28)

(17. Wolves GP: 38/ W:6/ D:10/ L:21/ Pts: 28)

(18. Everton GP: 38/ W:6/ D:7/ L:25/ Pts: 25)

(19. Ipswich Town GP: 38/ W:5/ D:10/ L:22/ Pts: 25)

(20. Southampton GP: 38/ W:3/ D:5/ L:30/ Pts: 14)

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'Crystal Palace scored...?'

This was the last thought that Sam had before all hell broke loose in Craven Cottage, instantly turning this stadium into a stadium-sized night club!

"OH MY GOD!!!"

"OH MY GOD...!!!" The commentator screamed at the top of his lungs, screaming so shrilly that you would think someone died.

"CRYSTAL PALACE JUST SCORED IN THE LAST MINUTE OF THE GAME IN ANFIELD!"

"THE GAME HAS ENDED; LIVERPOOL AND FULHAM ARE LEVEL ON POINTS!"

"FULHAM ARE THE PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS!"

Fulham are premier league champions..., what is the math behind it?

At 6-1, thrashing Manchester City in Craven Cottage while Liverpool was leading 2-0 against Crystal Palace in Anfield, Fulham were still losing since the goal difference was still in Liverpool's favor by just one goal.

But in the last minute, Crystal Palace scored. It was just a consolation goal in that match but in the grand scheme of things, that goal changed everything.

That goal killed Liverpool's advantage in terms of goal difference, making Liverpool and Fulham to be level on not just points but goal difference too but that was not why Fulham became champions.

In the premier league, the criteria to win the league title was total amount of points amassed in a premier league campaign.

If the champion could not be decided by that, the next criteria was goal difference and if the champion still could not be decided by that, the next criteria was the head-to-head record between the 2 competing sides.

This season, Fulham's head-to-head record against Liverpool was one-sided, Fulham won both games against Liverpool.

And that... was the difference in the title race.

Fulham won; Fulham was the 2024/2025 premier league champion.

"FULHAM ARE THE PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS!"

As soon as Sam heard those words from the commentator, he could not contain his emotions as he instantly collapsed to his knees in tears.

In that moment, he experienced a rollercoaster of emotions.

One moment, he and his teammates just lost it, narrowly losing to Liverpool in the premier league title race but in the next, Crystal Palace actually managed to bail them out of trouble.

'I did it,' he thought. 'No, we did it'.

In that moment, Sam's teammates swarmed him, surrounding him and celebrating excitedly even as Craven Cottage exploded.

BOOM!

Ecstatic Fulham fans roared at the top of their lungs, a lot of fans collapsing in a fit of tears while some even passed out immediately out of sheer excitement!

The atmosphere in this stadium was electric and joyful.

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

Across this massive stadium, a familiar chant started as tens of thousands of Fulham supporters sang the name of their superstar player at the top of their lungs, giving him one last acknowledgement for a legendary premier league season.

Even as his name was chanted by the fans, the Fulham players on the pitch responded, lifting Sam up above their heads as they paraded him round the pitch.

Coach Marco Silva already charged into the pitch to celebrate alongside his players long ago, this coach also could not control his emotions as he cried.

He could not believe it, they actually did it!

As soon as Sam was brought down by his teammates, this excited coach hugged his star player, kissing him on the forehead excitedly.

"Thank you Sam, thank you, thank you". He kept on muttering.

It was while the celebrations continued that the players' family were finally allowed into the pitch, and that was where Sam was shocked.

To his shock, Kayla, Ian, and Sophia appeared on the pitch but their appearance was not the most shocking. What shocked him most was the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Moses, his parents.

"How...?"

Mr. Moses grinned. "Congratulations son". This man hugged his son excitedly. "You did it, I'm so proud of you".

Mrs. Moses didn't exactly know the gravitas of this moment but the cascading emotions around already got to her, she was also crying.

Spending this moment with his family, there was no feeling like it in the world.

Sam felt on top of the world.

A few minutes later, Fulham's name was finally engraved in the premier league title even as Cairney, the Fulham captain carried the title the next moment.

Going to the part of the pitch that was already prepared for them, the Fulham players grouped together before lifting the trophy.

"Yeahhhh...!!!" They celebrated excitedly.

On that night, Fulham became premier league champions.