

LEGENDS 101

Chapter 101: Europa League Round of 32, Second Leg: Penalty Shootout II

Both sides had played four penalties and had both scored all their penalties.

The tension in the Estadio do Dragao was very palpable and everyone unconsciously held their breaths as Nadiem Amiri stepped back from the ball that he had placed on the penalty spot.

The Porto fans wished that he would by some stroke of luck, flop the penalty, either by the Porto goalkeeper saving it, or by him shooting the ball off target, but Amiri ran up to the ball and drove the ball past Augustin Marchesin and into the top left corner.

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Groans of annoyance and disappointment flew out of the stands where the Porto fans were seated while the traveling fans heaved a sigh of relief before doing their best to cheer for their team.

Next up was the Porto team and Otavio stepped up to take the penalty.

Another round of silent prayers filled the stadium as Otavio stepped away from the ball.

The prayers of the Porto team seemed to have touched the skies as Otavio didn't disappoint the hopes of his team and he slammed the ball into the bottom right corner.

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The Porto fans cheered as the ball went in, completely joyous that their team had survived yet another round of the penalty shootout.

With a winner still not decided even after five rounds of penalties, they entered the sudden death round.

At this point, the prayers and the tension in the stadium intensified as the first five penalties were usually taken by the best penalty takers in the line-up so the remaining guys were more likely to lose or miss a penalty and each team's fans prayed that it wouldn't be their team's player who flopped first.

For the sixth round of penalties, Paulinho was the one taking the penalty for the Bayer Leverkusen team. He had been brought on as a substitute for Moussa Diaby in the second half.

Paulinho took five steps away from the ball and took a deep breath as he waited for the referee's whistle.

Fweeeee

Paulinho ran up to the ball and swung his feet hard, aiming for the top right corner, but his luck seemed to have deserted him as the ball flew and slammed hard against the top crossbar.

Unfortunately, Paulinho didn't have Mattheus Uribe's strange luck and the ball flew out of play after slamming into the crossbar.

The groans of annoyance, disappointment, and despair of the Leverkusen fans were drowned out by the Porto fans who were in the majority in the stadium.

The Leverkusen team had missed their first penalty just after they had entered the sudden death round and now, as long as Porto could score their penalty, then they won the penalty shootout, and in extension, the match.

Coincidentally for Jason, he was the one that had been chosen to be the first penalty taker in the sudden death round... if that had happened.

Jason had already been arranged to take the fourth penalty in the place of Mattheus Uribe, but Jason had argued that someone else should take it as he didn't have any experience in penalty shootouts.

Of course, those were only the words he had said outwardly but internally he didn't want the pressure of the team's victory to be placed on his neck by being among the first five penalty takers, but then this had happened.

Having no choice, Jason took the ball from the referee and headed to the penalty box, put the ball on the spot, and took three steps back.

It was unknown who started it, but as Jason waited for the referee's whistle, someone started chanting his name and soon the other fans followed and the stadium was soon filled with Jason's name being chanted.

"Jason, Jason, Jason, Jason, Jason, Jason..." the fans continually chanted, unknowingly heaping tons of pressure on Jason's neck.

'This was exactly why I wanted to not be part of the first five penalty takers,' Jason thought with quivering hands as he bent down to adjust his shoe laces that did not need adjusting as he had already adjusted them before heading over with the ball.

To be completely honest, Jason actually both craved and feared this kind of attention from the Porto fans.

The team's victory was currently on his shoulders and this was one of the things that Jason was aiming for by wanting to be a football legend, thus he was flattered by the attention he was gaining from the fans, but he could also not help but wonder if he was ready to be this kind of player who decided games for his team.

By all rights, while his performance since his debut would not be called anything short of dazzling, it was also clear that Jason was too young, too inexperienced, and had too little charisma to lead the team to wins, even with the performances he had under his belt

Of course, Jason wasn't as young as he looked... mentally... but because of this he also could not help but be nervous as this was not something that he had been able to do in his past life.

He had never made it to the big stages and even on the little stages where he was, he had never been the best on the team, he had never been the go-to guy, he had never been the main x-factor for his team so the fact that the game was currently on his shoulder and that he could single-handedly lead his team to victory or into the abyss more than just unnerved him.

He was terrified just standing behind the ball with his name being chanted by thousands of fans who were looking to him for victory from his spot-kick, but he was doing his best to hide it.

Unfortunately, the referee didn't have an idea what was going on in Jason's head and he blew his whistle as soon as he thought both the player and goalkeeper were ready.

Immediately the whistle was blown, all his fears, worries, and uncertainty, took a backseat in his mind as everything suddenly became blank and the only things his brain registered were the ball, the Leverkusen goalkeeper, and the goalpost.

Jason took well-measured and calculated steps as he ran up to the ball, arched his body, and swung his right foot powerfully.