

## LEGENDS 128

### Chapter 128: Vs Rio Ave I

The players of FC Porto and Rio Aves marched onto the field with the referees walking ahead of them and the pre-match formalities began.

The line-ups of both teams were called out by the commentator in the box, while the coin toss was ongoing on the pitch.

Soon the players were in their positions and the match kicked off with Porto being the first to kick off.

The Porto players passed the ball around skillfully and advanced into the Rio Aves's half of the pitch.

They made use of the full length of the pitch to keep the ball away from their opponents and Rio Aves's three midfielders were no match for Porto's four players in the midfield in skill or pedigree and for the first few minutes of the game, Porto enjoyed dominance in the midfield.

Yet before the Porto players could record a shot, the Rio Aves team suddenly changed their tactics and the two wingers of the Rio Aves team suddenly dropped back, immediately transitioning from a 4-3-3 formation to a 4-5-1 formation.

With the extra legs in the middle of the park, Rio Aves took dominance of the midfield and left the Porto players chasing shadows whenever they tried to retrieve the ball.

After completely taking over the midfield, they didn't stop there and started advancing deeper into Porto's half of the pitch.

At every opportunity they sent the ball forward to the lone striker, Mehdi Taremi to try and start something, but luckily for the Porto team, their defense stayed alert and did their best to prevent the ball from successfully reaching Taremi.

Seeing this, the Rio Aves team settled for taking shots on sight or trying to build the attack from midfield instead before letting the final ball fly over to their striker, but apart from getting a few shots away, they didn't gain anything else.

And then in the 23rd minute, the unexpected happened...

Rio Aves had just been repelled once again from cracking the Porto defense and were currently passing the ball around between their defenders when suddenly Tiquiniho Soares and Moussa Marega double-teamed the defender with the ball and successfully managed to make him lose the ball.

Tiquiniho didn't need anyone to tell him before he chased after the loose ball, controlled it and advanced through the space left in the Rio Aves defense, bearing down on the Rio Aves goalkeeper.

Unfortunately for him, despite being a striker with above-average agility, he wasn't able to outrun the Rio Aves defenders for long and they soon caught up to him and began hassling him from behind.

Not wanting the attack to end with him, he quickly looked for the nearest pass and saw Fabio Viera running alongside him on the right side of the field and he immediately sent a through pass forward and across into the right side of the Rio Aves 18-yard box.

Fabio Viera immediately chased after the ball with all his might as the ball was going a bit too fast and was likely to end up out of play if he didn't hurry up.

Luckily, he was quite free and was able to put his full focus on chasing after the ball.

Behind him, Tiquiniho Soares who had made the pass was finally pulled down by the Rio Aves defender that was hassling him.

The referee immediately raised his hand and called for an advantage, not stopping the game and letting the attack play out.

Finally, just before the ball rolled out of play, Fabio Viera caught up to the ball and brought it under control.

Quickly shifting his body along in a series of well-practiced movements, he shifted the ball deftly from his left to his right and escaped the player who had just managed to catch up to him and was trying to block his path.

Managing to create enough space with his movement, Viera didn't get greedy for glory despite being quite close to the goal and instead opted to pass the ball into the path of the arriving Moussa Marega.

Moussa Marega arrived behind the ball with his leg already swinging and he caught it first time with the side of his foot, sending it at the Rio Aves goal.

The Rio Aves goalkeeper was close by and immediately jumped into the path of the shot, but was too late and only managed to deflect it slightly.

\*Clang!!!\*

The ball slammed against the inside of the crossbar before finally rolling across the goalline and uplifting the whole Estadio do Dragao.

{And it's a goal!!!}

{What pace! What commitment! What joy!}

{They took their chance and they made something out of nothing with it leaving the opponents to rue their mistake} The commentator's voice was there as usual to accompany the ball going in, while Moussa Marega had taken off towards the sidelines.

Reaching the sidelines, he slapped the corner flag with his hand, but before he could do anything else, he was jumped on by his teammates as celebrations ensued in the Estadio do Dragao.

On the sidelines, Jason could see Sergio Conceicao pumping his fist silently with a relieved smile on his face and it was understandable.

After all, the Porto team had only barely managed to keep out the Rio Aves team the last few minutes, yet they had somehow managed to turn things around by grabbing the opportunity that came their way with both hands.

‘Hopefully, with this, we can build on our momentum and go on to get a comfortable win,’ Sergio Conceicao hoped as he watched his players celebrate.

As the players rounded up their celebrations, the head manager called the team captain and gave him instructions for the team, reminding them of their roles and instructing them on how they should play going forward.

He wanted the players to remain focused and not allow for the Rio Aves team to continue their free reign in the midfield and he gave instructions to help the team counter this.

After receiving instructions that he was supposed to share with the rest of the team, Pepe headed back to the field, relaying the manager’s instructions to his teammates and soon the match kicked off again and Sergio Conceicao watched from the sidelines.

He had done his part and now it was time for the players to do their part while hoping that things fell in place, but things scarcely ever went as one hoped, did they?