

LEGENDS 160

Chapter 160: Scent of Unprofessionalism

“It’s been a while guys...” Sergio Conceicao began his address,

“So... are you ready to get back on the title race?” Sergio Conceicao said with a meaningful smile, but it was hidden under the nose mask.

“Yeaaaaaahhhhh!!!” The players cheered in agreement with the head manager’s question, their morale greatly lifted by the manager’s words, attitude, and support.

“Then let’s get to training like the champions we are hoping to become!” Sergio Conceicao said in response to the players’ positive answer and attitude.

“Yeaaaaaaaahhhhhh!!!” The players cheered in agreement again.

Though the manager’s address was comprised of just a few words, the intention of the manager had been achieved.

He had successfully increased the players’ morale after a long period of break and even made it look good on camera, but now that that was done, it was time to do some actual work.

Making a gesture to the videographers to stop recording, the manager got right down to business,

“Before we get into training, I need to first address something that I think requires addressing,” Sergio Conceicao began speaking again, but this time, he didn’t have to care about looking good on camera.

“I believe that you all know that you are professional athletes, right?” Sergio Conceicao asked rhetorically, not really expecting an answer, but a few murmurs from the crowd let him know that some of them still answered his question.

“Since you are all professional athletes, then it only stands to reason that even in the face of an unexpected occurrence like the lockdown period of the last few months...” he paused for a moment to let his words sink in.

“...You should still have ensured that you maintained your match fitness during that period of time, right?” he continued, his tone falling a little low.

At this point, some of the players on the team already knew where the conversation was heading toward, but they didn’t dare to let out any sounds.

“...So can somebody tell me why that doesn’t seem to be the case?”

“Some of you seem to have put on some extra weight!... extra weight that doesn’t look to be muscle...” Sergio Conceicao’s words were no longer calm, but now had a bit of a fiery blaze in them.

“*Sniff* *Sniff*” Sergio Conceicao sniffed the air a few times with annoyance on his face before he asked,

“Can anybody smell that?”

“It reeks of unprofessionalism, and I will not have that on my team, especially when we are supposed to be challenging for the title!”

“Do you think you can end this season as the league leaders if you are this unprofessional!?” At this point, Sergio Conceicao was already fuming and every word that came out of his mouth reflected that and also incensed him even further at the same time.

“... Hmmm? Nobody wants to give me an answer?” The Portuguese manager looked at his players with fire in his eyes, but none of them dared to speak up and have the manager’s full attention brought on them.

“... Well then, here’s what’s going to happen,”

“The first order of today’s schedule will be a match fitness test for all of you. Those of you who aren’t up to the fitness level required will be penalized accordingly...”

“Not only that... before our next match, another fitness test will be done and if you haven’t managed to regain your fitness levels to the required level, then I can assure you that you will not be seeing any of the four corners of the Estadio do Dragao or any other stadium apart from on the television until you are match fit,” Sergio Conceicao stated firmly, informing the players and staff of his decision on the players fitness.

“I believe this team is a very competitive environment and that there shouldn’t be a lack of match-fit players so forget about the fact that you used to be a part of the starting line-up... if you are lacking, you will be replaced,” the head manager stated, his words meant for the more experienced players on the team and the players who were usually a part of the team’s starting line-up.

“You will be divided into batches and each batch will take turns to go for the fitness tests to avoid overcrowding while the remaining batches will stay back to continue their training,” the manager gave instructions to the players on how the day’s proceedings would go.

After addressing the players and giving them instructions regarding the day’s training and the fitness tests that were scheduled to happen, Sergio Conceicao stepped aside and spoke with his assistant coaches and gave the task of dividing the players into batches to Vitor Bruno while Siramana Dembele would stay behind to assist him in setting up the training schedule for the remaining players.

Vitor Bruno soon got to work and began segregating the players’ names into different batches of 7 players each, while Sergio Conceicao, Siramana Dembele, and a few other technical staff began discussing the types of team training the players would be subjected to in the coming days.

They purposely left out individual training from their planning for the time being because they would have to wait for the results from the fitness test to pick out the best individual training for the players that would need it.

While all this was going on, the players were free to do whatever they wanted until the assistant began calling out the batches.

Some of the players went back to training while some of them gathered around each other and engaged in various conversations.

Soon enough, Assistant Coach Vitor Bruno finished segregating the players into batches and called out the names of the players in the first batch.

“Pepe, Alex Telles, Danilo Perreira, Jason Bolu, Fabio Viera, Moussa Marega, and Mattheus Uribe are batch A,” Vitor Bruno called out to the players, before going on to call out the names of all the other players and telling them their respective batches.

After calling out the names of all the players in their respective batches, Vitor Bruno had the players who were in batch A gather around and had them leave for another field to go and get a fitness test done.