

LEGENDS 162

Chapter 162: Fitness Test Results And Manager's Decision

****24th May 2020****

****4:56 pm****

Training for the day was already over and all the fitness tests that the manager had made compulsory had been completed and the players had left the training complex.

In the head manager's office, Sergio Conceicao was doing some work on his computer when he heard a knock on his door.

"Come in," he called out, hardly taking his eyes off the computer to glance at the visitors.

Vitor Bruno, Siramana Dembele, and Luis Pinto walked into the room one after the other, and in Luis Pinto's hand was a tab.

"Are those the results of the fitness test?" Sergio Conceicao immediately put aside his work when he saw the people who came inside and realized what was probably going on.

"Yes, these are the results," Luis Pinto said as he held up the iPad in his hand.

"Let me see it," Sergio Conceicao said as he held out his hand to collect the iPad from Dr. Luis Pinto.

"How is it?" Sergio Conceicao still asked even after collecting the tab from Luis Pinto.

"Well... a few players had higher numbers than they did before the break, some managed to maintain their match fitness, some deteriorated a bit... and some deteriorated sharply," Dr. Luis Pinto said in response to the head manager's question.

“Deteriorated sharply?” Sergio Conceicao’s ears particularly picked on that part of the sentence.

“...I guess they wouldn’t be playing then,” he concluded after a pause even though he didn’t yet know who the players who had deteriorated sharply were.

“For the players who deteriorated sharply, fine them for two weeks of wages, and for the players who deteriorated a bit, fine them for a week’s wages... Also after their punishment is over, they shall be subjected to another fitness test and if they still aren’t match fit, then repeat the punishment...” Sergio Conceicao fired out orders to Vitor Bruno who would make his decision known to the club’s financial department.

“Sir... do we really need to go that far on the punishments, it may cause some discontent and friction among the players,” Siramana Dembele tried to convince his boss to reduce the punishments but was immediately countered by the head manager.

“That friction and discontent is their own business,”

“If you are not fit, then you do not play, it’s as simple as that... the other players who stayed fit and the ones who improved are also members of this club and some of them may be earning a lot lower than those that deteriorated...”

“It is true that life is not always fair, but if someone has the results to show for their efforts and then another one chooses not to cherish their opportunity, then I’ll go with the option that would give me the best results at any time,”

“There’s nothing to discuss further, change is inevitable,” Sergio Conceicao spoke harsh words, but he also knew that this was what he had to do.

He had to put his foot down or the title race would slip out of their grasp, especially now that they were in a tight spot.

He would not let indiscipline from a couple of players ruin his title run, and if the only way to curb it was by performing harsh actions like this, then he was all for it.

“Make a new list of players and add only the players that maintained their fitness and the ones who improved... that is where I will pick out the provisional squad for the next game,”

“Oh... also make sure to highlight the ones that improved,”

“I want to know who they are,”

“Get that done quickly,” Sergio Conceicao instructed Siramana Dembele as he had already given Vitor Bruno an assignment.

After doling out responsibilities, the head manager got back to work while the visitors left his office and went to do their respective tasks, apart from Dr. Luis Pinto who went to pack up to leave the training grounds, already feeling hungry for whatever his wife would be cooking for dinner.

Thus the day rolled by and the players came back for training the next day.

The conversation between the head manager, assistant coaches, and head of the medical department remained oblivious to them, but the results of the fitness tests were made known to the players and the players who were punished were punished.

Of course, murmurs of discontent could not be prevented, but the head manager had only announced their names in a pass-or-fail context.

He had not specifically gotten into the details as firstly it was unnecessary and secondly, it would cause a lot more friction between the players as they would have targets to pick on.

After announcing the results of the fitness test, the manager said a few more words before personally heading the players training for that day as well as for the days that followed, though he also made sure to segregate the players who were already fit and had them focus more on tactical training while the unfit players focused more on fitness exercises.

He wanted the fit players to get used to working with each other since he planned to pick his squad from among them and the players were not the usual ones who he usually played.

Looking at the list of fit players, he already guessed that he may even have to change the formation from the usual 4-4-2 holding formation that he usually used, but that was a minor issue that could be solved easily, though he would have to work on it soon as the team had an upcoming match on the third of June and they were rapidly approaching that date.

The Porto head manager didn't want his first game after the Covid lockdown to be a loss or even a draw, and he was going to pull out all stops to make sure it became a reality... or at least, he will do so on the training ground, he wasn't going to do anything illegal or something of the sort.

He was an honest man.