

LEGENDS 163

Chapter 163: New Formation Training

****29th May 2020****

****10:52 am****

"Gather around guys," Sergio Conceicao called out to the players who were doing various training drills on the training field.

The players soon started gathering around the manager who was holding a notepad in his hand which was quite unusual, unless he had something to announce or implement.

After all the players gathered around, the Portuguese manager finally began speaking,

"Today, we'll be having a training match," Sergio Conceicao began

"I'm sure you all know that our current major formation is the 4-4-2 holding formation where we use two strikers up upfront, two wide midfielders who majorly function as wingers but come back to help in the midfield, as well as two holding midfielders who help us hold the line and control the midfield,"

"The four defenders do what they are supposed to do at the back as well,"

"Now that is all well and good, but in the footballing world, anything can happen at any given moment, so I want us to work on another formation,"

"A formation that I believe should go well with our current squad," Sergio Conceicao continued speaking, his eyes surveying his players.

"The 4-1-2-3 formation... this formation would still have four defenders but this time we'll have three midfielders and forwards instead of the 4 midfielders and two forwards that is a stable of our previously used formation,"

“This formation would have one midfielder who works with the defenders to keep out the opposition while the team is on the defensive, he’ll also work with the other two midfielders to control the midfield and set up attacking opportunities with passes behind or over the defense when we’re in possession,”

“The other two midfielders will function as attacking midfielders who will work closely with the three attackers to create chances, make decoy runs, and maybe even function as a forward if the other forwards are being too tightly marked,”

“As for the three forwards, I don’t think I need to explain what I want from you, the wingers would make incisive runs towards the box and cut in when they get the opportunity, if not, then they send the ball into the box instead and the striker, or whoever is in the box,”

“The striker must be able to finish well when the ball comes in his direction, but cannot remain stationary, he must keep moving and be ready to even join in the build-up play for an attack,”

“With that said, I will be selecting two teams and both teams will be playing against each other while using that formation, we’ll rotate the squads at ten-minute intervals,”

“Also note that while I did mention what I expect from each of the positions in the formation, I am not against you trying your luck at another play style that you think would fit that position more, after all, we’re still in the development stages of the formation, so I wouldn’t chew you out for trying to work something out,” Sergio Conceicao added after all his instructions as the essence of the training was after all to improve on flaws and better oneself.

His being the manager didn’t mean that he would instantly be able to create a ground-breaking tactic with a new formation and then carry on into matches and then mow down the opponents.

He was not Pep Guardiola, he knew his limits, hence why he had brought up this formation in training five days to an actual match and if he didn’t see the results he was looking for, then he was junking the new formation immediately.

“Is everything clear, or do you have any questions?” the head manager asked after his inner dialogue, but none of the players indicated that they had anything to add to his words.

“Okay then, the first team’s line-up will be like this,”

“Diogo Costa will be in goal, Pepe and Diogo Leite will be the center backs, Alex Telles and Tomas Esteves will be the left back and the right back respectively,”

“Mamadou Loum will be the defensive midfielder while Shoya Nakajima and Otavio will be the two attacking midfielders, Otavio will be on the right and Shoya will be on the left,”

“On the right wing, we’ll have Fabio Viera, and on the left wing, Jason Bolu,”

“The striker for the first team will be Ze Luis,” Sergio Conceicao listed out the line-up for the first team before going on to list a similar line-up for the second team.

After the players for both teams were picked, they went to prepare for the scrimmage match, some wearing bibs, some adjusting their equipment and some changing their equipment.

While they all did this, no one but Jason noticed a strange point in the line-up selection.

Due to his extended period of training without seeing the field for a while, as well as the fact that other players were constantly picked over him even when he was performing better in training, coupled with his past life experiences, Jason had begun to unintentionally pay a lot of attention to names he heard in the training room.

He also developed a habit of scrutinizing everyone on his team which was actually born from his negative emotions back then, but due to it, Jason had noticed that everyone on his team had passed the fitness test five days earlier while everyone on the opposite team didn’t pass the fitness test.

Jason didn’t think it was a coincidence.

It was one thing for the manager to rotate players on the team during the training, but such a clear distinction was strange, especially after his words that the players who didn’t pass the fitness test wouldn’t play.

'The manager can't be thinking of using this line-up in the next game, right?' Jason wondered to himself as he looked at the players on his team.

He couldn't call line-up a raggedy one, but there were a few players on the team that he hadn't played with apart from at training so he didn't trust them to do well on the pitch in a professional.

Jason wasn't looking to lose his first game after the lockdown, but Diogo Costa, Mamadou Loum, Tomas Esteves... like really?

This wasn't some domestic cup game where the opponent would be from a lower league, but rather it was a match against Familicao and was also the first game since the lockdown.

Jason wasn't underestimating those guys, but before the break, they were not ready for first-team football and while it was possible that they could have gotten better during the break, their improvement couldn't be that drastic unless of course one of them went back in time as he did, or got a system, but Jason doubted those possibilities.

'Anyway, it's still training anyway, if they don't play well, the manager will take them out of the squad,' Jason thought to himself, and for this, he had no doubt.

Every manager was obsessed with winning, especially when the win was crucial.

The match against Familicao was definitely a crucial one as Porto was only 2 points ahead of Benfica on the league table so if they lost and Benfica won their game, then they would go behind, and if they drew, then they would have the same number of points as Benfica.

Of course, they would still be ahead of Benfica because of the goal difference, but if they floundered once more, then they would go behind Benfica, irrespective of their goal difference.

With just about ten games to go till the end of the season, any slip-ups could lead to the title slipping out of their grasp and the manager wasn't about to have that.

In all this though, all Jason had to do was do his best on the field while trusting his teammates to do the same, all the other tactical matters were his manager's problem.

Soon the players of both teams were on the pitch in the arranged formation, waiting for the assistant coach Siramana Dembele, who was acting as the referee for this internal scrimmage to blow the whistle.

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Jason's team which was the team wearing red bibs over their training attire kicked off first, with Ze Luis sending the ball to Shoya Nakajima.

Shoya quickly laid off the ball to the left side of the field where Alex Telles awaited, doing his best to keep the ball away from their yellow-bib opponents.

Alex Telles received the ball and quickly passed it to Jason who received the ball smoothly with his first touch and smoothly sent the ball back to Shoya Nakajima in the mid-field with his second touch, continuing the chain of quick passes.

Shoya received the ball smoothly despite the presence of his marker and he partnered with Otavio and Mamadou as they slowly began advancing up the pitch, exchanging the ball with themselves smoothly and avoiding their opponents with quick and clever ball movements among themselves.

Despite Mamadou's obvious lack of ability in the mid-field, he worked well with Otavio and Shoya to advance the ball and soon they were bearing down on the opposition's goal.

Soon, Shoya found Jason open on the left wing and sent a curling pass between the right-back and the right center-back, aiming for Jason's path behind the defenders.