

LEGENDS 206

Chapter 206: Monthly Review Meeting

****26th July 2020****

It was a day like all the previous ones in Porto, quite silent without much movement by people which was quite strange for a city whose football team had ended the season as the league leaders.

Normally there would be many promotional activities organized by the Porto football club to show off their trophy but due to the outbreak of the Covid virus, most of the activities in the city were still on lockdown and thus it was impossible to hold any events where even hundreds of people would gather, let alone the thousands of Porto fans who would not miss such an event.

Unfortunately, going ahead to hold those events in times like this was not only against quite a few safety regulations, but it was also dangerous for the fans as nobody could tell if and when the virus could break out and spread among the crowd, thus the fans had to content themselves with seeing the trophy through their screens and the players had to content themselves with believing in their hearts that the fans were cheering for them from wherever they were.

On this day, the CTFD Portogaia, particularly the training field of the Porto team was quite empty due to the players having a day off after the game against Braga the previous day, but today wasn't a day off for the management staff of the club who were currently gathered at the club's head office at the Estadio do Dragao for the end of the month, review meeting.

The monthly review meeting was a meeting where every major occurrence that happened within the span of the month as well as things to take note of going into the next month would be discussed.

The meeting had started a little while ago and despite the topics to be discussed bearing great importance to the club, the atmosphere was quite light and was more positive than tense.

This was a result of the team ending the season as the league champions which meant that at least for the time being, no one was in danger of losing a job and they were even guaranteed bonuses that would make enjoying the season's break even more enjoyable.

Quite a few of them would have been planning trips but due to the heavy restrictions on international transfers, their plans for the break were a bit nearer to home.

The meeting continued and it soon reached the section where the transfer talks, contract negotiations, and new talents which would be headed by the sporting director arrived.

“Starting with contracts to be renewed before the next season, the players Pepe, Ivan Marcano, Vana, Yordan Osario, and Vincent Aboubakar need their contracts to be renewed immediately if we have plans of having them play for the club next season,”

“Also... a few other players may need their contracts renewed to adjust their value based on their above-average performances last season; Otavio, Fabio Viera, Diogo Leite, Chancel Mbemba, and Jason Bolu,” The sporting director said, bringing up the first matter on the agenda.

Sergio Conceicao was silent for a while before he started answering to the sporting director’s suggestions,

“For the immediate renewals, I don’t think there’s any problem with re-signing Pepe, especially since he is the team captain,”

“Ivan Marcano is a valuable part of the team and he has performed quite well this season, doing a lot for the team at the back, so it is no question whether his contract should be renewed,”

“As for Vana and Osario, I’m not quite sure what to do with them as I don’t see either of them breaking into the first team soon so it may be better to let them go,”

“This will be a win for both sides as they can take their services elsewhere where they can get more opportunities and we can save up on the money that we will use to renegotiate a contract as well as their salaries and use it for other things,”

“As for Vincent, I would like to keep him as he is perhaps the only substitute striker we have that is first-team material, but I’m hearing that you already tried to renew his contract earlier, but his demands were too high,” Sergio Conceicao said, his words having a bit of a questioning tone.

“About Vincent Aboubakar, it is true that we already tried to renew his contract but his demands were a bit above what we are willing to bear with at the moment for a player of his caliber,” The sporting director said without trying to hide anything with his words.

It was clear that the price that Vincent Aboubakar was asking for was probably a bit higher than what he had expected.

“How much are we talking about here?” The technical director asked the question on everyone’s mind.

“... He’s asking for 45000 Euros per week which is almost double what he’s already receiving, and that’s not to mention the add-ons to the contract,” The sporting director said after a slight pause.

“Ridiculous!” Someone said, but nobody bothered to look for who had said it because they were just as flabbergasted as the person who had voiced his dissent.

45 thousand Euros a week would add up to 180 thousand Euros a month which by European standards wasn’t too high, especially with the way money was flowing around in the footballing world nowadays, but for a team like Porto despite its pedigree was a bit too high for them to pay for a substitute striker.

“It’s impossible for us to pay him that much, make that clear to him and if he still isn’t willing to lower his demands then he can begin finding somewhere else to offer his services after this season because there would be no room for negotiation,” Sergio Conceicao said in a hard tone.

He quite liked Vincent Aboubakar, but he could not afford to cater to such high demands... no, it was more apt to say that the club couldn’t cater to such demands.

The effects of COVID had hit the club’s finances hard and though the club had been shrewd enough with their finances that they hadn’t needed to take any loans, it didn’t mean that they had a lot at hand.

In fact, the club was actually looking to offload a few of the higher-paid players which he didn’t quite agree with as he knew that it would greatly affect his chances at a title run next season due to the lack of synergy replacing valuable teammates would cause.

Unfortunately, the board's concerns weren't the same as his and they were more concerned with saving the club's finances at the moment hence he could not do anything other than try his best to save money for the club, otherwise it would be his job on the line.

"What about Pepe and Ivan Marcano? I'm sure you must have already begun discussing the terms of the with them?" Sergio Conceicao asked, hoping that there were no other wage problems as he couldn't bear to lose either of his two major defenders.

"I've been speaking with their agents and the increment in their wages is something we can accommodate," The sporting director said in response to the head manager's question.

Internally letting out a sigh of relief, Sergio Conceicao said,

"That's okay then, keep me updated... Also about the other players who you're considering whether to increase their salaries or not, let's put them off for now, we can just give them a few bonuses for now and put off any talks about a contract renewal until later when our finances are better stabilized."

He quickly made a decision on the other players and opted for giving them a bit of a hefty bonus to postpone any contract talks for now as it would be less expensive that way.

"Wouldn't that cause a problem later if the players feel like they are not paying well enough compared to their performances and contribution to the club," The sporting director immediately responded with his own thoughts,

"Just so you know, I'm talking specifically about Fabio Viera and Jason Bolu," he went on to specify.

"Hmmm... Continue," Sergio Conceicao hummed in response, gesturing for the sporting director to further elaborate.

"Okay... So I'm sure all of you know about those two players' performances in the latter half of the season," The Sporting Director began explaining,

“Fabio Viera was already showing first-team qualities, but ever since he paired up with Jason in the latter half of this season, his performances had an exceptional rise in quality despite him having only been able to feature for the second team for most of this season,”

“As of now, his performances and contribution to the team do not pale in comparison in any way to the current starters in the line-up and with this, it’s obvious that he’d be expecting more opportunities in the first team as well as an improved contract to follow it up otherwise he might start looking to other teams if they offer him better,”

“As for Jason... I don’t even know where to start,”

“Ever since his debut at the Europa League match against Bayer Leverkusen where he helped the team make a comeback victory against Leverkusen in the first leg, he hasn’t taken his foot off the pedal and he has gone on to amass a total of 13 goals and 7 assists in just 11 games,”

“Despite playing for barely half a season, he has a record that is just as good as the first-team players who have been playing throughout the season,”

“In fact, he has probably done even more for the team in the half-season he has been active than Luis Diaz or Jesus Corona have done throughout the season, yet he is receiving less than half of what those guys are making,”

“If his wages don’t see an increment soon, we may end up losing a talent like him to the first guys that come running, especially since he only has just over a year left on his current contract.”