

LEGENDS 234

Chapter 234: Blue and Black VS Blue and White VII

Fweeeeee

{The halftime whistle has been blown, bringing an end to a shocker of a first half}

{It's the Europa League Quarter Finals and Inter Milan leads Porto by 3 to nil}

{I have to say, the scoreline is a bit surprising, isn't it Alan?} Giuseppe asked his commentary partner, his voice being broadcast live to the world.

{Very surprising... Inter Milan hit Porto with three back to back and Porto have been unable to respond}

{This is a different side to the Porto team that sent Rangers packing just days ago}

{I'm sure I'm not the only one asking myself this question, "What's going on out there?"} Alan responded through the microphone, his voice also being broadcast live to the world.

{If only I can answer that question, but I'm just as confused as you are}

{The Porto head manager has a lot to do if he still has plans for this game, but personally speaking, I think this game is already out of their hands} Giuseppe intoned, his thoughts about Porto's chances being made clear.

{I have to disagree with you on that one Giuseppe}

{This is football and Porto is not a team that is afraid to shock the world, but that depends on a lot of things and everyone has a part to play if that is to happen} Alan responded, displaying a contrary opinion to his partner commentator.

{If that is going to happen, then just like you said, we'll have to see a different side of them in the second half, otherwise my opinion stands} Giuseppe said, not agreeing or disagreeing with his partner.

{Absolutely, Giuseppe, for now, we shall take a fifteen-minute break and will be back for the second half} Alan said, ending their debate and their discussion all at once.

As they stopped, the broadcast changed and adverts began showing on every TV broadcasting the match.

... In the Porto locker room...

The silence in the room was deafening as the Porto players filed into the room and sat down with defeated looks on their faces.

They didn't even bother with drinking water or cleaning up a bit like they were so used to doing, but rather they just stared into the ground and into the distance with complicated gazes.

Even Sergio Conceicao didn't say anything for a full minute as he did not know where to start.

Sure, his players hadn't performed exactly as he wanted and had been lacking throughout the match, but it wasn't like they did so purposely because they knew even more than him how bad it felt to lose in this manner.

They were trying their utmost best but still ended up being massacred because it just wasn't their day.

This made it complicated for Sergio Conceicao as he didn't know what to say first, but he opened his mouth anyway.

He had a job to do and if he didn't do it, an even worse result awaited them if they went back out just like this.

“Ok guys, we are going to change our formation to the 4-4-2 diamond shape and Otavio will be moving from the right midfield to the center attacking position while Jason will come on for Sergio Oliveira and take the right midfield position,”

“Luis will still be on the left while Danilo will be in the CDM position, the rest of you guys’ position will stay the same,” he first started by making adjustments to the formation and making the necessary changes.

“We’ll also be changing from playing a possession-based style of play to a quick counter focused gameplay,”

“When we are with the ball, we pass the ball around and keep them away, don’t avoid passing the ball all the way back to Augustin if we must, the point is to not lose possession,”

“If a chance appears, I want our wingers ready to burst through on the flanks where our opponent is weakest and then cut in,”

“If a teammate is open in the box, do not hesitate to send the ball to him, but if that isn’t the case and the box is overloaded with their defenders, slow down and wait for Wilson, Telles, or Otavio to arrive just outside the ball and send the ball to them instead,”

“If they can receive the ball successfully, I want shots... You shoot on sight, you shoot as soon as you see the goal, you shoot as soon as you find some space, hell you can shoot through them if the space doesn’t appear,”

“Just make sure that there is always a shot flying at them at every possible moment,” Sergio Conceicao explained while constantly drawing on the board to show his players a depiction of what he wanted.

As he explained, he had unintentionally forgotten about their situation for a slight moment and this frame of mind affected the Porto players who were now listening attentively with serious looks on their faces.

“When we are not with the ball, I want you guys soaking up the pressure and I want everyone behind the ball but Tiqunho,”

“Everyone else will stay behind the ball and give our opponents the impression that we are parking the bus,”

“We’ll also not press them hard, but instead focus on diverting them wide and making sure they can’t stay in the center, and once they’re close enough to our goal, I want you guys to launch a heavy press and get the ball back by all means,”

“While whoever is near the ball is launching a press and trying to get the ball back, the ones that are too far away from the ball to join in the press should get ready to receive the ball and launch a counterattack as soon as your teammates can retrieve possession,”

“Everything after that is up to the way their players are positioned, if they have players in the middle, you take the ball down the flanks and if they have players on the wings, you go through the center,” Sergio Conceicao continued explaining with the aid of all sorts of scribbles he made on the whiteboard.

“Is that clear? Or do you have any questions?” Sergio Conceicao asked as he paused to take a breath after saying all that at a stretch.

“Coach... You said that...” Wilson Manafa raised a hand as he asked a question about the game plan that Sergio Conceicao answered.

After that, the Porto head manager continued explaining the game plan and answering the occasional question from his players.

In this manner, the halftime break passed by, and the players soon headed back out to the pitch with more ease and more determination on their faces than when they had come in for the halftime break.

Throughout the break, nobody had mentioned the fact that they were three goals behind their opponents and that all the tactics they were adjusting were unlikely to have any effect on the grand scale of things.

Instead, they had simply listened with rapt attention to their manager as he made adjustments to their tactics like he would in any other game and simply went back out with the intention of playing according to their given roles.

Almost none of the players harbored the hope that they could somehow make a comeback and equalize or maybe even win, rather they just went back out to the field with the intention of playing football.

No strings attached.

If they lost, then they already had it coming, and if they somehow made a comeback, then wouldn't that be a surprise?

It was not exactly what one would call a professional attitude, but at this moment no one could blame them if they knew that that was what the Porto players were thinking.

Thus the Porto players marched through the tunnels, met up with the Inter Milan players, and headed out to the fields with nary a smile on their face.

There was nothing to laugh about anyway.

On getting onto the green, the players headed to their half of the field which was not the same as the first half since they had switched places.

It was Porto who would kick off the second half as Inter Milan had been the ones to kick off the game.

{The players are back out, refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready for the second half of this Europa League Quarter Final} Giuseppe's voice once again boomed through the stadium as the match's live broadcast was resumed.

{After a surprising first half, Inter Milan lead Porto 3 to nil, but you don't win a game at halftime}

{Inter Milan still have at least forty-five minutes of exciting football to play if they are going to end this game with their lead intact as Porto will be looking to recreate Inter Milan's first-half performance in a form of their own}

{Do you think they have made any changes to their tactics in the first half break, Alan?} Giuseppe threw a question to his partner after giving introductory remarks for the second half.

{Definitely. I believe that the Porto head manager would have made the appropriate changes to the game tactics, but we wouldn't know until the second-half whistle is blown}

{What we can see however is that there is a change in the line-up with Jason coming on for Sergio Oliveira}

{I don't know what shape the manager has arranged his team, but I agree with him bringing on the young winger}

{He has very quick feet and quite the tricky sets of movement that would aid him in getting past the Inter Milan defenders and this should add more versatility to the Porto attack and should help them create more attacking options up front} Alan gave quite the interactive response to Giuseppe's question, showing his skill in keeping the fans entertained even as he info dumped his opinion on them.

{You're right about that player Alan, I hope for Porto's sake that he can perform at the level required of him}

{Porto could really use a miracle right about now!} Giuseppe answered back, putting into words all that the Porto fans were thinking as they watched the second half begin with depressed looks on their faces.