

LEGENDS 28

Chapter 28: Prelude to First Professional Match

Sunday, 19th January 2020

11:50 am

Jason and Mylo arrived at CTFD Portugaia via taxi and walked together into the training center that also served as the home ground for the FC Porto Juniors home matches and made their way to the dressing room of the main field of the training complex where the other players had also begun to gather as well, waiting for the head coach to arrive.

Jason and Mylo greeted members of the team on their way to one of the benches where they sat and started changing into their training kits in preparation for a short training session and warm-up before the upcoming match.

While the players were changing into their training kits, Antonio Frasco walked in with his assistant coaches.

"Good morning lads,"

"I hope you all are well rested and prepared for today's match?" he asked with an amiable smile as he walked to the middle of the room with a notepad under his arm.

One of the assistant coaches pulled a moveable board in the middle of the room, right beside Antonio.

"I'll first start with calling the names of those who will be in the starting line-up as well as those who would be on the bench," Antonio started after acknowledging the assistant coach who had pulled over the board with a nod of gratitude.

"We'll be playing in the 4-4-2 flat formation and the players in the starting lineup are as follows:"

"Goalkeeper; Pedro Virginia,"

"Center-backs; Bernardo Ferreira, Erik,"

"Right-back; Fabio Amaral. Left-back; Andre Oliveira,"

"Central-midfielders; Mariano Regal, Joao Teixeira,"

"Right-midfielder; Umaro Cande. Left-midfielder; Tiago Andrade,"

"Central forwards; Goncalo Sousa, Mylo Baumgartner,"

"The substitutes for the match are Lacerda, Tiago Campas, Jeremy Agbanifo, Jason Bolu, Luis Gomes, Francisco Silva,"

"As for the rest of you who didn't hear your names, work harder in training and it'll be your turn on the pitch soon enough,"

Jason had already heard from Rafael that he would be added to the line-up for the match but hearing the coach adding his name to the line-up, even just as a substitute caused him to let out a sigh of relief before a determined look arose on his face.

He immediately pledged himself to do his best should the coach allow him to grace the pitch in this match, but while he was going on in his internal reverie, Antonio was already explaining their game plan.

"As always the two wide midfielders will assist in the midfield when we are on the defense and will play as wingers when we are on the attack," Antonio began to explain the mechanics of the formation he had chosen despite it being the most used formation by the team as he wanted to explain the team's playing style to the newcomer on the team, namely, Jason.

"The two central midfielders will also play in the upper part of the attacking third or the defensive third, depending on the team's situation, am I clear?" he asked after explaining.

"Yes coach!" the team responded energetically.

"Good," Antonio Frasco nodded his head, very satisfied with the team's energetic response before continuing his explanation,

"Our tactic for today is a very possessive gameplay.

I want you guys to retain the ball while moving up the pitch and waiting for space to open up in the opposition's defense,"

"Strikers, I want you guys to keep your eyes peeled for cracks in the opposition defense, and the moment you find the space, the nearest one to the space should make a forward run while the other should make sure to stay open as well to be able to receive the final pass,"

"Midfielders, keep your eyes on the strikers, and as soon as the strikers make the run and find space, release the ball to whoever is more likely to score, and if the strikers can't free themselves, they will create enough space for you guys to get the shot away,"

"Defenders, keep the opposing players away from the center of the goal by any means possible, but do not make any overly aggressive tackles and get any unnecessary cards," Antonio explained the game plan with the aid of the board.

He made use of the various drawings and symbols to make the game plan as understandable as possible.

"Does anyone have any questions?" he asked as he finished explaining the game plan, but the silence that followed his question indicated that no one had any questions regarding the game plan.

As a past-life footballer with a wealth of experience, Jason had no questions regarding the tactics that the coach had chosen for the match, so he stayed quiet like the rest of his teammates despite seeing the coach's eyes on him as if he expected him to ask questions.

"Since no one has any questions, then finish changing and get on the pitch and begin warming up, the match begins in an hour," Antonio finished the meeting while clapping his hands to hurry the players and they quickly began to march out of the dressing room.

As they came out of the tunnel and moved onto the field, they could see the Familicao U-19 players also moving onto the other half of the pitch and beginning up their warming-up routines.

On the stands, Jason could see the seats slowly filling up with fans of both teams, but it didn't need to be said that the fans of the Porto side were the majority and their slowly increasing cheers were already giving the Familicao team hell even before the match started.

The Porto senior side had played their league game the night before and despite not winning the game, the fans weren't too let down by it and they showed it by their increasing cheers for the junior side of their beloved team and booing of the opposite side while hoping for a win for their team this weekend.

Jason took only a few seconds to bask in the almost long-forgotten sounds of fans cheering for his team that he last heard a lifetime ago, and quickly moved to begin his warm-up by stretching his legs while keeping an eye on the opposing team's side for any player who looked to be a threat.

After thirty minutes of warm-up exercises, the players went back into the tunnels and back to their dressing rooms to change and make their final preparations for the match.