

LEGENDS 441

Chapter 441: Style of Play II

Versatility and Experience.

Versatility was because of well... versatility.

He could shoot with both legs, could dribble with both legs, could dribble speedily or technically, and could dribble simply or flamboyantly.

It meant he was never out of his element anywhere in the final third and that was a good starting point.

The second word was 'Experience'.

It meant a culmination of everything he had ever done and gone through and it was probably what had helped him so far.

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but he was an old dog who had seen all the tricks before and had experienced an age rejuvenation.

Thanks to his experience, he could easily read people's movement, motion, and their intentions and that had always helped him to be at the right place most of the time, but what if he stopped using that attribute passively and began to use it actively both when he was on the ball and off the ball.

If before the ball reached him, he moved himself into the best position to easily evade his marker right from his touch on the ball, then things would become a lot easier.

It would become a lot harder for him to be surrounded by opposition players.

The key was his initial positioning and an already prepared escape plan.

The good thing was that since he was almost never out of his element, he could constantly think of a lot of ways to escape defenders.

With a framework of an idea popping in his head, he started thinking more about how to best employ this new playing style, but unfortunately there wasn't a chance for him to do that right now, however, Jason contented himself with image training.

He had read somewhere that mental image training was just as effective as actual training... though that was only in regards to technical training.

Image training had no effect on the physique as any sane person would know.

The rest of Jason's day consisted of doing 'light' physical training and doing image training during the rest periods in-between the training sessions.

As the training for the day neared its end, the players were called for a meeting concerning the upcoming match.

On receiving the summons from the manager, the players who were training immediately went to freshen up before heading to the meeting room where the match focus meeting would take place.

Jason, Cuadrado, McKennie, Ronaldo, and Dybala arrived at the meeting room together for the meeting as they had been together when they were called.

On a noticeboard near the entrance of the room, a list of the players in the provisional squad that would be going to Milan for the match the following day was pasted for the players to see.

The players went to check the list before going to their seats and as expected, everyone but Dybala was on the list as he was still not cleared to get back on the field.

Jason was happy to see his name on the list as that was a good start, but he didn't get ahead of himself as he knew that it was almost impossible for him to be in the starting line-up for that match for so many reasons.

However, he did have some hope to get some time on the field in the match, but there was a high chance that might not happen.

‘No matter,’ he thought to himself, willing to wait even though he did want to try out the new style he was developing.

The guys around him didn’t talk much about it and he didn’t either and just sat to await the manager who soon arrived and after a few pleasantries quickly got into their game plan for the coming game.

Jason watched and listened intently during the meeting, soaking in the tactical instructions given to each player as it allowed him to have an idea of what was supposed to be happening on the pitch at any given moment.

Listening to the tactical instructions would help him understand not only the game plan, but also to understand his teammates and what each one of them were likely to do when they were with the ball.

While he listened, Jason could not help but note the disparity in how things were done here in Uventus as to how they were done at Oporto.

There was a lot more attention to details here at Uventus and what the manager expected a lot from his players, but at the same time, he allowed them to pitch in on ideas as the players at Uventus were players who were all individual talents in their own rights.

Any one of them could easily turn the game around when they were in a hot run of form and each had their distinct playing styles.

To bring out the best from them, then the manager had to listen to their opinions and consider them when making his game plans if he wanted a team that was free to display their best talents and bring about collective victory.

Pirlo wasn’t someone so rigid as to force instructions that would be difficult to follow through on a player.

Freedom to a certain level was best in a team like this because all the players had their own egos and if the tactics he chose to use didn't match their style of play, they might just go ahead and do whatever they wanted on the field.

That wouldn't do anyone any good and could cause problems in team chemistry in the long run.

With all this in mind, Pirlo explained the tactical instructions he had for the players in the coming match.

"Now that we all know our roles for the coming match, here is the starting line-up,"

"Sczesny will be the goalkeeper, Chiellini and De Ligt will be the central defenders,"

"Cuadrado will be on the right side of the defense line while Aleix Sandro will be on the left,"

"In center midfield will be Ramsey and Arthur, with Mckennie on the left and Kulusevski will be on the right,"

"Upfront are Ronaldo and Morata as usual," Pirlo said and began to reiterate what he had said earlier but this time, he directed his words to the players who had been chosen to be in the starting line-up.

Chapter 442: Grudge

The Uventus bus stopped outside the San Siro stadium in Milan and the bus waited for the gates to be opened.

The presence of the bus signified the arrival of the Uventus players for the match against the San Siro hosts and the fans who were around turned to look at the bus while a lot of them pulled out their phones to take pictures, but they were soon guided aside so that the bus could drive into the stadium grounds.

Once the road was cleared, the bus drove into the stadium and drove to the reserved area for the players' arrival.

Less than a minute after the bus came to a stop, the Uventus players started coming down from the bus and their debarking was welcomed with countless flashes of cameras.

Jason didn't know what was going on outside the bus though he could probably imagine it, but that wasn't what was on his mind as he slowly walked behind Ronaldo as they walked through the middle of the bus and finally reached the entrance in front.

He hadn't even come down the bus when the flashes of the cameras brought him out of his thoughts and he remembered where he was.

As Jason got down from the bus holding his sports bag, he began walking into the stadium just like the rest of his teammates, but before long he noticed that a lot of the cameras seemingly followed him as he walked into the stadium.

It wasn't weird as it had often happened to him at Oporto and he first thought that maybe it was because he was a new addition to the team, but as his eyes fell on Ronaldo who was walking just in front of him, his face a picture of focus and determination, Jason began doubting whether the cameras were on him or on the actual star of the team.

'Not that it really matters anyway,' Jason thought to himself not feeling much pressure on himself as it didn't really matter whether he was the one being captured by the cameras or not.

There was already a low chance that he would even be featuring in this match and the manager had probably just brought him along so that he could watch his teammates play and understand a bit more of how the Serie A worked.

A live lesson, he could call it, but it didn't matter too much as Jason was already happy enough that he wasn't relegated to watching the match from his couch.

"How many goals do you think you can score?" Jason decided to converse with Agent 007 who looked like he was on a mission to obliterate his opponents.

“... I don’t know. I always want to score so let’s say, uhm, 3 goals,” Ronaldo replied confidently without much thought, his face not showing anything but confidence in his words and his abilities.

“Don’t you think their defenders will have anything to say about that?” Jason asked with a laugh as he remembered some of the Inter Milan players he had faced off against months ago, especially that Skriniar guy who had injured him.

Remembering that event made him shiver a bit and he involuntarily grasped at his left shoulder.

It wasn’t aching at all, but Jason could feel a bit of phantom pain and suddenly began wishing he had been named in the starting line-up.

He owed Skriniar some first-hand, ankle-dislocating, embarrassment, but it wasn’t likely that he would be able to do that with how things were.

Jason who had given up any hope of playing in this match suddenly had his hope reignited and his eyes darted around looking for any Inter Milan players.

Ronaldo noticed the change in Jason’s eyes and became curious.

While they began talking about Jason’s history with the Inter Milan team, they didn’t know that countless cameras were taking pictures of them together... or rather, it wasn’t that they didn’t know but rather that they weren’t paying any attention to the cameras.

However, the people behind the cameras didn’t stop flashing away as the pictures they were taking were gold.

Apart from the fact that the two of them were top specimens of the male gender, the fact that one of the top players in the world was currently very close to one of the top talents in the football world was enough to shake up the football world a bit.

It could be a case of a mentor and his protege... a Batman and Robin story in the football world.

This was already something that was rare and would no doubt attract attention, but if they played even better when they were together on the pitch, then there would be a lot more to report, however, that remained to be seen so the cameramen contented themselves with just taking pictures for now.

The reports they would write after the match would have to wait.

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The Uventus players had quickly settled into their locker room and did not waste any time changing into their training gear and quickly stepping out to the pitch for a little pre-match training to warm up their bodies.

Walking out of the tunnel, they could see the slowly filling stadium and the Inter Milan players who were already on one side of the pitch, but they paid them no attention and began their own training on the other side of the pitch.

Jason glanced over at the Inter Milan team and watched their players doing their own training.

It did not take him long to spot the one he was looking for.

Skriniar was doing his training with his teammates when someone called to him.

“Do you know that guy?” Hakimi asked him, gesturing in a direction with his left thumb.

“Who?” Skriniar asked before turning in the direction Hakimi had pointed to and he locked eyes with Jason.

On locking eyes, Jason smiled at Skriniar and did a little wave, the look in his eyes could hardly be called a warm or harmless look.

“Yeah, we played against him in Germany last year,”

“He was playing for Oporto then,” Skriniar explained as Jason turned away jogged over to the remaining Uventus players.

“Why is he looking at you like that then?” Hakimi asked, a bit confused.

He was also a loan player like Jason and hadn’t been in the Inter Milan team at that time.

“I kinda injured him in that match and his team lost,” Skrinar explained, smiling wryly.

“Did you at least apologize or something, cuz it looks like he’s holding a grudge,” Hakimi asked, thinking of how Jason was looking at Skriniar earlier.

“... I forgot actually, but it doesn’t matter. Maybe I’ll talk to him after the match or something,” Skriniar waved it off thinking it didn’t matter.

Chapter 443: Live at the San Siro I

Fweeeeeeeeeee

The whistle to kick off the game sounded loudly and it was followed by the cheers of a happy crowd.

It had been months since the San Siro stadium had anyone in its stands cheering a football game and the fans who had arrived for the first live game since the lockdown due to the outbreak of COVID 19 were letting out all their emotions as the game finally kicked off.

The players on the pitch felt the loud waves of cheers sweep across them, but they maintained their composure and kicked off the game without showing any reactions to the crowd.

Due to the San Siro being the Inter Milan team’s home ground, they had more fans present than the Uventus fans and the cheers for the home sound was a lot louder than the cheers for the Uventus side.

Perhaps due to this, the Inter Milan team seemed to hit the ground running, passing the ball around cleverly and playing like they had been heated up right from the start, causing a lot of problems for the Uventus team right after the game kicked off.

The Uventus team seemed to be struggling to keep up with the Inter Milan team's tempo and more often than not, they were chasing after the ball and trying to steal it from their opponents, however, the Inter Milan team were on a roll and kept pushing hard at the gates of the Uventus goal.

Shots were sent flying, and the Inter Milan team kept pushing, but slowly, the Uventus team began responding and pushing back just as hard.

The time the ball spent with the Inter Milan team began to reduce and the Uventus began to prove that they were just as much of a threat to the Inter Milan team as they were to them.

However, the Inter Milan team was not willing to just let go of their attacking spell...

#12th minute...

The Inter Milan team was on the attack and were pushing hard at the Uventus's team defense.

Vidal sent the ball to Hakimi on the right flank and Hakimi received the ball while on a run, skipping past Aleix Sandro and running to the right side of the Uventus' 18-yard box.

Aleix Sandro immediately took off after Hakimi, jumping into his path to block any crosses into the box, but Hakimi had seemingly been expecting this and opted to send a pass back to Eriksen who had arrived just behind him.

Before the pass reached him, Eriksen's eyes had been scanning for who to send the ball to, but his team's two strikers were being tightly marked by the Uventus's center backs.

Just as he was about to give up on making a cross into the box, he spotted Vidal snaking his way into the penalty box while pushing off his own marker.

Seeing that scene, Eriksen's next move was decided and with his first touch on the ball, he sent a curling cross into the penalty box.

The ball flew into Vidal's path and he pushed harder at his marker as he made his way towards the ball before pushing off the ground with his head in the lead, aiming for the ball.

De Ligt who had previously been marking Martinez, one of Inter Milan's strikers saw the ball flying into the box and quickly disengaged from Martinez once he saw that Vidal was flying at the ball uninterrupted.

He wouldn't be able to reach the ball in time, but he would be able to block it, he figured.

As he jumped into Vidal's path, the ball finally contacted Vidal's head and bounced off it, flying towards goal but at a slightly different angle than De Ligt expected.

The ball missed De Ligt's torso and was flying past him when it met his outstretched hand, deflected off its path and bounced out of play.

The Inter Milan players around immediately raised their hands and turned to the referee, ready to voice out their complaint but the referee was one step ahead and had already had his whistle in his mouth.

Fweeeeeee

The referee blew loudly and pointed at the penalty spot.

The Inter Milan fans at the stadium immediately cheered in response to the referee's actions, cheering like the ball had already gone in.

The Uventus players and fans did not share such a cheerful disposition and immediately tried to argue to the referee, but the referee wasn't going to be listening to any complaints from the Uventus team.

De Ligt's hand was not hidden behind his body, but rather outstretched and the ball had bounced off it.

It wasn't a deliberate handball and for that he wasn't giving De Ligt a yellow card, but it was definitely a handball inside the 18-yard box and that translated to a penalty for the Inter Milan team.

Nothing was going to change that.

The referee quickly began sending players out of the penalty box while Sczesny didn't have a choice but to prepare to guard against a penalty kick.

Vidal took up the ball and placed it on the penalty spot, stepping back while waiting for the referee to blow his whistle.

Fweeeeeeee

The signal Vidal awaited soon came and he ran at the ball, hitting it deftly and sending it right to the center while Sczesny dived down to the left.

The ball safely nestled itself in the back of the net and Vidal took off down the sidelines in celebration.

{Well taken penalty!}

{They take the lead, punishing the Uventus players for their lack of focus earlier!}

{It's not even a quarter of an hour since the match began and they are now in the lead}

{Can they build off this advantage and elongate their lead in the minutes to come!?!} the commentator went crazy with his commentary, the excited frenzy of the Inter Milan fans as they celebrated infecting him.

The Uventus players watched the Inter Milan team celebrate their goal for a few seconds before they turned away and began taking their positions in their half again, not letting their moods be dampened in the slightest.

The match had barely begun and they still had a lot in the tank to show against their opponents.

Chapter 444: Live at the San Siro II

The match resumed after the Inter Milan team was done celebrating their goal and the ball was soon rolling around the field again, being exchanged from player to player.

Despite going behind, the Uventus team didn't show any hints of desperation and kept playing as patiently as before, but before long, one could see that they had become sharper in both their attacking and defensive plays.

It was their turn to dominate the match proceedings and they soon pushed the Inter Milan defenders back into their 18-yard box while they exchanged the ball around comfortably.

Crosses and passes were sent flying into the Inter Milan penalty box, searching out the Uventus forwards, but most of the time the ball was sent back fiercely by the Inter Milan defenders who were staying committed to the 'No-Nonsense' rule they had been given by their manager.

They couldn't stop all the balls that came in though and quite a few times the ball found their mark in the penalty box, but they would quickly hassle the player off the ball, or push him into a weird angle where he would not be able to easily threaten the goalkeeper.

This did not always work though and the Uventus team had still managed to get a shot away, but Handanovic was showing why he was able to take home the golden gloves the previous season.

Save after save came from the Inter Milan goalkeeper and when it still remained four minutes for the first half to end, the man had already amassed four crucial saves.

#44th minute...

Mckennie released a through pass forward on the left side and Ronaldo chased after it.

Ronaldo was not the only one after the ball as Skriniar was also chasing after the ball, but Ronaldo reached the ball first while Skriniar was barely a meter away.

With his signature back-chop to the left, Ronaldo sent Skriniar away from the view of the camera following after them and got himself clear on goal.

Without hesitation, he pushed the ball into a good position and let it fly.

{Ronaldooooo!!!} the commentator shouted as the ball took off and rocketed towards the top right corner of the goal.

Handanovic leaped powerfully, not wanting to give up his team's advantage but he couldn't reach the ball in time and the ball smashed onto the crossbar, the inside of the right post before smashing into the back of the net.

{GOAL!!!} the commentator shouted as loudly as he could.

On seeing the ball in the back of the net, Ronaldo already took off towards the sidelines in the direction of the Uventus fans at the stadium swinging his two arms like he was trying to pull off cobwebs before jumping and turning around mid-air.

He didn't even need to say a word and the fans shouted in the background.

"SIUUUUUUUU!!!"

{There's your superstar!} the commentator continued his commentary.

{A saviour when you need him and a source of nightmares to his opponents!}

{He's come through once again and has equalized for Uvent-...}

{Oh what's this here!? The assistant referee has his flag raised for offside!} the commentator's words were like a dampener to all the Uventus players and their fans.

The fans immediately cried out in outrage while the Uventus players went to meet the referee to complain about the call of the assistant referee.

Even Ronaldo left his goal celebration to go meet the referee as he did not believe he was offside.

The referee did not have a choice but to consult the Video Assistant Referee and soon stepped off the field to analyze the replay with the assistance of the VAR.

After almost a full minute of agonizing tension, the referee finally left the screen and headed back to the screen and his final decision was to allow the goal.

The Uventus fans erupted in cheers once again as if the ball had just rolled into the back of the net.

The Uventus players heaved a sigh of relief and smiles appeared on their faces in the next second.

On the sidelines, Pirlo pumped his fist after seeing that the goal was allowed, a hint of a smile showing on his face.

It was better for the two teams to be on equal scores when the first half ended as it would be better for morale than if they were behind and everyone in the Uventus camp thought the same.

The match soon continued and the two teams soon got back on the ball, each one of them trying to squeeze the ball past the other within the remaining time left in the first half, but it was not to be as the referee's whistle soon blew loudly, indicating that they were out of time.

{There's the whistle}

{The first half is over and what a first half it was}

{Two goals, and one coming from both ends of the pitch as well as a lot of attacking football from both sides}

{If I have any issues with that first half, it's that there should have been a lot more goals, but maybe they have been saved for the second half} the commentator did his job while the players walked off the field, heading down the tunnels for some R & R... Rest and Reflection.

While the players in the starting line-up went into the tunnels, the players on the bench began moving onto the pitch to continue their warm-ups.

Jason joined them, not asking why they weren't to joining the other players in the locker room as he had heard about this earlier.

Unless the manager needed to make a huge change to the tactics or wanted to bring on one of the players on the bench as a substitute in the second half, then there was no need for them to go to the locker room during half time.

Everything they needed was outside anyway and it was better for them to warm up for the second half where some of them would inevitably be brought on.

Jason joined his teammates in doing some warm ups with the ball while watching the fans.

Chapter 445: Live at the San Siro III

Fweeeeeeeeeee

The whistle to kick off the second half echoed loudly around the stadium and the ball immediately began moving.

The Uventus team was the one kicking off the second half of the game and the ball soon began moving quickly as they charged into the Inter Milan team's half of the field, not bothering to play defensive, but the Inter Milan team held strong and repelled them, causing them to be unable to move any further and soon they lost the ball.

When the ball was taken, the Inter Milan team also tried to start an attack, but the Uventus players were not going to let themselves go behind once again and quickly got on defense.

With how the players of the two teams were running at each other, it was like they never stopped for half-time.

Playing with the same ferocity that was reminiscent of where they had stopped for the first half break earlier excited the fans to no end and they responded with cheers, chants, and songs.

#52nd minute...

The Inter Milan team had just gotten a corner after an attempt at goal was blocked by De Ligt before it even made it to the goalkeeper.

Ever since giving away the penalty, he seemed to be trying to redeem himself and so far he had been doing so splendidly, killing off attacks before they became a threat and making sure that the player he was marking had been unable to do much throughout the game.

Normally Martinez was a very good striker, but De Ligt had made sure he was isolated and no dangerous passes reached him.

Even if they did, De Ligt swept them away from his legs before he could even get the ball to balance properly on the ground.

Eriksen was the one taking the corner for the Inter Milan team and at the referee's whistle, he swept the ball into the air space about two meters above the Uventus' 18-yard box.

The players of the two teams pushed against each other as they tried to reach the ball, but De Ligt reached the ball first and tried to head it out of the penalty box.

The ball flew out of the penalty box but was caught by Ashley Young before the ball moved too far away.

No one knew what Ashley Young was thinking, but he didn't bother trying to look for a pass and decided to just wipe the ball straight at goal with as much power as he could muster.

The ball flew powerfully at the Uventus goal but Szczesny was up to the task and jumped at the ball, managing to get a hand to the ball, but that was all he could do as the shot was too powerful.

Before any Uventus player could react to the ball that bounced back off Szczesny's gloved hands, Nicolò Barella jumped at the ball and poked it with the tip of his boot, pushing it past the goalline.

{GOAL!!!}

{Once again, they take the lead!}

{Uventus cannot catch a break here!}

{Early in the first half, they conceded first, and now they've done so again!}

{I'm sure Szczesny must have been wondering, "Where are my defenders?!"}

{We wonder the same!} the commentator was having fun with the mic while the Inter Milan fans were having fun watching their players celebrate after taking the lead once again.

This time, the Uventus players weren't able to keep their displeasure off their faces.

Ronaldo had an especially displeased look as he shook his head in aggravation as he watched the Inter Milan team celebrate their goal.

Luckily, they didn't have to watch for long and their annoyance soon disappeared from their faces as there was still more than enough time to get something from the game.

It all depended on their efforts from that moment on.

The match continued and the managers soon started making substitutions.

For the Uventus side, Pirlo first started with substituting Morata and Bentacur off for Chiesa and Rabiot in the 60th minute.

Seven minutes later, Cuadrado and Chiellini came off for Danilo and Bonucci.

However even with all this changes, the Uventus side weren't able to still get that equalizer that they sorely needed.

The defensive changes had made them a bit tighter at the back and they were able to ward off the Inter Milan attacks a bit easier, but their attacking attempts bore the same sharpness as before the substitution.

The ball wasn't getting forward fast enough for the forwards to be able to escape the Inter Milan defense.

The Inter Milan team normally played a 3-5-2 formation, but now they were playing defensively and had converted their formation to a 5-3-2 one, thus they had five defenders going up against Uventus's two forwards.

Even when Uventus's two wide midfielders moved up to join the attack, they were still a few players short and that would make their midfield weaker.

Pirlo could see the game slowly slipping away from his team, but there was not much he could do

The Inter Milan team was the one with the best defense stats in the league and from what he could see, it was clear that those stats weren't for play.

Even having a player like Ronaldo wasn't helping them as the ball was not getting into the right places on time.

'Seems this game is out of our hands,' he thought to himself with a frown, his arms folded across his chest as he watched intently.

The only way out of this situation was if they were somehow able to score a lucky goal, or maybe from a set piece, but the Inter Milan players also knew this and were doing their best to avoid giving the Uventus team's any dangerous set-pieces.

"Or maybe..." Pirlo's head was turning quickly as he looked for a way out and he looked over at the bench to see if any of the players could give him an idea that could help out.

His eyes swept across the players as he tried to come up with a plan that could use their specialties and soon his eyes fell on Jason and they lit up a bit.

Originally, he only planned on playing Jason for a few minutes if their team was winning, but now, he couldn't help but wonder if it was time to take a risk.

"Tell the new kid to kit up and come up here for instructions in a minute," Pirlo told one of his assistant coaches, checking the time on his watch.

Chapter 446: Live at the San Siro IV

After receiving the manager's orders from the assistant manager, Jason did not waste any time, quickly took off his training vest, and put on his jersey.

It was a short sleeve shirt, but underneath it was a white base layer that would help him stave off the cold while also keeping his clothes from getting sticky from getting drenched by sweat.

For Jason though, that was not enough and he pulled on a pair of black gloves before going on to adjust his new soccer boots.

It was a newer Nike Mercurial unlike his older one, but they had a similar design, however, the color was different.

It was colored white and minty blue with purple undertones.

After checking his ankle tapes and shin guards finally, he got off the bench and jogged over to Pirlo.

"You're going to be coming on for Mckennie so you'll be playing on the left," Pirlo got right to giving him instructions without wasting any time.

"What I want from you is simple, annoy them,"

"Once you get the ball, run down the flank, if there's space for you to run in and take a shot or pass to the forwards, then do that, otherwise, I want you out there drawing fouls,"

"If there's no space to get past the opposition, draw a foul somewhere around the final third,"

"If you can draw a foul inside the penalty box, than that would be for the best... however, watch yourself,"

"If they start making dangerous tackles, avoid holding the ball. If we lose the game, then we can deal with it, but I would rather you did not get injured, especially on your first game," Pirlo instructed, but he still showed concern.

It would be helpful for the team if Jason's teasing actions could help the team to equalize the game, but he wasn't going to allow to risk a serious injury just to win one game, especially as it was his first game.

Jason listened intently to the manager's words and his eyes glowed strangely, but there was a evil grin threatening to spout on his face.

The manager's words perfectly aligned with Jason's intentions.

He had thought he didn't care about Skriniar, but since he had seen him before the match started Jason had been burning with the desire to return some 'tat' for the 'tit' he had received, however he had thought that he would not get the chance, especially with how the team was losing.

Who knew the manager had received a mandate from heaven to help him seal Skriniar's fate.

Now Jason had been given full reigns to go on the field and show off without any risk of annoying his manager with his showboating.

"Go warm up for a bit till the ball rolls out of play," Pirlo instructed and Jason nodded affirmatively and started jogging on the sidelines.

His actions were quickly noticed by the fans in the stands and the commentator saw it as well.

{Well, what do we have here?}

{Uventus' newest acquisition on the sidelines warming up and it seems like the manager plans to put him on}

{Perhaps the manager is thinking that his presence on the field can shake things up a bit, but I think a lot of people will argue that it's too early, however the manager doesn't think so} the commentator did not hesitate to put forth his own opinion on the matter.

{Jason would be looking to make a good showing after his transfer over from Oporto but it might be a little difficult for that, especially in a match like this, against opposition like this} he continued as the ball flew out of play and the assistant referee held up the board to announce the substitution.

Mckennie saw his jersey number in red and came jogging over to the sidelines while Danilo who was going to make a throw-in waited for the substitution to be completed.

Mckennie soon reached the sidelines and double-high-fived Jason, leaning in and whispering,

“Go kill em bro,”

That was his way of encouraging a new teammate who was about to have his debut, but little did he know that Jason was planning to go ahead and do exactly that.

Jason ran across the field towards the left side, dapping the teammates that he came across until he was in position, but he had barely taken his spot on the field when Hakimi saddled over, standing nearby.

Jason didn't need anyone to tell him what it meant.

Hakimi was his primary marker, but that didn't matter too much.

He was fast, but Jason doubted that would be enough to keep himself in check, the guy was too attacking minded and was almost always upfront half the time.

The real threat was the wide center back in charge of the left... an old friend, Milan Skriniar.

A smile threatened to appear on his face again, but Jason opted to run his hand through his hair to check if there were any errant hairs floating around, but none was.

His new double tie-up style was doing it's job of keeping his hair out of his face.

The Uventus fans had applauded as Jason had come onto the pitch, but for now, they were watching and waiting for his performance before they did anything else.

Play soon resumed with a throw-in from Danilo and Bernadeshi received the ball well before trying to run down the right, but his path was soon blocked while he was hassled from behind so he quickly passed back to Danilo, not willing to lose the ball.

For the next minute, the Uventus team kept passing the ball around on the right, trying to break through, but the Inter Milan team held strong.

Since getting on the field, Jason hadn't even touched the ball as he was on the left side of the pitch and though he had been moving around so that he would be open to receive a pass, the ball still hadn't come his way.

Getting slightly impatient, he raised a hand to call for a pass and slowly started moving forward, ready to break into a run.

Luckily it seemed like Danilo had seen his call and he quickly sent a long cross-field pass over towards the left.

Chapter 447: Some Ankle Breaking Revenge I

The pass was a bit farther than Jason expected, but luckily, he had been almost about to break into a run so he was moving along just in time, running at a quick pace towards the probable landing spot of the ball.

Glancing over at the sidelines to see that the referee hadn't raised his flag, Jason increased his pace as he noticed that Skrinier was also running at the ball.

Thanks to his pace, Jason who was farther away from the ball initially was now as near enough to the ball's landing spot as Skrinier was and just as the ball was about to land, Jason stretched out his leg to tap onto the ball first, flicking it in-between Skrinier's legs as he ran at him.

EHHHHHH!!!

The crowd shouted as the ball rolled between Skrinier's legs and Jason jumped Skrinier, but Skrinier wasn't paying attention to the crowd and grabbed at Jason's jersey as he ran past, slowing him down enough for him to recover.

Jason smacked off Skrinier's hand and chased after the ball, not stopping even though the referee had whistled for an advantage in the favour of his team.

The manager had told him to draw fouls, but if there was a chance to actually score, Jason was going to take it and now that a chance had appeared, Jason was going to keep pushing till he was out of options.

Skriniar grabbing hold of his shirt had slowed him down but he managed to reach the ball before it rolled out of play, but after getting the ball, he realized that Skriniar was right in front of him, blocking his path to goal.

If Jason still had any plans to continue this attacking attempt, then he would have to get past Skriniar as there was no one nearby enough for him to pass to.

Good enough, that was Jason's plan and he quickly rolled the ball further down left.

Milan followed him, keeping his eyes on the ball, but Jason suddenly used the heel of his right foot to lift the ball off the floor.

The ball rose up to Jason's knee level and Jason kneed it outward causing Skriniar to try and react move back to the right, but the next second, Jason flicked the ball that was still mid-air over Skriniar.

The swift, chained motions left Skriniar unable to react in time to the ball flying over him, and by the time he turned around to chase the ball his body already almost tilted off balance, yet he was met with another surprise.

Everyone had been expecting Jason to run off with the ball once it landed, but he instead flicked it back between Skriniar's legs just as he turned around.

Skriniar was completely thrown off balance and did not know when he tripped over himself from trying to change his direction more than three times in less than three seconds.

{What fancy moves, he has his marker on the floor} the commentator shouted over the crowd's excited cheers at what Jason had just done to Skriniar, but Jason was no longer paying attention and was already running into the penalty box, feeling very contented with himself but just as he ran into the box, someone collided into him from behind, and this time Jason did not hesitate to drop to the ground, sliding forward a bit after hitting the ground.

There were about four defenders inside the penalty box and Jason wasn't confident in getting through the remaining people in his way so he could get a shot away and he was even less confident in holding

the ball for long enough for his teammates to get into a dangerous position so he let himself be pushed to the ground.

Fweeeeeeeee

The referee blew his whistle loudly and ran over, pointing at the spot and calling for a penalty.

Jason did not bother putting on a face of agony as he lay on the ground.

The tackle was rough enough for the referee to not let it go and it didn't cause him enough pain to groan in agony over, so Jason did something even more daring and propped his face on his as he lay on the ground, staring at the Inter Milan goalkeeper with a look that said, 'You're finished bro'.

He wasn't wrong as the person who would be taking the penalty was guaranteed to punish this guy for giving them a hard time up till now.

Jason finally turned over and adjusted his socks and shin guards before trying to get up but Chiesa was there to pull him up.

"You okay?" he asked as Jason got up, his eyes not hiding his amazement at what he had seen Jason do to Skriniar earlier.

"I'm fine, thanks," Jason muttered with a smile, dusting himself and glancing over at the Inter Milan players arguing with the referee about the legality of the penalty.

Jason didn't even bother interfering and went to pick up the ball.

Soon enough, the referee no longer listened to the Inter Milan players complaint as he had consulted the VAR and the penalty had been awarded.

Jason moved towards Ronaldo and tossed the ball to him,

“There’s my rent, Mr. LandLord,” Jason said with a grin and Ronaldo grinned back and threw the ball back at him.

“What’s this for?” Jason asked with a weird look.

“You should take it, you worked for it and it will be nice to start your first game with a goal,” Ronaldo replied with a grin but Jason threw the ball right back.

“Didn’t you hear me, that’s rent,”

“Don’t make me a debtor... also, there’s still time for me to score,” Jason grinned and started walking backward, moving out of the penalty box.

“This kid,” Ronaldo laughed in a low voice before he refocused his attention and put the ball on the penalty spot.

As he stepped back, there was no sign on his face that he was joking earlier with a teammate and he instead looked the very picture of concentration as he took deep breaths and waited behind the ball.

Fweeeeeeeeeee

At the referee’s whistle, Ronaldo began to run at the ball and with a whack, sent it flying.

Chapter 448: Some Ankle Breaking Revenge II

Jason watched and waited for the referee to blow the whistle.

‘Maybe I should have said I want to take the penalty,’ he could not help thinking to himself, but the next second that thought went up in smoke.

He was a new member of a team that already had a system for how they worked and that involved the set piece takers.

On the list of penalty takers for the team, he probably didn't rank in the top five of the penalty takers so by right, he shouldn't be taking the penalty, however, the real reason why he hadn't jumped at the opportunity to take the penalty was different.

It was his first match in a new environment and the team was losing in what was one of the most important matches of the season and the chance to equalize and score his first goal in the Serie A had been placed in his hands, but he couldn't do it.

The thought, 'What if I miss?' appeared in his head and prevented him from stepping up.

It wasn't that he doubted his abilities, but, he more than anyone else knew that most of the time, his face was just covering up most of his actual feelings.

He might look calm, collected, and non-responsive, but he was new to everything that was happening around him.

In his previous life, he had failed again and again and again so he still had a psychological shadow from back then, which was why he usually avoided thinking about whether something was possible or not.

Thus his actions were either involuntary or spontaneous, but whenever he stopped to think, he became too cautious because the fear of failure would oftentimes threaten to drown him and it had happened again.

He should have grabbed the opportunity to get his first goal for the club, after all he was playing well and had almost single-handedly created that chance, however, the pressure of failing to score had appeared when he had the ball in his hands and he quickly gave it to Ronaldo like it was a hot cake.

He did not need anyone to tell him that he needed to get over the trauma.

He knew his own problems.

One minute he had confidence in his abilities, the next moment he was doubting his abilities.

Things couldn't stay that way forever, but for now, he didn't know what to do with that issue, after all, he couldn't exactly go talk to a psychiatrist about his past life of constant failure as that was a surefire way to end up in a hospital where tranquilizers and restraints were the go-tos instead of bandages and aspirin.

Jason was thrown out of his inner monologue by a small section of the crowd erupting in cheers and he realized that the ball had gone in.

Just as he had expected and silently bragged to Handanovic, Ronaldo had delivered the ball into the back of the net with pitch-perfect accuracy, sending the goalkeeper the other way in the process.

'Hopefully, one day, I'll have that kind of confidence,' the thought flashed in his head but he smiled wryly and jogged over to the sidelines to join in the team's celebration.

{Good penalty!}

{They've gotten their equalizer!}

{The star man has struck once again from the spot and has shown why he's at the top of the goal ranking list this season}

{Ten minutes left in this game and we are back where we started!}

{Will we see a comeback here!? There's plenty of time left!} the commentator shouted excitedly as the Uventus players and the fans celebrated the equalizing goal.

The Uventus players that now had their morale boosted soon began heading back to their half of the field with all to play for in the few minutes that was left in the game.

The Inter Milan players had also been incensed that their 2-nil lead had been whittled down to nothing and they immediately charged at the Uventus' half of the field as soon as they kicked, their intention none other than to take the lead once again.

With both sides becoming more attacking, defenses became a little less lax, but it was a bit more difficult for the Uventus team to attack and they chose to soak up pressure before striking quick and fast on the counter attack.

Jason had a field time sending many passes forward to kick off many counterattack attempts as the defenders around him chose to press but didn't come too close so that he could burst past them in a showy move of conquest, leaving them sprawling.

This gave him enough space and time to send the ball forward, but despite making quite a few attempts the end of the ninety minutes edged closer and closer.

Jason didn't want his first game with Uventus to end in a draw so he began pushing forward a bit more and trying to get past the defenders himself instead of passing the ball forward himself.

Doing that made him more likely to get tackled by the Inter Milan defenders who wanted no part in becoming a youtube short, but somehow he managed to escape the tackles of his markers most times before sending the ball forward.

Whoever said that humans functioned better under duress probably meant people like Jason as the fear of getting tackled put him on incredibly high alert and allowed him to be as slippery as an eel, however despite all his attempts, all they managed was a few more shots on target.

Due to Ronaldo being tightly marked, the Uventus players had tried to get the ball to Chiesa who was playing as the second striker, but Chiesa's shots at goal lacked the sting that Ronaldo's shots had and his shots were easily dealt with by Handanovic.

The Inter Milan team had also not been idle and had been peppering Sczesny with shots at any chance they got, but Sczesny didn't betray his teammates trust this time and performed save after save to keep the ball from reaching the back of the net one more time in the match.

On the sidelines, the assistant referee held up the board signifying that there would be an additional 2 minutes.

Chapter 449: Some Ankle Breaking Revenge III

With the referee signaling that time was almost out, Jason's moves became even sharper. He was desperately looking for a way to change the game, and luckily, the ball soon came his way.

Receiving the ball near the halfway line, Jason turned around and took off down the left flank quickly facing off Hakimi who no longer stayed back.

With time running out, Hakimi wasn't going to take any chances and he immediately went in for the tackle, but before his leg could reach Jason, Jason flicked the ball sharply in-between the space in Hakimi's legs and jumped over his tackle before chasing after the ball.

As he ran after the ball, Jason could hear the crowd's voice rising slowly, but he pushed that to the back of his mind and quickly reached the ball just before he reached the left side of the penalty box, but he slowed down with the ball as soon as he caught up with it, wanting to cut into the penalty box, however, Skrinjar was once again in the way.

This time he was proving to be more annoying than before as no matter what fancy flicks Jason made around the ball to try and read his likely movement only his eyes moved while his body remained poised and alert.

Jason couldn't afford to wait so long for the right opportunity to show up, after all, time was running out and they were already in the last minute of added time.

With a mind to create a chance from nothing, Jason edged closer to Skrinjar.

Without waiting for a reaction from Skrinjar, the moment he got close enough, he grabbed the ball with his two legs and sent the ball flying up and over Skrinjar with a smoothly executed rainbow flick.

Skrinjar wasn't expecting the ball to fly over his head again for the second time, but he was expecting Jason's movement and as Jason tried to jump past him, he body slammed Jason, sending him to the floor.

Skriniar's face was filled with annoyance and glared at Jason that he had pushed down, not believing that this guy was trying to humiliate him again but before he could inch any closer to Jason, Rabiot rushed up and stood in his way.

Players of the two teams immediately rushed to defuse the situation before it became any worse.

Fweeeeeeeee

{Tempers are rising here and the referee's running over}

The referee came running over with his whistle in his mouth and pulled out a yellow card that he held high up to Skrinia before pulling out a small note and pen.

{The referee's not letting it off this time. His name is going into that little black book but it's only a yellow}

{Some would argue that it's a fair trade to block a goal-scoring chance of your opponents and only receive a yellow card and I agree, Uventus were looking dangerous there}

{Inter Milan aren't out of danger yet. Uventus have a free-kick in a dangerous area}

{With how many good headers of the ball they have on their team, Inter Milan will have their hands full defending against this free kick} The commentator did his job while the referee watched over the players arranging themselves for the free kick.

The free-kick was just a few meters away from the left side of the box so Jason, Danilo, and Ronaldo stood around, discussing who would take the free-kick.

With all three of them being able to speak Portuguese, they whispered among themselves the best way to take the free-kick.

Normally Jason would have just been there to run over the ball, but looking at the angle of the free kick, he suddenly got an idea.

"How about using trivela to send the ball curling outward instead of inward," Jason muttered, doing a little curling gesture with his hand.

"Hmmm, it's not a bad idea, but if I stand that way, it'll be obvious, after all, I only use my right foot for these kinds of things," Danilo muttered after a bit of thought, simulating the situation inside his head.

"You can take it instead while making it seem like you want to run over the ball," Ronaldo said to Jason,

"I'll go to the box and stay on the edge. You can get the ball to reach me right?" he asked Jason.

"Probably, but those guy..." Jason muttered, looking at the Inter Milan defenders who were all good defenders in their own right and would probably still be able to react despite their plan.

"You should be able to out-jump them, right?" Jason asked with a frown, looking at the burly and tall Inter Milan defenders.

"... Where exactly do you plan on raising the ball to? The moon?" Danilo could not help asking as he looked at the tall Inter Milan defenders.

"... I'll reach it," Ronaldo said confidently and began heading to the penalty box, not saying another word.

For him, there was nothing else to be said.

"I guess we do what the man wants," Jason shrugged to Danilo and stepped back from the ball, positioning himself directly behind the ball.

"Okay then," Danilo muttered and moved behind, angling himself to the left before raising his hand and signaling the peace sign.

To the Uventus players, it meant that the second kicker would be taking the free kick however before they could think and begin wrapping their heads around how Jason planned to kick the ball into the penalty box from the angle he was standing, the referee put his whistle to his mouth and blew hard on the whistle.

Fweeeeeeeeeee

Jason immediately began jogging towards the ball on hearing the whistle and swung his leg, whipping at the ball with the outside of his foot and sending the ball flying into the penalty box with amazing curl.

The Inter Milan players weren't expecting Jason to be the one to hit the ball, but they immediately sprung into action despite their surprise, running into the path of the ball, but as the ball inched closer, everyone soon noticed that the ball was a bit higher than they expected and the ball was more likely to fly over everyone.

{Ronaldo takes to the air!!!} The commentator's shout informed the Inter Milan players that someone was trying to reach the ball but it was too little too late for them to stop him now and they just barely turned around in time to see Ronaldo at an almost impossible height catching the ball with his head.

{Ronaldooooo!!!} The commentator shouted again and his words were followed by an outburst of cheers from the Uventus fans as the ball bounced off Ronaldo's head and flew uncontested into the top right corner of the goal, Handanovic too stunned to even move.

{GOAL!!!!}

{He makes it three for himself and three for the team!}

{In the dying embers of the game, he has once again made himself blazing fire of rebellion and he's won it for Uventus!}

{With no time left, Uventus take the lead for the first time in the game and probably the last in the game!}

While the commentator was excitedly glazing Ronaldo and the Uventus team, the man of the hour himself had taken off to the sidelines with his arm stretched wide.

Without surprise, he ran down the sidelines and executed his signature jubilation and the crowd shouted along with him as he landed after spinning mid-air.

SIUUUUUUU!!!

All the Uventus players ran over to join in the celebrations and even the players on the bench were celebrating on the sidelines

The Inter Milan players looked on, distraught at how they had just fumbled a two goal lead and were now about to lose the game.

It was difficult to explain what had gone wrong and they didn't know whether to call it bad luck or not.

It was already hard enough dealing with the force of nature that was Ronaldo.

He was like a blazing fire that had threatened to consume them if he was given the chance and he already made them pay once, but then that Jason guy came on and began to fan the flames, leaving them no choice but to be swallowed in flames.

"Fu*k!" Skrinjar cursed angrily, slamming his fist against the post in annoyance as he watched the Uventus players celebrate their goal.

However, despite his annoyance, he could do nothing but watch as the Uventus players finished celebrating and headed over to their half of the field.

As soon as the Inter Milan team kicked off, the whistle went off again, blasting sharply three times to end the game and the Uventus players began celebrating again, much to the dismay of the Inter Milan players and their fans.

While the Uventus players began celebrating, Jason lowered himself to the pitch and sat down, a smile on his face as the joy from winning the game rushed through his body, however he couldn't stay seated for long as some of his teammates came to pull him over to join in the celebrations, but even then they kept the celebrations to a minimum.

After all, this wasn't their home ground and everyone knew never to anger Italian football fans.

Chapter 450: Live Interview I

****18th January 2021****

9:48 a.m.

"Move the light over there," a man holding a notepad said to someone holding up a standing light.

"Yes, sir," the guy holding the light responded, going to put the light down in the direction that his boss had pointed out.

It was an early morning at the Continassa after the Uventus team's win against Inter Milan at Milan and the players were not even back yet at Turin after the match, but at the media building, preparations for a shoot was taking place.

It was meant to be an interview for Jason who was a new member of the club and should have been done earlier, but due to the match, it had been postponed till now and after Jason's performance in the previous match which had won over most of the Uventus fans, the club had decided to invest more into the interview.

That was the reason for the slightly more lavish than normal set-up for the interview, but Jason who was to be in the interview didn't know of the changes.

He was still on the bus heading back to Turin and already feeling mentally tired that he would have to face off against an interview instead of getting some rest after the previous day's match.

It wasn't that he was too tired which wasn't possible as he hadn't even been on the field for a third of an hour, but he wanted to quickly get to recovering from the match's fatigue so he could delve back into training.

His new playing style had shown it's effectiveness and he wanted to get to work perfecting it, but instead had to do an interview instead.

'They should have just let me talk to the reporters yesterday,' Jason murmured inwardly, remembering that the club staff had prevented him from talking to any reporters despite his performance in the match the previous day.

While it was a bit far off from a man-of-the-match performance when compared against the others on the pitch, for a new player, it was a very good performance and the reporters had been itching to interview him, but he had been shielded from all interviews because the club wanted his first interview in Italy to be self-hosted for some reason.

Not that it mattered much to Jason for the time being.

About an hour later, the bus was already cruising the streets of Turin and making its way to the Continassa.

It didn't take long for the players to arrive at the Continassa and the players quickly debarked with the aid of club staff.

The club's next match was in two days and the players needed to focus on recovery so that they could be ready for the upcoming match which was the Italy Super Cup finals against Napoli.

The players had already begun their recovery process back at Milan the night before by using ice baths to reduce muscle soreness and inflammation and doing some gentle exercises and stretching to reduce heart rate and body temperature, but for players of their level, that was the barest minimum and as soon as they arrived at the continassa, they were almost dragged away to continue their recovery.

Nutritional foods and massages were the next in line on the recovery process, as well as a few light exercises like cycling and swimming under the watchful eyes of the trainers to ensure that the players didn't stress themselves any further.

Despite having a scheduled interview, Jason wasn't subtracted from the recovery session.

After his showing in the previous match, it was clear that he would probably be a big part of the team's plans in the coming weeks so they could not afford any injuries due to negligence of a recovery period.

When the recovery session was over, some of the players began leaving while Jason was whisked away to the media building where he was first subjected to the care of the the cosmetics and dressing staff, but before long, it became apparent that they didn't need to bother too much on Jason's appearance which was the least worrisome thing about him in the interview.

It was only after Jason was seated in the stool-like chair with lights on him that he heard that the interview would be live.

'Fu*k, I should have known when they were doing too much,' Jason wanted to cry inwardly as he knew what a live interview meant.

Any blunders he made couldn't be erased and would be broadcasted to whoever was watching.

The problem was that after the Covid-19 lockdown period, the club had become more media conscious and would be broadcasting the interview live on not just TV, but also on the club's apps as well as on some of their social media accounts.

One blunder and Jason would turn from the embarrasser to the embarrassee.

And they were just telling him that a few minutes to the time for the interview going live.

At this point, Jason was wondering why they were doing this much for a player who had merely joined the club on loan.

'Is this normal?' Jason could not help asking himself, but there was no one to answer his thoughts other than him and he didn't know the answer.

In the end, he didn't have much of a choice but to watch the arrangements for the interview continue and listen to the things he should take note of for the interview.

The person who would be hosting the interview was someone Jason had never seen nor heard of before, but apparently that didn't matter as the focus of the interview was supposed to be on Jason and was directed towards making him closer to the fans.

Something about making him an open book so that the fans could become further endeared to him and at some point, Jason started wondering the kinds of question they would be asking, but after a while he stopped paying attention to that part as well.

In the end, he listened half-heartedly until everywhere suddenly became quiet and he heard,

"And we are live in 3, 2, 1..."