

LEGENDS 47

Chapter 47 First Training Session with the Porto Senior Team II

CLANG!

As he had expected, the sound of the ball hitting the crossbar rang in his ear less than a second after he had turned away.

He started walking towards where the players were gathering and only then did he notice that quite a few eyes were on him and there were various looks in their eyes, but most of the looks he was getting were ones of surprise.

He turned to Fabio, Pepe, and Otavio who were behind him and noticed the same look of surprise in their eyes.

At this point, he began to feel a little worried as he didn't know why they were looking at him like that.

"What?" he asked, suspiciously.

"Nice trick," Pepe was the first to speak, and only then did Jason understand what was happening and he suddenly felt the urge to facepalm in exasperation.

'That was a fluke!!!' he screamed internally, but only shrugged on the outside, not feeling inclined to explain what actually happened as they had to go meet the head coach, Sergio, who had been waiting around for more than a minute despite calling the players to gather around.

Jason didn't want to get into Sergio Conceicao's bad books for dilly-dallying. Despite the unlikelihood of such a situation happening, Jason didn't want to take his chances so he just continued walking towards where Sergio stood along with the other players, not bothering to say any more.

They all walked together in silence to the crowd of players gathered around the head manager.

"Good morning lads," Sergio Conceicao said in Portuguese while locking eyes with Jason and beckoning him over.

Jason responded and walked over to Sergio who stood in front of the players.

"This here is Jason Bolu as I believe you all should know if you pay attention to news about the club, or bothered to read the emails that were sent to you guys about his addition to the team," Sergio began patting on Jason's shoulder as he stood beside him.

"I think some of you already are familiar with him, but irrespective of that, I want you all to welcome him and treat him well as he too is now part of the FC Porto family, and I expect you to treat him as such,"

"So Jason... welcome to the team, I hope this will be a fulfilling time for you as well as everyone here," Sergio introduced Jason to the team in order to establish a good relationship between the team and the new arrival.

The team applauded after Sergio stopped speaking and Jason nodded as a little smile appeared on his face.

"Alright, let's get to work boys," Sergio exclaimed while gesturing to Jason to go back to join the players.

"For those players who were in the squad the day before yesterday, I want to say, I admire the effort you put in to win the match, but I could not help but notice something in that match," "In that match, our two goals came from Tiquinho and Alex, who play the left forward and left back positions respectively, yet very few goal attempts came from any of the players on both sides of the midfield, "

"Our most used formation as well as the formation we used in the last match was the 4-4-2 holding formation, which means that the two wide midfielders have to function as wingers who are in essence, forwards as well, yet I've noticed that it's becoming a trend in the last few matches that no goals are forthcoming from any of the wide midfielders,"

"I have no issue with the lack of goals, rather I have an issue with the lack of attempts at goal from the wide midfielders," Sergio quickly got into dissecting the problems that he had noticed in their game plan in the last few matches as that was what he planned to address in their team training for the day.

"I have told you before, when our team is on the attack, the wide midfielders function as wingers while whenever we are not in position is when you come back to your duties in the wide parts and even central parts of the midfield, but what you have been doing in the last few matches shows no reflecting of that,"

"You have relegated yourselves to becoming just suppliers who send the ball forward to the strikers and have hardly been making runs into the penalty area and just sit outside the penalty area,"

"If you keep playing like this, we are likely to lose a game soon enough if a team can manage to hold our strikers back from being effective in the area,"

"Thus today's training would have us address that by looking at ways you can exploit playing down the wings and become more effective in the final third,"

"With that said... Siramana!" Sergio called to another of his assistant coaches who stood beside him and collected a notepad from him.

"I'll be splitting you guys into two sides and you will each take turns in intervals of five minutes to try and score against the other team using the wings,"

"Literally speaking, the wingers would be the focal points of your attacks and the winger must be the ones to score or to give the assist," Sergio explained what they would be starting the day's training with and began calling the teams for each side out.

Sergio began calling out names for the two sides, and one team consisted of all the big names in the first team as well as some of the substitutes while the other side consisted of the rest of the members of the first team as well as the reserve team members.

There was no attempt at trying to balance the teams and it was pretty obvious that the second team consisted of mostly reserve team members who would be used as the grinding stones to sharpen the

"more important" team members, but this didn't matter to Jason as he was faced with an even worse situation.

He was allocated as a member of the second team, and not just as a member of the, but as a substitute for the second team.

'I'm really starting from the bottom, huh?' Jason thought to himself with a wry smile as he walked off the field along with the substitutes from the two teams.

Rafael had told him that joining the team didn't mean that he would automatically be favored by the coach and just get chances handed to him and even he already knew that chances to impress wouldn't come to him on a silver platter.

In fact, he had had the pleasure of spending more than a season on the bench without being able to be on the football field in his previous reality, but he hadn't expected to really start directly from the bottom again even after signing a contract with the senior team.

Despite the current situation, however, he wouldn't let it bring him down and would train more determinedly than ever so that when the time came to impress, he would be ready.

It may end up taking a little while, but he was ready to wait while doing whatever was required of him until he managed to break into the team's line-up.

The chances would come... in fact, there was one that would be arising in a few minutes when he was allowed to join the training.

Not to mention that his position was the focal point of the day's training.