

Legends 591

Chapter 591: Injury Crisis

The hungry Jason didn't take too long to finish the food and he soon drove out of the square and went back home to get a much needed rest.

The next day, he arrived at the training ground and went to report to the manager in his office that he was back after his international break.

Pirlo welcomed him back and asked how the break was, and after a little conversation, he was sent to the medical center for a check-up.

Important matches were coming up and the manager had to ensure that all the available players were at their best shape.

The club was in a sort of a little injury crisis as during the time Jason was on international break, four players had gotten injuries that would keep them out for a while.

Kulusevski had gotten a broken ankle during a training session, Morata picked up a groin injury during a match, Bonucci had a torn thigh muscle, and Arthur had a dislocated shoulder.

The sudden wave of injuries alarmed the club, and the manager was warned to ensure that more players didn't succumb to injuries as the club was now at a crucial part of the season.

The title race was heating up, and they had broken into quarter finals of the Champions League competition.

They couldn't afford to falter now.

Jason quickly underwent a fitness test and a physical exam to ensure he didn't pick up any hidden injuries during his time on an international break.

When he was finally done, quite a bit of time had gone by, and he went to go join the players on the pitch for training.

The Uventus players welcomed him back, and they quickly resumed training.

On any training ground, there were different social groups, and Jason was part of a group made up of Ronaldo, Dybala, Cuadrado, and Mckennie.

They usually trained together most of the time and did a few extra training sessions together.

When Jason resumed training, he noticed that Dybala was training harder than he had ever seen him do before, and it was a little bit of a surprise.

But then he remembered that the manager had mentioned that Morata was injured.

Due to Dybala picking up a long term injury before, the club had brought in Chiesa, who could play as a striker and on the flanks, and they also had Morata and Ronaldo.

Ronaldo was untouchable in the line-up, which meant that the remaining three forwards had to fight for one spot on the team, but the problem was that they were all quality players who would leave any manager at a loss for whom to use among them.

Unfortunately for Dybala, he had been injured long term, and his importance in the team had reduced a fair bit, hence ever since his return from injury, he had only been able to feature in a few matches, and it was beginning to look like the end for him at Uventus.

However, Morata's injury changed things.

Morata was the next main man after Ronaldo, which meant there was now a chance for Dybala to break back into the team as long as he could impress the manager more with his performances during training.

Football was a team sport, but it was also filled with competition, especially inside the team, so even though Dybala didn't wish for Morata to be injured, he also wasn't going to let his chance to get back into the starting eleven slip away.

"Hey, with how hard you're training, you just might score a hat-trick in the next match," Jason laughed at Dybala, who was sweating hard from training despite the cold weather.

"That's the goal," Dybala shouted back and continued his agility drills.

"Love the confidence. What will you do when you score the hat-trick?" Jason asked as he joined the agility drills.

"That is worth thinking about," Dybala heaved, as he dashed between the cones.

They continued discussing as they continued their training, and the day quickly soon passed them by.

****3rd April 2021****

It was matchday for Uventus, and they were up against Napoli, who were guaranteed to be a tough opponent.

However, the Uventus team would not accept anything other than a win in the game.

There was still some time before the match, hence, the players had not yet left the training ground.

They were in a meeting room, and the manager was about to begin calling out the players who were in the starting line-up.

Normally, he would have decided since the day before and have the names up on the board, but due to the injuries, he had a lot more to think about regarding the line-ups, hence the current situation.

“For this match, we will have Szczesny in goal, Chiellini and De Ligt in the center at the back and Danilo and Alex guarding the flanks.”

“Bentacur and Rabiot will be in the center midfield, Jason will be on the left, and Bernadeschi will be on the right,”

“Finally, up front will be Ronaldo and Chiesa,” Pirlo said.

Jason, who was seated beside Dybala, could see his lips straighten in disappointment, but he didn’t say a word.

“Like you already know, we will be using the 4-4-2 formation and will be hoping to dominate the center before distributing the ball to the flanks quickly and letting them send the ball into the center of the box,”

“You must always remain alert as we are up against a particularly strong opponent who can punish us if we give them just a little chance,”

“I want a structured shape from you guys when we are keeping possession, but I also need you to be fluid when necessary,”

“If there’s no opening on the flank, come up with your own way to help the team, but remember not to compromise the team’s shape too much and never leave your position for too long and allow it to be a weak point or God help me, I will have your head,” Pirlo made a little joke and the players laughed, but deep down they knew that they must not test the manager.

Chapter 592: Countrymen Clash

{Hello hello around the world, It is matchday 29 in the Serie A}

{Here in the Allianz Stadium in Turin, Uventus and Napoli will battle it out for the three points which they both need to climb up the table and remain relevant in the title race}

{Uventus already have a nine-point lead over their opponents, but they are stuck in second place, five points behind Inter Milan after playing a draw against Torino in the last game}

{They will be looking to take all the three points from this game to ensure that they maintain a two point distance behind Inter Milan, who already won their game yesterday}

{The visitors would however be looking to stop them!}

{All in all, we are in for an exciting match, so get your popcorn and buckle in, it's definitely going to be a turbulent ride} The commentator gave an opening speech to the fans at the stadium and those watching the game from screens in other areas.

{Looking at the line-up for both sides, I can say this; I see a lot of goals in this game} The commentator's assistant, a pundit named Miguel Veloso began his analysis of the two teams' starting line-ups.

{The Napoli side have a very good side with top-notch attackers and defenders arranged in the 4-2-3-1 formation}

{They could switch to a 4-5-1 on the defense and 4-3-3 on the attack. It's a formation that fully brings out their strength}

{On the Uventus, we are looking at a Uventus side that has been shaken up a fair bit due to the injury crisis they had in the last one week}

{Morata, Arthur, Bonucci, and Kulusevski are all out due to their injuries, and the manager has had to do a little bit of reshuffling as all those players are very instrumental in the first team}

{It is impressive to note that the line-up fielded by the manager does not look much weaker than before, except for maybe in the striking partnership between Ronaldo and Chiesa}

{Chiesa is preferably better on the flanks, and though we have seen him up front a few times this season, it is still very well known that he is more comfortable on the flanks despite his goal-scoring capabilities}

{However, he's got Cristiano Ronaldo, who is unarguably the best goalscorer of the current generation partnered up with him so I think Uventus are good up front} Miguel said.

{True that. And let's not forget Jason, who has returned from his international break after helping his nation coast to a qualifying spot in the upcoming 2022 AFCON competition}

{Also on the field is Victor Osimen, another Nigerian striker who is slowly becoming a top player with every potential of becoming world-class. He will be up against his fellow countryman, Jason} The commentator also spoke while the players on the field began to arrange themselves in their positions, waiting for the referee's whistle.

{Speaking of Nigeria, with the high number of talents that are gradually appearing in that nation, what do you think of their chances of qualifying for the world cup and what are their chances... if any, of winning it?} Miguel threw an interesting question to the commentator.

{Ah well, I think they definitely have the quality to qualify for the World Cup, but I wouldn't be too sure about their chances of winning the World Cup}

{There's definitely a lot of competition for the spot of being the top in the world, and I think the Nigerian national team still falls a fair bit behind...}

{... But it wouldn't be the first time we've seen an underdog make it far in the competition, so I will be keeping my fingers crossed for an exciting competition} the commentator replied to Miguel, but before Miguel could respond, the referee blew his whistle loudly to start the match.

Fweeeeeeeeeeeee

{There's the referee's whistle, and we're off!} the commentator said into the mic, cutting off any other conversation for now.

The Napoli team was the one to kick off the game, and they sent the ball back into their half, opting to pass the ball among themselves instead of attacking straight away.

They knew the threat the Uventus team was and chose to pass the ball back while keeping the Uventus team from taking possession,

... or so everyone thought.

Mario Rui received a pass from Fabian Ruiz and faked a pass to Koulibaly, causing Bernadeschi to try to cut off the pass, but he instead skipped past the Uventus man and chipped the ball forward, sending a long ball deep into the Uventus side of the field.

The ball flew powerfully into Uventus' half of the field, moving towards the final third.

Osimen jumped to catch the ball on his head and sent it toward Insigne on the left flank.

Insigne caught the ball on his chest and quickly brought it under control before trying to make a cutting run into Uventus' penalty box, but Cuadrado immediately moved forward to block.

Dropping a shoulder to the right as if he intended to go to the right, he tricked Cuadrado into following his movement before suddenly darting to the left and making a run outside and to the left flank before cutting in once again.

Cuadrado followed the Napoli man but before he could close him down, Insigne made a pass back to Zielinski who had arrived at the left corner of the penalty box.

Zielinski whipped the ball as soon as it reached him, sending the ball curling into the penalty box and at the waiting head of Osimen who had taken to the air.

{Osimen!} the commentator screamed as Osimen got his head to the ball and sent it at the goal.

{Woljcieh Szczesny with a magnificent save!} the commentator screamed again a second later when Szczesny somehow managed to reach the ball and punch it away from the goal and out of play.

{What an exciting start to the game! Barely a minute in and the Napoli team are making the threat they hold clearly known to the Uventus players and fans here in their own home!} the commentator said excitedly into the microphone.

{The attack is not over either and they have a corner!} Miguel added, as the players of the Napoli team rushed into the Uventus team for the corner kick while the Uventus patted Sczesny and sent thankful looks at their last line of defense.

The corner kick was quickly taken but Sczesny was quick off his line and caught the ball before any Napoli player could reach it.

Making a 'calm down' gesture to his teammates, he let the Napoli players move a fair distance away before rolling the ball to the nearest man in a Uventus shirt.

Chapter 593: Vs Napoli I

#16th minute...

The match between Uventus and Napoli raged on with both teams doing their best to get one above the other and both teams had already made a collective of six attempts at goal despite the game just having begun less than twenty minutes ago.

Napoli was currently the team with more momentum as they had made four attempts on goal with two on target as opposed to the Uventus team, which had only made two attempts at goal with neither shot on target.

Currently though, it was the Uventus team on the attack.

Bentacur laid off the ball to Jason who received it smoothly and then tried to run down the flank while holding off his marker, but the man was sticking to him like glue so Jason made a U-turn while shielding the Napoli man away from the ball.

As he completed his turn he spotted Ronaldo who had moved nearer to support him and he immediately sent the ball to Ronaldo before making a dash past his marker down the left flank.

Instantly understanding that Jason wanted the ball back immediately, Ronaldo didn't hesitate to return the ball and then started making a run to the penalty box to receive a cross from Jason.

Ronaldo expected to have to fight off Koulibaly as he made his run, but the Napoli defender had left Ronaldo who he was supposed to be marking, and had gone darting after Jason, cutting him off just before he reached the ball and body slamming him away.

Jason felt like he had been hit by a tank and flew to the left, stumbling over.

Fweeeeeeeee

The referee blew his whistle loudly for a foul and ran to the site of the incident.

{The referee seems to be warning the Napoli man from making such a rough tackle, but it was never the kind of foul that would get him a booking}

{The slam was quite heavy though, but Jason is already back on his feet and doesn't seem to be too affected by it} the commentator said while the Uventus players began preparing for the freekick.

Jason would be taking the free kick and he stood behind the ball on the left flank, looking at the best place to send the ball too.

It did not take too long for the players to take position in the Napoli 18-yard box and the referee blew his whistle for Jason to take the free-kick.

His mind made up, Jason ran at the ball and whipped it at the penalty box, sending a cross at the far post.

The players of the two teams ran at the ball, but Ronaldo out-jumped everyone to reach the ball first and headed it at the goal.

{Ronaldoooo!!!}

{David Ospina gets to it!!!} the commentator screamed as Ospina jumped at the ball and managed to parry it.

{It's not out of danger yet! Chiesa hits it the second time!}

{Ohhhhh, what a miss!!!} The commentator screamed again as Chiesa who had been lucky enough to be where the Napoli goalkeeper parried the ball to hit the ball and sent it up and over the goal despite there being no one in his way.

{He should not be missing from there! It was an open goal!} the commentator shouted, aggrieved that Chiesa could waste such a chance to put his team in the lead.

It wasn't that the commentator was a supporter of the Uventus team, but rather it was that there was no football fan who would be able to keep his calm when a player missed an open goal and this commentator was a huge fan of the beautiful game.

{He looks to have caught it wrongly. I think the mood of the moment got to him and he was a bit nervous}

{His teammates are comforting him, but it's clear that that miss will haunt him for the rest of this game and it will haunt him even more if Napoli wins this game} Miguel said, nodding to himself in the commentary box, though no one could see it.

#37th minute...

After Uventus missed what could be said to be the biggest chance of the game, the game had heated up even more with the Napoli team now going above and beyond to get a goal first.

At the same time, they were also paying a lot of attention to their defense against the Uventus team.

It was clear that the Uventus team could hurt them badly if they even dared to slip up hence they made sure to be tight at the back.

Their defensive tactic was to try to direct the Uventus attack out wide before shutting them down there or forcing the ball out of play, and if that was not possible, to take down the dangerous players before they got too close to the box.

It was dangerous since if they let the attack to advance too deep to shooting range, there was no telling if the Uventus team could score from a free-kick.

Jason was already dangerous enough, not to mention Cuadrado or Ronaldo.

The fact that it had been a while since Ronaldo had scored a free-kick didn't take away the fact that he had a deadly foot and was still very dangerous on a set piece.

History had already told the tales they needed to learn from and if they didn't learn, they would only have themselves to blame.

For now though, the Napoli team was more focused on their attacking play and they had advanced deep into the Uventus half when Fabian Ruiz chipped a pass to Osimen who had been a few meters away from the edge of the penalty box a second prior but was now making a run inside.

Before the Uventus defenders could respond, Osimen had caught the ball on his chest in the penalty box and volleyed the ball at the Uventus goal.

Sczesny couldn't react in time and the ball rocketed past him into the bottom corner.

{GOAL!!!}

{Napoli!}

{They score first!}

{A zero to a hundred moment! That came out of nowhere and Uventus find themselves behind all of a sudden!}

{With performances like this, it cannot be said that this man is not paying off the amount they splurged to have him join their club!}

Chapter 594: Vs Napoli II

#45+1 minute...

After the first goal of the game went in, the game heated up further and the Uventus team who had fallen behind their opponents began doing their best to try to find their way back into the game, but the Napoli team on the other hand were doing their best to ensure they ended the first half with their lead intact.

Bernadeschi cut into the Napoli 18-yard box from the right wing after receiving a pass from Bentacur.

His marker immediately tried to block his path, but Bernadeschi's tricky feet were able to create a little space for him and he hit the ball at goal, not bothering to look for a teammate.

Ospina jumped into the ball's path and managed to get his hand to it, stopping the ball from going in.

As the ball bounced off the Napoli goalkeeper, Koulibaly, who was near where the ball landed, hastily cleared it to the left side of the pitch.

{Would that be the final save before half-time? Oh, the Uventus team didn't waste any time getting the ball back on the field}

Jason had quickly run to the throwing line when the ball was hit out of play, and the ball boy nearby had quickly thrown the ball at him, doing his job with double efficiency, especially since his employers were the Uventus team.

Jason received the ball and quickly threw it back to Alex Sandro who swiftly took control of the ball and sent a pass to Ronaldo, who was holding off Koulibaly with his back.

As the ball reached Ronaldo, he made a one-touch pass to the left, flicking the ball into Jason's path.

Jason had begun his run as soon as he threw the ball and was now in perfect position to receive the ball, especially with Ronaldo holding off Koulibaly, the toughest defender on the opposition team who had made it his duty to stop Jason's every attempt on goal.

As Jason received the ball, his marker hot on his heels, Koulibaly quickly disengaged from Ronaldo and rushed at Jason, hoping to block him before he could get in too deep.

Jason used his pace and clever movements to prevent the man from getting too close and kept him alert and when he was almost running off the field in the left side of the penalty box, he twisted his body awkwardly and hit the ball with his left foot, sending a pass back across the face of the goal.

Ronaldo who had been moving in accordance, expecting a pass back from Jason, reacted immediately, but Jason's cross had been made under pressure and missed Ronaldo entirely, the ball just narrowly going behind the striker.

{Chiesa!!!} the commentator screamed, giving hope to Jason, who had fallen over and Ronaldo, who had missed the ball.

Chiesa had been trailing behind Ronaldo and was in perfect position to receive the pass since the ball missed Ronaldo, and he didn't think for a second before hitting the ball.

The ball flew off his feet and rose powerfully, flying toward the top right corner of the goal.

{But oh! Over and off target, he's missed the chance for an equalizer!} The commentator's words reiterated what the fans had just witnessed.

They crumpled back into their seat, letting out sounds of disappointment.

{His shooting boots are off at the moment} the commentator began, but the referee's whistle interrupted his commentary.

The referee had blown for the end of the first half of the game, and the players began to head to the tunnels, leaving the fans to entertain themselves for the next fifteen minutes.

Jason stood up from where he had stumbled over after making the cross and began to trudge off the field, disappointed that the team hadn't been able to equalize the game.

He hadn't been able to play as well as he usually did, especially now that his opponents were doing their best to keep him from building any momentum.

Especially that Koulibaly guy.

Jason knew that he was still a way off from being called a top player in terms of skill and experience at the top stage of football.

His stats said differently, and that might have gotten to his head a little bit, but facing top-level defenders like the guys in the Serie A was making it clear that he still had a way to go before he could call himself a top player.

Since he arrived in January, he had only scored four goals in the Serie A, which wasn't a bad number, but compared to actual top players, that was two to three weeks' worth of work.

If he was going to be facing top defenders like Coulibaly week in, week out, then he had to get better and not be locked down because the pressure had increased.

Jason was deep in thought as he headed to the locker room with the rest of his teammates.

"We need to do better in the next half," Pirlo said to his players, who sat around resting.

“We’ve not done enough to get upfront, and the few times we managed to break past them, the forwards have been wasteful... you especially, Chiesa,” the manager said with a stern face, his eyes stabbing daggers into the Italian man.

“The defense has not been as tight as I expected as well. We are leaking at the back and not applying enough pressure up front,”

“That has to change, and now it will be even more difficult than the first half because they’re already in the lead,”

“If we can’t score early enough and they go fully defensive, it would become even worse, so here is what we’re going to do,”

“Our opponents are solid at the back and that makes running in behind or getting the ball in behind difficult,”

“They’re also especially targeting our players on the flanks, doing their best to stop them from getting anywhere near the box,”

“Hence, our best bet is a quick counter using a long ball tactic,”

“We soak the pressure in, bring them onto us, deep into our half while we ensure we don’t collapse on the pressure and lose possession.”

“I have a feeling that even if we do that, their back four will still stay rooted at the back, but we don’t have much of a choice,”

“The wingers should aim to get the ball up front as quick as possible whenever we’re on the attack and the midfielders and forwards must always follow after them to make sure there are always available passing options,”

“The more passing options we have, the more we can stay in control of the ball and the longer we stay in control in their half, the higher our chances of getting a goal,”

“I’ll need more than a hundred percent from everybody if we’re going to pull off a comeback,” Pirlo said to his players, looking around for any body in the starting line-up who had lost motivation.

Luckily, there were none yet, thus he dived back into discussing the second half game plan.

Chapter 595: Vs Napoli III

Fweeeeeeeeeeeee

The second half began with Ronaldo passing the ball back to Rabiot in the Uventus half of the field, and Rabiot quickly laid off the ball further back to De Ligt while the Napoli players rushed into the Uventus half of the field on the press.

The Uventus players reacted appropriately and kept the ball moving, not giving the Napoli team any chances to retrieve the ball.

From the defenders back to the midfield, then Rabiot sent the ball to Bernadeschi on the right flank and Bernadeschi charged forward with the ball before releasing the ball to Chiesa inside the Napoli 18-yard box.

Receiving the ball, Chiesa turned at the goal and tried to shoot, but there wasn’t a clear shot on goal, and he ended up faking a shot before turning on his right and sending a cross across the face of the goal.

Jason came running in at the ball and hit it at goal first time, but Koulibaly stretched out his leg at the right moment and deflected the shot.

{Jason hits it!}

{Deflected wide by the Napoli defender! He has been on top of his game today!}

{Uventus have a corner} The commentator gave a live description of the game while Jason jumped and turned, putting his hands on his head in frustration.

#64th minute...

The game had raged on with the Uventus doing everything they could to get an equalizer, but the Napoli team had held on to their one-goal lead tightly, with no intention of letting it go without a hard fight.

In his frustration at the ineffectiveness of some of his attackers, the Uventus manager had begun making substitutions.

Bernadeschi had come off for Mckennie, but the newly subbed on player had swapped wings with Jason.

Thus, Jason had taken point on the right while Mckennie was on the left.

Up front, Chiesa had come off for Dybala, but the arrangements had stayed the same, though Dybala had dropped a little deeper and was more or less behind Ronaldo now, playing as a false-nine.

{It's Uventus once again on the attack!}

{They've been knocking on the gates a while, will this be the tie!} the commentator called out as Jason began cutting in from the right, a bit freer now that he was on a different side of the field from his nemesis, Koulibaly.

Doing a few fakes to gauge his marker's reaction speed, Jason slowly moved towards the defender who was squaring off against him.

Noting that the defender was trying to stay upright because he didn't know how Jason would move, Jason did a couple of step-overs before cutting towards the right and crossing the ball into the center of the penalty box as soon as he created the space.

{The ball comes flying in!?!}

{Ronaldo in the center! He heads it!} the commentator screamed as Ronaldo pushed off Koulibaly, took off from the ground and put his head to the ball, directing the ball at the Napoli goal, but Ospina reacted quickly, diving at the ball and just barely managing to reach it and slap it back before it crossed the line.

{A fantastic save by the goalkeeper, but Dybala is there!}

{He sends it in! Goal for Uventus!}

{They have their equalizer, and they have this man to thank for it!} the commentator squealed as Dybala took off to the sidelines doing his trademark celebration of making a check sign with his index and thumb and using it to cover half his face.

{A lot of times, a substitution can do a lot for a losing team and this man has made it clear why the manager has kept him waiting till now!}

{He's barely been on the field a few minutes, but he's been waiting and watching and as soon as the chance, he took it}

{The referee is checking the goal for a possible offside, but I doubt there's any problem with the goal} Miguel spoke into the microphone, his voice a little calmer than the commentator.

The fans who had screamed loudly when the ball went in had quieted down a bit, waiting hopefully while the referee waited for confirmation from the VAR that the goal would count.

A few seconds later, the referee whistled loudly and made known his decision.

The goal would count.

The Uventus screamed loudly in celebration while the players resumed their celebrations, but didn't celebrate too much as the game was still not firmly in their hands and they were not happy with just equalizing.

The celebrations could continue if and when they won the game.

With a determined mind to build off the momentum and get back at their opponents, the Uventus players began heading back to their half of the field.

#77th minute...

{Napoli with the ball. They're pushing forward, looking to redeem themselves after the earlier equalizer from Uventus}

{Zielinski to Mertens, back to Zielinski}

{Mertens makes a run into the penalty box, but Zielinski holds on to the ball. He seems to be looking for a better pass, but there's no time and he's out of options and he passes the ball back}

{Ball back to Mario Rui. Jason moves on the press, trying to get the ball back, but Rui sends the ball further back}

{Jason gives chase, but the ball evades him and is back with Zielinski. Mertens makes a run again and this time Zielinski finds him!?!} The anticipating cheers of the Napoli fans slowly rose as Mertens cut into the Uventus 18-yard box with the ball after receiving it from Zielinski.

{It's Mertens against Cuadrado! Cuadrado lunges forward but Mertens escapes him, is he looking for the right pass?}

{No, he goes it alone and, Mertens!!!}

{Oh, wonderful save from Szczesny! If he hadn't got a hand to it, it was a goal!}

{Napoli's got a corner after that attempt. Can they make something of it? We'll see} the commentator said into the microphone after giving a play-by-play of the game.

{Well, they've got a lot of presence in the air. Quite a few tall players are on their side, but I think the Uventus team is evenly matched, if not a little superior to them in the air!}

{With that said, it will take something special from them to be able to put away this corner} Miguel analyzed, his tone calm as he said his observations out loud.

Zielinski had gone over to take the corner while the players of the two teams arranged themselves in the penalty box, waiting for the ball to come flying in.

Fweeeeeeeee

{Zielinski whips it in!}

Chapter 596: Vs Napoli IV

The ball flew in powerfully from Zielinski's cross, but perhaps because he was trying to send the ball to the far post area, Zielinski whipped the ball a bit too high and it almost soared over everyone in the center on its way to the far post area, but Cheillini somehow managed to reach the ball with a powerful leap.

Catching it just before it flew over everyone in the center, the ball bounced off the Italian man's head and flew further than intended, leaving the Napoli players who were waiting for the ball unable to react in time.

Ramsey who was in the far post area had already reacted though and quickly raced after the ball, managing to reach it before it rolled out of play and he sent the ball to Dybala to who was just outside the penalty box, on the right side of the field.

{Is this a counter attack chance for Uventus!?!}

Pausing for a second to pick out the right pass despite the players running towards him, Dybala quickly spotted Bentacur who was already outside the box and he sent the ball forward to him with a left footed drive.

As soon as he made the pass, he dashed forward past the player coming toward him which was a correct move as Bentacur who had received the ball was already being hassled from behind and returned the ball to Dybala the moment he freed himself.

The Napoli players were reacting quickly and dashing at the Uventus players, wanting to stifle the counter before the momentum built any further, but it didn't seem to be working as Dybala chipped the ball a little and jumped over the player who had just come sliding in at him.

Bentacur, who was nearby, did not wait for Dybala to make it past the guy before flicking the ball forward over another two defenders into Jason's path down the right flank.

At this point, they had just made it past the halfway line.

Jason spotted Dybala darting forward from behind at a very impressive pace and flicked the ball with his back heel into his path as Dybala made a cutting run.

Dybala caught sight of the ball heading back towards him and jumped slightly to catch it on his head and head it forward, but after the ball bounced once, he headed it again, but this time to Mckennie who was just beside him.

As soon as he released the ball, Dybala began charging into the penalty box while Mckennie sent a pass to Ronaldo, who was making a run towards the left edge of the penalty box.

{Ronaldo!??}

Ronaldo received the pass comfortably while on the run, spotted Dybala in the center, and sent a low cross towards Dybala.

Dybala let the ball pass between his legs before catching it perfectly with his heel and hitting it towards the bottom right corner of the goal.

The ball bounced off the right post and went in smoothly while the goalkeeper was rooted to the spot.

{And then Dybala with the most delightful of finishes!}

{It's his second goal after coming off the bench in this game, and this goal is one for the highlight reel!}

{A perfectly orchestrated counter attack with the ball moving fluidly and perfectly all the way from their half of the field till the perfect end of the counter!} The commentator screamed excitedly while Dybala jogged behind the goal with his hands held out in a shrugging motion, a huge smile on his face while his teammates ran after him excitedly and the crowd went wild in their seats, jumping and cheering.

{Uventus are back in front, despite all the efforts of their opponents to keep them down!}

{They have shown efficiency, togetherness, skill, and an attitude to never give up, and it's paid off!}

While the Uventus team celebrated their comeback goal, the Napoli manager berated his team in annoyance, annoyed that his players had not only been able to stop their opponents as they made a play all the way from their own half, but that they had also not only lost their lead, but were now behind their opponents.

However, there was still time left for his team to get back in the game with an equalizer of their own, so after berating them, he gave a few words of encouragement and called the team captain over to give him a few new instructions.

Soon, the players of both teams were back in their starting positions, and the game resumed again.

#90+2 minutes...

The game was winding down, and there was only about a minute left on the match clock before the referee would have to blow his whistle and at this moment the match was at its very peak.

After scoring a comeback goal earlier, the Uventus team had tried to build off their momentum even further and score another, but the Napoli team had had enough of being battered and tried to do some battering of their own.

This had put them in a deadlock at first, but the Napoli team tried to change the playing field by sending more players forward to try and overload the Uventus team's half of the field, but the Uventus team had responded by pulling their players back.

With their players now behind the ball, whenever they retrieved possession, they would try to play out of their defense, but most times, they were stopped before they went far.

{It's Uventus with the ball again, after Zielinski's pass to find Mertens was intercepted!}

{Napoli, immediately on the press, trying to retrieve what they lost and slot it home before it's too late, they're almost out of time!}

{The Uventus team is moving the ball around quickly, not wanting to lose possession at this juncture. They might also be looking for a goal of their own too}

{Rabiot to Ramsey, Ramsey back to Cuadrado!}

{Cuadrado looks for an option behind, but Jason has come short and he lays it off to him instead} the commentator said and the crowd's volume slowly started increasing as Jason received the ball with a spin that helped him get past his marker and he immediately took off down his flank.

Chapter 597: Vs Napoli V

{He's moving forward quickly, maybe looking to make a run down the open right flank?} the commentator spoke in a questioning tone, but the Napoli players were already responding to the attack, charging into his path to try to stop him, but in a desperate situation like they were in, all it did was free up other players.

Spotting Dybala upfield and all alone but somehow still onside, Jason hit the ball with the outside of his left foot, sending a trivela pass up and across the field just barely into the Napoli's 18-yard box.

Dybala ran at the ball while Ospina stayed on his line as he was not near enough the ball to reach it first, but that was his undoing as Dybala smacked the ball powerfully before it even touched the floor, unleashing a powerful shot at goal.

{And Dybala!!!}

{Oh, it's in! Stupendous volley! That ball was traveling!}

{With this, they make it two over their opponent, and this man makes it three for himself!} the commentator screamed excitedly while the crowd went so wild with excitement that one would think they had scored a comeback goal in a final game.

While the crowd went wild, Jason had run to the sidelines with Dybala and when they were at the side of the field, they faced each other and Jason put Dybala's arm across his shoulder before hoisting him on his shoulder with practiced ease before throwing him gently on the field, doing a harmless version of Goldberg's jackhammer.

After throwing Dybala down, Jason took one of his legs up in a pinning fashion while Dybala lay on the ground like he had the air knocked out of him.

Less than a second later, Mckennie came sliding in and began the pin countdown, slamming his hand on the pitch like a WWE referee.

The Uventus crowd, also infected by the excitement of the situation, counted down with the players.

1, 2, 3!!!

After the countdown, Jason stood up and put his hands out in front of the crowd as if he was celebrating the win while Dybala got up as well holding up three fingers before they were swarmed by the rest of the Uventus players in celebration.

{Well, that was an interesting celebration. Definitely had the crowd going, I can tell you that} The commentator laughed as the Uventus players headed back to their half of the field after the goal while

the Napoli players dejectedly took the ball back to the middle of the field, aware that at this point, it was over for them.

Barely five minutes after they kicked off, the referee blew his whistle loudly, cementing their fate as the losers of the match.

{It is over and Uventus have won!}

{They came from behind against a tough opponent, and they were able to cement their dominance, showing their opponents why they were in close contention for the title!

{This man, Dybala, is someone all the Uventus fans and players have to thank for this win}

{His presence on the field revitalized his team's attacks, and he got three goals for himself despite coming off the bench after more than half of the game had gone past}

{Every shot he took today was a goal and he would be hoping for more of the same in the coming weeks and so would the Uventus fans}

{Surely, they will be happy to see this man maintain his form} The commentator gave closing remarks as the players celebrated with each other, while some comforted each other after the exciting game.

Jason had a quick chat with Osimen and exchanged jerseys with him before heading back to join his teammates in celebrating their win.

The Uventus players stayed on the field to celebrate with the fans, while the Napoli players headed off the field, wanting to wash away a bit of their feelings of loss in the showers.

After the celebrations the players began heading off the field, but the reporters interrupted some of the players to get a few questions in, looking for a story to put in their reports.

“How does it feel to get back to club football after your international break?” a female reporter who looked to be in her late twenties, asked Jason.

Jason had swapped jerseys with Osimen and did not have a jersey on his upper body and his inner-shirt was soaked in sweat, allowing the muscle lines and contours of his upper body to be shown clearly, but he wasn't paying attention to it.

The female reporter on the other hand could not, not pay attention to it and the female fans who were watching live from their screens were also having a hard time staying focused on Jason's words.

All they knew was that he was talking.

“... so, while I definitely enjoyed my time off during the international break, I'm happy to be back in the team, helping the team to it's goals and visions for the season,” Jason said and stopped, his silence snapping the reporter out of her unholy thoughts.

“Despite not being directly up against Koulibaly, he somehow managed to continuously get in your way today. How did that feel for you?” she asked Jason.

“Kalido is a very good player, top player that I respect and the reasons showed today. It's impressive how he not only managed to keep me in line, but he was also a pain in the side of everyone else who was trying to score for the team... well except Paulo,”

“So I say, it was tough, but I'm happy that it happened as it showed me my own shortcomings and I will work hard to be able to build myself after this encounter,” Jason replied succinctly.

“Sounds just like something you would say, haha,” the reporter laughed a little before moving on to her next question.

“Well, with your performance again today, you have shown your worth to the team. You were involved in all the goals in today's match for your team, whether directly or indirectly and it is clear that you are now an important cog in the machine that is F.C. Uventus,”

“Many of the fans are calling for the club to secure a permanent deal for you from F.C. Oporto. Do you have anything to tell us on that front. Any good news perhaps?” the reporter asked another question, a smile on her face.

Chapter 598: Club Interest?

“Ah... um, I don’t really have anything to say about that, but I’ll go out on a limb and say there’s interest, probably some interest in that, like you said.”

“Take that as you will,” Jason smiled, shrugged, and began to walk off.

“Thank you,” the reporter called after him and he replied, not stopping.

It was a thing he did now, moving away after answering enough questions, depending on his mood because if he stayed back, the reporters would only keep bombarding him with questions, and he did not have that kind of time.

As for why he had not clearly answered the reporter’s questions, it was because his words were the truth.

He really didn’t have anything to say.

He could guess that the Uventus team probably planned to keep him around after his loan.

In fact, he was almost ninety percent sure that the club wanted him to join the club, but strangely enough, he hadn’t heard or received anything official.

If the club wanted to secure a permanent deal for him, then they should have contacted Adele to find out his demands for a contract, his role in the team, how much it would take to get him away from Oporto, and all that.

But so far... nothing.

It was already April, and by May, the season would be over, yet the Uventus management had yet to reach out about anything regarding a permanent deal.

This wasn't even him being paranoid, but rather it was the way any business man would think.

Jason had already proved himself as valuable to the team, but the longer they went without asking for his contractual demands, the higher his value would rise, so it was in Uventus's best financial interests to have a semblance of an agreement with him earlier rather than later.

But somehow, Uventus was going against the norm and maintaining radio silence.

Sometimes, Jason could not help but feel that something was off, especially with other clubs that had been seemingly interested in signing him also going quiet lately.

It wasn't as if he had fallen off the radar, but all the teams had gone quiet, and now he was in a loop because he could not plan for his future since no one was talking.

Despite all that, though, he wouldn't be doing anything either.

Two could play the silent game.

He was desperate for a move away from Oporto, but he wasn't that desperate that he would have Adele begin to offer him up like a product that no one wanted.

He had his own pride too, and he wasn't going to throw it away.

Thinking all this and laughing to himself, he headed into the locker room where the Uventus players were continuing their celebration and someone had brought out a speaker and was playing some music.

He joined his teammates in doing a little dance, unaware that he was being recorded and after a few minutes, he went to wash up while Dybala who had recorded the guys dancing, sent the video to the club's group chat.

A couple of minutes later, almost every Uventus player had posted the video on their social media channels along with a few other “Forza Uve” graphics to celebrate the win.

When Jason came out of the shower later, he quickly got dressed and packed up before checking his phone, but when he saw the video, he just laughed a little before posting another video on his own social media channel.

It was the video of him giving Dybala a smackdown after the third goal.

While the Uventus team began boarding their team bus after they were done, Jason’s video had begun to get all sorts of reactions from everywhere.

[WWE: Napoli definitely felt that jackhammer. Maybe Jason should be on Royal Rumble]

[Goldberg: JACKHAMMER!!!]

[Adele Joyce: You should have shot him from 3km away with a McMillan TAC-50]

[Darryl Mayes: I wanna see an F-5 next]

[Dark Knight: Just say you want to see him kill a teammate. You don’t have to go around in circles trying to disguise your words] Dark Knight responded to Darryl Mayes.

[Bopdaddy: Clearly this guy needs an Attitude Adjustment] Bopdaddy joined in on the thread.

[Benson Burner: What about a pile driver?]

[Riri: You’re the one who needs a pile driver] Riri replied Benson Burner.

[Benson Burner: Sure, I'll take it so I can pile drive that a**] Benson Burner replied back.

[Riri: Aiyooooo, I'm a man bruh] Riri replied, clearly flabbergasted.

[Benson Burner: Even better, pick up the soap boi] Benson Burner's comment flabbergasted everyone in the comment section.

[Hornybunny: Jason is always so handsome]

While the comment section descended further and further into chaos, Jason had already gotten back home and was just shutting the door behind him.

Putting his bag down, he went to the kitchen to get a glass of water to drink, but while he was re-hydrating himself, his phone began ringing, and he picked it up, looking at the caller ID for a second before swiping across the screen.

"What's up shawty," Jason said in a flirtatious tone, a smile on his face.

"Shawty? Boy, I'm almost your height."* Adele's voice could be clearly heard on the other end of the phone.

"Well, almost doesn't kill a bird, soooo," Jason replied smugly.

"So what?"* Adele asked.

"So nothing shawty. What's up with you?" Jason could not keep away a smug smile from appearing on his face.

Unfortunately, it wasn't a video call so, Adele couldn't see his face.

"I'm good... tired, but I'll sleep soon," Adele said, her voice a bit lower than usual.

"Busy day?" Jason asked.

*"Yeah, and speaking about busy days, something happened today. I was going to wait till tomorrow to tell you, but well, I'll just say it now," Adele said to him.

"Shoot, what's up?" Jason asked, pulling out an apple from the refrigerator and washing it at the sink.

"I got a call today," Adele began.

"From who?" Jason cut in.

"Let me finish, then you'd know," Adele said in annoyance and Jason could almost imagine her rolling her eyes at him.

"Ah, sorry, mademoiselle Joyce, you can have the floor," Jason laughed.

"Anyway, I got a call... from Tottenham," Adele said, not bothering with Jason's antics.

Chapter 599: Match Focus

"Tottenham huh?" Jason muttered in a low tone.

"So what did they say?" he asked Adele, biting into his apple.

"They were asking for your availability for a transfer deal in the summer transfer window," Adele replied.

“Funny how it’s them who were the first to ask about a transfer deal,” Jason chuckled, moving to the living room and diving onto the couch.

“Well... Anyway, they asked what our demands are, so I gave them a basic rundown of our likely demands,” Adele replied.

“Which are?” Jason asked.

“Salary package of between 120 to 150k Euros, playing time of a regular starter at least,”

“Bonuses and other clauses are still up for discussion and debate, but we will only get into it if and when they make an official offer,” Adele told Jason.

“Hmmm, so that’s what you told them... So what did they say?” Jason asked.

“Well, they didn’t outrightly reject any of the demands, but they also didn’t say whether they would go on to make an official offer,” Adele replied.

“Oh... I guess that’s another one in the wind,” Jason muttered, looking at the ceiling and chewing on his apple.

“I actually feel like they’re interested and might make an offer, but the issue is whether they have the financial capability... No scratch that,”

“I think with Tottenham, it’s less about whether they have the financial capability or not. It’s more about whether they would be willing to splurge a hundred million or so on a single player,” Adele sighed.

“True,” Jason nodded to himself, deep in thought.

Despite being known as one of the big six in England football, the Tottenham team didn’t have the trophies to compete with the other teams.

In fact other, quite a few non-big-six teams had more trophies than Tottenham.

The reasons Tottenham was accepted as a Big Six team was because of their team's quality and higher-than-average financial strength and they were already beginning to slowly lose ground on the latter reason.

Tottenham entering a bidding war for a player who was worth more than fifty million was not something anyone expected to see in the current footballing world.

In fact, the team was known for being tightfisted when it came to spending money on bringing in new players.

Even the players on the team were not being paid the high amounts of money that the other Big Six team players were receiving.

"Anyway, what do you think about the offer?"

"Are you sold on it or not?" Adele asked him.

"Hmmm... Me in a Tottenham shirt," Jason mumbled as he stared at the ceiling, his mouth moving in repeated motions as he chewed.

"...It's not a bad image. It is white and blue like Oporto, but I can work with it," he said after some thought.

"As long as there are no other offers I mean. If other offers, I might have to re-evaluate my choices, but for now, try to keep that window open, I guess,"

"Alright then, I'll keep following up with them to know their next move. Oh, should I leak this information?"

"That might get the other clubs to also make their move as well," Adele asked him.

"Hmmm, don't do that yet. We don't have anything solid from their side yet,"

"I also don't think they would want us to leak the news right now and if we decide to do it anyway, they would know it was us," Jason replied, sleepiness blasting against his mind like a harsh tidal wave.

"It shouldn't really matter, but okay, I'll keep quiet about it for now. It's still a bit early anyway," Adele replied, yawning.

It was clear that both of them were already very sleepy after physically and mentally exerting themselves throughout the day.

"I think, I'll say goodbye here, we can talk about anything else tomorrow. Keep me updated about the offer and any other offers that come up," Jason said yawning as he stood up from the couch and went to the kitchen to throw the apple's core into the bin.

"Alright, I'll do that..."

"... sleep well," Adele said in a whisper and Jason barely heard it.

"You do the same love, goodnight," Jason replied and hung up the call.

Grabbing his bag from where he had dropped it, he headed to his bedroom throwing the bag into the laundry room on his way.

A few minutes later, he was out of his previous outfit and lying in bed with only a pair of shorts.

It was cold outside, but the heater was heating up the inside, not letting him feel the cold and he fell shortly after...

5th April 2021

At the Continassa, the Uventus players began arriving, ready to dive into training, fully energized after their rest day and especially motivated for their next match.

They would be up against Borussia Dortmund, an especially strong German side for qualification into the Champions League semi-finals.

It went without saying that this would be a tough matchup, but the Uventus players were willing to fight hard for a chance to step even closer to the Champions League trophy.

Before the training session began, the players had to have a match focus session as their opponents were not a side they knew well.

Videos of their opponent's playing styles and various sort of analysis were showed to the players so they would have an idea of the people they were up against.

Watching the videos, Jason could not help but think that his team was in for a hard time against match against the Dortmund team.

Defensively, they would be a little pain with the help of the experienced Mats Hummels who kept switching between Bayern and Dortmund like he couldn't decide who to play for all his life.

Akanji wouldn't be too much of a problem defensively... as far as Jason was concerned, but attacking wise, he tended to join the attack every so often, continuously playing in the forwards with longballs, but Jason felt his team should be able to deal with it as long as they didn't underestimate him.

The wingbacks were also going to be annoying as they were both pacy players who could join their team on the attack and still track back quickly when needed.

As if that was not enough, the midfield looked rock solid yet dynamic, with the combination of Witsel and the young guys, Bellingham and Brandt.

Bellingham's talent was beyond impressive, to say the least, but that wasn't the most of Jason's worries.

Their attack was the most dangerous part of all.

Haaland, a top goal scorer who would almost definitely punish an opponent who gave him enough space to get to the ball in the penalty box.

Sancho, a very dynamic winger with pace, skill, and amazing goal sense who had a knack for scoring low-probability goals.

Worst of all(as far as Jason was concerned), was Marco Reus.

The guy could do anything required of an attacker and he was the one usually pulling all the strings.

He had pace and skill, was good with long shots, could send mean curlers from anywhere, could take set-pieces and he was very good at it.

Worst of all, he could orchestrate attacks against the most defensive of opponents.

He was a player that any top team in football would want to snag up out of Dortmund but had stayed loyal to the club all his life.

He was a player Jason liked a lot and one of the few guys he respected in the world of football despite his underachievement when it came to trophies.

Unluckily for Uventus, despite him being prone to injury and almost always being away on injury, they were unlucky enough to meet him this time.

This match was by no means going to be easy for the Uventus team and if they approached the match without full determination to win and didn't put out the most of their effort, then they would lose.

In fact, against these guys, even putting out their best might not ensure their victory if luck was not on their side.

Luckily, Jason wasn't the only one who knew the kind of uphill battle they would be up against.

All the other Uventus players as well as the manager had seen what he saw and knew they would have to be at their best in the game.

"Okay now, let's get to training," Pirlo told the players as he sent them to begin the training session for the day.

The players began with basic training to warm up their muscles.

After warming up, Pirlo began speaking to his players again.

"Our opponents are quick on the counter. They have pacey wingers and wingbacks if the wingers are held back,"

"If we somehow managed to hold them back, they are also good at sending long balls forward,"

"They have a very direct playing style. When they are on the attack, they go directly towards the goal, no time wasting,"

"This means, we have to always be on the alert to stop their counterattacks to make sure we can kill off their attacks before it gets too dangerous,"

"While we are doing all that, we have to make sure that the ball doesn't reach Haaland,"

“He has strength and speed so getting too near is a waste of time and energy, what we want to do is aim to box him out,”

“Zonal marking... that’s the plan, the defenders have to position themselves in a way that any ball that comes flying in can’t reach him,”

“Is that clear?” Pirlo asked the players if they understood everything he was saying and they responded confidently.

“Good, with that said, let’s get started,” Pirlo said, nodding to himself.

Chapter 600: Borussia On The Bus

****7th April 2021****

A huge bus carrying the Dortmund players was moving through the streets of Turin, it’s front and back and flanked by other cars for security.

“Beautiful city, this place,” Akanji said, looking out the window as the car moved at a uniform pace through the streets.

“Since when did you care about the scenery?” Witsel asked Akanji with a raised eyebrow.

“Since never man, I’m just a lil’ bit nervous, I guess,” Akanji replied honestly, not bothering to hide.

“Why’re you nervous though?” Bellingham asked, poking his head over from behind.

“Come on man, we’re going against Mr. Champions League, in the Champions League. Of course, I’ll be nervous,” Akanji replied.

“Ronaldo in Real Madrid was the Mr. Champions League, this Uventus version of him is not as scary,” Meunier across the aisle also joined in the conversation.

“That’s what Diego Simeone said before Ronaldo stunted on his a** with a hat-trick and knocked him out single-handedly from two nil behind just last year,” Hummels who was seated behind Meunier didn’t wait for anyone to convince and took on the job to convince his seatmate himself.

“Madrid or not, Ronaldo is a handful for anyone. One doesn’t get to five ballon d’ors just by being a team player,”

“Also, Uve is not a weak team and they should have won the Champions League long ago, Ronaldo himself has personally killed their dreams a few times. He might look like he’s past his prime, but that was only a bit over a year ago and he’s still slamming numbers that no one in our team currently has,” Hummels told Meunier.

Hummels wasn’t a Ronaldo fan or anything, but as someone from the same generation as Ronaldo, he sometimes had to remind his younger teammates about players like Ronaldo, Messi, Neymar, e.t.c, who they thought were past their prime and no longer as dangerous as before.

He had to do it during the group stage when they were up against PSG and had beaten them in the first round, but they hadn’t listened and Neymar had punished them in the second round.

Luckily, they had still qualified for the knockout stages, however, it seemed some of the younger players hadn’t learned their lessons.

These guys had yet to understand that because many top-level players retired in their early thirties did not mean that a player’s prime was when he was in his twenties.

“Uve have an injury crisis as far as I know. They don’t look unbeatable to me,” Meunier scoffed, still not taking heed to Hummels words.

“At this point, I can only pray you don’t turn to a highlight reel when you face off against that Jason guy... if he plays,” Akanji said to Meunier from across the aisle, seeing that Hummels had given up and was no longer interested in saying anything to convince this headstrong guy.

“Jason who? He better up he’s on the other flank and not up against me. I’ll lock him up,” Meunier continued digging his own grave.

“Hey Jadon, Marco!” You think Thomas can keep that Jason guy in check?” Bellingham called out to Jadon and Marco.

” He’d better,” Marco scoffed, having heard all Meunier’s boasting from before.

Jadon hadn’t heard it though and had only heard when Bellingham called out to him.

“He’s gonna get all the smoke, and then he’d be like a lost puppy chasing his own tail,” Jadon smirked as he took off his headphones.

He was not going to lose the chance to tease his own teammate.

“Pffffttt, hahahaha,” Bellingham and the others burst into laughter.

“Bruh said he’d chase after his own tail, hahaha,” Bellingham laughed, falling back into his own seat.

“There’s no way he can do that,” Thomas countered, his face red, but no one could tell whether it was from anger or embarrassment.

“Take it from me, there is more than a fifty percent chance that he can get past you if you go up against each other,” Reus, the team captain said, his words surprising everyone.

“Seriously, cap?” Jadon asked, the smirk on his face disappearing.

“Didn’t you guys watch his highlight reels? That guy can move,”

“The videos were mostly filled with him running circles around his marker and most of the time, he can’t be kept in check,”

“And he can score goals too,” Reus intoned, sighing deeply.

“So you’re saying if we focus more on shutting out Ronaldo, this guy can punish us for that, but at the same time, we can’t focus on only him either,”

“However, if we focus on the two of them, there’s still Dybala, Chiesa, or whoever else will be playing, or even the two of them?” Thomas asked, creating a scenario in his head.

“I already feel exhausted,” Akanji sighed.

“And that’s with the injury crisis they have,” Hummels reminded them.

“Actually, that injury crisis is a bit annoying for us too because now, we don’t know how will arrange themselves on the pitch,” Edin, the interim manager joined the conversation.

“They have enough squad depth to rearrange their formation or their playing style due to the injury problem so we really don’t know what we will be up against,”

“We can guess, but it wouldn’t make much of a difference,”

“What you guys need to do is follow our game plan. Defend well, soak in pressure, and if you see space to get in behind, make your move,”

“Everything more, nothing less,” Edin told the players, trying to motivate them against their opponents.

He knew that while the quality of his players couldn’t be doubted, the Uventus team were the widely acclaimed favorites.

It was just what everyone thought and their performances so far emphasized, hence the the Dortmund players could not help but feel a little pressure even though they weren’t that far off in terms of player quality.

Edin was merely an interim manager who was filling the role until the board found another manager, but he was going to do his job, and he was going to do it well.

... Or at least that's what he wanted to do.