

LEGENDS 74

Chapter 74 A Misfortune that Begets Opportunities

As the Bayer Leverkusen players were celebrating, Sergio Conceicao called Otavio and Shoya Nakajima from the bench to quickly begin warming up as he had to quickly make some changes to the game plan before the game got out of hand.

Thus before the Porto team kicked off, the assistant referee held up the board, signaling for substitution.

Jesus Corona and Mattheus Uribe on seeing their numbers being displayed in red knew that their time was up on the pitch and they quickly jogged down to the sidelines.

Shoya Nakajima was going to be coming on for Mattheus Uribe while Otavio would be coming on for Jesus Corona.

'Hopefully, they can breathe life into our attacks that are coming to a dead end every time,' Sergio Conceicao thought to himself as he watched the new substitutes run to take their positions on the pitch.

The match kicked off again with the Porto side having possession of the ball and without wasting any time they launched an attack that ended up repelled, but were able to show their fighting spirit that said that they weren't willing to stay down and swallow this loss just yet.

Under their incessant attacks, they put tremendous pressure on the Bayer Leverkusen team and gradually pushed them back into their half, forcing them to put most of their efforts into defending.

Finally, in the sixty-fifth minute of the game, the Porto team launched an attack that seemed like it would finally result in the goal they had been looking for.

The Porto team had been exchanging the ball among themselves just outside the Leverkusen penalty area with well-calculated passes.

Suddenly Shoya Nakajima, the newly substituted player who had just received a pass from Danilo Pereira tried to make a run into the Leverkusen penalty area with the ball, hoping to make use of his advantage in stamina as a newly brought-on player.

He managed to get past Lars Bender with a swift flick of his feet and a sudden change in direction, but just as he was entering the penalty area, he made as if to shoot and swung his left leg before faking the shot and pushing the ball towards Tiquinho Soares who had just gotten rid of his marker.

The ball had barely left his feet when Jonathan Tah's right foot which was outstretched in a sliding tackle collided into his right ankle harshly.

Jonathan Tah hadn't known that Shoya Nakajima would fake a shot before passing the ball to an opponent instead and had flown into a tackle, intending to block Shoya Nakajima who looked like he would get the shot away.

This led to a mistimed tackle that sent Shoya Nakajima tumbling over in the Bayer Leverkusen penalty area.

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The referee quickly blew his whistle while pointing to the penalty spot as he ran over, pulling out a yellow card that he showed to Jonathan Tah.

The Porto players and fans quickly erupted in a little celebration seeing as they had just been awarded a penalty. Even the manager on the sidelines had a small smile finally rise on his face as he finally saw a little hope for his team to grasp, but a few seconds later, his smile slowly faded into a frown as he noticed that Shoya Nakajima who had been brought down in the penalty box hadn't stood up and was instead still rolling over in pain while grabbing his ankle.

The Porto players had also noticed this and more of them gathered around Shoya while the referee was already calling for the medics to hurry over to attend to the injured player.

At the moment, despite having gotten a penalty, the Porto team and their fans didn't have a happy expression as the injured player looked to be in a lot of pain even as he was being tended to by the medics.

Sergio Conceicao was watching from the sidelines with a hard expression as he knew that with the injured player looking to be in that much pain, it would be a miracle if he could continue to play for the rest of the game.

In fact, even if the player somehow managed to stand up after treatment and request to continue to play, Sergio Conceicao would not allow him to, as the pain on his face could not be just pain from a mere collision and was more likely to be an injury so Sergio would not risk letting the player continue and aggravate the injuries any further.

There was just one problem with this situation and that was that the player that had gotten injured was a player that had just been newly substituted onto the field.

'What kind of bad luck is this?' he thought to himself as he looked at the players remaining on the bench.

Shoya Nakajima was a central attacking midfielder and that was the position he was currently playing on the field, but there was nobody on the bench right now that could play that position.

... Or was there? The thought suddenly appeared in his mind as his eyes fell on Jason.

From the scout reports, it was noted in the scout report that Jason could play the CAM position and he just remembered that point now, but he was hesitant.

It was one thing to bring Jason on in such a high-stakes match despite him not having any prior professional experience, and it was another thing entirely to bring him on and put him in a position where he hadn't tested Jason's effectiveness in performing.

Thinking that he would have to take a gamble, he turned his head back to the field and his eyes involuntarily fell on Otavio making him suddenly remember that Otavio shouldn't have any problems

playing the CAM position and he could instead bring Jason on to take Otavio's place on the right wing while Otavio moved to the center parts of the midfield.

Under this wave of ingenuity, he suddenly called out to Jason, "Warm up and come here for instructions, you have one minute."

Jason looked up in surprise, but his body ignored his surprise and pulled him out of his seat while his mind was still processing the manager's sudden decision.

Jason quickly began to do a few stretches and warm-up routines on the sidelines all while the medics on the field were giving Shoya Nakajima first aid treatment while calling for another colleague to bring a stretcher as they had determined that he was not going to be able to continue the game.

He had been hit hard by the tackle and his ankle was almost dislocated, but for now, they weren't completely sure of whether it was only his ankle that had been injured or if he had a muscular injury as well.

They were of course not going to risk it, so he was out.

As they were slowly shifting Shoya to the stretcher while being extra careful with his leg, Jason had already finished warming up and had arrived beside Sergio Conceicao.

"Tell Pepe and Otavio that I want you on the right and Otavio in the center and they'll get the information across to the other members of the team,"

"I'm sure you hear all the instructions during the tactical meeting, but just in case, I'll say it again,"

"Make sure to keep your marker on his toes, run at him, and if you can get past him like you've done so many times in training, leave him behind to have no choice than eating your dust,"

"We are currently behind and I want you out there doing your best for the team so we can get on level terms and maybe even make a comeback, but don't be pressured, just take it as if it was a training

session and you'll be alright," Sergio rattled off instructions and even a motivational speech to Jason who was changing into his jersey and checking his kits to see if everything was in place.

After giving his instructions to Jason, Sergio Conceicao told the assistant referee that Jason was coming on and the referee got started on the substitution procedure, putting Jason's number on the board.

As Shoya Nakajima was being carried off the field, the assistant referee held up the board and Jason stood beside him rubbing his gloved hands to stave off the nervousness that suddenly arose in his heart as the moment for his debut approached.

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His heart was beating at an unnatural speed and felt like it was going to leap out of his throat.

He was so nervous that he unconsciously did the cross sign and even prayed.