

Legends 831

Chapter 831: Final Medical Clearance II

"So what do you think? Is he cleared to play?" Conte asked Nick Stubbings who had come to his office with Jason's file.

"His physicals check out, 96% leg strength similarity with the uninjured leg, there weren't any issues with his sprinting or changing directions, he's recovered well,"

"As for load response, there's no issue there either, his body's responding well and there's seemingly no issue with his achilles tendon,"

"No issues in movement and his MRI says he's clear," Nick told Conte.

"What about psychologically, psychology issues, erm mentally. Mentally, is there any issues?" Conte asked.

"... That part is a bit strange," Nick said, scratching his head.

"Strange how?" Conte asked curious and a bit worried.

"Comparing the current him to before, he's not running as much at his opponents,"

"It's not like he's hesitating to run either. It's more like he's choosing to slowdown and then take his opponents on. Like that's the normal thing but he's much slower than before,"

"Before he dribbled in a way similar to a young Cristiano. Like ferocious and sharp movements, but now he's slowed down and dribbles like Neymar instead, like no rush behind his movements,"

"We're not sure if he's doing it consciously or not but it's almost like he developed a whole new dribbling style while injured... Well either that or he could always do that and just chose to begin doing it now,"

"Eh?" Conte was confused, but now that he thought about it, it was true.

The Jason he had faced when he was coaching Inter Milan was always running at people like he was trying to breeze past them and he often did.

His dribble moves were silky but somewhat ferocious so while it had a lot of flair, it made some people say he lacked finesse.

However the Jason he had seen during training sessions was using the same flair filled movements but they were a bit slower than before.

"Surprisingly enough, it doesn't seem to have affected his effectiveness. He's still able to pass his opponents just as easily as before, just that this time, they can see him better while he does it, yet they still can't stop it," Nick continued.

"In fact it seems like he's even harder to defend than before, and he seems to have gotten even more daring, but we can't tell whether that's because of the injury or not,"

"I want to say he's completely ready, but I don't know whether his attitude would prove to be self destructive or not," he added and went silent.

Initially Conte had wanted to reply with, " it's only self destructive if they can touch him," but Conte knew that wasn't true.

Players who dribbled too much usually had an issue of injuries and it wasn't because they weren't good enough.

It was usually because they were too good and that always incited their opponents to play dirty, after all who wanted to be embarrassed by their opponents.

Neymar was enough of a clear story, Hazard, Tarabt, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho... The list was endless.

However there was nothing their managers could do about them and Conte found himself in the same predicament.

"Have you told him about this?" Conte asked but he felt like he knew the answer to his question.

"We did, and he replied positively, but then went back to doing what he was doing. I don't think we can really stop him from doing what he wants actually and if you even force him to, it would only reduce his effectiveness on the pitch," Nick replied and Conte could almost hear a voice in his head say, "told ya".

"On the bright side, he's got a good physical quality and shouldn't get injured too easily from basic tackles,"

"Though he's a smart kid and when he gets back on the pitch, he may realize that too much dribbling is not worth getting tackled so much," Nick added.

"Well, there's nothing more we can do. Clear him. We'll try to build minutes in the coming games," Conte sighed and replied.

"... I know it's not my place as I don't make your decisions for you, but he's going to need more than a few minutes. The kid really wants to play and if you don't give him more minutes on the pitch then only one of two things can happen,"

"He's either going to keep playing riskier football to try to prove that he deserves more playing time, or his confidence might collapse and his form would drop massively,"

"Young talents like him need to feel the support of everyone at the club when coming back from injuries like these and that everyone includes the manager," Nick said and stood up to leave the room.

Watching Nick leave his office, Conte sighed as he understood what the guy meant. He had coached a few young players and their mental states were a lot more fragile than older players, especially after injuries.

If there was a clear space on the team for Jason to fit into, then Jason would instantly be inserted in there, but the current front three were quality players in their own right and were currently at the peak of their form.

Son and Kane were at the peak of their scoring forms in years and while Kane hadn't really been able to translate that into the team, he had been doing very well at a national level so it was clear that he was still the best fit for the team's center forward.

Lucas who had seemed a bit behind the two had also been putting on very good performances right from the beginning of the season and he had been able to become a good connection between the midfield and the forwards.

The squad needed depth.

That didn't need saying, however, none of these four player would readily accept being the "depth" for the others.

Kane was currently on of the best strikers in the world.

Son was the best Asian forward in the world... Scratch that, he was the best Asian player in the world.

Moura didn't have any of those great titles, but he was solid and had been a servant of the club, proving himself time and again for the Tottenham side and even though he didn't score a lot, he wouldn't easily accept being benched.

Jason on the other hand had just won the Champions League which was the peak of continental football and he had done so actively participating.

He was also one of the hottest youths in the football world right now and had more than enough options if he wanted to leave the club.

Hell, it was even a wonder that he was at Tottenham in the first place.

Right now it was between Jason and Moura.

He as the manager would have to make a decision and he would have to do it quick.

Chapter 832: Guess Who's Back

****23rd November 2021****

Guess who's back in training?

A post with this caption and a picture of Jason in a shooting posture on the training grounds at Hotspur way appeared on Tottenham's Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter accounts and it instantly got the attention of the Tottenham fans who had been waiting long for the good news.

Surprisingly, Jason also had a bit of a new look.

He had dyed his hair ash blonde so the parts near the roots were darker and the ends were a bit lighter in color.

He hadn't had it cut though so it was a bit long, but that only made it look better.

Comments of "COYS", "Looking good Jason", "Thank God he's back", "Starboy is back", "The prem better watch out", "We are so back", filled the comments section and the post got a lot of attention both from Tottenham fans and fans of their competitors.

The teams that had Tottenham on their calendar immediately began making adjustments to their tactical plans because no one wanted to be caught off guard.

The person who was the cause of all this attention though was at Hotspur way undergoing training sessions with his teammates.

With him being completely cleared, he could now take part in full training sessions without any restrictions and though they mentioned that he needed to take part in at least 3-5 sessions before he would actually see any minutes on the pitch, he didn't have any issues waiting a bit more.

However, he had already taken part in a few training sessions already so he was technically already match ready, but he guessed the manager might only give him a few minutes for a while he was still being monitored.

He might have been cleared but apart from being training ready, he had to be able to play matches and not have any issues so technically he was still being monitored and if anything was off, he'd have to continue recovery.

The whole process of injury was particularly annoying and the longer the period a player was out, the worse it got so right now Jason wanted to avoid getting injured as much as possible.

However while he thought that, his actions during training sessions weren't saying that.

They had just finished a scrimmage and were resting and Jason's performance during the scrimmage had been nothing short of stunning.

Like Nick had said, he seemed to have gotten slower... Actually getting slower wasn't the way to describe.

Rather it was like he had gotten smoother. His speed of movement and speed of doing tricks hadn't gotten slower, but they had somehow become more fluid and that gave people the impression that it had gotten slower because they could now actually see him moving his legs.

However seeing it didn't mean they could stop it. In fact it had gotten harder to catch him and Jason also noticed that perhaps because of that, simple feints seemed to receive a huge boost in its effectiveness.

He had tried it out and Emerson Royal had almost fallen over three times just because of a sudden but simple feint that Jason had used to fool him into thinking he would change directions.

Even Jason had been surprised when he saw how his opponents seemed to react when he was moving.

"Were you actually doing some hidden training while saying you were injured man? Cuz what the fu*k was that out there?" Dele asked, just finished guzzling on some water.

"Ever heard of image training?" Jason replied honestly.

When he had been injured, he couldn't play, but he could watch, he could review and he could think about doing things differently and he had done all that.

He just didn't think doing all that would have this kind of effect.

"Image training? What's that?" Dele asked curiously.

"It's actually from an experiment they did with amateur basketballers. They literally took like 20 people and made them shoot at the hoop like 10 times each,"

"Then they split them into two and took 10 guys to physically practice shooting while the other ten were told to imagine themselves practicing shooting,"

"By the time they came back to check the two groups, both sides had made similar levels of progress in shooting the ball," Jason explained.

"Wait, is that a real thing?" Son who had been listening in asked curiously.

"Yeah, like for real and not like some anime?" Dele also asked curiously.

"Well I read it from some academic paper on the internet so you take a guess," Jason said with a laugh.

That was mostly what he had done and clearly it sort of worked, but that could be because he was a special case.

When he came into this reality, he had a foundation of years of continuous practice so he was already what anyone would consider a genius.

Twenty years of practice of something one was the worst in the world at would turn that story around and Jason wasn't the worst in the world at football.

He had been good enough to go pro and even though he didn't make it big, even the worst professional football players were miles ahead of people who played football for fun.

The mindset was different, the way one viewed the field was different and so many things were so much more different.

With Jason's solidity in more than the basics, he had spent his early years adding more to his skill set and true to his efforts, he had learnt a lot but he had forgotten something.

His experience had blinded him.

He thought that his previous experience would be enough for him so he didn't have to join an academy or anything, but he had forgotten that his experience was of a player with limited abilities.

Hence when he finally began playing football in this life he was more or less just spamming the moves he had learnt and while they looked good and even worked, they didn't have that fluidity that truly talented people had.

People had likened his skills to an early Cristiano Ronaldo, but even the early Cristiano Ronaldo had a fluidity to his skills even though they looked aggressive.

This was why Jason was stumped when the Serie A teams found a way to keep him off the ball.

Something like that wouldn't have bothered Neymar for more than 45 minutes.

They guy would simply have adjusted his style and continued causing havoc, but Jason didn't have enough experience with his new weapons to know how to use them, interchange them and use the most perfect ones.

Many times when a simple body feint would have worked, he would have had to use a back chop and then turn.

It looked good, but it was wasteful.

His injury had brought a steady period in his life and as he continuously reviewed and rewatched his play, he began to notice these things.

The puzzle pieces he had were finally coming together and he thought about it and when pure thought was not enough, he tried to lightly perform those skills or movements in the hidden confines of his home and he thought they might work.

And oh did they work, hell, it looked like they might be too damn effective and that was what had gotten to him.

That was what was causing the addicting feeling of feeling like a genius for once in his life.

Before, despite escaping his opponents, it seemed like he always had to give his all, but now just from watching his opponents position, he could quickly decide on the simplest method to send them looking and stamping the wrong way.

It was an addicting feeling indeed.

Chapter 833: Away in Slovenia

Jason was named among the provisional squad heading to Slovenia for the match against NS Mura much to his and the fans joy and early on the matchday-1, they jumped on the plane in the late afternoon.

The flight was about two and a half hours and after landing at the airport, they got on the arranged bus that took them to their hotel for the night.

Having a quick dinner and doing a few stretches to help reduce muscle stress, the players went to sleep to rest from the fatigue of their journey.

Of course some players were more interested in exploring a little of Slovenia's night life, but Conte wasn't having it and had told the players to rest.

Of course, the players were adults and weren't going to be stopped if they actually decided to go out, but they would definitely be found out and that meant getting in the manager's bad books.

Not many people wanted to risk that.

Even Dele Alli who would almost without doubt be leaving the club in January of the coming year since his contract was running out and the club didn't seem interested in renewing it.

His only way to make a comeback would be to become useful to the manager and he was making an attempt at that so he wouldn't dare do anything crazy at this moment.

In the end, the players got a good rest and the next morning were up energized and ready for the day's training and match.

First having breakfast at the hotel before heading over to the NS Mura field to have a one hour training session and to inspect the field.

After getting injured because of a field with artificial grass had now made it a point to carefully inspect the grass of any pitch he would ever play on.

On getting to the Ljudski Vrt, the home stadium of NK Maribor which was being borrowed for the match against NS Mura, the players first went to change while the training staff began preparing for the training session.

Since it wasn't a full on training session, there was only need for balls and a few basing training kits like colored cones and colored bibs.

When they finally stepped on the pitch, the first thing they did was to inspect the pitch and after confirming that there wasn't anything wrong, they began training.

It was a pretty laid back session as it wasn't really so much as actually training and rather more about maintaining the players's rhythm.

It was more tactical than fitness and after a quick warmup, the players began the training.

Media were allowed for the first 15 minutes and then kicked out while the players went on to finishing drills, rondos and set-piece practice.

The field was filled with the players laughter and voices as they joked around while practicing and organizing small competitions as they did the drills.

Finally, they practiced their shape without the intensity of the game and wrapped up the training for the day and headed back to the hotel to have lunch and rest a bit before the game.

Some of the players had the physios give them a little treatment before they went to get some rest.

As the time approached 4pm the players got up again, did some pre-match activation at the hotel before getting on the bus and heading to the stadium again.

Unlike their arrival earlier in the day which had gone unnoticed, this time there were already quite a few fans arriving at the stadium who caught sight of the Tottenham bus arriving.

The security did their jobs and allowed the bus to pass uninterrupted and head to the back of the stadium to the players entrance.

There the players got off and headed into the stadium, going to prepare kit up and begin the pre-match warmup.

A few minutes later, in front of a crowd that grew every minute, Tottenham began their pre-match warmup and at this point the starting lineup for the game was already spreading across the internet.

Like most people expected, Conte was rotating the squad quite a bit from the side that played against Leeds previously.

For want of a spare striker, Kane was starting again, but almost everyone other than him who started the previous game were either on the bench or weren't part of the squad at all.

Behind Kane was Dele Alli and Bryan Gil.

Davison Sanchez, Oliver Skipp, Tanguy Ndombele and Ryan Sessgnon were behind them and the backline was Matt Doherty, Japhet Tanganga and Joe Rodon.

Though a few had been hoping for it, Jason's name not being in the line up was something that most people expected, even the player in question himself.

However he also hoped for the manager to give him some minutes later in the game. Those were his thoughts while warming up.

Time passed quickly and soon the substitute players and the coaches were on the sidelines as the game kicked off.

Having already lost to Tottenham in a previous leg, five goals to one, NS Mura knew that despite the somewhat lacking defensive quality of their opponents, their attacking prowess more than made up for it.

And with a new manager and revamped tactics, things could only get worse for them if they weren't careful.

Thus their tactics for the game was to defend like their lives depended on it and to only counterattack when possible.

So defensive was their tactical setup that even when attacking on the break, only about three players ran forward while the rest stayed back to defend.

NS Mura had set themselves up as if saying, no matter what, we're not going to lose today.

With such a tactical arrangement, the most unlucky thing that could happen to Tottenham would be to allow Mura to somehow score first.

And which football team was more unlucky than Tottenham?

In the 11th minute of the game, Mura got a chance to counter and a long ball was sent into the path of Tomi Horvat, NS Mura's right winger.

Continuing to run until he got to the right side of Tottenham's penalty area, he squared up against Davison Sanchez and cut inside, flicking the ball fast past Snachez's side.

It wasn't an impressive move and was the kind of move that should have been easily stopped, but somehow Sanchez let him through, allowing him to enter the penalty box from the left.

The alarm bells had begun to ring in the Tottenham's players heads, but before they could even make a move to stop Tomi, the man hit the ball.

Chapter 834: From Beginner to Hell Difficulty

All the technique that was missing from Tomi's dribbling was present in his kicking motion and the ball was sent curling beautifully into the top left of Tottenham's goal.

Gollini couldn't even move because he could instantly tell that the ball was out of his reach.

{Goal! What a curler!}

{The keeper knew he wasn't reaching that and was rooted to the spot!}

{In a shocking turn of events, it's Mura who score first and now Tottenham will have to put more effort into cracking this side that has been playing very defensively}

Antonio Conte, passionate man that he was felt like screaming his head off at Davison Sanchez.

With his quality as a player, no one should be getting past him so easily with such shoddy movement, yet reality told a different story.

Yet with at least 79 minutes of game time still left, screaming at his players might have an adverse effect, but he still did it.

However, he didn't scream his annoyance, but instead tried to motivate his players and remind them that they still had more than enough time to turn the game around.

However as the game kicked off, it became clear that it was easier said than done.

With NS Mura willing to do just about anything to stay in the lead, their haram ball tactics and aggressive defending left the Tottenham players frustrated.

Both sides began to rack up yellow cards as they tried to force the game in their direction and bad soon turned to worse for Tottenham when Ryan Sessgnon who had already been booked earlier made a mistimed tackle in a bid to steal the ball and initiate a counter.

Without any mercy, the referee showed him another yellow card and he was sent off.

Conte held his head in his hands, not even sure what to be angry at.

The yellow card could have been avoided if Ryan didn't lose his head and make a bad tackle, but the tackle hadn't been very rough either so another yellow card felt a bit too much, but there was nothing he could do but watch.

With nerves beginning to tense, Conte and the Tottenham fans watched as the team struggled to penetrate the opposition defense.

The NS Mura players were already a lot to handle and now that they were one man down, it only got more difficult to handle their opponents.

The Tottenham players played as best as they could, but the spaces between the Mura players were just too narrow and it was too difficult to send a ball through or even squeeze through themselves.

With disappointing results on the attack other than a few long shots, the first half ended.

The players of the two sides walked off the field and into the tunnel towards the dressing room, one side clearly more upbeat than the other.

The NS Mura fans at the stadium were just about 6000, yet they were doing a good job cheering their players on.

It looked like their team was about to get revenge for the trashing they had received the last time they faced Tottenham and the NS Mura players were also feeling good, clearly bolstered by the positive situation.

When the Tottenham players got into the dressing room expecting an annoyed manager they were a bit surprised when Conte didn't do much more than trying to remind them that there was still enough time to turn the game around.

As long as they kept pushing for a goal, they would find one.

After a bit of motivation, Conte began giving specific instructions on how to deal with their stubborn opponents.

Since the opponents had chosen to sit back, then they should also stop playing defensive and take the fight to them.

Conte only wanted two players staying back to defend while the rest of the players should throw themselves forward and try to find some space.

Conte literally wanted his players going on an all-out attack as soon as the second half began and after giving them instructions and sending them back out to the field, he began conversing with his tactical team on what substitutions to make in the second half.

Normally he would make these decisions himself, but thanks to the red card he had to really consider his decisions.

Since he was resting players, he had quite an array of choices to pick from, but there was one particular substitution that was troubling him.

He had already decided to sub off Dele Alli and Bryan Gil, and intended on replacing them with Son and either Jason or Lucas.

Once again he was stuck between Jason and Moura.

Jason was definitely going to be a big help in disturbing Mura's organized defense and the guy would be able to get into tight spots without much problem.

However, it was too early to bring him on.

Jason was technically still being monitored and as someone just coming back from an injury he was still a huge injury risk despite passing all the physicals.

With how aggressively the opponents were playing and doing all they could to keep their lead, Jason would definitely be on the receiving end and things could get ugly.

However Tottenham needed a goal and they needed it yesterday.

Early changes were the only way forward right now but that was just giving the opponents more than enough time to do and undo things to Jason if he came on.

Should he take the risk or go for the less riskier but equally rewarding option... Hopefully.

After all, Lucas was in good form and had been a good driving force on the team, managing to pick out his teammates in dangerous areas.

After watching the first five minutes and saw nothing forthcoming from Bryan and Dele handcuffed in midfield, he called out to the players on the bench.

"Son, Lucas, Ben, go warm up,"

"..."

"Eric, you too," he gave quick instructions and turned back to the game.

There was no choice of waiting.

The opponents only seemed to be getting more confident at stopping his players attacking efforts.

The changes had to be made now or this match might very well slip from their hands.

Chapter 835: A Step on the Green

Starting with a triple sub in the 54th minute, Ben, Son, and Lucas were subbed on for Dele, Bryan, and Matt.

A minute later, Dier was subbed on for Joe Rodon.

With this, Ben Davies took position on the left back to give the team width that they had lost when Sessgnon was sent off.

Davison dropped deep to cover at the back, leaving Ndombele as the only central midfielder, but Dier would always move upfield to support him in the center, not leaving him alone to face off against their opponents.

After coming back from the first half break, the NS Mura team had grown more confident and seemed to have been given instructions to kill off the game so despite still playing defensively, they were now constantly trying to trigger a counterattack whenever the opportunity arose, trying to capitalize on their advantage of an extra man.

However, Tottenham's newly subbed on players had made them wary and they had to now put a bit more focus on defending.

No longer starved for supply, Kane was beginning to look the threat that he was and with every passing minute, Tottenham looked like they would finally capitalize on their regained dominance of the game.

In the 72nd minute, it finally appeared with Lucas Moura receiving a pass from Eric Dier who had just stopped a Mura counterattack by tackling the ball off a Mura player.

Immediately launching himself forward, he took off with the ball in tow, drawing his opponents to him and then snaking a pass in behind into Kane's path.

Not taking a touch, Kane followed the ball into the penalty box, his head doing mental calculations as he watched Mura's keeper come off his line, trying to reach the ball.

That was exactly what Kane was waiting for and as soon as the guy was far enough from his line and lunging at the ball, Kane chipped it over him and into the back of the goal.

{It's taken them a while! But they finally get their equalizer!}

{The team with one man down simply wouldn't stay down. They're making a statement here!}

{It's not over yet!}

The commentators voice accompanied Tottenham's celebrations and the Mura fans boos, but the Tottenham side weren't bothered with the boos.

A mere group of 6000 fans couldn't even hope to get in their heads.

They say hell hath no fury like a woman scorned... Well, it seemed like Mura was a woman scorned.

They reacted explosively when they lost their lead. The disappointment of being thrust out of their winning dreams incited them into trying to get back in the lead as soon as they kicked off to resume the game.

Once in possession, they began sending the ball forward, trying to bulldoze their way through Tottenham's players and when they lost the ball, they did anything to get the ball back as soon as possible.

Conte's smile was quickly wiped off his face when he saw this much pressure being put on his players.

They were already one man down and after spending most of the game chasing, their spirits might be high but their stamina was definitely low and nearing the bottom of their tanks.

"We have to relieve the pressure on the defense," he muttered to himself in a voice only he could hear.

Thinking for a few more seconds, he made a decision and turned to the bench for the second time that day.

Attack was the best form of defense.

"Jason, get ready to go on,"

The players remaining on the bench constantly warmed up every few minutes to have their muscles remain active so they could get on as soon as the manager called them and Jason had just finished doing some stretches and a little jog along the sidelines.

The manager's call to Jason surprised him at first, but then a small smile appeared at the corner of his lips.

He took off his training vest, revealing the jersey beneath it and began adjusting the rest of his kits.

He checked his laces, pulled his gloves tighter and adjusted his shin guards before heading towards Conte for instructions.

"You're replacing Ndombele, but you'll be playing wingback on the right while Skipp will move to the center," at Conte's words, Jason's face turned a bit strange.

He didn't understand why Conte was giving him defensive duties.

The team was already lacking defensively, were a man down and then the manager was putting him on into a defensive position.

Was he trying to throw the game?

"You're the width of the team so when you have space on the flanks, run down and send the ball in for the forwards to finish," Conte said, not saying anything about specific defensive duties which was confusing in its own way.

But without specific defending duties, it meant Jason could do what he wanted when he was not defending and he intended to do just that.

When the ball finally ran out of play, Jason stood beside the assistant referee who was holding up the board, but while that was going on, Conte called Eric, Tanganga and Oliver Skipp over.

Conte already knew that Jason would barely do any defending so he told the three players to cover for Jason whenever he moved up the field to avoid any annoying situations.

Doing this would leave them a bit vulnerable, but they were already vulnerable.

What did it matter if they got a bit more vulnerable if there was a chance to turn the game around.

{Tottenham make a substitution and it's another forward coming on}

{This is a clear message that they don't plan on just going down quietly}

{It's this man's first time out after an injury just about 3 months ago but the fans would be hoping for instant impact}

{They know he's quality and they know he has the skillset to produce goals. Can he do it just like before his injury}

Not paying much attention to the commentary, Jason high fived Ndombele and jogged onto the field, his eyes already scanning the situation and making gestures to various teammates.

Chapter 836: Baby Steps

Jason's presence on the pitch was something that the NS Mura manager had half expected and he had made preparations for it.

As someone just coming off an injury, especially a long term one, no matter how confident they looked, they were still a bit shaky mentally and the NS Mura planned to make his players capitalize off that.

He had given instructions to his players to surround Jason and pressure him mentally and if that didn't work, then tackle him aggressively with each player taking turns.

That was bound to stop Jason from settling on the ball, or at least that was what he hoped, after all, the person he wanted to tell deal with was just twenty years old and couldn't have too strong a mental fortitude.

Oh how wrong were his calculations.

To Jason who was looking for opposition players to take on, their surrounding him was the equivalent of them delivering themselves in a well packaged gift box.

Hence when Jason first received the ball on the right and began driving the ball forward, to the Mura players on that side of the field began to adjust themselves so that they could surround Jason once he got closer.

Jason noticed the movement of the opposition players immediately because it freed up space for his teammates on the left side of the pitch.

Continuing to push the ball forward, he squared off against a Mura player and was about to dribble past when he suddenly changed his mind and hit a crossfield pass instead.

The sudden change of pace confused everyone who was watching.

Everyone except Son who was making an inside run from the left and jumped at the ball as it flew across the face of the goal.

Unfortunately, Son was just a few paces too slow and couldn't reach the ball and it flew out harmlessly for a goal kick.

{It goes wide!}

{It was begging for a touch, but Son just couldn't get to it in time}

Son raised a hand, sending Jason a thumbs up with a wry smile on his face, apologizing for missing the chance, but Jason wasn't actually too bothered.

He was just trying a long ball technique he had learnt from Beckham.

He had gotten the direction of the pass correct, but the weight behind the ball was too much and it got there too fast.

Noting that down, Jason headed back and waited for his next opportunity on the ball.

Thanks to the NS Mura team actually fighting back, Jason had to spend quite a bit of time in defensive positions, doing his part to ensure the opponents didn't score.

He didn't like defending, but that didn't mean he wouldn't defend at all if he had to.

In that same vein he expected that his manager shouldn't expect any spectacular defending from him.

One could have the spirit to give his all for the team, but if one's skill wasn't up to par, then not much could be done about that.

#83rd minute...

{Tottenham on the attack again!

{It's all about body language and their body language says that they don't plan to give up just yet}

{Moura. He's already created one goal, can he create another?}

Moura was with the ball in the final third, looking for passing options, but the path infield was completely blocked.

{Into the path of Jason who's making an overlapping run on the outside}

Pushing the ball forward with his first touch, Jason ran past the the wide players and holding them off continued his outside run.

After breaking through from the right on the outside, Jason continued his run, hugging the line as he ran into the opposition box, doing his best to hold off his opponents from pushing him off the ball.

Finally he couldn't hold out any longer and less than ten yards from goal, he sent a ball across towards Kane and Son in the middle but Mura's goalkeeper jumped off his line, punching the ball forward before it reached the Tottenham strikers.

{Saved by the keeper! He wasn't taking any chances this man!}

On the sidelines, Conte flinched and turned away the ball was punched away and then cleared.

Yet another chance had gone begging and they were still on level terms with their opponents.

Applauding Jason's efforts he suddenly realized something. Jason hadn't attempted any flamboyant tricks on his opponents and had barely even attempted dribbling, instead choosing to spray passes to stretch out the opponents who were playing tightly.

'Does he only act daring in training or is he actually scared of getting injured again?' Conte wondered.

His reasons for bringing Jason on was for him to cause havoc with his dribbling, drawing attention and reducing the pressure on the other players.

However even without doing any flashy skills, he was drawing the opponents attention whenever he was on the ball and his performance wasn't bad so far.

Even his defensive efforts weren't bad.

Matter of fact, they were pretty good. He was solid, he was quick to press and his unyielding efforts when chasing the ball was troublesome for the opposition players.

'So what was all that in training?' Conte was now very confused as he didn't understand what was going on anymore.

Little did he know, all hell was about to break loose.

Before getting on the pitch, Jason could see that the Mura players were aggressive and after getting on, it was even more clear.

This wasn't a training session and his opponents wouldn't have the same compassion his teammates had for him in training so he first had to feel them out.

And now he had realized that while they weren't all bark and no bite, they were mostly bark and that was all he needed to know.

#85th minute...

The Tottenham players had been passing the ball around looking for space when suddenly the Mura players surged forward, all the players applying a high press.

This sudden press stunned the Tottenham players who were already a man down and the ball was quickly sent back to the defense, yet the Mura players didn't stop pressing, not giving them any time on the ball.

When the ball was sent back to the final man, Davison Sanchez, he realized that there wasn't enough time to turn on the ball and send the ball back to Gollini.

"Here!" Jason called out from the right, pointing to his feet.

Chapter 837: Instant Impact

Davison Sanchez quickly sent the ball over, but the ball was not the only thing that rushed towards Jason.

The pass didn't have enough pace on it to outpace the running Mura players and one Mura player rushed after the ball while two others rushed towards Jason.

Moving towards the ball, Jason suddenly turned back as if to receive the ball on his inside and turn with it and his opponents seeing that tried to block his sides.

But on receiving the ball, Jason who had been moving as if to turn suddenly bounced back, flicking the ball back and jumping through the space between the two players on his side, but he wasn't out of trouble yet because there was one more guy who hadn't reached him yet earlier but was now within kicking distance of the ball.

The Mura player immediately put out his leg, trying to steal the ball, but Jason was faster and flicked the ball between the space that opened between his legs instead.

{Oh wow! Pressure doesn't mean much to this man, does it?}

{Who needs defending when they can't get the ball off you, really}

With the Mura players having surged forward on the press, the danger wasn't over yet, but for Jason, he saw an opportunity and after using a la croqueta to dodge another tackle, he sent the ball curling into the path of Son's run on the left with a trivela pass.

Making it to the ball, Son wasn't able to reach it before it bounced, causing him to have to curve his run a bit, but he managed to reach it on the left side of the penalty box and sent a cross into the center where Kane was waiting.

{Kane!!!}

Kane hit the ball with the side of his foot first time and sent it into the far left where Obradovic couldn't hope to reach, sending the net bulging and the Tottenham fans to their feet.

Kane ran down to the sidelines, hugging Son who was waiting for him and the other Tottenham players came running over.

{From back to front! I doubt it's been ten seconds and Tottenham have reversed a situation that looked like it could end badly for them!}

{It's this man again!}

{The previous leg, he scored an hat-trick and now he has two!}

{And I dare say, this goal wouldn't have been possible without the efforts of Jason back there}

{Escaping the high press like he did with such finesse and picking out the perfect pass to create the opportunity}

{Such precision, such skill, such beautiful football}

Jason finally reached the players celebrating and got a lot of appreciation from his teammates for his play.

High fiving Son and Kane, Jason blew a kiss to the few Tottenham fans in the stadium before turning back as well and heading back to his team's half.

While the Tottenham side was happy at finally completing a comeback, the Mura players and fans were distraught after all their efforts the whole game evaporated in front of them without them being able to stop it.

They hadn't suddenly begun playing badly, rather, they had been focused all game and put in as much effort as they could, but even then it wasn't enough.

The gulf in quality between them was truly vast, but after managing to trouble Tottenham for this long, their spirits weren't broken just yet.

As soon as the game resumed they switched to attacking football.

There was nothing left to defend for.

They had played four games so far with this being their fifth one on the group and they had lost all four and were on track to losing their fifth game.

It was impossible for them to qualify at this point so at least they didn't want to feel like they hadn't given everything.

There was just one small issue with their thinking.

With how vast the difference in quality was, releasing the defensive pressure that had kept Tottenham in check all game was a mutually destructive decision.

Just four minutes later, Tottenham caught them on the counterattack after stopping a Mura attack and the ball was quickly sent up the field into Mura's half and before long Tottenham was in the final third.

{Tottenham's looking to get a third and bury this game!}

Mura had managed to get back quickly enough to slow down Tottenham so the counter attack had stalled with Moura now on the ball looking for options, but not seeing any options leading to goal, he passed to Jason who was making an overlapping run at minimal pace.

{Out to the flank, spotting the overlapping run from the wingback}

Receiving the ball and pushing it forward at jogging pace, Jason squared off against the one Mura player directly in his path.

{Can he get through, it's only one man in his path at the moment!?!}

Seeing how firmly the guy was following his movements, Jason immediately determined that the guy wasn't trying to stop him by holding him off, but rather was looking for an opportunity to make a tackle even if it meant getting booked.

Taking advantage of that, Jason feigned as if to cut inside before suddenly turning back to the outside.

Klemen Sturm saw Jason's initial move and then sudden change but luckily he hadn't committed to Jason's earlier move and immediately made to tackle if he made an outside run, but suddenly Jason changed direction one more time.

It was a feint inside a feint that no one could predict, not even the camera man shooting from up close.

With Klemen tackling the wrong direction, Jason cut in from the right, reached the edge of the penalty box and without much thought unleashed a blitz curler, aiming for the top left corner of the post.

{He's away and he hits it!}

Obradovic leaped as powerfully as he could, following the ball with his eyes, but he couldn't hope to stop the ball that smashed into the top left side of the goal.

{Oh it's in!}

{Surely this is it! The one to settle it all!}

{Impact! Instant Impact!}

{His first game back after three months of injury, playing in an unfamiliar position, but he won't stay silent and he's had his say!}

Chapter 838: Title Race?

Surprisingly, Jason barely celebrated his goal and only did a small fist pump as he turned back.

Perhaps it was out of respect for the opponents, or that he didn't consider them a challenge worth celebrating scoring against, or... Maybe it was just a sudden thought, no one really knew.

Jason's lack of enthusiasm on the goal didn't translate to his teammates though.

He was quickly surrounded and jumped on, receiving hugs and high fives from his teammates as he headed back to his team's half.

The Mura players were now beginning to look down. It had now dawned on them that this wasn't a fantasy story where they were the main characters.

This game was already beyond them now and even if they pulled out all stops, their chances of coming back was only about 15% and this was because of Tottenham's current situation.

The full strength of the team wasn't on the pitch, they were a man down, and their defense wasn't much to boast about at their level.

If not the chances would be even lower.

But they would still give it their all and they did just that, even stunning everyone and managing to score a last minute goal on the counter, reducing the deficit to one goal, but at the final whistle, they were still the losing side.

However they had put up a good fight and everyone watching understood and respected that.

Jason grabbed a bottle and poured some in his mouth and was about to pour some on his head, but was hugged and patted on the back by Conte.

"Good work!" Conte was clearly happy and went on to share commendations with other members of the squad while Jason poured some water on his head.

He wasn't even tired yet and this little taste had left him wanting more so he could only let the water run through his hair and cool down his enthusiasm a bit.

He was still being monitored and there would definitely be checks on his leg before the medical team would allow the manager to give him more minutes.

Weirdly enough, because he was playing as a wingback which was technically a defender, he didn't get tackled much since he hadn't gotten into too many attacking positions in the short minutes he had been on.

So that was pretty good. Now he could only hope for more minutes in coming games.

The Tottenham players soon gathered to thank the few traveling fans who had made the journey to Slovenia to support them before finally heading to the dressing room where they received praise from Conte for their unyielding attitude and their determination to win.

It was one of the things Conte loved to see from his players and the squad had really shown that tonight with their performance.

Some parts still needed brushing up, especially the late goal they conceded and that the spirit to fight wasn't shown by everyone on the pitch at all moments, but these were things that they would have to work on as time went by.

For today, the players were in a celebratory mood.

With a string of good results, Tottenham carried on their preparations for their next game in the premier league.

A home game against Brentford who were just 3 points behind them but sitting at 12th place on the league table as opposed to Tottenham who were 7th.

Despite being 7th Tottenham were quite a distance from the title race with Chelsea seated at the top of the table with 30 points.

Man City and Liverpool had 29 and 28 points respectively and were in the title race with Chelsea, while Tottenham was a whole 11 points away.

At this point one could almost say Tottenham was out of the title race unless they somehow kept winning all their games and racking up points while the top teams dropped points, but such a scenario was going to be very tough to pull off.

Not impossible, but almost impossibly tough because those teams were at the peak of their powers at the moment and honestly speaking, Tottenham were still quite leaky despite improvements in their performance over the last few games.

Whether their attacking capabilities would be able to make up for that in the games to come, that remained to be seen.

However now that Jason was back from injury, a lot of eyes were on Tottenham again.

Jason's goal and brilliant performance on his first game back from injury hadn't gone unnoticed and teams that had Tottenham on their schedule had begun putting more efforts into their tactics as they now had an extra problem to deal with.

An annoyingly tricky one.

Time passed and it was soon the twelfth month of the year and with the twelfth month came more matches, the first of which for Tottenham was on the second day of the new month.

4 months into the season, will Jason finally get his first start?

News articles and tweets about all sorts of football topics filled the online space and even some of the offline platforms but the players themselves were preparing for their upcoming game.

****2nd December 2021****

Tottenham welcomed Brentford at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, each team ready to battle it out for the 3 points at stake.

With Tottenham playing the 3-4-3 formation and Brentford playing the 3-5-2 formation under Thomas Frank, the two sides arranged themselves in a somewhat similar formation.

Once again, Jason was on the bench as he was still being closely monitored and Conte believed that there was still more to Lucas Moura's current form.

Lucas had gotten two assists in the last game, building off his previous form and that was good enough reason for Conte to choose to keep him in the starting lineup.

However Moura knew that his position was under contention and if he didn't keep playing well, his starting spot was about to be taken away.

Moura himself couldn't deny that Jason was a better player than him and could do more on the pitch, but he wasn't about to give up his starting spot so easily either.

Either way, the pressure was on.

Fweeeeeeeee

The game begun.

Chapter 839: First Premier League Game Back I

Tottenham began the game on a strong note, starting an attack in the sixth minute that ended with Kane making a pass to Moura inside the right side of the box and Moura attempting a shot, but the ball was easily blocked by Alvaro Fernandez.

It wasn't a surprise as any professional keeper worth his salt should be able to save a shot like that in that condition, but it was Tottenham's first shot on target in the game.

Their second shot came six minutes later after a corner kick that Son had played short to Reguilon.

Reguilon waited for Son to step behind the offside line before returning the ball and Son aimed the ball at the center, trying to pick out a teammate.

The ball flew into the center where it Ben Davies was being marked by two Brentford players, yet he somehow managed to send the ball into the back of the net.

{Davies sends it through!}

{He was watching, he was waiting and he delivered!} The commentator exclaimed as Ben Davies celebrated the goal with his teammates but soon the replay began showing and it told a slightly different story.

The ball had indeed bounced off Davies's head last before entering the back of the net, but it was because Sergi Canos was trying to head it away instead.

It was Sergi Canos clearance attempt that had caused the goal and not Ben Davies header so the goal was considered an own goal instead.

Either way it didn't matter much to the Tottenham players who mostly only cared that they were ahead and the match continued.

If it wasn't clear before that Tottenham was in the driving seat in the game, as more minutes, it became clearer and clearer that Brentford could hardly break down Antonio Conte's team.

If it weren't for Brentford's goalkeeper, Fernandez, Thomas Frank's side would have been down by a few more goals at the end of the first half of the game.

The man was really on form and he was showing it with save after save.

Nevertheless, Tottenham went into the first half break with a calm head as they hadn't really been threatened all game.

Conte however wanted no part in this relaxed mentality and all he said in the half time meeting could be summed up into a few words.

Stay compact at the back and find a chance to kill the game.

The Tottenham players didn't disagree and went out into the second half with the mind to do exactly that and just four minutes a chance came to do exactly that.

Hojberg managed to intercept a pass in the middle of the park while most of the Brentford players were behind him and he immediately sent the ball to his right into the path of Oliver Skipp.

Skipp pushed the ball forward, his eyes scanning the pitch in front of him and making a decision.

With a beautiful defense splitting pass, he sent the ball through the Brentford defenders and into the path of Harry Kane running at the goal from the left side.

{Here's Harry Kane one on one!}

{For his second premier league goal of the seasonnnn!!!} The commentator screamed as Kane hit the ball at goal, but Alvaro Fernandez had different ideas.

Getting down quickly, he managed to block the ball's path with his body before it got past him and pushed the ball into the path of a teammate who cleared it quickly.

{Not today!}

{Fantastic save from Fernandez to keep his team in the game!}

{He's really been on form!}

The commentator exclaimed while Kane lay on the ground in shock, a hand covering his face in frustration.

It was already the 14th week in the Premier League and he, the team's main striker still only had a single Premier League goal to his name.

He was supposed to be one of the best strikers in the world but the other people he was sharing the rankings with already had about 10 goals already or even more, yet here he was struggling to get a second goal this far into the season.

Conte couldn't believe it either.

He was pleased that his players were playing well and attacking well, but the opponent's goalkeeper was performing so well that it was frustrating.

His team needed to bury the game so that they could be at ease a little but it was proving annoyingly difficult.

The only good thing was that the opponents really weren't threatening at all, otherwise he would have pulled his hair out by now.

'No we need more attacking power,' Conte thought to himself.

Lucas Moura who he had chosen to start the game, hoping he would be able to build off his previous form had been silent after his first attempt of the game.

Brentford had somewhat identified him as someone who could get things going and was dangerous on the counterattack thanks to his pace and they had made sure to stop him from running.

Since he couldn't get away, he couldn't get into dangerous spaces and even his passing lanes were being blocked, stopping him from playing any one-twos to escape.

Hence he had been kept quiet all game and hadn't contributed much to Tottenham's attacking.

Regulion who was a wingback was doing even more than he was on the attack and the team couldn't have that.

If Moura wasn't able to help on the attack, then better to bring on someone who could.

"Tell Jason to get ready to get on and to come meet me for instructions," Conte finally turned to his bench in the 63rd minute.

Jason got up immediately to quickly do a little warmup. Starting with a jog down the sidelines, he calmly warmed up, but the Tottenham fans on seeing him running up and down the sidelines couldn't stay calm.

Beginning to applaud him as he warmed up, they showed their encouragement and optimism for him as he came back from injury.

While all this was happening off the pitch, on the pitch, Tottenham got another chance to counter after they regained possession high up the pitch.

The ball soon found its way to Skipp who spotted a run from an overlapping Regulion and he sent a pacey ball up the pitch into the man's path.

Catching up to the ball, Regulion pushed it into the box before squaring it off to Son who was running in from the center and had kept up with him.

Fernandez had made almost superhuman saves all game, but even he could do nothing about Son who was faced with an open goal.

Without any surprise, the ball was slotted into the back of the net and Tottenham was up by two.

The players immediately took off in celebration.

Chapter 840: First Premier League Game Back II

"I need you to stay center and always be ready to run. Just like we did in training,"

"You get the ball, you move it quickly before they close us down," while the players and the fans were celebrating the goal, Conte was giving Jason instructions.

"Leave the flank to Emerson and focus on your job up front to create goals,"

"Also take it easy. Don't stress yourself too much. I know you're alright, but you can never be too careful," Conte told Jason who nodded in understanding.

With the instructions passed along and the players returning to their starting positions, Conte sent Jason to the assistant referee to make the substitution.

The next moment, the board was held up with Jason's number in green and Moura's in red.

The crowd erupted in applause for Moura who was coming off and Jason who was coming on.

Jason ran slapping hands with his teammates as he ran past them hand, reaching his position and brushing his hand through his hair that loosely fell onto his face.

Fweeeeee!

{Brentford kick off for the third time today. It's a result that warrants their performance today which has been flat}

{They've not been able to get things going so far and now it's looking like it's a little too late}

{Never say never James, it wouldn't be beyond Brentford to stage a comeback} the commentator's partner cut in.

{Nothing is impossible, but their performance so far hasn't given the fans much to hold on to}

The conversation of the commentators soon turned to Jason who was joining his teammates in pressing the opposition players.

{He looks good out there doesn't he? After a three month injury, you would think he would slowly ease into it, but from his performance out in Slovenia, he seems to have hit the ground running}

{Well we do know that he is without doubt a quality player and he only keeps showing us that quality}

{His ability on the ball, to hold onto it and take it through the tightest of spaces is something that any manager would want in a player, but his creativity, range of passing and goal scoring abilities, even from set-pieces makes him an irreplaceable asset to any team}

{Surely, Conte is glad to have him and his teammates are too}

While the commentators were speaking, Tottenham had managed to regain possession, but doing so in a deep position with all chances for a counter blocked, they took it easy on the ball, passing it around which allowed Jason to get a few touches on the ball.

Conte's style of football mostly relied on counterattacks and long balls, but in the current situation there was no chance for either.

However Jason didn't intend to wait for the perfect chance to attack, he'd rather create the chances himself.

#70th minute...

Receiving the ball in his team's half with his back to the opponents goal, Jason's body feigned to the right as if he planned to turn on his right and his marker followed that movement only to realize it was a feint.

Jason turned the other way, completing the turn in less than a second and beginning to push the ball forward.

With Jason suddenly breaking through from the center, Brentford found themselves on the back foot and suddenly began running back, trying to get back in defensive positions.

Facing off against another Brentford player, Jason slowed down and then used a reverse elastico to dodge past the outside and then began cutting back in behind the defender.

At this point he was already in the final third, but the Brentford players were marking tightly and there were still quite a bit of players between him and goal.

Spotting an overlapping run from Emerson Royal, Jason rolled the ball into his path.

Emerson pushed the ball forward with his first touch and sent a cross into the Brentford penalty box, but shortly after the ball left his foot it became clear that it was a hasty cross and the ball sailed over everyone arriving in the center before they even got there.

{That's not helping at all!}

{After being played in like that and completely free of any pressure, you'd think he'd take his time to pick out a teammate, but he's overhit it instead}

{What did he do that for, there was no one there!} Clearly aggravated from the missed opportunity, the commentators didn't hesitate to make the opinions heard.

The game resumed with Brentford's goal kick and they sent the ball up the field, trying to get it into dangerous areas, but they were really out of their groove today.

74th minute...

Once again having stolen possession but not being able to counter, Tottenham was moving the ball around and trying to build up from the back.

The wingbacks were beginning to move forward, ready to make the overlapping run once needed.

Ethan Pinnock was the man responsible for marking Jason and had been staying nearby enough to close Jason down as soon as the ball came his way.

As Tottenham passed the ball around, it found Skipp who tried to pass to Jason, but the pass was blocked by Christian Norgaard who quickly tried to trap the ball but Skipp recovered quickly enough to get to it first and send it to Hojberg nearby.

Hojberg caught it on his chest, but he was also being closed down quickly by the Brentford players who smelled an opportunity.

Quickly kicking the ball a bit high towards Jason, he hoped Jason could get it under control and escape the press with it or at least clear it.

As the ball moved towards Jason, so also did Ethan and when he was about 3 meters away, Jason caught the ball on his chest, watched it go up and then let it fall towards his feet.

At this point, Ethan was already right behind Jason thinking he could win the ball as soon as it touched the ground, but before it touched the ground, Jason flicked it with his heel backwards and into the path on the flank.

The ball flew between the legs of Ethan who was behind him and into the path of Emerson Royal who pushed the ball forward with amazing pace, taking it up the pitch.

Jason didn't waste any time thinking about what he just did and was already running up the field as well, advancing through the center.

Emerson Royal had already reached the right side of the penalty box and crossed the ball in again, this time opting for a low cross to avoid a repeat of last time, but his cross didn't even make it past the first Brentford defender.

Jansson managed to block the ball with his body, but he had barely gotten in the way in time and wasn't able to direct the ball out of play where it would be safest.

Instead the ball flew towards the edge of the penalty box where Jason was arriving.

{There's a chance for him to hit it!}