

Legends 841

Chapter 841: First Premier League Game Back III

Jason ran at the ball swinging his leg at it, yet at the last moment, his leg only touched it enough to stop it, trapping it at his feet while the few Brentford players in his path had jumped at where they thought he would hit the ball too.

Passing the ball towards the Son on his left instead, Son didn't hesitate and sent a right footed curler towards the bottom right corner of Brentford's goal.

Fernandez dove powerfully at the ball but he couldn't reach and the ball sent the net flying.

Pointing at Jason and gesturing for him to follow him, Son began running down to the sidelines with Jason in tow before jumping into a kneeslide.

A little distance away, Jason stopped and made a gesture of a camera, Son's own celebration, and acted as if he was capturing the moment.

{Three! Three for Tottenham! And it couldn't have come more beautifully!}

{Quick electric football from back to front! Once these guys get going you'll barely be able to catch your breath before the ball is at the back of your own net!}

{The goal was a beauty, but that pass to set him was equally as important}

{The manufacturer and the distributor himself creating the goal and still making the final pass. The man pulling the strings and making it look easy}

The Tottenham fans were jumping around in the stands, celebrating the goal and enjoying the feeling of utterly dominating their opponents.

It was one thing to win a game, it was another thing to dominate, and it was yet another thing to play beautiful football.

Tottenham was doing all three and their fans couldn't be happier as they watched.

The fans continued celebrating, even as the players headed back to their half of the field, took their positions and the game resumed.

As far as they were concerned, this game was already in the bag so what did it matter if the celebrations began some ten minutes early.

However while the fans were in a celebratory mood, Conte didn't want his players to let up the slightest.

He wanted them to keep pushing to kill the game even more if it was possible.

With some fresh legs who didn't want to simply appear on the field to while away time, Conte managed to keep his players actively attacking and searching for more goals.

#87th minute...

Brentford had just launched an attack that ended with Norgaard finding Toney in Tottenham's penalty, completely onside, but in an awkward angle.

Still he didn't hesitate to kick the ball at goal, but it was easily blocked by Lloris who quickly ran with it and sent a powerful throw up the pitch to Harry Kane in the center.

As the ball flew towards Kane, Jason turned towards Brentford's goal and began racing forward, expecting Kane to bring the ball under control and spot his run.

His faith wasn't misplaced and the ball was soon sent flying into his path.

{A counterattack is on for Tottenham}

Jason raced forward from the left flank where he had made his run through and raced at the ball, but he wasn't the only one who wanted the ball.

Ethan also raced towards the ball, chasing after Jason and while Jason managed to get to the ball first, stopping it from rolling out of play for a throw-in, it allowed Ethan who knew he couldn't keep up to reach Jason and pull at him as he ran past with full speed.

The sudden pull sent Jason into a spinning fall, but right after landing on his knees, Jason pushed himself back to his feet and continued towards the ball, but now Sergi Canos was in front, trying to get to the ball as well.

{He went down but he's back up again just as quickly!}

Increasing his speed again, Jason raced towards the ball, managing to get to it just a split second earlier than Canos and push it past him, jumping over his tackle.

Jason left leg still clipped against Canos leg, sending him scrambling yet again, but he got right back up before even falling completely.

{He just wouldn't go down!}

With his push of the ball, the ball finally made it into the penalty box with Jason not far behind but as Jason reached the ball, one more Brentford player jumped into his path.

With no more space to go past on the outside, Jason tried to cut inside instantly, but the guy coming at him was coming at top speed and wasn't able to stop in time to follow Jason.

Out of reflex, his leg shot out, trying to stop himself, but all he managed to do was sweep Jason's legs from under him roughly.

{He's gone down in the penalty area!}

This time Jason really went down, the impact on his legs a lot stronger than before.

Landing on the ground, Jason began rolling over in pain and the Tottenham fans who had been watching in awe, shock, and expectation suddenly had a lot of worry on their faces.

After all, Jason just came back from injury and was still at a huge injury risk.

Any severe impact to his legs could cause the injury to resurface.

They couldn't have that happen now, especially when it was clear that he brought so much to the team.

The Tottenham players weren't having it either and rushed up to Charlie Goode who had just tackled Jason.

The referee also ran over quickly, doing his best to fan out any flames of conflict before it began, but the loud voices of the Tottenham players calling out for a punishment filled his ears.

The Tottenham players were arguing that the tackle was a clear obstruction of a goal scoring opportunity because while Charlie wasn't the last man back, if Jason got past him, Jason would have a clear shot on goal.

{The player affects looks to be in serious pain. He's rolling over and gripping his leg, agony written across his face?} on

As the referee was making a decision and pulling his cards out of his pockets, Jason who was rolling over on the ground suddenly stopped, opened one eye to sneakily glance at the Tottenham crowd, winked at them and silently shushed them before continuing to turn over, seemingly in pain.

The gasps of shock from the Tottenham fans were followed by outrage cries of red card for Charlie, the Tottenham fans quickly catching on and playing along.

Chapter 842: You're Welcome

Charlie Goode was given a yellow card and Tottenham were given a penalty for the foul in the penalty box.

After getting up, Jason picked up the ball and threw it to Kane, saying, "You're welcome," and then headed outside the box.

Laying on his back on the grass with his hands behind his head and his legs crossed, he waited for Harry Kane to score the penalty.

"What are you doing man?" Eric Dier asked, having come over when he saw Jason laying down.

"Just chilling for a bit, I'll get up when the celebrations are over,"

"Join me," Jason grinned at him.

"..."

"Hell,night as well," Eric didn't bother thinking too much and also lay down.

Even without looking, up, the commentatry kept them updated and the loud shouts of the Tottenham fans rocking the stadium let them know the ball had gone in.

What they weren't updated about was that Kane after looking for Jason to celebrate with him saw him lying down up the field and ran over.

He didn't know what Jason was doing, but he also lay down to join him and the other Tottenham players joined in as well.

The camera flashes got especially intense at this scene.

{Easy, Easy, Easy. They might as well just take a nap.

Conte didn't even know what to think of his players when he saw them lying down on the field after scoring a goal.

The Tottenham fans however didn't need to understand and began making sleeping gestures as well at the cameras.

On the field, Jason had noticed what his teammates were doing, but while they were doing it for celebration, he had initially done it because he was feeling a bit winded earlier after the tackle.

He didn't know how that turned into all his teammates lying down around him in celebrations, but the match was still ongoing.

Rising up, he said with a smile, "I think we should get up now."

Standing up and sharing some hugs and high fives with each other before heading back to their positions.

The rest of the game was quickly passed by with Tottenham continuing to hold onto the reins of the game.

Conte's attacking tactics usually involved his players running at their opponents, but it was based off the fact that Conte himself wasn't a very technical player good with tight spaces when he played.

This was why it was considered vertical tikitaka. It didn't require exceptional talent to play in that manner, but speed and moving the ball quickly were indispensable parts of the playing style.

Because of this, Conte usually made his players press all over the pitch, but also to draw back and make the opponents come onto them so that when they finally got an opportunity to counter, there were fewer players behind the ball and more space to run into.

Jason's presence however changed things a bit and presented a new tactical opportunity to Conte's men.

Jason could suddenly get past his marker in the middle of the field and begin running at defense forcing a counter opportunity without them having to waste so much time running up and down the pitch and it was usually just as sudden as the initial tactic.

This helped Conte's men to avoid long spells of them chasing the ball or just passing it around because they couldn't break past their opponents.

It also gave Jason a chance to "express" himself at the opponents expense and entertain the fans.

The only downside to this was that it was more draining to the players who were already high strung.

Also, it could cause problems if someone lost the ball when they were rushing forward.

Conte couldn't even say anything to stop Jason because annoyingly enough, he hardly ever lost the ball when he began dribbling unless he was the one tackled and not the ball.

It was some of his teammates who couldn't keep up with him and lost the ball, causing everyone to have to double back.

After a few more minutes of entertaining football, the referee finally blew the whistle to end the game.

The two teams had come into the game as somewhat equal sides based on their performances up till now, but Brentford was suddenly thrashed out of nowhere and had barely looked threatening all game.

And it wasn't because of a lack of effort, but rather because Thoma Frank's side had been completely outplayed.

Rarely did one see such a game between two sides that were supposed to be equal.

Even on paper, Tottenham just had a few more exceptional players on their squad than Brentford did and safe to say, it was those exceptional players who made the difference in the game.

Those players were now giving interviews after the match.

"How did it feel to get your second goal of the season? Some relief perhaps?" A reporter asked Kane.

"It's always good to score and I always want to score because it helps the team but I have a lot more than goals to offer the team,"

"If my role requires me to do things other than scoring, then as long as it helps the team to win, I'm all hands," Kane replied.

"With two goals here in this game, you extend your goal scoring record and maintain your place at the top scorer in the premier league this season. Do you think you can keep this up all season and maybe even finish as the top goal scorer?" The reporter asked Son.

"I hope so," Son said and laughed.

"I'll work hard and I hope that can turn into goals because like Harry said. It helps the team when there are goals and I hope we can keep the fans happy," Son said, a bit more seriously.

"Jason, it's your first premier league game after your injury and you looked really good out there. How did you feel coming into the game and now after the game?"

"Should we expect more appearances from you in the coming weeks?" The reporter turned to Jason.

"Uh, I feel good. We're still monitoring the situation, but I've recovered well, I think and it feels really good to play in the Premier League again after so long," Jason replied with a small nod.

"That celebration after Harry's goal where the team lay down on the pitch. What brought that about?"

Chapter 843: Ballon D'Or 2021 I

4th November 2021

The picture of Tottenham's players laying down on the field after Harry Kane's goal made it to the front page of many sports news papers and also became a trending topic.

Jason had replied honestly in an interview that he was just resting after being a bit winded from falling over three times in quick succession and that his teammates had just copied him.

Many people had accepted his words as the truth, but a lot of people on the internet in normal internet fashion had chosen to believe something else and find faults that didn't exist.

Some said he and his teammates were being disrespectful to the professional spirit of their opponents with the celebration.

Some had said Jason was too non-chalant.

Some said he just wanted to farm aura and look cool.

The various opinions sparked various debates, but one thing that no one could deny was that a new team celebration had appeared.

In other matches around the world in some lower tier leagues, some teams did the same goal celebration and with all the traction on Jason's matter, the news about those other teams got some attention as well.

However the team in concern were hard in training, focusing on their next Premier League game against Norwich City, while the player who was the main cause of all the media attention, was on a plane to Paris just in time for the Balloon d'or ceremony.

He wasn't the only one invited to the ceremony from the Tottenham squad, but he was the only one going as the club had another game in just 2 days.

Conte's reason for sending him off was because as someone still at injury risk, back to back schedules were still a bit too much for him so wouldn't be starting the next game.

Also, Jason had the highest potential among all the under 21 players in the world to win the Kopa Trophy this season so he should be at the ceremony to receive the award just in case.

For other players like Kane and Son who would be on the rankings but didn't have much chance at any awards, they simply stayed back at England.

Thus Jason arrived at Paris where Adele and Daphne were already waiting and he was quickly dragged off to get ready for the event that would be taking place that same evening.

The women were shuffling back and forth on how he should dress up and what to say if he won and all that, but weirdly enough, Jason didn't feel nervous... More like a bit irritated.

He had been injured for so long and now that he was finally getting to play, there was this ceremony.

If not for the ceremony, he would potentially have gotten his first start in the Premier League tomorrow, but with how late he would get back, he might not even be a part of the squad in the game tomorrow.

Scratch that... He definitely wouldn't be part of the squad because he barely trained, was an injury risk, and would be exhausted from all the activities.

If he told anyone that the game against Norwich was more important to him than dressing up and going for the Ballon D'Or ceremony, they would probably want to strangle him, especially considering that he was both a nominee for the Kopa Trophy and the Ballon D'Or award itself.

Maybe it was because he stopped paying attention to things like individual awards a long time ago because no matter anyone said or tried to use to white-wash them, they weren't awards won on the pitch.

If a team won the Champions League, then that was that.

Individual awards that weren't based off just stats just felt like propaganda because unless it was a very standout season for one particular player who was so much better than everyone else, there would always be controversy.

For example, the Ballon D'Or award ceremony he was about to go to probably had four players who were most touted to win it.

Ronaldo was the first, because of his individual performances and leading Uventus to win literally every trophy that could be snagged up.

Lewandowski was another option, with his record breaking 41 Bundesliga goals and total of 64 goals in all competitions, as well as achieving a domestic double as well as winning the UEFA super cup and the club world cup.

Messi had achieved a total of 38 goals in all competitions, won the Copa Del Rey and then led his country to the 2021 Copa America, securing their first international trophy since 1993.

And then surprisingly but not surprising, there was Jason who had achieved 32 goals and 29 assists in all competitions and in two different teams. He had won all trophies Ronaldo did and won one more at Oporto before joining Uventus in January.

Then there were other players who had also performed well at the club, continental, and international levels like Jorginho, Benzema, Kante, Salah, De Bruyne, Mbappe e.t.c.

Going by just goals, Lewandowski should win.

If one was speaking star power, impact on the team, and trophies, then Ronaldo was the correct option.

If one considered international trophies as the criteria, then Messi would win.

If the award was to be given to the one with the most trophies, then Jason should win it.

With all that said, it was simply impossible to decide on the winner with absolute certainty, however a bunch of journalists were the ones with the most numbers and most crucial votes to decide who should win the trophy.

Jason didn't have a problem with it because as already said, it was impossible to decide with absolute certainty who should win, but oftentimes, the clear option would not be the one who won the award and that presented serious doubts about the integrity of the awards.

So Jason didn't hate individual awards or all the glam and glamour, he just preferred having his actual stats do the talking.

Actual goals, actual assists, actual impact on the pitch and actual trophies...

Not a debated individual award that didn't serve any purpose than recognition and the justification for his team to severely inflate his price.

All that said and done, he was actually looking forward to the awards a bit, after all, who didn't like recognition?

He just wouldn't be too beaten up if he left the award ceremony with empty hands.

Chapter 844: Ballon D'Or 2021 II

Jason arrived at the Theatre during Chatelet in Paris at 5:51 pm, just in time for the red carpet at 6.

With Daphne and Adele on his left and right respectively, he walked the red carpet with camera flashing and walked into the theatre, the three of them presenting a sight to see.

All three of them wore pure black outfits with varying silver jewelry and they looked more like a badass supervillain group than a family.

The fact that the three of them were extremely pleasant on the eyes didn't help and they drew eyes as they walked the red carpet, stopped to take pictures and then continued into the hall, the cameras flashing incessantly.

After making it into the hall, Jason began the first step of the program involving him, which was the host interviewing the nominees of the awards.

For Jason, he got to be interviewed by the legend himself, Didier Drogba who was also one of the hosts for the award ceremony tonight.

"How does it feel to be here tonight? Did you imagine this moment as a kid?" Drogba began the interview quickly as they didn't have much time together.

"It feels surreal, can't lie. Being here means I've made something of myself at least,"

"You've had an unbelievable season, a League title, the Champions League and 3 different domestic trophies across two countries. When you look back at the year, what stands out the most?"

"I'll say the sacrifices behind the scenes, the commitment from everyone and the burning desire to win above all else. I learnt a lot from the guys at Uventus,"

"And tonight. Nervous or confident?" Drogba asked again.

"Honestly I'm kinda blank right now. Everything's so surreal," Jason said honestly.

"Do you think you can take home any awards tonight?"

"Honestly... I don't even know," Jason chuckled.

"I thought you'd have more confidence. Not many played like you did last season," Drogba said, a bit surprised.

"True, but that's not the deciding factor is it?" Jason smiled, his words a hint to his true feelings about the awards ceremony and a feeling that many shared.

Quickly finding something else to talk about, he turned to Daphne who looked to be the older one among Jason's accompaniment and who also looked a bit like him.

"You brought your mother tonight?"

"My aunt actually. She was there before all this so it's special," Jason said without a pause, though his face twitched and his mood slightly changed after his mother was mentioned.

"Alright, that will be all. Thank you, enjoy the evening. I'm rooting for you," Drogba ended the interview and sent Jason off.

Only after Jason, Adele and Daphne left did the mic in Drogba's ear buzz and a voice said.

"Jason is an orphan, his parents died when he was a kid. Didn't you read that part of the information?"

"Sh*t" the realization of what he had done hit Drogba immediately and now he realized why Jason's mood suddenly seemed to change at the last question.

Unfortunately it wasn't even his fault because he remembered reading all the information carefully and there was nothing about it.

The mention of his mother reminded Jason of the past and put him in a somber mood for a while, but Daphne and Adele weren't having it and they worked together to bring him back, continuously citing that tonight wasn't the night for a somber mood.

Annoyingly enough, the actual Ballon D'Or event was only starting at 8 so those who had arrived had to find something to do to entertain themselves in the meanwhile.

Luckily, entertainment wasn't a problem for Jason and before he knew it time had passed and the hall had filled up with nominees, club managers, former winners and some celebrities and musicians.

Jason had even recognized someone who looked like Tom Holland somewhere in the crowd along with Zendaya.

As someone who loved the Marvel universe, even though his favorite character was Iron Man, he still had a lot of love for the Spider-Man character so Jason wouldn't pass up the opportunity to meet the actor playing Spider-Man, but it would have to wait till the after party.

By 8pm exactly, the awards ceremony officially began with a short cinematic montage of the football year, a crowd shot of all the nominees and a small narration about football's global impact.

Right after that was the opening musical performance and like the people had already heard, the committee had chosen to have BTS the Korean Idol group to perform on the opening stage of the ceremony.

After an energetic performance from the idol group that got everyone excited, the hosts, Drogba and Sandy Heribert got on stage immediately and began with welcoming the audience.

Introducing the football legends present and giving a brief explanation of the voting process before they began the much anticipated revealing of the rankings.

First only the players from rank 21-30 on the Men's Ballon D'Or ranking were revealed.

From back to front, the players were Luka Modric, Ruben Dias, Nicolo Barella, Gerard Moreno, Phil Foden, Perdri, Harry Kane, Lautaro Martinez and Bruno Fernandes.

Each player got highlight clips, applause, and brief camera reaction when their names were mentioned.

After this, it was finally time for the Kopa Trophy to be presented and just like with the Ballon D'Or rankings, the players on the list would also be announced by their rankings from back to front.

Starting from the back was Giovanni Reyna in 10th with only 1 vote.

Followed by Ryan Gravenberch with 3 votes in 9th position, then Florian Wirtz and Bukayo both with 8 votes.

Mason Greenwood, Nuno Mendes and Jamal Musiala were 6th, 5th, and 4th with 15, 22 and 38 votes respectively.

Now it was down to the final three and Jason knowing he hadn't heard his name yet wasn't surprised, but was only waiting expectantly.

In third place was Jude Bellingham with 39 votes.

In second was Perdri with 40 votes.

And in first place was...

Chapter 845: Ballon D'Or 2021 III

In first place of the Kopa Trophy rankings was Jason with 42 votes.

The crowd immediately erupted in applause while on the huge screen above the stage, highlights of his 2020/21 season was being played.

On the internet, the rankings of the Kopa Trophy was also released simultaneously and the netizens quickly began giving their opinions and congratulations on the rankings.

At this point something has begun to brew up when people saw the meagre difference between the votes of the first and second place on the rankings.

All this had nothing to do with Jason who had taken to the stage, his eyes clear and a small smile on his face.

Receiving the award, he then had to give a short speech.

Holding the award with one hand, he put his mouth to the mic.

"Well, I didn't prepare a speech so I don't know what to say really. Uh, my parents aren't here anymore, but I'm sure that from where they are, they are happy right now,"

"I want to thank God, my family, my teammates, my agent, my girlfriend, my friends, the fans and everyone who has wished me well,"

"Lastly I want to thank me for not giving up on me, for putting in the work, for all sacrifices and for always being there for me," Unlike Snoop Dogg's iconic speech that was for fun and clicks, Jason meant every word he was saying to himself.

Only he knew what he had gone through in the efforts of making himself a better player to get into places like this and he was grateful that he was in this situation.

Finally leaving the stage, the applause echoed loudly as Jason moved backstage to take pictures with the award.

After a bit, he headed back to his seat with his award and by this point the award ceremony had already continued.

The second musical performance had already begun when Jason took his seat again and as he walked to his seat quite a few number of people congratulated him.

Daphne and Adele congratulated him as well as he sat back down in-between them.

The ceremony continued and they moved on to the next 10 players in the Ballon D'Or rankings, namely ranks 11-20.

This time doing more analysis and commentators talking about surprises of the season.

Key goals, trophies won, and season stats of the players in that section of the ranking.

From there it was time for the Yashin trophy and the Gerd Muller award, the awards for the best goalkeeper and best striker.

Without surprise, Gianluigi Donnaruma won the Yashin trophy award as he had been the most impressive goalkeeper all season, irrespective of the trophies his team won.

For the Gerd Muller award people paid a lot more attention as it would determine which player could be removed from consideration for the final Ballon D'Or award.

It was sort of an unwritten rule that one couldn't take more than one award home from the Ballon D'Or ceremony unless the second award involved team of the year.

Since the best striker award could only go to one of two players; Ronaldo or Lewandowski, whichever one of them win it would definitely not be winning the Ballon D'Or award, reducing the shortlist.

There was also the part where Ronaldo was the most touted to win the Ballon D'Or so if he didn't get the consolation prize of best striker award, then well... However no one could really be sure who would end up with the award on that night.

"And the Gerd Muller award goes to..."

"Robert Lewandowski!!!"

Lewandowski's face twitched as he confirmed that he wouldn't be winning the Ballon D'Or tonight.

But it couldn't be helped, he had been spectacular all season, but his fellow contenders had been even more spectacular.

At least he wasn't going home empty handed, he thought as he walked up the podium to receive his award.

Giving a short speech before heading back to his seat, he sat down again as one of the winners of this year's award ceremony.

The show took quick break to reduce the tension with a little entertainment from the hosts who interacted with the players and other guests, making light jokes and entertaining the crowd for a few minutes before getting back on track.

The rankings of the players from 5 to 10 were revealed after and at this point, each player reveal came with a narrated mini documentary and the major moments of their season was played on the screen.

At this point, Jason's breath had slightly tightened as his name had still not been entioned.

At earlier conjecture, he had thought to himself that he was actually one of the most likely names to win the award and he had also told himself that individual awards didn't matter, but now that it was actually happening, he was actually beginning to feel the weight of the moment.

Talk was cheap... When big moments actually happened, how wouldn't he be stunned?

It was hard to believe that just after a season and a half, he was already in contention for the acclaimed best in the world for the year title.

Turning to the Women's Ballon D'Or, the attention was once again taken away from the final four of the Men's Ballon D'Or.

The top 3 of the Women's Ballon D'Or ranking were quickly shown and the winner took her award among much fanfare.

Right after that was another musical performance, the third for the night.

It was a pretty dramatic performance with a choir, orchestra and dramatic lighting and really highlighted the fact that they were in the final stages of the awards ceremony.

Right after that, the coach of the Year award was given to Andrea Pirlo for his efforts with Uventus, both domestically and continentally as the winner of the Champions League and SuperCup.

Right after that Uventus also won the club of the year award which was to be expected, considering they had won the Champions League and done very well domestically.

With all that out of the way, it was time for the final act.

The final four players on the ranking, Ronaldo, Messi, Lewandowski, and Jason were presented individually with a mini documentary filled with their highlights, statistics and defining moments of their season.

"In 4th place for the Ballon D'Or ranking 2021, is..."

"Jason Bolu with 380 votes,"

Loud applause filled the room but Jason despite expecting it sighed internally, a bit disappointed.

This was exactly why he didn't want to have much hope in the first place, but he also understood that the individual performances of all the other three players were far ahead of his so it was a loss he could easily swallow.

With Jason selected as fourth, everyone expected the next result which was Lewandowski in third with 396 votes.

In classic fashion, the hosts once again diverted from main topic and began a short tribute segment, but everyone was itching in their seats as they waited for the final results of the award ceremony.

Luckily they didn't have to wait long and the two final players were shown side by side and a quick run down of their season was shown.

With all that done, the hosts began to open the envelope bearing the name of the final winner.

"And the winner for the Ballon D'Or 2021, is...."

"Christiano Ronaldo with 547 votes,"

The most thunderous applause yet filled the Theater as Ronaldo stood up from his seat and received several embraces from his family before he finally walked to the stage to receive his award.

The Ballon D'Or was presented to Ronaldo by former teammate and football legend Ricardo Kaka and Ronaldo received the award with a huge smile.

Turning to the crowd to give his speech, he thanked his family, his teammates, and the organizers of the event, gave a word of warning to the crowd that he wasn't done winning and making the news just yet.

He received even more applause as he finished and the pictures session immediately began and all the winners of the other awards were invited up the stage once again with their awards to take pictures altogether.

Walking on the stage, Jason congratulated Ronaldo and Ronaldo did the same to him as they had both won something thanks to the efforts of each other.

The final pictures were taken with everyone on the stage and the ceremony ended shortly after with players now moving to press rooms for quick interviews to record some heat of the moment shots.

Right after that was a VIP after-party that Jason couldn't avoid even if he tried because quite a few people now wanted to meet him.

After all, winning the Kopa Trophy and being 4th on the Ballon D'Or rankings during his first appearance in the award ceremony was a very impressive feat.

With the number of senior footballers and legends who had said they hoped to meet him at the after party, if he dared not attend, there would instantly be news about him being prideful and all sorts of other weird rumors.

Of course he could ignore all that and do what he wanted, but it wasn't worth the trouble.

Also, he really did want to go as his "seniors" were treasure troves of knowledge and connections.

Chapter 846: Public Reaction

****5th November 2021****

The aftereffects of the previous night's Ballon D'Or award ceremony was still rocking social media severely.

The Ronaldo fans were celebrating their stan's success while the Messi fans were lamenting.

Some fans of pure attacking and goal scoring were saying Lewandowski should have won it and quite a few of the neutrals were commenting on how shocking it was that Jason was in the conversation and some even believed he should have won it.

Finally, some trouble makers and stat heads were commenting on the disparity in votes.

Ronaldo had won the award with 547 votes and behind him in close second was Messi with 514, then Lewandowski with 410 and Jason with 380.

Some people were already complaining about why it was so close between Ronaldo and Messi.

How was a player who had won 5 trophies comparable to someone who had only won 2 while other people who had won more trophies were behind the person who had won only two?

So what if one of the trophies was an international trophy? It wasn't the world cup.

It was also clear that if not for the abnormally clear disparity in success, the player with two trophies would have won the final trophy.

For people who already doubted the integrity of the award, this became a glaring bone to pick.

While the intrrnet netizens were having fun with this issue, someone pulled up another issue.

Jason had been a top four Ballon D'Or ranked player and had also won the Kopa Trophy, but if one looked at the difference in votes between him and second place Pedri, the disparity wasn't a lot and that frankly... Was insane.

One player had won the trophy of every tournament that he participated in and had a total of 61 g/a over the season while the other didn't have half as many goal involvements and only won a single trophy.

Granted they had different roles on the pitch and Pedri had done a lot more than just scoring and giving assists but his impact had been nowhere near close enough to Jason that it warranted such a narrow lead.

To a lot of non-Barcelona fans, such a result was criminal because it felt like the voters in the Kopa Trophy were saying there wasn't much of a difference between Jason and Pedri and if that translated to the actual Ballon D'Or award then it would mean Pedri was one of the top 10 players in the world that season.

But in the actual Ballon D'Or rankings Pedri was a mere 20-somethingth.

All these things were causing quite the steer on the internet, but Jason didn't even know as he hadn't even had time to check.

He had received tons of congratulatory messages and well wishes from his teammates, both current and former as well as from friends and family and now he was about to do something else.

Jason stepped onto the green of the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, still tired from all the activities from the last two days.

Flying back and forth, the award ceremony and the after party were all very tiring and he was glad that he didn't have to play any football right now and was even given a few days break.

However before that he had something to do.

Holding his Kopa Trophy that he had come to show off to the fans as arranged by the club.

He had been asked if he could do it just before the match to give the fans and the players a morale boost.

Tottenham wasn't a team he had been with for long and this award was from his performances for other teams, yet Jason didn't have any issues displaying the award to the Tottenham fans.

He was a Tottenham man now after all.

Walking onto the field while the other players were already done with the pre-match formalities but hadn't yet started the match, the announcer put mouth to mic.

"Here's your new Kopa Trophy Winner, Tottenham's very own Jason Bolu!!!"

Dressed in a white and black jacket draped over it as well as black baggy trousers and white Nike Air 270s, Jason did a half pitch across the field, showing the trophy to the fans who cheered loudly and applauded.

"He didn't become that man with us, but he's one of us now," one of the spectators told another fan as they cheered and they both cheered louder.

On a clock, Jason didn't spend too much time on the pitch as a match was about to start so he quickly got off the pitch and was about to be directed to the executives box for the match viewing, but he chose to sit above the players stands either.

He didn't want to be too far away from the match atmosphere for today as if he wasn't this tired or busy, he would have wanted to play.

The game began shortly after and right from the onset, Tottenham got off to controlling the game, trying to find the early goal so that they could really settle into the game, but Norwich fought back in the early minutes.

Stunning Tottenham with attacks of their own, Norwich got their first shot away after a cross from Billy Gilmour found Teemu Pukki who immediately redirected the ball at goal, but the power on the shot was too weak and the accuracy wasn't much better.

The ball flew straight at Lloris who clamped hard down on it, stopping it from going anywhere.

Norwich continued to fight back, looking to hit Tottenham on the counter whenever they surged forward, but to do that they had to absorb the hits first.

Unfortunately in the 12th minute a pass from Son to Moura inspired him to make a run from the right side outside the box.

Pushing the ball to the right of a Norwich player then running past his left to collect it behind him, Moura caught hold of the ball in the final third, pushed it into an optimal position and hit it powerfully with his right foot.

Chapter 847: Battle For Spot

The ball flew powerfully at the left side of the goal and Tim couldn't hope to get a hand to it.

Smashing past him, the ball sent the net flying and the crowd into a frenzy.

{Banger! Absolute banger from Lucas Moura. A clever move to escape from the pressure and he perfectly placed the ball where Krul wouldn't be able to get to!}

{Not even a quarter of an hour into the game and Tottenham take the lead!}

{Norwich will have to spend the whole game playing catch-up and hope that they don't go down by more!}

Moura celebrated happily with his teammates, shooting a look at the manager on the bench and then at Jason in the seats above the bench.

Conte caught Moura's glance and saw where he looked at after and a crafty smile appeared at the corner of his lips.

Everyone at the club knew right now that there was a not-so-silent war going on between Lucas and Jason.

When Jason joined the club, people had been having doubts about whether Lucas could stay in the starting lineup as he hadn't performed well enough the previous season.

Even Moura knew that Jason's arrival was an axe above his head and after Jason's performance in his first game, that axe had gotten bigger and loomed closer than ever.

Fortunately for Moura, Jason suddenly got a long term injury that allowed him to hold onto his position for a while longer and even play well.

His performances while Jason was injured had somewhat re-established him on the team and with them being this far into the season, sudden changes in squad lineups didn't happen frequently.

Hence as long as he kept putting out good performances that were hard to ignore, he could somewhat hold onto his place in the starting lineup because now Jason was back and he only needed to slip up and play badly before he would be completely replaced.

Now with Jason's identity as a top player established by his ranking at the Ballon D'Or and his claiming of the Kopa Trophy, the only thing standing between Lucas and becoming depth was a single bad performance.

Even now he was barely holding on and would soon have to give up his spot, but if he kept pulling off amazing performances, he could still fight for a spot, otherwise once Jason began out performing him, it was over for him at Tottenham unless he was contented with warming the bench.

With his position in the starting lineup on the line, how could Moura not play like everything depended on this one performance.

Conte knew that healthy competition within the team did wonders for improving player performances and he was currently reaping the benefits of it.

Continuing to dominate the first half, Tottenham came close to extending their lead a few times, but Krul wasn't having it especially when it was Harry Kane behind the ball.

Kane was beginning to lose his mind at how all the keepers of the league teams he played against turned to the best version of themselves whenever they were up against him.

He still only had two goals in the Premier League so far.

Ending the first half after exciting football, the second half began with Tottenham still in the lead and looking to extend their lead while Norwich looked to be doing all they could to stop them while also trying to get a goal of their own to equalize the game.

Again in the second half, the Norwich side began with more energy than Tottenham and Teemu Pukki somehow managed to break in with clever touches from the right before taking a shot at goal, but once again it was too light and Lloris didn't have any problems getting to it.

A few minutes, Man Utd loanee Brandon Williams made a darting run from the left, breaking past everyone cutting the ball back to Adams Idah who tried to hit it first time.

However Adams didn't understand the type of pass he was trying to receive and the ball hit his the upper part of his side foot and the ball flew abnormally high and right into the stands.

{Ohhhhhh!!! How did he miss that!}

Adams was on his knees in disbelief at wasting such a good chance to square the game.

Norwich seemed to be slowly rearing their heads and looking like they could bite, but a sudden goal from their end of the field ended their hopes.

A corner kick from Son in the 67th minute had been stopped in the penalty box after an header attempt from Davison Sanchez bounced off Ben Gibson and landed at Davison's foot and he smashed it into the back of the net immediately.

The sudden second goal sent the Tottenham fans into a celebratory mood and the Norwich players who felt like they had been building up to their equalizer suddenly felt like they were back at the beginning again.

Their loss of concentration proved costly as Davies found Son inside the penalty box just ten minutes later and holding off his man, Son pushed the ball to the right, found the perfect spot to shoot and immediately let fly.

Tim Krul could barely react in time and could do nothing to stop the ball from smashing into the top left of the goal sending the Tottenham fans into celebrative frenzy yet again.

At this point, it was already over and though Norwich kept playing as hard as they could to get at least one goal back, they also knew in their hearts that the game was over for them.

The goal they were looking for wouldn't change their situation, it would only make it a little less ugly but for them that was enough.

However, Tottenham wasn't in the mood of giving and held tight to their clean sheet, each and every player doing their part to making sure that Norwich got nothing from the game other than the experience of playing at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium to entertain the Tottenham fans.

Chapter 848: Outbreak

7th December 2021

"Damn it!"

"When did it start?"

In the manager's office at Hotspur way, Conte was looking at a piece of paper on his desk with the team's medical staff in front of him.

"We don't know where the initial issue came from and now there are 8 players and 6 staff members who tested positive for COVID."

Every word that came from the medical staff threw him into a mental spin and the thoughts of the repercussions of this event had him rubbing his brows in frustration.

The world might have long begun to move past the effects of COVID-19, but the trauma still remained.

The players who tested for COVID in the squad were very healthy otherwise and were in little to zero risk despite testing positive, but that wasn't the issue at hand.

The problem was that COVID was very contagious and to stop the spread before it reached people whose lives it would risk, the players would have to be quarantined and with this many people testing positive in an already thin squad... The outcome could be guessed.

Glancing at the calendar and the games coming up, his mind quickly began calculating.

The most problematic game was the one that was just 2 days away against Rennes.

There were too many important players who tested positive so Conte didn't want to have to play a crucial game with a team far from its best.

Right now, they were the second on the table in their group with 10 points but Vitesse were right behind them with 7 points so they needed at least a draw against Rennes to be completely sure of qualifying for the knockout stages.

"No, we need to postpone the game," he decided and grabbed his phone, beginning to make some calls.

Shortly after the event at Conte's office at Hotspur way, reports began to emerge on the internet that Tottenham had appealed to UEFA to postpone the match against Rennes.

Instantly the news had people wondering why the club needed to do that, but like they said, bad news always came in pairs.

The club soon released a statement stating that some players had tested positive for COVID and there had been a rapid spread among the squad and some staff, hence their reason for trying to postpone the game.

They also admitted that the training grounds had been partially shutdown with the uninfected players training in a different field from the one they normally used while the rest of the training grounds were undergoing disinfection.

Adding that no player was in a critical condition, and that they would do their best to ensure safety for both the players and the fans, they ended the report.

The Tottenham fans were left feeling concerned at what had happened to their players, but the Rennes side smelled blood.

With Tottenham recently getting into top form, their chances in the coming game had been more doubtful than ever.

Of course, even if Tottenham beat them, they would still qualify as they already had eleven points and had secured a qualifying spot, but if they did lose, they'd fall to the second position and would have to take their chances with a team that was first in its own group.

For the sake of going farther in the competition, Rennes weren't about to let that happen and that was why they weren't going to let this chance slip.

Luckily they had already made the trip to London by the time Tottenham released their statements and despite Tottenham's efforts to call the game off, Rennes didn't budge, saying it was unfair for a smaller team like them.

Unfortunately, according to the UEFA rules, as long as a club still had at least 13 available players including a goalkeeper, then technically the match still had to go ahead.

Despite their somewhat thin first team squad and the COVID issue, as an elite club, Tottenham still had more than 13 players.

Tottenham's side tried to argue that they were trying to stop the spread of the virus and had even stopped training completely when another player among the supposedly healthy group tested positive, however their arguments fell in deaf ears.

On the 9th of December with barely 4 hours left to the game, it was clear that UEFA would not approve the match being postponed so now Conte had to make a choice.

Play with a fragmented first team squad, filling in the space with players from the youth teams and under-age squads and risk it despite the players having barely trained for the game or play it safe, avoid any problems and not risk his players health.

Conte didn't have to think too long.

With the club fully behind him and not showing much care for the UEFA Conference League, Conte decided to forfeit the game.

If they were lucky and still qualified, then that was good, and if they didn't qualify, then that was also good. They could then fully focus on the League and the domestic cups.

With Tottenham forfeiting the game, Rennes were awarded a 3-0 victory over Tottenham and Tottenham had to hold hope that Mura could stop Vitesse from taking the full 3 points from them again.

Thus Mura and Vitesse received a huge boost in the viewership of their match as Tottenham fans tuned in to watch and support Mura against Vitesse.

The match began and like everyone expected, Mura was easily dominated by Vitesse all over the pitch, but they did their best defensively, trying not to concede.

To the dismay of the Mura and Tottenham fans, Mura couldn't hold on for long and in the 28th minute, Vitesse found a goal from a clever header in the box that found the goal easily.

Mura reacted explosively after the goal and they seemed to go for broke, doing their best to equalize.

Their pride was on the line now.

They didn't want to be known as the team that qualified for a continental tournament but didn't manage to take home even a single point.

Football wasn't all about sheer will and determination, but in this case, it fueled the Mura players and thirty two minutes into the second half, they got a counter chance that they turned into an equalizer goal.

Mura wasn't done yet and struck once more in the third minute of added time, getting another counter opportunity thanks to Vitesse throwing all their men forward to find the goal that would give them a qualification spot.

As the ball made it past the goal line, the stadium exploded with the Mura fans joyous cheers.

All over North London, the Tottenham fans also erupted in cheers since this cemented their qualification spot.

It was a result everyone was happy with... Well everyone but Vitesse.

Chapter 849: Outbreak's Break

Since he was on a bit of a break, Jason hadn't managed to resume yet when the COVID virus broke out within the squad.

As someone who had previously had COVID, he was at high risk of reinfection and his break was extended involuntarily.

Of course since he had also been vaccinated since then, he wasn't at the risk of a severe infection, keyword being severe.

It simply meant he could still be infected and was in fact at high risk since it had been over a year since his initial infection, but the infection wouldn't be severe, however it could lead to persistent symptoms, also known as Long COVID.

If he really did get long COVID, then it would be like getting another long term injury because during the period he was showing symptoms, he was a carrier of the virus which meant long time quarantine.

Neither Jason nor Tottenham wanted first so Jason hadn't even gotten to breathe the air of the training grounds since his trip to Paris.

Luckily, treatments, quarantine and disinfection of the training grounds were already underway so he would soon be back at training soon enough but with all this free time now on his hands, Jason decided to have a day out.

Setting his sights on Liverpool, he grabbed the keys of his latest garage addition and jumped into his silver grey 2021 Aston Martin F1 edition.

He had also had Q by Aston Martin do some extra work on its exterior, blacking out his rims and making other touches to its interior and exterior design.

It didn't take too long since the additions weren't much, also, it had been done extra fast since it was him making the request, but even with that, it had just arrived after he got back from Paris.

He hadn't even driven it anywhere yet.

This was his chance to break it in, hence the planned long distance drive to Liverpool.

Another reason for going to Liverpool was that he hoped there would be less people who could recognize him when he was just out chilling for the day, also, Liverpool was supposedly one of the most beautiful cities in England so he wanted to see if that was true.

The trip to Liverpool would take 4 hours so Jason jumped out of bed at 6 and did some exercises at home before jumping into the bath at 7.

Dressing in a grey Evo hoodie and blue jeans, he tied his hair in a bun on top of his head for the first time in a while and threw on a pair of shades.

Then he packed a bag of clothes just in case. Liverpool was pretty far and if something happened and he couldn't make it back tonight, then it would be better to be prepared.

Heading out, he headed to the Aston, and pulled open the boot to throw his bag in only to be surprised by the amount of space there was.

"Shoulda bought this thing before going for gumball," he chuckled to himself before getting into the car and shutting the door behind him.

Pushing the button to start, the engine came to life with a roar, sounding like an angry tiger.

"Damn!" Jason has heard all sorts of loud engines at this point, but there was something different about this one.

It wasn't especially sound but even at a comfortable volume, it sounded like a snarling tiger whenever he revved it.

"I think I'm in love"

As always, music first and the moment the music began playing, Jason had to do his best not to get too in the mood.

The intro of guitars and drums of Disturbed's Decadence flowed through the Bowers and Wilkins speakers.

Setting the map and then taking the song back to the beginning again, Jason pulled out of his garage and onto the streets of London, driving out of the city and heading towards Liverpool.

Because of things like speed limits, Jason couldn't push the car to its limit, but he had quite a bit of fun driving it.

It wasn't as fast as his Ferrari, but then, no car he had was as fast as that thing so it wasn't something he had a problem with.

However as Jason drove along he realized that while he had been driving reservedly with respect for the rules, a few other young drivers with sports cars didn't have the same respect of rules that he had.

This was especially apparent just on the outskirts of London, but it was to be expected as there had been a rise in crime and issues with public safety so most of the police men hardly had time for minor issues like overspeeding or disturbing the neighborhoods with loud cars.

Jason even remembered seeing somewhere that the police department had even admitted that they were understaffed and they had moved a lot of officers over from the traffic departments into other departments to help guarantee public safety first.

Because of that, underground car meets and street racing had seen a rise in numbers, or so Jason had heard.

He hadn't been in London long and his situation up till now hadn't allowed him to be that knowledgeable about London yet.

Anyway that didn't matter today as most other people followed the traffic rules and there wasn't much issues caused by the guys going at high speeds.

Like expected, Jason got to Liverpool after about four hours, and the first thing he did was find a place to get lunch because for some reason he only remembered that he hadn't eaten after an hour on the road.

Parking and then checking for a place to get a bite, he decided on some place called CJ's cafe and drove to its location.

Parking outside, he pulled on a nose mask and a pair of dark glasses.

The glasses were to hide his eyes while the nose mask was there to hide part of his face and to protect him from whatever might be flowing in the air.

Now that he was reminded that COVID was still around, he wasn't taking any chances.

Chapter 850: Side Missions I

After a sumptuous lunch of baked beans, eggs, grilled tomatoes, bacon and chicken and then grabbing some orange juice to go, Jason paid and stepped out of the restaurant, not sure where to start exploring.

He wasn't really here for the sights and had literally just come here to chill a bit in a different location.

Deciding to just drive to random places and then get out and walk around a bit each time till he got tired, he headed towards his car.

As a beautiful Aston Martin with customized trims, there was no way Jason's car could escape the attention of passerbys and a few people stared at it as they walked by, stopped to admire, and some even took a picture with it or did a video.

Seeing this, Jason decided not to go near the car for now and noted the place on his map just so he didn't get lost before beginning to walk down the street, no idea of where he was going.

As he walked, he understood what people meant when they said Liverpool was one of the most beautiful cities in the UK.

It had a certain artistic charm to it that places like London also had, but in Liverpool it felt different.

More pronounced and genuine... Or something like that.

Jason wasn't an expert at art. He just knew that things felt a bit different but it was more or less the same to him somewhat.

Apart from the beautiful city, Jason noticed something that seemed to be the same everywhere.

The content creating craze.

Since the lockdown COVID period a lot more people had been introduced to content creating and a year after then, the craze not only hadn't reduced, it had even increased.

Now everyone and their mother's wanted to be a content creator or internet celebrity... Or whatever it was called.

Thus Jason saw quite a few people doing certain odd things in different places while recording everything.

Ignoring all those people, had begun thinking of turning back when one of those content creators noticed Jason.

Johnny was a content creator just trying to do all sorts of fun things and seeing whichever one would click and get plenty of views and he didn't work alone, but with a few of his friends who pulled their own weight.

For today, their content composed of finding someone, calling their attention and rolling a football to them before putting a bottle down and telling the person to kick the ball at the bottle from wherever they were.

Some people ignored it outright, especially women, but as a football country, most of the guys made an attempt at hitting the bottle.

Some missed and a few hit the bottle and Johnny already had more than enough clip at this point, but he kept recording, trying to see if he could get more cool clips of people who could attract viewers with their skill on the ball.

It was actually a good idea considering that almost every youth in England had once hoped to be a professional footballer with some getting farther than the others.

Johnny was hoping to catch a few more people who had gotten farther than others. He already had a few but he wanted more and noticing Jason, he picked him as the next target.

A bit surprised at a ball rolling towards him, Jason saw the guys calling to him and pointing at the bottle and he instantly understood what they wanted before they even finished talking.

Letting the ball reach his feet, he smoothly raised the ball up, kneed it back to his feet and then three consecutive around the world while juggling before flicking the ball up and over his head towards his back.

At this point he already had the attention of Johnny's crew and a few other people who noticed, but his next move was even more explosive.

As the ball fell towards his back, his right leg shot backwards, catching the ball on his heel and sending it back up and over his head into the sky.

The ball flew high and curving towards Johnny and his crew, then the ball dropped towards the bottle and hit it directly on the top.

Seeing the bottle hit the target, Jason continued walking forward, taking a sip from the bottle of orange juice that had been in his hand the whole time without spilling.

For a second no one could react, but the next moment, Johnny and his guys shouted and ran after Jason with a camera.

"Whoaaaaaaa!"

"That was crazy!"

Jason didn't fancy the camera being shoved in his face but he reacted calmly and didn't overreact.

"Thank you for being in our video and taking part of our content, we really appreciate it. Have a good day," Johnny told Jason, quickly catching on to the fact that Jason didn't want the camera in his face at the moment.

"You're welcome, you have a good day as well," Jason nodded at him and continued walking away.

"I could swear I know that face from somewhere," one of Johnny's friends said as he watched Jason walk away.

"Me too. Maybe he's an actual player... But I don't think he's from Liverpool or maybe he's still a youth player," another guy said.

"We can check it when we review the footage later," Johnny said and told his friends to get ready for another shoot.

He had gotten a good clip that he could definitely use to attract attention, but he wasn't going to stop here.

He could still get a few good videos if he stayed a bit longer.

Meanwhile, Jason had turned back and was on his way back to his car, following another path and heading back to the place he parked earlier and his car was still attracting the passerbys.

Thanks to all attention being on the car, no one noticed Jason coming close until he was right by the door, opening the door smoothly and jumping in before anyone could even glance at his face.

Vrrrrrrrrrrrr

The car roared to life and Jason put it into gear thinking it was a fun walk and that this was his only involvement with a content creator today.

Oh how wrong he was.