

LEGENDS 95

Chapter 95: Europa League Round of 32, Second Leg I

****27th February 2020****

Jason drove into the car park for players in the Estadio do Dragao and turned off the car engine before hopping out of the car and heading into the stadium.

The pre-match training for the day's game had been scheduled to be held at their home stadium instead of at the CTFD Portugaia training complex as usual.

Jason didn't care about this though as it was all the same to him and he just walked into the locker room to change into the training gear along with the rest of the team.

After the players were done changing, they headed out to the field where the team's manager was waiting for them.

"Good morning guys," Sergio Conceicao greeted as the team walked up to him together.

The team greeted him as well and after a few exchanges of pleasantries, the manager started the team meeting.

"As you know, we managed to get a win over Bayer Leverkusen in the first leg of the Europa League knockout of the round of 32 thanks to our efforts in making a comeback from being two goals behind,"

"... But, I'm not going to lie... that was only possible because they went on the defensive after going two goals ahead, thus allowing us to get into the driver's seat and take the reins of the match which luckily ended up with us getting the win,"

"Unfortunately, the same thing wouldn't be happening in this match as they are already a goal behind," Sergio Conceicao explained.

“It doesn’t take an idiot to know that they will come into this match guns blazing, focusing all their attention on getting the first goal before trying to build off of that momentum and try to score another,”

“As of right now, they have nothing to lose as they are already behind so there would be no need for excessive caution on their part and they are going to come at us with all they have and we must be ready otherwise, we’ll not only lose our advantage, we’ll also lose our path forward in the Europa League this season,”

“... Thus what I need from you guys is simple... Defend well and while looking for any chances to help us strengthen our lead,” Sergio Conceicao declared.

“It won’t be easy considering our opponents, but I believe you guys can get it done, right?” Sergio Conceicao asked his players.

“Yes Coach!” the players affirmed, determination in the tone and volume of their voices.

“Good, let’s show those Leverkusen players what it means like to play against the dragons in their lair,” Sergio Conceicao made an attempt at motivating his players further before letting them begin their training.

From there, the time passed by rapidly...

The team did a few hours of pre-match training before heading into their locker rooms to rest and relax while taking a few beverages and food prepared by the club chefs for the players.

Time ran by quickly and it was soon time for the pre-match warm-up that the players quickly did while also noticing the Leverkusen players who had also arrived at the stadium as well.

After a few minutes of pre-match warm-up, while the fans filled up the stands, both teams headed back into their respective locker rooms to begin their tactical meeting.

In the Porto meeting room, Sergio Conceicao was calling out the names of the players in the starting line-up for the day’s game.

It came as no surprise to Jason that he wasn't part of the starting line-up, but he was on the bench which he was contented with... for now.

With their tactics already decided and even practiced in the pre-match training, there wasn't much for the manager to do than to give a few specific instructions to specific players as the players dressed up for the game.

Sergio Conceicao glanced at Jason who was currently pulling a bib over his training vest with an impassive look on his face.

'It's really hard to know when he's happy or sad if he doesn't show it on his face,' Sergio Conceicao thought to himself as he glanced at Jason's face that did not leak a single drop of his emotions.

It was an excellent poker face, but that wasn't the reason why Sergio Conceicao had glanced at Jason.

He had wanted to put Jason in the starting line-up especially since the current wingers in the line-up have had a bit of a roller coaster ride in regards to their form lately as compared to Jason.

Shoya Nakajima was still injured, Otavio had to be in the middle of the field despite his adequacy on the wings, Jesus Corona had been quite average lately, and Luiz Diaz...

Well, let's just say, he hasn't been having the best of luck lately as the blunders he had made in the past few matches were still quite fresh in Sergio Conceicao's mind.

Jason on the other hand was currently on a hot run of form despite his debut being only two games ago and having not even gotten his first start for the team, but it did not need to be said that if he started Jason, the Bayer Leverkusen players would be especially wary against him.

They'd probably put more men on Jason than Jason could manage and if they still couldn't stop him, they wouldn't hesitate to foul him.

This wasn't some novel world where people would always have their guards down against Jason and look down on him just because he was a young new player who was fresh on the scene...

Nope... this was real, and the Bayer Leverkusen players were professionals who knew that it was best to shut down a dangerous player especially whether he was a prodigy or an established star.

To them, it held the same importance and with Jason's showing against them in the previous match, the Leverkusen defenders would probably watch him the same way they would watch players like Eden Hazard or Mohammed Salah if they were the ones on the pitch.

Knowing this, Sergio Conceicao had resolved to keep Jason on the bench till the second half when the Leverkusen players were already quite tired from all the running around.