

LEGENDS 99

Chapter 99: Europa League Round of 32, Second Leg V

Jason squatted down, his breathing more accelerated than normal due to the exertion, and watched as the Bayer Leverkusen team celebrated their goal with a strange look on his face.

He wasn't sure whether to feel disappointed or angry at how his team had flopped their lead and were now back on equal terms with the opponents in a match that was almost at its conclusion.

... Actually, they were even losing the match but due to their previous results that put them on equal scores on the aggregate scoreboard, they were still in contention for the next round ticket.

But with the way things were going, the match would probably end up going to extra time, or maybe even penalties, which was not something Jason wanted to happen.

Penalties were usually taken with skill, but victory in a penalty shootout was more dependent on luck than anything else.

Even the no. 1 team in the world could lose a penalty shootout to the worst team in the world if luck was not on their side no matter how much skill they had as humans were inherently imperfect beings.

If the Porto team didn't want to end up going to penalties with the Bayer Leverkusen team, then they had a lot to do and they must especially ensure that they didn't concede any more goals as going a single goal behind at this point would require them to score two goals back to gain anything from the game.

Sergio Conceicao on the sidelines was also thinking the same thing, as was the rest of the Porto team.

The emotion of desperation that should never have shown up on the Porto side in this match reared its head and shone in the eyes of the Porto players as they arranged themselves for the kick-off to resume the game.

On the sidelines, Sergio Conceicao quickly had Otavio and Sergio Oliveira warm up and prepare to come on, they would be coming on for Jesus Corona and Danilo Perreira respectively.

Sergio Conceicao needed his team to improve their attacking efforts and try to get a goal, or at least to keep the Bayer Leverkusen team in check, they had left them to run free for a while, and that had led to their current situation so some things needed to be changed.

Otavio could help Jason share some of the pressure from the defenders and allow him to run around a bit more while Sergio Oliveira could help with defensive efforts as well as support their attacking endeavors which was not Danilo Perreira's strong point.

After the substitutions were completed the match kicked off again, and Porto immediately burst out on the attack.

Tiquinho Soares who had stood over the ball at the kick-off sent the ball to Moussa Marega and Marega immediately sent the ball to the left wing where Jason awaited the ball.

Probably because their team had equalized, the desperation of the Leverkusen players had reduced by a lot and Charles Aranguiz carelessly charged at the ball that was headed towards Jason.

The ball was closer to Jason than Aranguiz so he inevitably got to the ball before Aranguiz, but Aranguiz immediately dived into a tackle hoping to get the ball from Jason before Jason could completely control the ball.

Jason noticed Aranguiz's actions with a side glance and immediately gave up on controlling the ball and instead flicked the ball up just slightly as Aranguiz's outstretched foot came flying in.

The ball flew over Aranguiz's tackle and Jason himself carefully stepped out of the way of the tackle before pushing the ball that was returning to the ground, forward.

With Aranguiz out of the way, Jason took off down the left wing but soon had to slow his pace as Lars Bender came at him, blocking his path and intending to steal the ball from him.

Learning from previous experiences of being fouled, Jason didn't bother trying to dribble and instead made an inside pass to Mattheus Uribe in the center parts of the field, but he didn't stop running and ran past Lars Bender, sending a glance at Uribe and hoping he understood his intention.

Mattheus Uribe received the ball but didn't immediately send it to Jason to complete a one-two routine like Jason was expecting, and instead passed the ball to Oliveira who was just beside him.

Oliveira had been watching the whole situation and quickly sent a lobbed pass at the left wing with his first touch on the ball.

Jason ran for the ball that came his way slightly later than he expected but still came anyway and he managed to get his leg to the ball and trap the ball with his first touch a few yards behind Lars Bender, but he was still onside due to the presence of the other defenders in front of him inside the Bayer Leverkusen penalty area.

With the ball at his foot, Jason immediately cut into the penalty box, coming face to face with Jonathan Tah, but he didn't panic and did a couple of step-overs before cutting right and swinging his leg powerfully to unleash a curler at the Leverkusen goal.

The ball flew past the Leverkusen defenders undeterred, but just before flying into the back of the net, it came in contact with Hradecky's outstretched gloved palm that pushed it off its original path and the ball flew out of play, deflected by the Leverkusen goalkeeper's efforts.

Jason's hands flew to the top of his head in agony, annoyance, and disappointment as he stared at Hradecky who got up and shouted in a passionate voice as his teammates commended him.

With the ball already out of play, there was nothing his disappointment would do, so Jason ignored the Leverkusen goalkeeper's actions and moved to the edge of the penalty area, awaiting the corner kick.

Soon the Porto and Leverkusen players arranged themselves in the Leverkusen penalty area for the corner kick.

As usual, Alex Telles stood over the ball and a couple of seconds later, sent the ball flying into the penalty box.

The Porto and Bayer Leverkusen players jumped to catch the ball with their heads but the Leverkusen team with their height advantage got to the ball first and cleared the danger, sending the ball out of their penalty box.