

STARTING WITH REAL MADRID

Chapter 10: Suppressing the Brazilian Gang

In Real Madrid's 4-2-3-1 formation, the best position to be sure of is the goalkeeper, and Casillas is the best choice.

San Iker's reputation will hang in Real Madrid for at least a few years, showcasing his strength.

Judging from the statistics of this season, Casillas is undoubtedly one of the best players in Real Madrid right now.

Real Madrid's goalkeeper has the world's top reflexes and incredible saves. Unfortunately, he is limited by his height, which makes him unstable in handling high balls, but this does not damage Casillas' status as one of the world's top goalkeepers.

This state of Casillas will be maintained until he ages and his physical functions decline, leading to a decrease in his reflex abilities. Only at that time will more weaknesses and deficiencies begin to appear.

But that is ten or eight years in the future.

As for the right-back position, Real Madrid has a total of five players: Salgado, Cicinho, Diogo, Ramos, and Arbeloa, a teenager promoted from the second team.

Ramos is a given; Gao Shen has positioned him as a central defender. Among the remaining four, Salgado is a bit old, and Cicinho is slightly stronger than Salgado. Diogo, a member of the Brazilian gang, is the worst, with relatively low future achievements.

Gao Shen decided to utilize Arbeloa in this position.

Arbeloa, though not well-known now, has been in the second team. At 23, he is not welcomed by the first team, but he is not weak. He is not only the captain of Real Madrid's second team but also the captain of the Spanish national youth team.

If Gao Shen remembers correctly, Arbeloa moved from Real Madrid to Deportivo in the summer of 2006. After only half a season, he was bought by Liverpool for three times the price, where he famously froze Messi and gained renown.

It can be seen that Arbeloa's current strength is definitely not bad; he just lacks the opportunity to perform.

Sometimes, prestigious clubs and big companies are like this.

They do not lack talent, but they lack the environment to nurture talent.

The same applies to the left-back position.

Carlos is almost 33 years old, and his performance has already declined significantly. His left side has always been the most problematic area for Real Madrid's defense, as is the left-back substitute Raul Bravo. The performances of both on the left side have been very unstable.

Under Carlo, Raul Bravo was often arranged as a makeshift central defender, which shows how stretched Real Madrid's backline has become.

But even in this situation, Felipe Luis was still placed in the second team.

This season, the Brazilian left-back has performed very well in the second team.

Gao Shen remembers that after leaving Real Madrid in 2006, Felipe Luis was loaned to Deportivo for two years. Initially, coach Caparros did not trust him and only used him as a substitute, but as the team's performance plummeted, Caparros was sacked. His replacement, Lotina, entrusted Felipe Luis at the end of the season, and he showed enough strength.

By the 2007-08 season, Felipe Luis had firmly secured the starting position on Deportivo's left side.

Like Arbeloa, the Brazilian left-back is not lacking in ability but in opportunity.

As for central defenders, Ramos will definitely occupy one of the positions.

He started as a right-back and occasionally makes cameo appearances on the left or as a central defender, but Gao Shen knows that Ramos's future lies in the center. Despite future controversies, no one can deny that Ramos is one of the world's top central defenders, especially in individual defensive ability.

The key lies in the other central defender position.

Woodgate is very strong, standing at 1.88 meters tall, with excellent strength in physical confrontations. These are Woodgate's advantages. From a technical perspective, he has almost no obvious weaknesses.

But he is injury-prone.

Currently, Woodgate is not injured and is in good shape, but the risk is significant; no one knows when he will get injured again.

This is very fatal because the most important thing in the backline is stability.

Gao Shen remembers that Woodgate left Real Madrid in the summer of 2006 and showed an impressive performance in Middlesbrough in the Premier League during the 2006-07 season, proving his strength again, but soon got injured.

It can be said that as long as he is not injured, Woodgate is a world-class central defender, but he has too many injuries.

Elgra is also a veteran of Real Madrid. He started as a defensive midfielder. In 2000, he was converted into a central defender by Del Bosque and served as the central defender in the middle of the five-man defense. He performed well in the Champions League that year.

Since then, Elgra has been oscillating between central defense and midfield, with varying performance.

Pavon, Ruben, and Mejia are all Real Madrid youth products. Among them, Pavon is the most familiar, being pushed to the forefront by Zidane's "Pavon policy," which initially showcased his potential.

But times have changed, and now Pavon, Ruben, and Mejia all lack the enthusiasm and have not met the expectations of the past.

Now, the really useful ones seem to be Woodgate and Elgra.

There are many midfielders in Real Madrid, and many are qualified for the defensive midfield position, but Gravesson was the first to be identified by Gao Shen.

The Danish midfielder's ability is not bad. He performed very well at Everton, not only in defense but also in organization and attack, which earned him his move to Real Madrid.

A very important reason for Gao Shen's interest in Gravesson is his conflict with the Brazilian gang, especially Robinho.

This is actually quite normal.

In Real Madrid, no defensive player in the midfield and backline would have a favorable impression of the superstars in the front line, except for Raul.

Robinho is a typical Brazilian genius—very egoistic. He basically does not participate in defense and holds onto the ball for too long. Just imagine, if he dribbles the ball to the front and loses it, without actively participating in the counter-attack, leading to a direct counterattack in front of Real Madrid's trailing midfielder—who can accept that?

The conflict between the two sides has been ongoing, and Gao Shen clearly remembers that Gravesson and Robinho had a big fight during Real Madrid's pre-season training in August 2006, which led to Gravesson being sold.

For a genius like Robinho, Gao Shen keeps his distance.

Facts have proven that individual combat geniuses have been eliminated, and the future trend of football is teamwork.

A genius like Messi needs a team to shine.

This is also why Gao Shen decided to suppress the Brazilian gang.

The enemy of my enemy is my friend, and Gravesson is a player worth supporting.

Pablo Garcia's defensive ability is very good, but he needs further observation. Beckham can also play as a defensive midfielder. Although he is

very close to the Brazilian gang, Gao Shen feels that Beckham may not support them in this matter.

Beckham has very clear aspirations, and Gao Shen is confident he can persuade him.

Another option is De la Red.

This young player is very well-rounded, standing at 1.85 meters, with good physical strength, a diligent style, strong foot skills, passing ability, and a good overall vision. Later, Del Bosque praised him as the best midfielder in Spain.

Of course, this compliment is a bit exaggerated; compared to players like Xavi, he is still inferior, but it is enough to prove De la Red's strength and potential.

The only obstacle is his heart condition.

De la Red retired early due to a heart problem. Gao Shen has asked Lucas to arrange a detailed physical examination for De la Red, especially focusing on his heart. The report should be available soon.

For the attacking midfielder position, Zidane is undoubtedly Gao Shen's ideal candidate.

To be able to lead the French team to the World Cup final this summer, there is no doubt about the strength of the aging yet still formidable Zidane. More importantly, the French superstar understands the bigger picture and knows how to advance and retreat, which is very rare.

Among so many Real Madrid superstars, why did Florentino Pérez only bring Zidane with him when he re-entered the club? Later, he focused on nurturing Zidane, making him the head coach of Real Madrid. Is this just because of Zidane's football achievements?

Zidane has already announced his retirement after the World Cup this summer, and Gao Shen believes he is not willing to end his career in this manner.

As long as there is a request, there is an opportunity.

In the striker position, Ronaldo will not be considered for the time being. Raul, Negredo, and Soldado are all options for Gao Shen. There is also Cassano, a winger who can be unpredictable but very effective when used well.

The rest of the players, such as Adrian Martin, Jurado, Balboa, and Barral, although they performed well in the second team, have not achieved much in Gao Shen's memory, so they are not included in his plan.

When he woke up, Gao Shen found himself sleeping on the sofa all night.

He had been in the tactical library all night. When he woke up in the morning, he not only remembered everything that happened in the library but also felt energized, as if he had slept all night.

This is definitely a valuable tool!

Not to mention anything else, in the future, when others are sleeping, Gao Shen can continue to study.

Mom no longer has to worry about me not sleeping because I want to study.

After tidying up the house hastily, Gao Shen went out to buy breakfast and picked up two newspapers on the street.

As usual, he got ****As**** and ****Marca****.

Like yesterday's editions, today's ****As**** and ****Marca**** are still focusing on Real Madrid's coaching change, with a special emphasis on Gao Shen's remarks at yesterday's press conference, where he declared war on the superstars.

To Gao Shen's surprise, the reactions of the two major media outlets were divided.

The debate over whether Real Madrid should purge their superstars has been ongoing, and Gao Shen has now brought it to the forefront. This is the first time in years that the two major newspapers have written articles supporting the idea, although some reporters believe that even if the superstars are purged, a rookie fresh out of university should not be the one to do it.

However, most media reporters still believe that the issue with Real Madrid is not the presence of superstars, but how to utilize them effectively.

Every viewpoint has its merits.

Should all superstars be discarded in one fell swoop?

If all the superstars are sent away and a new set of players is supported, will Real Madrid be better off?

Not necessarily!

Later, when Capello took office, he sent away many superstars and introduced numerous powerful players. Yet, didn't the team rely on Beckham to turn things around in the second half of the season?

Without Beckham, could Capello and his Real Madrid have won the title that year?

It should be noted that this happened when Beckham was sidelined by Capello and had decided to move to the United States six months early.

Despite this, he maintained his professionalism and helped Real Madrid eventually overturn Barcelona to win the championship.

How many fans completely changed their views on Beckham because of that season?

And Zidane, judging by his performance and the following years, is a very smart person who understands the big picture, knows how to advance and retreat, and can manage the overall situation.

Gao Shen felt that Zidane and Beckham could be valuable among the foreign superstar players.

Even if he can't get them to fully support him, he must ensure they do their best on the field and execute the team's tactics. Gao Shen knows how to convince these two superstars.

They both have strong desires and ambitions!