

STARTING WITH REAL MADRID

Chapter 6: Huge Surprise

Portugal's receding hairline gives him a wise appearance.

When he saw Gao Shen arrive, he was very surprised.

They had dealt with each other before, but at that time, Gao Shen was just an intern. Now, Gao Shen is the head coach of Real Madrid.

"Acting head coach? The interim coach is now the head coach!" he thought in surprise.

What surprised him even more was how eloquent Gao Shen was. As soon as they met, Gao Shen started lamenting about his helpless situation with the first team and how his superiors had given him impossible tasks. But now, with no one available to help, what could he do?

"Michel, you must know what the new chairman said, right?" Gao Shen asked, sensing the right moment.

"What? He said a lot." Michel frowned, trying to recall.

"He said we need to evaluate Real Madrid's stars, cut half of the incompetent players, and reorganize the locker room."

Michel's eyes widened in shock. He looked at Gao Shen in disbelief, who nodded innocently and helplessly.

This suddenly reminded Michel of the long-rumored news.

The management is about to get serious!

In January 2005, Luxemburgo replaced Remon as the head coach of Real Madrid with the aim of reorganizing the locker room. Before Luxemburgo was dismissed, there was a mutiny in the Real Madrid locker room; the superstars were extremely dissatisfied with his strictness. Florentino Pérez brought in Caro with the intent to suppress the superstars, but Caro turned out to be too gentle.

From the coaching change to the dismissal of technical director Sacchi, accountability rose step by step, leading to Florentino's resignation.

However, there was also a theory that Florentino could have avoided resignation, but he couldn't be tough on the superstars. So, he arranged for Vice Chairman Martín to take office to get rid of those superstars.

Because of this, as soon as Martín took office, he declared that he would cut half of the incompetent players.

In this light, isn't Gao Shen just the tool in the hands of the new chairman?

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Gao Shen didn't know about all the events that had transpired at Real Madrid in the past year.

At the time, he had only seen some news reports in China, which were not very detailed, just broad reports such as Florentino's resignation and Luxemburgo's dismissal.

Michel thought everyone knew, and since these were not secrets, he told Gao Shen everything.

The turmoil here was no less than the internal conflicts within any company he had known.

But Gao Shen also felt a bit excited and sensed an opportunity.

After chatting for more than half an hour, Michel gave the green light.

He even directly handed Gao Shen the roster of the second team, letting him choose players.

Castilla, the second team, played in La Liga this season, but their performance wasn't great, currently ranked eighth. They had no prospects for promotion and didn't need to worry about relegation. Michel was confident and generous.

Gao Shen also showed respect, promising to communicate with Michel in advance about the players he would play. All players not included in the first team's playing list could return to the second team to ensure their results.

Michel initially felt fine, but watching Gao Shen pick and choose his main players was painful.

Captain Arbeloa, main center Negredo, midfielder De la Red, midfielder Javi Garcia...

Each time Gao Shen selected a player, Michel's heart ached. He could only hope Gao Shen would keep his promise, allowing these players to return to the second team, otherwise, he'd struggle with the remaining squad.

Of course, system-wise, it is the second team's duty to supply talent unconditionally to the first team.

Gao Shen noticed Michel's expression and secretly laughed but had no choice.

Real Madrid's youth team was full of talent, but there was no clear path to the first team. The competition in Real Madrid's first team was fierce, making it difficult for youth players to secure a place.

But now, Gao Shen really needed players.

However, Gao Shen soon encountered a problem.

There were two Callejons in the second team.

Juanmi Callejon and José Callejon, both nineteen years old, born on February 11, 1987, both right-footed wingers, one playing on the left and one on the right. Both were key players for the second team.

Gao Shen, though a fan in his previous life, hadn't noticed this detail.

Which one was the Callejon he remembered?

In the end, Gao Shen decided to promote both to the first team.

Take them both and figure it out later.

This made Michel nearly cry.

Gao Shen also noticed another player on the list.

"Filipe Luís?" Gao Shen pointed at the player and looked at Michel.

A Brazilian, born on August 9, 1985, left-back, this was the same Filipe Luís who later became a top left-back at Atlético Madrid.

But why was he at Real Madrid?

Michel nodded, "Yes, he is the Brazilian youngster loaned by the team from Rentistas. Caro kept him. He is the main left-back this season and has performed well."

Gao Shen read Filipe Luís's resume and found that the Brazilian first played for Brazil's Figueirense, was loaned to Ajax but didn't stay, then Figueirense sold him to the Uruguayan team Rentistas, which loaned him to Real Madrid.

Real Madrid had introduced two Uruguayan players, Pablo García and Diogo, managed by the same agent.

Filipe Luís hadn't appeared in the first team and played directly in the second team, so many fans, including Gao Shen, didn't know he had played for Real Madrid.

This was definitely a huge surprise!

How good was Filipe Luís?

At his peak, he was a top left-back, both offensively and defensively solid. From Deportivo to Atlético Madrid, his performance was consistently high.

More importantly, if Gao Shen remembered correctly, he soon became a key player after joining Deportivo. Despite breaking his leg once, he still drew

attention from Real Madrid and Barcelona, later becoming a top three left-back in the world.

Imagine a player who could still become world-class after a leg break – what talent!

In the first team, Carlos was Gao Shen's strongest opposition. Gao Shen always wanted to replace Carlos, but Carlos was too important to Real Madrid. Besides Carlos, who else could play left-back?

Raul Bravo? Ramos as a stand-in?

Now, with Filipe Luís, although Brazilian, he could ease this concern.

More importantly, this could send a signal.

By addressing Carlos, whether it meant using Raul Bravo or having Ramos and Arbeloa fill in, it would suppress the Brazilian faction, boosting the morale of the local players. Isn't that a good thing?

Over the years, the local players had been suppressed by the Brazilian faction and superstars. Even Raul couldn't play his best position and was forced to play in midfield, so they were willing to cooperate with Gao Shen.

But once they dominated the locker room, would this cooperation continue?

Who could guarantee they wouldn't become the next Brazilian faction?

Remember, Raul, Guti, and others had a closer relationship with Del Bosque and Hierro.

A leader must always consider the future.

This seemed distant, but Gao Shen had to guard against it.

From the head coach's standpoint, balance is the best locker room situation.

Filipe Luís was a suitable starting point, showing that Gao Shen didn't care about local, superstar, or Brazilian factions. As long as someone was willing to play for Real Madrid and cooperate with him, they were welcome.

With this in mind, Gao Shen ticked Filipe Luís's name without hesitation.

If Arbeloa, Negredo, De la Red, and others were expected, Filipe Luís was a great surprise.

Later, Gao Shen selected three more players: Granero, Parejo, and Juan Mata. He initially planned to pick young talents like Bueno, but seeing Michel's resentful eyes, he held back.

Even so, he took away half of Michel's main players and some key substitutes, making the Castilla coach feel like he was being flayed alive.

This Chinese kid was really ruthless!

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When he came, he was alone, but when he returned, he had a group of people.

Not only were there a dozen second-team players behind him, but Gao Shen also poached intern Fernando Lucas.

Currently, the first team's coaching staff were all Carlos's people, with Maqueda as the assistant coach. Gao Shen needed someone he trusted, so he brought Lucas along.

A group of them marched through the barbed wire, entering the first team's training area.

The young players were very surprised when they received the notice. Some were the same age as Gao Shen and had dealt with him before. They didn't expect Gao Shen to become the head coach and for them to be promoted to the first team, realizing their long-held dreams. How could they not be excited?

Who doesn't look forward to a bright future?

Once they crossed this barbed wire, who would want to go back?

Gao Shen's big move quickly reached the first team.

The coaching staff hadn't been notified beforehand, so they were caught off guard.

The players were even more shocked.

Under Caro, several second-team players had been promoted, resulting in 32 players in the first team, including four goalkeepers.

Now, Gao Shen brought over a dozen more players, pushing the squad size to over forty.

What was he trying to do?

Did the board really allow this?

Didn't he understand that quality is more important than quantity?

Raul, Guti, Casillas, Ramos, and others stood by, watching the scene unfold.

"I thought I was brave, but he's even more daring," Ramos laughed.

Guti also smiled, "I'm starting to like him too."

Raul and Casillas are both cautious, but at this moment, it is hard to hide their surprise and joy, but at the same time they are also a little more worried.

Can things really go so smoothly?