

Avatar 1361

Chapter 1361: Only Two Rounds Remaining

Excellent Era is back!

Even though it was not what it had been before, everyone knew that this Excellent Era was the direct successor of that old powerhouse. It was just that the luxury goods of this house had been sold off, so it seemed somewhat run-down.

But for many loyal fans, as long as this team was still here, that was enough.

The instant that Excellent Era won, Chen Guo clearly heard a racket coming from outside, and even the sound of people setting fireworks. They were celebrating Excellent Era's victory – Excellent Era's return.

Excellent Era belonged to this city, in the past, and in the present still. True, Happy was here as well and had even taken over Excellent Era's former home stadium, earning pretty good attendance at their matches. But it was clear that compared to Excellent Era, who had been rooted here for ten years, Happy couldn't compare. Respect was won through results in competition, but feelings and passion couldn't be transferred so quickly.

"What do you think?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu.

"The match was pretty good. Mysterious Fantasy clearly had the advantage in terms of experience, but Excellent Era's young players had more drive, and they seized more opportunities in the end," said Ye Xiu.

"Who cares about that," Chen Guo huffed. "I'm asking you about your feelings on Excellent Era's return."

Ye Xiu felt out a cigarette, lit it, took a deep breath and nodded. "Pretty good."

"Next season, they'll become our opponents," said Chen Guo.

Ye Xiu smiled faintly. "We've beaten them, what's there to worry about?"

"What are you pretending for." Chen Guo was speechless. She knew that Ye Xiu was someone who would never look down on any opponent.

Ye Xiu continued to smile, but he didn't say anything. He watched the television quietly, watched that new generation Battle Mage, who announced to the world: "We're back."

Yes! They were back.

To be able to return after leaving, that feeling was wonderful, wasn't it?

Ye Xiu thought of that year and a half he'd spent in retirement and couldn't help but let out a sigh.

Excellent Era's return!

The next day, this made headlines everywhere. And this new Excellent Era wasn't a powerhouse, only the remnants of a powerhouse, but they still stood resolutely, they still charged through the Challenger League. This earned much praise for the young army of New Excellent Era, and the media began to report in detail on the players and characters of this new army. The excitement was comparable to how everyone had felt last year when Happy knocked down the powerhouse Excellent Era.

In this year, Excellent Era had experienced both roles.

With the strength of a powerhouse, they'd lost the most critical battle, attracting all sorts of anger and criticism.

At a weakened level, they'd conquered the final obstacle, winning all sorts of praise and support.

Everyone was already indulging discussion on Excellent Era's future. But they only had half a day of time, because at 8PM that night, Round 36 of the regular season began. Here, the competition would only be fiercer.

This round, Happy was playing their home game, welcoming the second-to-last Bright Green, who was already set to be relegated. In everyone's eyes, this was basically a gift of points for Happy. And Wind Howl was facing Parade this round. Meanwhile, Hundred Blossoms and Thunderclap faced off, becoming the match that was chosen for broadcast. 301 continued their difficult match schedule, this round playing their away game against Blue Rain.

They had reached a critical point in the season, so even though Happy's opponent was weak, there were still many fans who came to watch. And this time, they finally watched their fill, without any disappointment.

Happy earned a perfect 10-0 victory against Bright Green, giving their team a valuable point buffer during this fierce point in the competition. Even more valuable, Ye Xiu still didn't appear in the team competition this match, but Happy's team was still able to cleanly defeat their enemies. Those reporters who had been ready to tear into Happy could only grit their teeth.

Wind Howl also won their match, 9-1 against Parade. The death match between Hundred Blossoms and Thunderclap entered the typical rhythm for Thunderclap matches. After the individual rounds, Hundred Blossoms had the lead 4-1, but Thunderclap won the team competition, ultimately surpassing Hundred Blossoms 6-4.

And 301 defeated Blue Rain 7-3. Step by step, they were breaking through their difficult match schedule. After their three matches against Samsara, Tiny Herb, and Blue Rain, they won 15 points in total. Even though they were still in ninth place for now, they hadn't dropped in the rankings. They were only one point behind the eighth place Hundred Blossoms, so a reversal within one round was completely possible. And Round 37 looked to be a perfect opportunity for this.

Round 37, 301 was fighting their home game against the current last place team, Seaside. And Hundred Blossoms was facing Tyranny.

In Round 36, Tyranny had won 10-0 against Seaside, while Blue Rain had lost to 301, so the two teams switched on the leaderboard. Tyranny once again rose to second place, forcing Blue Rain down to third. Second and third place both had the small home field advantage in the playoffs, the only difference was

the amount of prize winnings for final placement on the leaderboard. But these two powerhouse teams clearly didn't need to worry about this small amount of prize money, and of course Tyranny wouldn't overexert themselves during this time.

They of course wouldn't throw their match with 301, but it was natural that they wouldn't play this match with the same perseverance and energy that they would for the finals. The modern competition format was simply this prolonged, and it didn't make sense to require the full effort of all players at all times.

With all of these factors tangling together, the future situation only grew more complex and confusing.

Just two rounds left!

This is what all the teams were telling themselves. After two rounds, the line between heaven and hell would be determined.

May 29th, Round 37 of the regular season began. Happy's away game against Wind Howl became the broadcasted match for this round. Wind Howl's home stadium was completely filled, without an empty seat in sight. Ever since Wind Howl switched to their one-on-one team playstyle and began winning again and again, everyone from players to fans became energized, and even their chant of winning the championship was brought out once more. And this round, their opponent was the team that had previously swept them 10-0, Team Happy. The stadium was filled with hostility, and as soon as Happy's players entered the field, they were surrounded by booing.

Ye Xiu was once again first up in the individual competition. 35 consecutive wins, the media no longer had the strength to emphasize this incredible feat. This season's King of Dueling award would undoubtedly go to him, as his individual record this season was so far ahead of everyone else's. As for who had the second-best score, everyone was too lazy to care, since there wasn't any meaning in comparing them anyway. Right now, everyone was waiting to see whether Ye Xiu could ultimately complete the feat of 37 consecutive wins, and some were beginning to sigh about how Ye Xiu hadn't played in the individual round in Round 1. Otherwise, he'd have 38 rounds – that wouldn't be called consecutive wins anymore, he would have won all of them, every single one. This score could never be surpassed, only tied, unless the Alliance once again expanded and added more teams.

"Ye Xiu is already on the field. This is his thirty-sixth individual battle, and up to now he was already won thirty-five consecutive. Will his record end here? Who will Wind Howl send up to meet him? Will their captain Tang Hao himself face him?" After Ye Xiu came out, Pan Lin began to shift the audience's attention toward Wind Howl's player. In the end, Wind Howl's first player for the individual round: Liu Hao.

"Liu Hao, it's Liu Hao! Wind Howl's vice-captain Liu Hao, former vice-captain of Excellent Era. To send him against Ye Xiu, is it because he understands him? Does he have some grasp of this match? Will Ye Xiu's consecutive win record end by the hand of his former lieutenant Liu Hao?" As soon as Pan Lin saw this player coming forward, he grew excited. This was something to talk about! The media loved this kind of battle, where there was a lot to talk about.

"Mm, it's no secret that Ye Xiu goes first in the individual competition. So most teams would address this in one of two ways. They could try the Tian Ji Horse Race strategy, and just let Ye Xiu win the first match,

or they could send a strong player who actually has a chance of taking him out. No matter what, Liu Hao isn't a throwaway player for Wind Howl. His appearance now means they have some sort of plan against Ye Xiu," said Li Yibo.

"Has Liu Hao discovered the way to defeat the unspecialized Lord Grim?" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Let us wait and see!" Li Yibo hurriedly said, fearing that Pan Lin would want him to make an analytic prediction. This was Ye Xiu's match. Predict the outcome? Don't joke around.

Soon, the first individual match officially began.

"It's not a direct confrontation," Li Yibo immediately concluded, after looking at the map selected. "This map is pretty typically suited for a Spellblade. The distance between obstacles matches very well the attack range of a Spellblade."

"As expected, Liu Hao came prepared!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Come on! Let me see how much you've grown these past two years." As soon as the match began, Ye Xiu spoke in the chat.

"Haha, I welcome the teachings of my old captain," Liu Hao replied, polite and modest, in an extremely composed demeanor. In reality, he was about to explode.

I'm not a student in Excellent Era's training camp anymore. I'm not Excellent Era's benchwarmer substitute anymore, or Excellent Era's player at all. I'm not under your authority anymore, Ye Xiu. I'm Team Wind Howl's vice-captain, an All-Star player this season. But you, you, on what basis are you still acting so high and mighty? You want to see how much I've grown? Do I need your comments anymore?

My growth?

I'll show you how much I've grown.

Liu Hao's Spellblade Absent Sun decisively advanced, without retreat, along the center road.

Stone Forest.

This was the name of this 1v1 map. Stone pillars, each as thick as a person, were distributed quite densely along this map. No clash could avoid hitting them; places for cover were everywhere.

Absent Sun quickly arrived at the center road, but when he looked around, he didn't see any sign of Lord Grim.

"Old captain, how come you're not here? This isn't your normal style!" Liu Hao immediately said in the chat.

"Of course not, my style adapts to local conditions!" Ye Xiu quickly responded.

Where is he?

Liu Hao purposefully acted relaxed in chat, but in reality he was very nervous. Dealing with sneak attacks on this map would be a headache. Liu Hao didn't let Absent Sun just stand around waiting, and so he also prepared to sneak attack the opponent, and began to move carefully alongside a stone pillar.

Whoosh!

About twenty body-lengths away, a silhouette flashed through the stone pillars, instantly going from behind one to behind another. Liu Hao immediately adjusted his camera view, capturing this rare clue.

Liu Hao stared at that one stone pillar. Lord Grim was right behind it. Absent Sun began to carefully move in that direction. On this map, Liu Hao was unafraid of a direct confrontation.

Chapter 1362: It's Always Like This

Step by step, Liu Hao carefully approached. Absent Sun moved steadily, his eyes unwavering, with no openings in sight.

The viewers yawned. Lord Grim wasn't in the direction Absent Sun was moving in. After Lord Grim hid behind that stone pillar, he backed up in a straight line until he reached a different stone pillar and then switched to it as a new hiding spot.

Having an omniscient view sometimes made things quite boring. The viewers all felt bored. They regretfully could not experience Liu Hao's nervousness and could not sympathize with Liu Hao's extreme caution.

Earthquake Sword!

Absent Sun threw out a fierce attack, and a wave of earth surged forth. The whirling earth crashed into that stone pillar and sliced it in half. The Earthquake Sword had split into two paths and then converged towards the center of the stone pillar.

Liu Hao had been waiting for this moment. Absent Sun slid to the side to get a better line of sight and sent out an Ice Wave Sword.

"Haa..."

The audience once again yawned. There was no one behind that stone pillar. What was the point of making so much noise? Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was quite a distance away and wasn't within the attack's range. A fight wasn't going to break out. Everyone could see that clearly. It was only Liu Hao alone, with his spirit trembling with excitement, who couldn't see it. His two skills ended up hitting nothing but air.

He's not there!

Liu Hao was shocked to discover that Lord Grim wasn't behind the stone pillar.

However, with his experience and his familiarity with the map, he immediately determined how Lord Grim had disappeared from right under his eyes.

Absent Sun moved precisely along the route Lord Grim had chosen. The audience noticed Liu Hao's precise judgement and shook excitedly. Applause suddenly poured down.

This time, he was truly closing in. However, this time, Liu Hao wasn't certain of Lord Grim's exact location.

The audience didn't know that though! All they saw was Liu Hao chasing after Lord Grim with extraordinary precision. They thought he had completely ascertained Lord Grim's position. How could they know Liu Hao only had a rough idea. He was still picking from A, B, or C as his final answer!

Seeing Absent Sun getting closer and closer to Lord Grim, the crowd became increasingly more excited. All sorts of cheers and excited shouts exploded. Then, they watched as Absent Sun sweep out an Earthquake Sword towards a stone pillar with no one there.

Fuck!

What a letdown.

Everyone's hopes were instantly crushed. The crowd immediately went silent.

Liu Hao did the same two attack maneuver as before and once again saw that there was no one behind that stone pillar.

Okay, so A's been eliminated. There's only B and C left.

He should be... behind those two stone pillars, right?

Liu Hao was suddenly unsure again. He had been confident in his pursuit. Even though he hadn't seen any signs of Lord Grim, he was certain Ye Xiu was dancing in the palm of his hands. If there were any strange movements, he would definitely notice them.

But there were none.

That meant Lord Grim should be in front of him. He just couldn't confirm whether A, B, or C was correct.

Liu Hao believed choice A was the last likely. He still chose it in the end though. It was actually bait. When he attacked A, his attention was more focused on B and C. He thought Ye Xiu would act as soon as he guessed wrong, so he wanted to beat him at his own game.

But Ye Xiu did not act. As a result, he safely eliminated A as the correct choice and now began pondering over the other two choices.

The audience suddenly became quite lively.

Lord Grim's over there! If your first guess wasn't right, try again! Why'd you stop?

Absent Sun raised his shortsword and suddenly started casting a Wave Formation. With just one move, he could cover both options.

At this moment, Lord Grim casually stepped out from pillar B.

Liu Hao was greatly alarmed and hastily cancelled his Wave Formation. Shining Cut! Lord Grim cut across and appeared right in front of Liu Hao.

"You haven't changed. Your playstyle is always so... fake," Ye Xiu said as Lord Grim let out two slashes in the shape of a cross. At this distance, a vertical and horizontal slash was truly difficult to dodge. Liu Hao reacted quite fast though. Absent Sun shielded his head with his shortsword, using the Blade Master skill Guard to block Lord Grim's attack. Borrowing the momentum from Lord Grim's attack, he slid back.

“You clearly know where I was hiding! Why not directly attack me? Why did you insist on running in circles?” Ye Xiu didn’t have Lord Grim urgently rush over and followed up on the conversation.

“You call that fake?” Liu Hao sneered. “Are you saying you’ve never done this?”

“I have, but no one is so fake through and through,” Ye Xiu replied.

“Do you really think words like those would shake me up?” Liu Hao said.

“If you really did get shaken up, that would be great,” Ye Xiu said.

“Shut up!” Liu Hao was finally unable to hold back. After all, letting it accumulate was quite tiring as well.

“Alright!” Ye Xiu responded. Lord Grim moved again.

Liu Hao sneered. In his eyes, Ye Xiu had made a mistake. Lord Grim suddenly leaping out, while his Absent Sun was casting a spell, came out of nowhere. Lord Grim instantly closed in on him too. It had been such a perfect ambush opportunity. But instead of continuing his assault, he just chattered. Liu Hao was truly laughing from head to toe. He had truly been panicking whether or not he could block Lord Grim’s direct attacks. That distance wasn’t a Spellblade’s ideal distance.

Instead, Ye Xiu stopped, giving him a chance to breathe. This was simply letting a tiger return to the mountains! Liu Hao had adjusted himself. If another attack came, he wouldn’t be afraid. He had originally planned on directly fighting with Ye Xiu. Why else would he have charged directly to the center of the map at the start of the match?

You’ll pay the price for trying to preach to me!

Liu Hao shouted inwardly. Absent Sun raised his sword. A frenzy of fire surged towards Lord Grim. Fire Wave Sword!

Bang!

The raging flames left Lord Grim nowhere to dodge. The fire blazed turning Lord Grim into smoke.

Humph...

Liu Hao laughed coldly. Shadow Clone Technique. Ye Xiu had used this old trick who knew how many times by now.

Absent Sun had already leapt up. At practically the same time as the Fire Wave Sword, he twisted his body in the air and released an Earthquake Sword!

The land quaked and violent sword intent flew forward, but all that it hit was a thread of Lord Grim’s clothing.

Absent Sun had missed. Lord Grim hadn’t been standing directly behind him, but rather to the side a sliver. The Earthquake Sword grudgingly whistled by him.

“Who told you I always went behind my opponents?” Ye Xiu asked as Lord Grim unsheathed his sword.

Sword Draw!

The sword light swept over. The airborne Absent Sun had no way of dodging it. He had just Guarded previously; its cooldown wasn't up yet. All he could do was swing his sword as a normal attack to parry it.

However, a normal attack had lower priority than Sword Draw. It couldn't completely block it. The Sword Draw pushed Absent Sun's shortsword back towards him. Absent Sun crashed to the ground; the flames from his previous Fire Wave Sword had yet to extinguish.

Even though he wasn't able to completely block it, it still had some effect. Absent Sun didn't go into a tumble as a result. Liu Hao adjusted his character, so he would land on his feet.

Clack!

The instant he fell, a clack came from beneath his feet. Liu Hao lowered his head and saw spikes through his character's feet.

Thief skill Spike Trap rooted the target.

Liu Hao's face suddenly paled. He hadn't noticed when Lord Grim had placed the trap down. From its location, could it have been the instant he sent out the Fire Wave Sword? Could he have used the light from the flames as a cover?

In any case, Liu Hao had been hit by the trap, and his Absent Sun couldn't move an inch for the duration of Spike Trap. And this time, Ye Xiu had no plans of chatting with him. Grenade, Sand Toss, Disperse Powder... Lord Grim rushed over and threw a bunch of things. Unable to move, the only thing Liu Hao could do was look away to avoid Sand Toss's Blind effect. Every other projectile had hit. Then, Lord Grim's sword glowed dark purple as a ghost soul flashed out. A boundary had appeared on the ground: Sword Soul, or Sword Boundary. All allies within the boundary would have their Strength and Intelligence greatly buffed.

The real offensive had only just begun: Unspecialized Blitz.

With Spike Trap in effect, Absent Sun could only stand there and get beaten. When Spike Trap's root effect dissipated, Absent Sun could still only get beaten up.

Liu Hao wanted to cry. He had been waiting to use this map for a long time. He had been waiting for the key moment to use it to improve his popularity. This crucial match against Ye Xiu and his 35 round win streak were once in a lifetime opportunities to win huge amounts of fame. Liu Hao had sacrificed his treasure and released his treasure's full might. He had utilized his familiarity with the map to give a precise chase and received the audience's applause.

But there was nothing after that.

He received no more chances to utilize this map. Ye Xiu had used a Spike Trap to seal his movements. Then, after making a few setups, Ye Xiu didn't give him a single opportunity to counterattack or use the map as cover.

Am I going to lose?

Lose like this?

I was so meticulous and precise with my preparations, yet I'm going to lose like this without any chance of retaliation?

IMPOSSIBLE! It doesn't make sense! I worked hard and put in the effort! Victory? Why can't I see any shred of victory? Will I truly never be able to beat him?

Liu Hao felt fear.

He had exhausted everything at his disposal in this match. He thought that he had a huge advantage, but he hadn't even been able to hold the upper hand for even a minute. It was like he still a trainee at the Excellent Era training camp. That Battle God from up above strolled into the training camp, picked a random map, and just casually crushed him.

He thought that he had grown strong, but in the end, he could see no difference from the past. He was easily and casually defeated.

Why?

Why did it turn out like this?

When Absent Sun fell, Liu Hao collapsed in his seat and roared furiously. But no one could hear him.

Chapter 1363: Hundred Blossoms on the Cliff

Happy vs Wind Howl, 1-0.

The scoreboard in the stadium clearly displayed the two teams' points after the first battle.

Ye Xiu's win streak continued. In the live broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo only mentioned this once, almost with an air of resignation. It was simply too repetitive. And with this battle in particular, Li Yibo felt that he had been faceslapped once again. He hadn't even dared to make any thorough analysis at the start of the match, he'd only said that this map was suitable for Spellblades, and that Liu Hao had chosen it carefully. He felt that he couldn't go wrong with such an obvious observation!

But in the end, had this map actually been suitable for the Spellblade? If only looking at the actual performance, and not the map, then Li Yibo could only be given a regretful "haha."

Just from the onstage performance, it was impossible to see that Liu Hao's Absent Sun had used any special characteristics of the map. But would Coach Li be beaten that easily?

"Ye Xiu played very well!" Li Yibo said. "From the very start, he could tell that the map put him at a disadvantage, so step by step, he drew the opponent into his plan, took control, and ended the match."

"Yes, yes – what did Liu Hao want to do with this map? We didn't even get the chance to see!" Pan Lin followed Li Yibo's thought process.

"This match between old teammates didn't ignite the fireworks we'd expected. Ye Xiu easily obtained victory," said Li Yibo.

“Yes, Ye Xiu won easily, and now Happy is 1-0 in the lead. The Wind Howl audience seems somewhat disappointed!” Pan Lin said.

“This outcome probably caught them off-guard as well! The first player in a match is usually chosen to be someone with a tougher style. This kind of player can carry the atmosphere, and even if they lose, they won’t disappoint people too much. Liu Hao is more of a calculating player, but if he miscalculates, then his loss is a bit more ugly,” said Li Yibo.

“Yeah... this match, he seemed a bit off,” Pan Lin said.

While the two of them discussed, the two players had already begun to come offstage. Liu Hao’s face was ugly as he walked along, and he heard a few boos directed at him. Clearly, a number of Wind Howl fans were unsatisfied with his performance. But overall, the Wind Howl audience was still relatively tolerant.

“Let’s get ready to enjoy the second battle!” Pan Lin said. The camera switched back to show the digital display in the stadium, and very soon, the names of the players participating in the second battle of the individual round appeared.

Happy, Mo Fan, Deception.

Wind Howl, Guo Yang, Qi Breaker.

“Another former Excellent Era player,” Li Yibo said.

“Happy sent out Mo Fan, unlike their recent pattern of sending Luo Ji or Wei Chen. It looks like the situation’s getting more tense, so Happy doesn’t dare to continue to let Luo Ji and Wei Chen find their condition,” said Pan Lin. ()

“Haha, if they lose points now, they won’t have any more chances to win them back,” said Li Yibo.

Indeed, these were the last two rounds. Every single point was precious. It was very possible that the final standings would be determined by this single point.

Wind Howl had lost one point, but they were still in seventh place, and had a points advantage over eighth and ninth. Meanwhile, Hundred Blossoms, currently in eighth place, was in a greater need of points, but they also lost the first point of the individual round.

Song Qiying, the young general of Tyranny, went first, and ultimately defeated Hundred Blossoms’ old general Zhang Wei to win a first point for Tyranny.

The second Tyranny player instantly provoked boos from all corners of the Hundred Blossoms stadium.

Zhang Jiale, it could only be Zhang Jiale. Every time he returned to this stadium, he was met with this kind of welcome.

It had already been three years since he retired from Hundred Blossoms.

It had already been two years since he joined Tyranny.

Yet Hundred Blossoms' resentment toward him seemed not to have lessened in the slightest. Even if there were many Hundred Blossoms fans that understood him, their voices would never be loud enough. Those who passionately despised Zhang Jiale had a stronger presence.

This season, Hundred Blossoms' fans had organized a poll amongst themselves, a contest in which they ranked the various players in Hundred Blossoms history in different categories. The player toward whom they were most grateful, and the player they hated the most, the number one for both categories was Zhang Jiale.

Zhang Jiale, to Hundred Blossoms, was an angel and a demon combined.

Some remembered his many years of contributions, while others hated his final abandonment.

Love and hate tangled together like this, in a never-ending debate. Now that he came onstage, there was some applause, but there was more booing. In the end, Hundred Blossoms desperately needed victory at this time, and Zhang Jiale had become an obstacle standing in their way. Evidently, this would ignite more hatred than gratitude.

And on Hundred Blossoms' side, when their player name was announced, the crowd instantly hushed.

Zou Yuan, Bright Blossoms.

By coincidence, Hundred Blossoms' old and new Spitfires stood opposite each other on the battlefield. The very air seemed thick with tension.

But Zhang Jiale was very calm.

Having walked to this point today, he would have no other emotion. All of those feelings and conflicts of the past were now buried deep in his heart. He would reminisce, but not at this moment. Perhaps the points didn't matter to Tyranny right now anymore, but Zhang Jiale absolutely would not throw the match for Hundred Blossoms. He still hoped he could earn the understanding and support of the Hundred Blossoms fans, but he would not do so through such a method.

He would play this match seriously. It wasn't a victory that Tyranny needed, but to himself, and to Hundred Blossoms, this was the greatest respect he could offer.

Gunshots.

The two Spitfires were already fighting.

These were perhaps the two best Spitfires in Glory right now, both from Team Hundred Blossoms, both controlling Spitfire characters with the word "blossoms" in their names.

Who was weaker? Who was stronger?

This was not a question that could be answered with one match. In one match, there was only victory and defeat.

Zou Yuan's playstyle had inherited many characteristics from Zhang Jiale's, but later on, he had integrated many of his own traits as well. The two's styles seemed to be similar, but they weren't the same.

This had nothing to do with which was superior. They simply each used their own abilities to the limit.

Amidst roars, explosions bloomed like flowers. In this instant, everyone forgot all debate, as they were captivated by the sights onstage.

Victory and defeat, that was all there was. No matter what player, what class, what style, what debate – once on the battlefield, only victory and defeat were displayed in the end.

The loser would fall; the winner would remain standing. Aside from this, there would be no other outcome. And when this moment arrived...

Glory!

The display flashed with this large word. The holographic projection, showing the details of the battle, played the final moments in slow motion.

Amidst the fireworks exploding like blooming flowers, Bright Blossoms fell. In the end, Zou Yuan could not defeat his senior. As for Zhang Jiale, he knew very well that this match was just icing on the cake for Tyranny, while it could be fatal for Hundred Blossoms. But he didn't hesitate, didn't retreat, as he resolutely controlled Dazzling Hundred Blossoms to fire the final shot.

As for what consequences this would have for Hundred Blossoms, it was no longer his business.

Hundred Blossoms' core player, ace character, this was all in the past.

2-0!

In Tyranny's away game against Hundred Blossoms, when Tyranny no longer needed to care too much about victory, they still obtained the first point, pushing Hundred Blossoms to the cliff's edge.

The news from the other ongoing matches only gave Hundred Blossoms even more of a panic.

301, who had only been behind them by one point, was facing the last-place Seaside this round. By now, they'd already won all three of their individual battles, squeezing Hundred Blossoms out of the top eight.

Thunderclap was playing their home game against Samsara and had already finished two individual matches. Even though Thunderclap was generally weaker individually, they had actually taken the lead 2-0 against Samsara.

In Wind Howl against Happy, they'd finished two battles and were tied 1-1. When two direct competitors were gaining points at an equal rate like this, it was the worst for the other competitors. It would be better for Hundred Blossoms if one team dropped a lot of points, because then there'd be space to pass them.

Not a single piece of good news.

Team Hundred Blossoms, at ninth place right now, had no road of retreat.

Victory, they needed victory! If they weren't able to earn points this round, then their season would come to an end right here. Hundred Blossoms was facing an away game at Samsara next round. It was truly too difficult to push any hopes onto that match.

“You have to win!”

Carrying all of Hundred Blossoms’ hopes as he walked onstage was their Summoner Zhu Xiaoping. The one he was about to face was the player who quietly demonstrated his strength through positioning and movement, Qin Muyun.

Zhu Xiaoping knew how critical this battle was, but it was a difficult task!

His summoned creatures had no way of completing an encirclement around Qin Muyun’s Negative Nine Degrees. Qin Muyun’s precise movement allowed him to thread his way through the army of summons, while his bullets were sent wave after wave toward Zhu Xiaoping’s Wind Carving.

The summons he’d sent to surround the opponent weren’t enough, but Zhu Xiaoping didn’t have anything left to summon creatures to protect himself. Both attack and defense were too difficult, and in the end, he unfortunately lost this crucial third match.

0-3!

Hundred Blossoms was now lagging 0-3. Just when they thought the situation couldn’t get any worse, Tyranny dealt them another blow.

When he came offstage, Zhu Xiaoping’s expression was anguished. He hadn’t been able to manifest the hopes that the entire team, the entire audience, had placed upon him. He knew what this loss implied.

The stadium was deathly silent. No matter how dissatisfied they were by Hundred Blossoms’ performance, the audience was in no mood to boo or jeer.

We have to win!

In everyone’s hearts, there was only this one sound: win!

“We can’t lose any more points. We have to win every single one of the next seven points. This is the most crucial moment of our entire season. Everyone, focus! Win, we must win. Erase every other thought from your minds. Don’t hope that Tyranny will let up, because they won’t, that team never will. We can only bring out everything we have and wager it all on this stage. This is our opportunity, and we can only rely on ourselves to seize it. Win! Win all the way until the end!”

In the short break after the individual round ended, Yu Feng was desperately trying to boost the team’s morale.

“Let’s go!” he roared. “Don’t let the opponents look down upon us, don’t let down our fans! Let’s get them.”

Chapter 1364: An Extremely Stressful Team Competition

At the brink of disaster, without anywhere else to retreat to, Team Hundred Blossoms finally showed astonishing fighting strength during the group arena. Amongst them, the most praiseworthy performance came from their Assassin player, Zhou Guangyi. He had played exceptionally well, narrowly completing a 1v2. After such a beautiful opening, the following two players didn’t waste the

opportunity, finally securing a valuable 2 points for Team Hundred Blossoms in the group arena, somewhat stabilizing the cliff that they were on.

But the news that arrived from other matches made Hundred Blossom's situation as dire as before.

301 was entering the team competition with an absolute lead of 5 to 0, already putting themselves ahead of Hundred Blossoms by two points. It looked like they wouldn't have too much trouble securing victory in the team competition, meaning that 301 had secured a full 10 points in this round.

Thunderclap, after seizing 2 points in the individual competition, now suffered against Samsara's strong retaliation, with the score already changing to 2 to 3 in favour of Samsara. Still, Thunderclap was ahead of Hundred Blossoms by 7 points. Even if they were to lose the upcoming team competition, Hundred Blossoms couldn't rely solely on beating Tyranny in the team competition to surpass them.

The other match was the one that Hundred Blossoms had pinned the most of their hopes on. Team Wind Howl was only ahead of them by 3 points, so of course, Hundred Blossoms was hoping that the gap wouldn't increase, or even for them to simply overtake Wind Howl in one move. In the end, after their initial victory in the first individual round, the retaliation that Happy received was even more dramatic than the one against Thunderclap. Team Wind Howl won round after round, with the score after the group arena tallying up to be 1 to 4. Happy with 1 point, and Wind Howl with 4.

If Happy was ahead of Hundred Blossoms by 7 points, and Thunderclap was ahead by 5 points, no matter what the end result of the round was, Hundred Blossoms had no way of surpassing either of these two teams. Unexpectedly, their end result in this round had already been decided halfway through the competition. Ninth place, it could only be ninth place, with no chance whatsoever of entering the top eight. The last round would be their final chance to make it into the top eight, but it was an away game against Samsara, the most difficult opportunity of them all. And in order to have a chance of seizing this opportunity, they had to first defeat Tyranny in the team competition of this round.

They had easily taken back two points in a brilliant performance in the group arena, but after hearing such bad news from other matches, the morale of the members of Hundred Blossoms began to wane.

"That makes things easier." Unexpectedly, their captain, Yu Feng, had become more relaxed. "We only have one road to take, without any other choices. Let's put in all our effort and try to make it! No matter what, we won't have any regrets."

No matter what, we won't have any regrets!

As the members of Hundred Blossoms thought about it, their gazes gradually became more resolute. They needed to win this round, so they would fight with no fear. Who cared who their opponents were?

"Hundred Blossoms' current situation isn't good, no matter how the match plays out, they're definitely going to be in ninth place." Pan Lin and Li Yibo took advantage of the break in the match to comment about the circumstances for Team Hundred Blossoms.

"That's true, but in the last round, Hundred Blossoms will still have a chance. However, they have to win the upcoming team competition first," Li Yibo said.

“Mm, if Hundred Blossoms wins the team competition, they’ll have 237 points.” Pan Lin looked at the team rankings and calculated, “If Thunderclap loses the team competition to Samsara, they’ll only have 239 points, and they’ll be ahead of Hundred Blossoms by 2 points; if Team 301 wins the team competition against Seaside and takes 10 points, they’ll also be at 239 points, ahead of Hundred Blossoms by 2 points. As for the match we’re currently broadcasting, if Wind Howl wins in the team competition, Happy will only be ahead of Hundred Blossoms by 2 points; and if Happy wins, then Wind Howl will have the same number of points as Hundred Blossoms. Hundred Blossoms still has an obvious opportunity to make it into the top 8.”

“No matter who wins or loses in the current match between Wind Howl and Happy, one team will be left behind, becoming the target for Hundred Blossoms to surpass,” Li Yibo said.

“I’m sure that they’ve already heard the news from the other matches during this break, so they should be very clear of the circumstances that they’re facing,” Pan Lin said.

“In this round, both teams are shouldering a lot of pressure. But if they lose this round, they’ll face even more pressure in the next round. Wind Howl will face Tiny Herb in the last round, and Happy will face 301. Neither match will be easy for them to deal with,” Li Yibo said.

“Looking at it, Wind Howl has taken 4 consecutive points in the individual rounds, so their morale should be very high, and they have the benefit of being the home team. On the other hand, after their initial victory, Happy has lost 4 points in a row, so they need to collect themselves quickly!” Pan Lin said.

“Yes, that’s right. While these two teams are evidently in a much better state than Hundred Blossoms, they’re still not too far from the edge of the cliff. Whoever loses will move a few steps closer to that cliff, where Hundred Blossoms is desperately trying to claw their way back in. It could very well be that Hundred Blossoms comes back, while one of these teams makes an exit,” Li Yibo said, putting his fists on the edge of the table to illustrate what he meant.

“Let’s wait and see which team can better stabilize their state of mind at this crucial time!” Pan Lin said.

“Mm, the team competition is about to begin,” Li Yibo replied.

“Let’s return to the current match,” Pan Lin said, as the camera moved away from the commentator’s booth and back to the arena. At the same time, a bird’s-eye shot overlooked the player benches for each team, where the players were huddled in a circle, obviously making crucial preparations for the match ahead.

In the arena, the referee walked to the side of the stage, stretching his hand out to indicate that the competitors from the two teams should prepare to go onstage. One by one, the names of the players from each side who would be appearing in the team competition flashed on the large screen in the stadium.

“Fuck!” Pan Lin suddenly cried out, before immediately covering his mouth, but it was already too late. During this whole season, he had been walking on the blade’s edge with the issue of repeatedly swearing, and Pan Lin had put in a great amount of effort to control his repeated urges to curse out loud. Unfortunately, in the second-to-last round, his willpower finally cracked, and he was unable to refrain from swearing. In an instant, his cursing was transmitted to the ears of every single viewer. He could practically already see his bonus for that month flying out of his pocket.

“Happy is really too bold!” Li Yibo was really quite considerate, knowing that Pan Lin’s sudden swearing wasn’t very appropriate, so he hurriedly spoke up, doing his best to cover it up a bit.

“Yeah...” Pan Lin was still somewhat unable to calm himself after his mistake.

“In a match as crucial as this, Ye Xiu still isn’t going up in the team competition?” Li Yibo continued to stare in surprise at the names of the players who were competing in the team competition. Team Happy: Fang Rui, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou, Luo Ji, An Wenyi, Mo Fan.

Not only was Ye Xiu not going up, Luo Ji, a rookie who had only played in a few rounds, was unexpectedly appearing in the team competition roster during such an important match.

“What on earth is Happy thinking!” Pan Lin exploded.

“Could it be that Ye Xiu has really run into some kind of problem?” This time, Li Yibo really couldn’t stop himself from making a conjecture. Even though Ye Xiu had continued his unblemished record in the individual competition, he’d already rested for 4 whole rounds when it came to the team competition. Normally, if a player didn’t appear for 4 rounds, most people wouldn’t think that they were rotating their roster, they would think that the player had been cut from the main roster entirely.

But how could Happy possibly cut Ye Xiu?

“Could he have suffered an injury that prevents him from playing for a long period of time? Like Sun Zheping?” Pan Lin wondered. Until today, Sun Zheping had only played in the individual competition for Team Heavenly Swords. It was no secret that he couldn’t take on a greater burden due to his hand injury. Ye Xiu only appearing in the individual competition for four rounds in a row really did have a few similarities to Sun Zheping’s situation!

No matter whether he was resting, or if it was some kind of deliberate feint, Ye Xiu not appearing in such a crucial competition really didn’t conform to common sense.

But no matter how surprised everyone was, Happy could only have these 6 players who were taking the field. At this time, they were lined up in the middle of the stage next to Wind Howl’s 6 players, taking in the look of astonishment on their faces. Evidently, Ye Xiu not appearing in this round was something that no one had expected, not even Team Wind Howl.

After shaking hands and exchanging greetings, the two sides made their way to the player booths. As they walked away, some of Wind Howl’s players turned their heads in suspicion, as if Ye Xiu was mixed into that group of 6, waiting to catch them off guard.

“Don’t bother thinking about what the other side is doing, it’s irrelevant to us. We’ll mark their players, the same thing as usual,” their captain, Tang Hao, said to the rest of his team.

“Understood.” Wind Howl’s players nodded their heads, but at this time, their vice-captain, Liu Hao, was staring at Happy’s player bench, away from the stage. He was staring at Ye Xiu.

Having being easily beaten into submission during the individual competition, Liu Hao was on the verge of collapse, but he was really too good at hiding his true feelings. After he came out of the player booths, he wore a look of defeat without despair, apologizing to his teammates, encouraging the next player, leaving no room for anyone to say anything much to him.

Only he knew that deep inside, he wasn't as calm and collected as he looked.

He was about to go insane. He simply couldn't accept the reality that he had been so easily dispatched by Ye Xiu.

He wanted revenge. He needed revenge.

The opportunity was right in front of him, the team competition. In the team competition, they would face each other again. And in the team competition, where Wind Howl wanted each person to mark an opposing player, Liu Hao's mark was indeed Ye Xiu.

Liu Hao had clenched his teeth, waiting for this moment the entire time. But in the end, Ye Xiu didn't appear.

In such a crucial, important match, Ye Xiu actually decided not to play in the team competition.

The energy that Liu Hao had been building up for the whole of the first half of the competition immediately turned to sullenness.

He desperately wanted to take down Ye Xiu, but from the very start, Ye Xiu paid no mind to him. When he should take the stage, he went up, and when he wanted to rest, he would rest. Just because Liu Hao was on the other team, would he have to go up in the team competition to take the reins? Regrettably, Liu Hao never had this sort of worthiness, and Ye Xiu never had such intentions.

Ye Xiu didn't appear, so Liu Hao's mark changed. His new mark: Luo Ji. /

This was the natural substitute, since Ye Xiu hadn't appeared in the match. Wind Howl had no intention of rearranging each person's mark once again. But Liu Hao wasn't in a good mood, immediately becoming furious with the player that he had to target during the match.

It was actually that noob?

Liu Hao felt as if he was being scorned. Deep down inside, he knew that there was no such thing, it was just a natural result of Happy's players being swapped. But even then, he couldn't get rid of the feeling that they were looking down on him.

"Let's beat them!" Tang Hao roared.

"Yes!" The players shouted back.

The competition began.

Chapter 1365: The Underestimated Rookie

The match had officially began, but the audience hadn't gotten ready for it yet. No one had recovered from the news that Ye Xiu wasn't playing!

But the first thing each team did when the match began had the entire audience snapping their attention back to the match.

Team Wind Howl, player and account substitution, healer player Ruan Yongbin, Cleric Soul Healer switched out, sixth player Guo Yang, Qi Master Qi Breaker switched in.

Team Happy, player and account substitution, healer player An Wenyi, Cleric Little Cold Hand switched out, sixth player Mo Fan, Deception switched in. The entire stadium exploded into uproar.

Everyone had gotten used to Wind Howl's new playstyle by now and some even questioned why they even bothered having a healer at all. Of course, this was just sarcasm. Having a healer in their starting lineup added a layer of uncertainty for their opponents. Even though they knew that Wind Howl favored the tactic of switching their sixth player in for a five DPS formation, they would be forced to wonder if the other would really use it.

In addition, a man on man offense was very tiring to keep up. Often times, they still needed a healer behind them to help stabilize the situation, so that was why a lot of people thought Misty Rain too extreme with their six DPS lineup.

In this match, Wind Howl was using their usual play style, but no one had expected that Happy would copy them, throwing their healer out for a DPS the moment the match started.

"Happy... is really too brave!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

Team Wind Howl had rolled through the competition with their playstyle and, until now, no other team had been so resolute, arranging a full DPS formation to counter. This was another huge shock after the first, where everyone realized Ye Xiu wasn't playing.

"But, speaking of, it isn't like Happy hasn't used this playstyle before. Of course, back then their goal wasn't a man on man offense like Wind Howl," Li Yibo brought up.

Pan Lin thought back. It seemed that they really had switched out their healer for their sixth player to maximize DPS before. Happy had utilized this ages ago.

"Then what are they aiming to do this time?" Pan Lin wondered aloud.

"Hm, let's wait and see," Li Yibo said.

Pan Lin rolled his eyes. At a time like this, shouldn't he do some analysis? Li Yibo was just getting worse and worse, pretending that he had nothing to do at times like this.

The two teams charged out. Team Wind Howl split into three groups, two people heading to the left and right flanks. This flank attack was their usual strategy. On their home turf this round, the familiarity of the map had them moving even faster and more decisively.

On the other hand, Happy's five were in a tight group. Never mind scattering, their current position was almost too closely spaced.

"What's Happy trying to do?" Pan Lin's curious and anxious attitude wasn't an act to rouse excitement; he really did want to know. "They switched out their healer for a DPS, but considering this formation, it doesn't seem like they intend to fight man to man!"

"They probably don't," Li Yibo agreed, "If they really were planning on a man on man, then Happy would most likely be at a disadvantage. Team Wind Howl's players are very strong individually, which is what

has allowed them to perform so well at this man to man offensive. It's probably not the best idea to face this head on for Happy."

Just as they spoke, the two teams met. For Team Wind Howl, it was Tang Hao, Lin Feng, and Zhao Yuzhe. As for Happy, all their members were present.

Team Happy's movement speed suddenly fell, while Wind Howl continued to charge forward. Suddenly, there was a poof from Happy and then purple smoke rapidly spread out, immediately enveloping Happy's characters.

"Smoke Bomb! It's Happy's Deception's Smoke Bomb!" Pan Lin yelled. "No wonder Happy's formation was so closely spaced. Were they wanting to use the cover of Smoke Bomb to make their opponents incapable of figuring out the situation?"

Pan Lin yelled out excitedly, as if he had discovered a new continent. However, Li Yibo frowned, deciding against making any hasty judgements. Did they want to break up Wind Howl's man to man with just a Smoke Bomb? That was underestimating their opponents a little too much, wasn't it? That's what Li Yibo thought.

Childish!

On the field, Wind Howl's captain, Tang Hao, looked at Happy's strategy with disdain. Wind Howl had honed their man to man over and over. It wasn't so easy to break.

Smoke Bomb could conceal characters, but it was best for a single character. With five characters, it was a little too much. It was okay if they didn't move, but once they started moving, the smoke would move, too, and then it was a matter of observing the thickness of the smoke to find out where each character was.

Or, they could just ignore the smoke and wait. It wasn't like the smoke from Smoke Bombs would move with the characters. If Happy's five just sat there, by the time the smoke dispersed, they'd still have to fight.

In conclusion, there were too many ways to counter this. If Happy thought that a Smoke Bomb was some sort of amazing counter strategy, then they were far too naive.

"A single Smoke Bomb can't cover for all of them. Destroy them!" Tang Hao ordered, matching their aggressive style perfectly. In addition, he hadn't even bothered to switch to the team chat, sending the message directly into the public chat.

Happy's strategy was honestly embarrassing. Sending the order directly into the public chat would teach them a lesson, and might have them wavering.

Tang Hao didn't rely purely on passion when fighting. As a captain, he knew what he should do.

Wind Howl's team followed his orders, charging forward. By then, Liu Hao's Spellblade, Absent Sun, and Guo Yang's Qi Master, Qi Breaker, had arrived as well, and they acted in perfect sync with the other three. Wind Howl's playstyle was very mature now.

"I'll get rid of their smoke!" Liu Hao yelled into the chat. He was relatively more cautious. Being unable to see Happy's current situation unsettled him a little. "Together." Guo Yang, on the left, understood his

worries as a teammate back from Excellent Era, and coordinated with him. The two mid-range attackers both had AoE attacks, making pincer attacks very satisfying.

Thus, Absent Sun began casting a Wave Sword while Qi Breaker casted to gather Qi energy. Yet that was when a missile shot out of the smoke, trailing flame behind it. Dancing Rain's missile headed straight for Absent Sun, interrupting his cast. On the other flank, the air seemed to have been pierced through by something, leaving behind a chain of transparent ripples.

Qi Blade!

How could Guo Yang not recognize this skill as a Qi Master player? This was Fang Rui's attack, interrupting his.

The two attacks from the flanks had been interrupted, but Tang Hao's Demon Subduer was already charging in from the front, while Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon had activated Stealth, creeping closer. Zhao Yuzhe's Elementalist, seeing the two casts interrupted, didn't bother starting to cast a powerful spell. He jabbed his staff forward and a Raging Flames exploded up amidst Happy's formation. The flames, rising like a volcanic eruption, shot up several meters, but no characters were blasted up by it.

Tang Hao's Demon Subduer had finally gotten within attack range and Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon had closed in successfully with Stealth. Happy's smoke cover now looked like it was boiling over with those attacks, starting to thin.

"Attack!" With Tang Hao's cry, Team Wind Howl began their most practiced divide and conquer! Ice Wave Sword!

Liu Hao's Absent Sun swept his blade out, frost swept across the ground, tearing into the smoke. The glittering light blue crystals left a clear mark in the purple smoke.

Hit! / update by

Liu Hao saw the crystals hit a target. He didn't know who it was, exactly, but this target would have their speed slowed. Happy's rhythm was, with this, destroyed.

His blade rose once more, this time surrounded by wisps of flame. Fire Wave Sword, the Wave Sword with the strongest attack power, was prepared, but that was when Liu Hao felt something strange with the ground under Absent Sun's feet. He hurriedly stepped away and looked down, yet found that he was unable to take this step. A vine had wrapped itself around Absent Sun's foot.

Devil World Flower!

Liu Hao was stunned for a moment, immediately remembering that one player in Happy's lineup that had replaced Ye Xiu's position. That rookie-like guy called Luo Ji or something, wasn't his class a Summoner?

Summoner... Summoner

Liu Hao shuddered, suddenly realizing something...

Tyrannical Chain Punch!

Tang Hao's Demon Subduer had lunged into the fray by then. He didn't care who he'd catch. Divide, their goal was to divide, divide up Happy's five characters and isolate them from one another.

Hit!

Demon Subduer crushed his target against the ground with one hand, his other hand crashing forth. The only thing was that it wasn't as satisfying as he thought it would be. This target seemed so tiny. Spirit Cat... It was a measly Spirit Cat...

Summoner...

Summoner!

Tang Hao finally realized what was going on, but soon enough, two sets of sharp claws had caught Demon Subduer's shoulders. Frost Wolf was biting down on Demon Subduer with a mouth full of chilling energy.

Zhao Yuzhe's Elementalist Beautiful Light began to cast a high level spell after Wind Howl had fully opened up their offensive.

Absolute Zero!

He wanted to use this powerful control skill to throw one of Happy's members out of their formation.

However, in the middle of his casting, an eagle's cry sounded from amidst the purple smoke. A Thunder Eagle shot out from the smoke like a bolt of lightning, arriving in the air above Beautiful Light seemingly in the blink of an eye. It opened its mouth, spitting out a thunderbolt and Zhao Yuzhe was forced to dodge, cancelling his cast. Not good!

Zhao Yuzhe had realized, too.

This wasn't good at all.

The true goal of the Smoke Bomb wasn't to cover for Happy's five characters, but to cover for Happy's Summoner's summoning. Wind Howl wanted to fight man to man, but with a Summoner, how could they manage? A Summoner meant that there would always be more characters.

A mistake! They had made a huge mistake.

No one had expected that Happy's rookie would be the key character in their team competition. Summoner! This class was a rather obvious counter to Wind Howl's man to man style, but Wind Howl had neglected to consider him and forgotten to deal with him.

This was only because he was replacing Ye Xiu. Everyone was shocked, but had forgotten to consider what sort of value the person who had been substituted in might have in this team competition.

Forgetting a rookie could be fatal too!

Chapter 1366: The Limits of Happy's Summoner

Wind Howl with their man to man offense had neglected to consider the Summoner amongst Happy's ranks. This was a humiliatingly rookie mistake.

Team Happy's courage and their confidence in their players had reached an absurd level. For other teams, how many of them would be willing to bet everything on a rookie, even when knowing that Summoners were a counter to Wind Howl's playstyle? A rookie that hadn't played many rounds since his debut at that?

That's what Happy had done. As for the humiliating mistake Wind Howl had made, barely anyone had the heart to criticize them for it, because most people had neglected to consider this as well, just like Wind Howl.

Just as everyone was obsessing over how Ye Xiu wasn't playing, now many people had stopped to think how Happy would face this match without Ye Xiu?

From their perspective, Happy was just messing around with Ye Xiu not playing.

Unfortunately, with a Smoke Bomb and a Summoner, Happy had used two rookies of theirs that rarely played in official matches to dismantle Wind Howl's man to man offense.

The smoke had more or less dispersed and Happy's impressive formation was revealed. Concealed Light's summons made Team Wind Howl's man to man seem ever so idiotic.

Liu Hao's Absent Sun was caught by the Devil World Flower's vines.

Tang Hao's Demon Subduer had managed to pin a Spirit Cat, but his own head was in the jaws of a Frost Wolf, a rather terrifying sight. Zhao Yuzhe's Beautiful Light had been locked onto by a Thunder Eagle. Though there was no way a single summon could be much of a threat to a pro player, he'd have to ask the Thunder Eagle before he could attack Happy.

Was Guo Yang's Qi Breaker and Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon in the clear then?

Of course not!

Happy was a team, and Luo Ji wasn't the only one in it. Concealed Light's summons had occupied three of Wind Howl's players, and the other members of Happy had plenty of freedom to act as they wished!

Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain engaged Qi Breaker with her artillery. However, the most unfortunate one was Lin Feng. He was a battle Thief and had sneaked over with Doubtful Demon under Stealth, planning to tear a character out of Happy's formation. However, the smoke dispersed, his Stealth wore off, and then he got surrounded.

Tang Rou, Fang Rui, Mo Fan's three characters had surrounded Doubtful Demon.

Dismantling an opponent's strategy didn't count as a victory. A true victory was dealing a critical blow to the opponent. Strategies could be switched and adjusted. Wind Howl wouldn't have the rookie mistake of forgetting the Summoner in their opponent's ranks again.

Thus, Happy would naturally want to use this chance and deal a critical blow to Team Wind Howl first. Otherwise, they would've merely tanked past their opponent's first wave of attacks; without a counterattack, what use was that?

Lin Feng was currently deeply lodged in Happy's counterattack. Being ganged up on by three people had him incapable of fighting back. Doubtful Demon's health plummeted, however, there wasn't nearly enough time to erase Doubtful Demon from the field in one go.

Just a Thunder Eagle wasn't nearly enough to completely control Zhao Yuzhe.

It might have looked scary with Frost Wolf's jaws clamped around Demon Subduer's head, but this was just a game. The damage didn't increase just because of how scary the scene was. However, the frosty breath of Frost Wolf would give Demon Subduer a slow that could prove annoying for Tang Hao.

Liu Hao's Absent Sun was only caught by the vine, which only limited his movements. He could still attack from there. The attack range of Wave Swords could still reach Happy.

In the end, the only one who was pinned rather badly was Qi Breaker under Dancing Rain's assault. Summons, in the end, wasn't as good as a pro player, not nearly good enough!

"In the current situation, Happy has the advantage, but we can't determine the victors just from that. We'll still have to see how well they perform." Li Yibo could tell that the battle was far from over and commented with this in the live broadcast.

"Indeed. Liu Hao's Absent Sun might be rooted in place by Devil World Flower, but Happy is still within his attack range. He can definitely still provide Lin Feng with support!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

Earthquake Sword! Liu Hao, as Pan Lin said, soon had Absent Sun provide support for Doubtful Demon.

However, Devil World Flower had become a shield then. Doubtful Demon was dragged behind Devil World Flower and beaten down. Absent Sun's Wave Sword attacks couldn't go around Devil World Flower no matter what. Earthquake Sword was all for naught. But Liu Hao did see a missile rocket over, bouncing on the ground twice before landing in front of him after the dust kicked up by Earthquake Sword dispersed.

That bitch!

Liu Hao only had the time to curse in anger before the Heat Seeking Missile descended, spewing fire. Absent Sun, trapped by the vine couldn't dodge.

Boom! A mushroom cloud engulfed Absent Sun. Su Mucheng, who was primarily dealing with Qi Breaker, managed to divide some of her precious time and focus to send Liu hao a gift.

Tang Hao's Demon Subduer managed to finally escape by then. Fling!

The Frost Wolf was grabbed by Demon Subduer. Though his speed had been reduced due to the slow, the power of his attack wasn't reduced at all. The Frost Wolf was thrown right at Tang Rou and co.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

But that was when Tang Rou, attacking even as she defended against his assault, charged out with a Dragon Breaks the Ranks, knocking the Frost Wolf away and stabbing right towards Demon Subduer.

Tang Hao's reaction speed and mechanics were perfect, but he couldn't do anything about Demon Subduer's slow. With Tang Rou's abrupt and resolute change in targets, his character couldn't keep up with his attempt to dodge. With a clink, Demon Subduer was sent flying by Soft Mist.

However, Tang Rou didn't bother pursuing him. Soft Mist turned right back, continuing her assault on Doubtful Demon.

"Happy is doing very well. Their play is methodical, very well paced!" Li Yibo exclaimed in awe.

"But, like this, hasn't Demon Subduer escaped his pin? Tang Hao will be free to join the fray!" Pan Lin said.

"Really?" Li Yibo smiled.

On the field, Concealed Light's casting and orders continued relentlessly.

The Four Summon Beasts were what he mained, and this number was also one he was good at controlling. However, right now, Luo Ji didn't conserve anything. He summoned all and any summons that were available to Concealed Light.

Some low leveled summon creatures had very limited attack power, but Luo Ji wasn't counting on these summons to finish the battle. All these summons had one job: to stall and pin their opponents. They were like line after line of defense, preventing Wind Howl from engaging with Happy.

To achieve this goal, Luo Ji summoned relentlessly. Luo Ji's mana was the one thing that was being exhausted the fastest on the field. Normally, Summoners definitely wouldn't fight like this. Otherwise, they'd use up their mana before they managed to defeat their opponents. However, the task of defeating their opponents had been given to the others in Happy, and Luo Ji's task was simply to use his summons to continuously harass his opponents.

This was a trade: Concealed Light's mana for the opponent's HP. Right now, Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon's health was being depleted just like Luo Ji's mana.

Under the combined efforts of three of Happy's members, he couldn't retaliate at all. He could only stall as much as possible, waiting for his teammates to save him, and what Luo Ji was doing was preventing this sort of support. Concealed Light's summons and Dancing Rain's long-ranged firepower had become the biggest hindrance to Team Wind Howl.

A measly rookie Summoner had managed to stall their entire team?

This reality was driving Wind Howl crazy.

But what could they do?

Luo Ji's crazed summoning had creature after creature appear in front of them. He was also giving the summons orders the best he could, not just sending them up to die.

With Luo Ji's mechanics, he wouldn't be able to do it perfectly. However, the choice in what details to focus on and which to neglect was something he was accomplishing very well this time. He couldn't perfect his mechanics, but he would act when needed at the crucial moments.

Those who looked down on Luo Ji, but had some understanding of Glory, snapped their mouths shut. Anyone could tell how important Luo Ji was to this match. Though he wasn't the main DPS, he was an indispensable part of Happy's strategy. He was like a healer, barely providing any DPS, but who would say that a healer had no value on the field?

As for those who were a little more skilled, they were shocked by Luo Ji's performance.

It was true that he wasn't top notch with mechanics, but he had managed to do what he could, the best he could.

Precise calculations, a carefully executed rhythm.

Happy seemed to have produced another interesting player!

Although his natural talent was limited, he could perform at his limit.

For example, if this were an exam, some had the ability to achieve a 100 percent, but because they would make mistakes out of carelessness, they only achieved 90 percent. As for Luo Ji, he was someone who could only achieve a maximum 90 percent, but in the end that was what he achieved. With that, his actual performance was no different from those who could achieve 100 but only got 90.

"Wind Howl needs to find a way to turn things around. This mess won't be good for them if it continues," Li Yibo commented. "Then, Advisor Li, what do you think Wind Howl needs to do to solve this dilemma?" Pan Lin asked. "Cooperate," Li Yibo replied, "Wind Howl needs to work as a team. Only by cooperating and advancing as a team can they successfully deal with Concealed Light's stream of summons. Right now, they're each doing their own thing. It's far too low-efficiency. This is the root of why Luo Ji has managed to stall them all by himself."

"As a team..." Pan Lin wasn't too sure what to say anymore. Everyone knew that Wind Howl had ended up with this man to man style because they performed too terribly as a team. With that, they could brute force a battle of cooperation and teamwork into one on one duels. Yet now, Wind Howl had to work as a team to solve their current crisis.

"That's probably... a little hard for them now, no?" Pan Lin lamented. He couldn't lean too much to one side right now, after all!

Chapter 1367: Wind Howl That Needs Teamwork

To have Wind Howl play as a team...

Everyone who heard Li Yibo's evaluation went silent.

If Wind Howl could play beautifully as one, would they have needed to resort to their current method? In the end, a man to man full offensive playstyle was on the extreme end. When employing such an imbalanced playstyle, a slight fault in execution could result in the opponents grasping a huge opportunity.

This time, because Wind Howl had neglected Happy's Summoner, they had fallen into such a crisis.

Lose like this?

No!

No one in Wind Howl was willing to give up. Who was that? Luo Ji? A name they had never even heard of, an unknown noob, was about to be their downfall? How could they live with that?

“Stand firm!” Tang Hao roared in the chat. Who knew if he wanted Lin Feng to persist, or if he wanted the whole team to continue with their current playstyle and look for an opportunity to break through. After he yelled out this order, the Frost Wolf summoned by Concealed Light once again pounced towards him relentlessly. Frost Wolf was one of Concealed Light’s four main summons. Its battle power couldn’t compare to the miscellaneous summons he only added a few points in. In addition to its naturally high defense and health, it wasn’t something that could be dealt with in just a few blows, not even by Tang Hao.

Back Throw!

Tang Hao could use a high priority move to have Demon Subduer throw the Frost Wolf behind him. However, in the blink of an eye, the Frost Wolf had climbed back up and pounced again!

As Wind Howl’s core, a lot of importance had been attached to Demon Subduer, but the enemy summons seemed to be endless; no matter what he did, he could never get rid of them all.

No, it’s not like this!

Tang Hao was still a top-tier God. He obviously knew that although a Summoner had a lot of summons, they didn’t have an endless amount of them. The enemy Summoner had an extremely strong grasp of rhythm, linking attack after attack. His calculations were immaculate.

This guy... Tang Hao realized that Happy’s Luo Ji wasn’t a player that could casually be ignored.

If it was a 1v1, Luo Ji’s annoying tactics were nothing to be afraid of. If one came, he would kill one. If two came, he would kill two. He could just keep on killing summon after summon until Luo Ji ran out of mana. However, in the amount of time it took for him to kill one summon, who knew how much damage Lin Feng’s Doubtful Demon would take. If he didn’t hurry and rescue him, Wind Howl would immediately have one less player the enemy side. Such a wide disparity could not be casually erased.

“Restrict Concealed Light’s summons!” Tang Hao finally gave the order.

When Chen Guo saw this scene, she felt a wave of joy.

Luo Ji seemed to be Happy’s weakest member. He hadn’t been used until the very end of the season, but in this match, the arrogant Team Wind Howl and the overbearing captain Tang Hao had unexpectedly targeted him.

They weren’t focusing on Luo Ji because he was the weakest member, or because he was the easiest to bully, but rather because he was the one putting a halt to Wind Howl’s plans.

He had not only received the acknowledgement of his teammates, but the acknowledgement of an extremely proud opponent. Even if it was just in this team competition, Luo Ji had firmly cemented his

place. Chen Guo believed that no matter what ended up happening, Tang Hao would certainly remember the name Luo Ji, this noob who had brought so much trouble to them.

Well done! You have to win!

Chen Guo celebrated quietly.

But Wind Howl had already started acting. Under Tang Hao's clear orders, they began targeting Concealed Light. And this would be a group effort. In the end, Wind Howl had been forced to change their recently successful playstyle to deal with the situation.

Zhao Yuzhe's Beautiful Light suddenly Teleported, abandoning his original position. Wind Howl's formation had reason behind it. Every player's position efficiently split apart each opponent. But because they were switching up their tactics, Zhao Yuzhe immediately threw his position aside. There was also Liu Hao. His Absent Sun was no longer being restricted by vines. After receiving the order, he immediately moved horizontally, his movements matching Zhao Yuzhe's. Team Wind Howl's team play was indeed lacking, but they had built up synergy in a certain places. After all, each player was individually talented. If they truly couldn't work together at all, they wouldn't be qualified to be pro players.

Absent Sun and Beautiful Light had joined together despite the blockade of summons. Beautiful Light's Teleport had contributed greatly towards it. No matter how fast a Thunder Eagle may be, it could not achieve instant movement.

After the two characters met up, Absent Sun moved to the front, while Beautiful Light moved to the back, forming a shield. The charging summons were dealt with by Liu Hao's Absent Sun, while Zhao Yuzhe's Beautiful Light began casting in safety.

Then, a Satellite Beam crashed to the ground, sweeping towards them. The two immediately dodged.

This girl again!

Liu Hao's irritation had reached a peak, and Su Mucheng had kept it there. Dancing Rain's firepower suddenly shifted towards them, unleashing a fierce assault.

Absent Sun dodged with difficulty, and without protection, Beautiful Light could not continue casting.

Everyone in the audience shook their heads.

This was exactly why Wind Howl could not play well together. They had a certain level of synergy, but it stopped there. Their teamwork was easily broken apart. Not only that, the two had just gotten together, but were separated by a Satellite Beam. The two were now getting farther and farther apart. They had initially intended on coordinating with each other, but in the blink of an eye, their plan was destroyed without a sliver of it remaining.

"Wind Howl may have realized that their top priority is to stop Luo Ji from summoning freely. However, Wind Howl still hasn't found a good solution to it yet. Liu Hao and Zhao Yuzhe tried to convene, but Su Mucheng easily broke them apart," Pan Lin said.

"Their teamwork still isn't good enough! In team battles, Wind Howl's foresight is rather lacking. Liu Hao's and Zhao Yuzhe's coordination was somewhat hurried. They failed to consider the issue of

timing,” Li Yibo had the courage to talk about Wind Howl’s teamwork because it was rather weak. Weak meant superficial. Li Yibo could see through them without much effort.

“Then, Coach Li, what do you think they should do?” Pan Lin asked.

“They could have Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe act as bait from one end, while Liu Hao and Guo Yang work from the other end. The two were old teammates in Excellent Era. Their synergy together should be quite high,” Li Yibo was more than bold enough to talk about Wind Howl’s plans.

“Indeed, that would be better. Hm? Liu Hao is...” Pan Lin suddenly noticed something.

“Huh? This is...” Li Yibo also noticed it.

“He’s pretending to retreat, but in reality, he’s looking to coordinate with Guo Yang,” Pan Lin yelled.

“Guo Yang’s Qi Breaker has made a move! Dancing Rain shifting targets gave him an opening, and he grasped that opening well,” Pan Lin shouted.

“Su Mucheng’s attacks were a bit excessive! She should have been able to promptly shift back. This opening shouldn’t have existed,” Li Yibo remarked.

It was already too late though. Guo Yang’s Qi Break was able to complete a cast during this opening.

“Cloud Grasping Fist!” Pan Lin shouted.

Everyone’s hearts leapt to their throats. Could Qi Breaker’s move turn the tables for Wind Howl? The camera zoomed in on Concealed Light.

But...

“Dancing Rain?” Pan Lin was astonished. Guo Yang’s Qi Breaker was just barely able to find an opening to disrupt Happy’s momentum, but he targeted Dancing Rain instead of Concealed Light?

“How calm!” Li Yibo praised, “Grabbing Concealed Light from his position was rather difficult. One slight slip-up, or if the summons got in his way, he might just end up grabbing a summon instead.”

“That’s why grabbing Dancing Rain is actually an excellent choice. Dancing Rain has been Cloud Grasped and is out of the picture. Wait, she hasn’t stopped attacking!” Pan Lin was unable to keep his thoughts to himself and ended with a cry of surprise.

Dancing Rain had been forcefully separated from her team with Cloud Grasping Fist, but she continued to bombard Liu Hao’s Absent Sun with attacks. Despite the forced movements, her attacks were still as precise as ever. Hit, hit, hit, hit after hit! Liu Hao’s Absent Sun was blown up, as if there really was no sun.

“Could it be... Liu Hao isn’t actually intentionally giving away openings, but rather Su Mucheng’s attacks are truly so fierce that he’s being forced into so many openings?” Li Yibo was astonished.

“So you’re saying, Guo Yang’s opening came out of blind luck?” Pan Lin said.

“It’s hard to say...” Li Yibo said. It really was hard to say, but seeing how Dancing Rain had been pulled away, yet refused to let up her attacks, those really were his thoughts.

Dancing Rain bombarded Absent Sun as she moved towards Qi Breaker. Her speed actually increased because of the recoil from her attacks. Her character continued to grow larger and larger in front of Guo Yang's eyes.

This... why does this feel familiar?

Guo Yang suddenly had a strange feeling rise up. He didn't have time to think carefully about it. Dancing Rain had already arrived in front of him...

"Behind!!"

Guo Yang saw a warning from the team chat.

Behind?

How could there be anyone behind him? Happy's players were all in front of him! Wait, no! Isn't there someone missing? Soft Mist?

Guo Yang suddenly realized where that feeling of deja vu came from.

Launching Spear...

This was a tactic that Ye Qiu and Su Mucheng had once used. What they meant by behind wasn't behind Qi Breaker, but rather behind Dancing Rain. Behind her was Soft Mist...

Dancing Fire Flowing Flames swept by as the air itself seemed to boil. Guo Yang had the opportunity to strike Dancing Rain, but then the following Battle Mage attacks could not be dodged.

What to do?

This was a question that countless Excellent Era opponents got headaches from, but this time, it was Guo Yang's turn.

Guo Yang didn't run away because his memory told him that when this tactic came, dodging would turn out worse than standing firm.

Qigong Blast!

Qi Breaker's palm slammed towards Dancing Rain as Dancing Fire Flowing Flame swept towards him.

Chapter 1368: Both Sides Stalling One on Two

Boom!

The Qigong Blast crashed through Dancing Rain's body, qi buffeting her long hair. Qi Breaker was unable to avoid Soft Mist's attack either, but Guo Yang's attention was mostly focused on Dancing Rain.

Launching Spear. This was a rare method of attack of Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's where the Launcher was the main attacker. The Battle Mage's sneak attack from behind the Launcher was just to set up the foundations of the assault. Next, the Launcher would engulf the target in a barrage of close ranged artillery fire.

Guo Yang was an ex-player of Excellent Era's, after all, so he had seen this technique plenty of times in matches and was taught about it in training as well.

Be on guard against Su Mucheng.

That was what experience told him. However, this time, all Dancing Rain did was turn her back on him. Guo Yang anxiously waited for her to turn around, yet she didn't, instead slowly moving away from him...

She... she left? Up.dated b.y

Guo Yang was shocked. What the hell was this? This wasn't how the Launching Spear went. He hesitated, but Tang Rou didn't. Soft Mist's Dancing Fire Flowing Flame burned through the air towards him. Dancing Rain was already behind her. Although Dancing Rain didn't seem to have any intentions of turning around, her attacks hadn't stopped at all, still bombarding Liu Hao's Total Darkness relentlessly.

What was this?

Guo Yang was completely baffled. From start to finish, Su Mucheng didn't even glance over. Was this really the Launching Spear? Resisting the urge to beg for attention, Guo Yang focused on dealing with Tang Rou. After the first strike, Soft Mist's attacks were raining down on him rapidly. Guo Yang realized that even though it was just this one person, he wouldn't be able to deal with her offensive that easily. Thus, looking back on the process, the cooperative aspect of the Launching Spear seemed completely nonexistent. Tang Rou merely used this method to help Su Mucheng escape the Cloud-Grasping Fist. And then? Then Tang Rou attacked Guo Yang while Su Mucheng never stopped her assault on Liu Hao. Even when she was dragged away by Cloud Grasping Fist, she didn't even give Guo Yang's Qi Breaker a single glance.

"This... what were they trying to do?" Commentator Pan Lin was confused and looked at Li Yibo for an answer.

"This... is probably because she doesn't want to stop her offensive! Su Mucheng has been very successful in suppressing Liu Hao, after all." Li Yibo was also filled with confusion, but as a VIP guest commentator, he was here to explain uncertainties and not ask questions, so he had no choice but to answer Pan Lin.

"She seems to be very focused on dealing with Liu Hao..." Pan Lin noted.

"Probably because she has a better understanding of him, since he's an ex-teammate!" Li Yibo guessed.

"But so is Guo Yang!"

"..." In the end, Li Yibo still ended up lost as to how to answer. However, thinking carefully, Su Mucheng's performance in this round really was rather strange. No matter if it was back at Excellent Era, or currently at Happy, she generally performed a supporting role in their tactical system. It wasn't like there weren't times where she'd open up an offensive, but for her to lock onto a single person and bombard them relentlessly like this, that was extremely rare. Su Mucheng seemed like she was determined to act on Wind Howl's strategy, trying to tear Liu Hao's Total Darkness out of Wind Howl's team.

Boom boom boom!

Boom boom boom!

The broadcast also gave Su Mucheng a lot of focus. Steadily, everyone began realizing that this was rather uncharacteristic. Su Mucheng seemed to have left Happy's tactical system and went to 1v1 Liu Hao.

Was this girl crazy?

Liu Hao frantically had Total Darkness dodge, feeling rather surprised. He was pretty sure he wasn't a key figure in Wind Howl's strategy, no? It wasn't like he was Happy's Luo Ji. Why was Su Mucheng so focused on him? Had she gotten something wrong?

Roll, jump, run... Liu Hao's Total Darkness acted like he was here to attend a sports competition, only able to execute these technical actions. Counterattack? His Spellblade didn't have the range of a Launcher. If he wanted to counterattack, he had to be able to actually reach her first!

Generally speaking, the further the distance, the weaker the control on the target. However, Dancing Rain's attacks were so well spaced that Liu Hao couldn't see any of the openings that distance should've given him.

He slowly began to panic. He had known and fought beside Su Mucheng for years, and never once had he noticed how aggressive she was. What was with this feeling? It was like he was prey with a predator staring down his neck.

He wasn't the only one who was surprised. All those who knew Su Mucheng well enough were all shocked at her uncharacteristic actions.

Did... she have a grudge or something?

That was what many people were thinking by then. Su Mucheng's playstyle wasn't at all like a tactic that Happy had planned for, but more like cathartic venting.

Su Mucheng's burst of strength had the match twisting in another direction. Currently, Tang Rou and Guo Yang were fighting 1v1, Fang Rui and Mo Fan were ganging up on Lin Feng, while Luo Ji was stalling both Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe at once. As for Su Mucheng and Liu Hao, the former was completely suppressing the latter.

From this perspective, the match didn't seem much different from a man to man. It was just that this situation had a 1v2 and a one 2v1, and it was all with Happy at an advantage.

Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon, after being bullied by three people for so long, was still helpless against the two that remained. Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe, the two that were viewed as the cores of their team now, were being stalled by a single rookie Summoner.

However, they hadn't lost much health, and instead, Concealed Light had expended a huge amount of mana. Yet anyone could see what Concealed Light was trading this mana for.

Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe were both very confident in themselves. Currently, being stalled by Luo Ji 2v1 for so long, the mental blow that this dealt to them was more significant. As for Luo Ji? Originally, he had

to have his summon creatures stall several targets and now, suddenly, that number had fallen to two. His mechanics became more focused and active. This 90 point student was performing exceptionally this time, reaching a score of 95. However, the one who had been in the worst situation this entire battle was still Lin Feng.

From the very beginning, he had been encircled and beaten. He had no choice but to watch and wait for help. He waited, and waited, yet Wind Howl's actions were like thunder without the rain or lightning. They had fought up till now, and although his opponents had fallen to just two, he still couldn't hold up against them!

On some level, Lin Feng, at first, could be considered to be holding off 1v3, and now 1v2, but his teammates had to deal with the problem at hand while he held them off! Unfortunately, Wind Howl couldn't deal with the problem at hand, and Lin Feng was slowly being dealt with by their opponents.

"It seems like Wind Howl still hasn't found a solution." Pan Lin had said this who knows how many times already.

"However, they've at least managed to increase Concealed Light's mana expenditure. This way, if Concealed Light's mana runs out when Doubtful Demon is defeated, then they'll still be able to fight this match. A Summoner without mana is more or less equal to a dead character," Li Yibo analysed.

"Could this be the solution Wind Howl has decided to go with?" Pan Lin asked.

"Perhaps!"

"How brutal!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Hahaha..." Li Yibo laughed weakly. Brutal? More like helpless! Did Wind Howl really plan this or get into this situation by chance? Who knew? Either way, Wind Howl wasn't in a good position.

Would Doubtful Demon's health be depleted first, or Concealed Light's mana?

The live broadcast displayed the two's health and mana side by side, reminding the audience of the crucial point to this battle. The playing on the field seemed to have realized this as well. Lin Feng hadn't given up, still stubbornly struggling against the two person pincer. As a Battle Thief, he'd occasionally use some dirty tactics. After all, playing dirty was better for survival than tanking through. As for Luo Ji, he really didn't have any further ideas. Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe were putting even more pressure on him. He could only face them head on; he couldn't let his guard down at all.

If only his mechanics were a little better! Luo Ji, even doing his absolute best, still didn't feel like this was enough. However, this was already the ceiling of his ability. He was already performing past his limit, and no one doubted his skill any longer. However, Luo Ji wasn't satisfied with himself. If he could do even better, then Happy wouldn't have fallen into this situation in the first place. It was because he wasn't good enough that he had to deplete his mana and throw his summons out like cannon fodder in order to stall the opponents.

Their current situation wasn't so good!

Just in terms of calculation, Luo Ji's ability was cream of the crop. Even when everyone else only had a vague judgement, he had already managed to calculate the rate at which the two gauges were going down. Not good, not good at all!

If this continued, his mana would be depleted first. Then, if he was unable to stop those two, Doubtful Demon might even be saved, and everything would've been for nothing.

They needed support!

Luo Ji was desperate. He wanted to notify his teammates, but Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe were on him too hard. He didn't have any time to type.

No voice, what a shitty rule!

Luo Ji was even cursing the Alliance match rules now.

"Hurry, we gotta hurry!" Fang Rui, by then, had also realized that he and Mo Fan might not be efficient enough. However, he had the time to spare to send a message. On one hand, this was to tell Mo Fan to hurry. On the other, it was also telling the two 1v1 fighters that they might need some support, and to provide it if they could..

Tang Rou understood what Fang Rui was trying to say, and had the intentions of pulling her battle over. However, the experienced Guo Yang was clear on the situation of the battle and knew that Lin Feng definitely couldn't take more damage. He immediately clung to Soft Mist with everything he had.

Just a little bit more! A little bit longer!

Everyone was staring at the two's HP and MP. As the two numbers fell, the situation became clearer and clearer. It wasn't looking good for Happy! Summoners were mana hungry classes in the first place, and with this playstyle, the player was doing all he could to the best he could, there was no reason to criticise this sort of performance.

Was Happy's spectacular arrangement and performance going to be brute forced through by Wind Howl like that? Apart from Wind Howl fans, everyone felt that this was quite a shame for Happy.

"We need some artillery support!!" Fang Rui finally yelled for help directly. He wasn't Tang Hao or Zhao Yuzhe. When it was time to call for reinforcements, he wouldn't hesitate at all.

Boom!

An explosion immediately enveloped Doubtful Demon, which surprised even Fang Rui, who was right nearby. Support came right when he asked for it. Did he have some sort of superpower?

"Sorry, I'm late," Su Mucheng sent into the chat.

That was when everyone suddenly remembered that there was another set of players on the field. Su Mucheng had returned, and what about Liu Hao?

Liu Hao... had already been defeated?!

Spellblade Total Darkness was the first to be wiped off the field. Defeated by Su Mucheng, Dancing Rain, alone?

Nomyummi She definitely has a grudge.

Chapter 1369: Who's the MVP?

Liu Hao was killed?

Once everyone realized that this was true, they were all stunned.

That was absurd! Lin Feng was still holding on after being ganged up on for so long, but Liu Hao's Absent Sun had been crushed by Su Mucheng on her own?

No one had expected that the 1v1 duels would be the first to end, so in this time, no matter if it was the live broadcast or the audience's attention, they were all focused on Lin Feng and Luo Ji's 1v2s.

Lin Feng was forced into a 1v2, while Luo Ji had the initiative for his 1v2. This indirect face off between the two seemed to be coming to an end with Concealed Light's mana running out, but no one had ever expected that the 1v1 on the other side would see a result first.

How did Su Mucheng destroy Liu Hao so quickly?

The battle was tense and the live broadcast couldn't possibly replay that section. Everyone could only watch dumbly, as the battle raged on.

With Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain back, she helped Fang Rui and Mo Fan turn their battle into a 3v1 even as she sent some firepower support towards Luo Ji's side of things. The situation immediately turned, and soon enough, the face off ended with Doubtful Demon's death. Instantly, the 5v5 situation became a 5v3, and Wind Howl's Cleric hadn't even managed to rush over yet.

It was over.

That was what everyone was thinking. Wind Howl had lost two people at once, so man to man wasn't an option anymore. Fight as a team? Could Wind Howl beat Happy with a number disadvantage? Even if Happy didn't have Ye Xiu, they had proven their strength as a team in the three consecutive rounds of Ye Xiu-less team competitions. A team that could fight Thunderclap's to the bitter end, who dared underestimate them?

They were going to lose...

A lifeless silence engulfed Wind Howl's home stadium.

This loss was a crisis for Wind Howl. With this result, they might fall to the same number of points as Hundred Blossoms, meaning that they'd both have to fight for that extra boost in points in the last round. With the tiebreaker in their favor, Wind Howl wasn't afraid of tying in points, but if they had even a one point disadvantage, then they'll be kicked out of the playoffs.

"How is Hundred Blossoms doing against Tyranny?" Li Yibo asked after this problem for all those who were curious.

"Er, it's still ongoing." Pan Lin looked over the information sent over from the other stadium.

“Ah!” Pan Lin suddenly cried out after looking more closely at the contents, “They’re in the lead. Team Hundred Blossoms is currently in the lead in terms of numbers. They managed to get the advantage in numbers in their home game.”

An advantage in numbers was generally how team competitions were judged while ongoing. If the other side couldn’t mitigate this imbalance in time, then the final result would be exactly what they didn’t want to see.

“If Hundred Blossoms wins, then they’ll be tied with Wind Howl in the final round,” Li Yibo noted.

“The match between 301 Degrees and Seaside is about to end. 301 Degrees should be able to win without much trouble,” Pan Lin continued.

“Then 301 Degrees will be 2 points ahead of Hundred Blossoms and Wind Howl,” Li Yibo concluded. “And the other matches?”

“Thunderclap currently has the advantage in numbers as well,” Pan Lin replied.

“It seems like they really do have a chance to beat Samsara!” Li Yibo’s tone was filled with admiration.

“If so, then Happy and Thunderclap will both have a 7 point advantage in the last round,” Pan Lin said.

“But they still shouldn’t let down their guard! Especially Happy, their opponent for the last round is 301 Degrees. 301 Degrees only has a 2 point lead. They’d definitely go all out in the last round. If Happy really does slip up and lose by a little too much, and if Hundred Blossoms and Wind Howl manage to win big, they might be left behind!” Li Yibo said.

“The... the chances of that are a little too low...” Pan Lin said.

“Ha. It’s true that there are a lot of requirements to meet, but Happy really can’t let down their guard. In contrast, Thunderclap’s last opponent is Miracle. I think they’re completely in the safe zone now,” Li Yibo said.

The two’s discussion was already on the next round, not giving any attention to the ongoing match. In their eyes, Wind Howl, down two people, had no way of turning the tides. The match was already at its end.

However, Wind Howl clearly didn’t want to give up. After a moment of silence, the in-venue audience exploded with cheers and shouts of encouragement. On the field, Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe weren’t the kind of people who gave up when they fell behind. They were still giving it their all, trying to use their skill to overturn the match.

However, Happy had become cautious, their entire team drawing back, heading towards the support zones and clearly aiming to switch in their healer. With Wind Howl’s disadvantage in numbers, they couldn’t stop Happy’s retreat even with their Cleric’s arrival.

Yet, once they arrived at the support zones, Happy didn’t directly switch their players, they first set a trap. When Wind Howl arrived in their relentless pursuit, they were struck full force by Concealed Light’s final Elemental Beast King Formation.

The requirements for activating the Elemental Beast King Formation was to have all four summon beasts on the field and standing in the required positions. After activation, the four summon beast's combative ability would dramatically increase. Thunder Eagle and Young Wyvern's thunderbolts and fireballs shot out like bullets from a machine gun. The chill that spread when Frost Wolf opened its maws and howled spread a layer of frost across the field. Spirit Cat, originally very agile, had its speed raised another level, it's form darting from one place to the next leaving broken after images behind.

Being able to control such powerful summons was a delight for any Summoner, but this delight wouldn't continue on forever. The powered up four summon beasts still had health and could be killed, and their active time would be calculated according to the active time of the Elemental Beast King Formation. When the skill ended, the four summon beasts would all disappear. In addition, during the time the Elemental Beast King Formation was active, the summoning of the four summon beasts were deactivated. They couldn't be resummoned.

Luo Ji, an underestimated rookie Summoner, had become the star of this show. It was only after the Elemental Beast King Formation ended that An Wenyi and Little Cold Hands were switched in. Happy then fought steadily while Wind Howl's Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe, unwilling to give up, continued to struggle. But their struggles were futile.

"Alright, now Wind Howl's last character, Tang Hao's Demon Subduer, has fallen. In the end, Wind Howl still lost this team competition," Commentator Pan Lin announced.

"With that, the results of this match are 4 to 6, Happy with a total of 244 points, while Wind Howl had 237. The two teams will enter the last round of the regular season with a seven point difference," Li Yibo said.

"Coach Li, what do you think about this match?" Pan Lin asked.

The match had finished and the results were out, meaning that Li Yibo was much freer to comment as he wished, "Hm, well, although Ye Xiu didn't fight, they clearly made ample preparations for this battle. Their strategy was executed very well, and a great counter to Wind Howl's playstyle. They managed to grasp the initiative from the very start." "Indeed. Team Happy's Luo Ji was the greatest surprise and delight of the match. It was truly unexpected, but also a very reasonable coincidence," Pan Lin agreed.

"That's right. On the other hand, for Wind Howl, neglecting to consider Luo Ji was a fatal mistake they made at the very beginning. No matter what kind of player the opponent is, just the fact that there was a Summoner meant that Wind Howl should utilize the appropriate countermeasures. Though Wind Howl only knew of Happy's player switch when the match was about to begin, they should have adjusted accordingly, but they didn't. They didn't even think to counter Luo Ji's Summoner until halfway through, and afterwards, they didn't execute that counter well either," Li Yibo analysed.

"Despite that, Wind Howl actually still had a chance, right?" Pan Lin asked.

"Yes. Even if Luo Ji's Summoner dismantled their man to man playstyle, this dismantling came at a huge cost to Luo Ji. Using their willpower and individual abilities, they might not have been able to break through Luo Ji's summon creature wall, but they could deplete Concealed Light's mana. Unfortunately, that's when a major problem appeared. I believe everyone noticed this," Li Yibo said.

"Liu Hao, right?" Pan Lin questioned.

“Yes. Just as Wind Howl’s entire team was holding on, waiting for Concealed Light’s mana to be completely depleted, Liu Hao fell to Su Mucheng. This is another immense surprise in this match. In reality, Wind Howl’s eventual loss was because of this one event. If it wasn’t for this, then even with Happy’s arrangements, Wind Howl would still have a chance. However, Liu Hao’s defeat pretty much killed all of Wind Howl’s hopes,” Li Yibo explained.

“Uh huh. We still have some time left so, next, let’s look back at what really happened and how Liu Hao was killed so quickly by Su Mucheng.” As Pan Lin talked, the shot in the broadcast switched to Dancing Rain’s barrage against Absent Sun.

As the battle raged, Pan Lin and Li Yibo waited to comment, and the blasts of the Launcher’s cannon resounded in the audience’s ears.

“Su Mucheng’s style is very resolute this time. What do you think, Coach Li?” Pan Lin finally spoke up.

“Yes, we’ve never seen such resolution from her. Su Mucheng accurately grasped the match point. Look, she had completely stopped the wide range support she’d usually provide in matches, focusing all her attention on Liu Hao’s Absent Sun. Her performance is impeccable and Liu Hao was completely suppressed. He was completely helpless, and she crushed him, otherwise how else would he have died so fast? Over there, Lin Feng’s Thief fighting 1v3, then 1v2, had managed to hold on for longer!” Li Yibo commented. “Liu Hao’s performance definitely wasn’t the best this time!” Pan Lin exclaimed.

“Indeed. Being steamrolled like that in a team competition, never mind in a match like this, in any match, it would definitely break the balance of the situation,” Li Yibo said.

“Su Mucheng’s performance was truly exceptional,” Pan Lin sighed in admiration.

“I agree! She’s given this match a dilemma, and I’m curious about it as well. Will the MVP of the match be given to Luo Ji or Su Mucheng?” Li Yibo wondered aloud.

“I think it’ll probably go to Su Mucheng. After all, it was her exceptional performance that allowed them to grasp the match point and ascertain Happy’s victory. Otherwise, with just Luo Ji’s playstyle, the way the match would go would still be uncertain!” Pan Lin explained.

“However, Luo Ji played a crucial role in breaking the balance on the field as well. In addition, he’s a rookie that hasn’t played many matches. I think the Alliance will take that into account, too, so I think it’ll be Luo Ji,” Li Yibo countered.

“Then, Coach Li, let’s make a bet. Whoever loses has to treat the other to a midnight snack, yeah?” Pan Lin joked. This clearly wasn’t anything harmful.

“Alright then. The statistical data should be announced soon,” Li Yibo played along.

“Let’s use this time to take a look at the other matches,” Pan Lin suggested.

Chapter 1370: You Played Pretty Well

By this time, the players from Wind Howl and Happy had emerged from their competitor booths. The large screen in the stadium displayed the final score as the players came onstage. They followed the typical post-match protocol, acknowledging the crowd, and greeting their opponents.

Each and every one of the Wind Howl players looked numb, robotically shaking hands with Happy's players. The typical niceties like "you played pretty well," "keep working hard," "congrats," and so on, were left out this time. These were all just for politeness, so no one really cared too much whether they were actually said or not.

Their players were still lined up in an orderly fashion, though, with Captain Tang Hao at the head, and the rest arranged in order. Lined up second was Vice-captain Liu Hao, who quickly arrived in front of Su Mucheng with a resentful expression on his face.

But Su Mucheng seemed to be in quite a good mood, as she looked at him with a bright smile.

Liu Hao gave a cold humph and didn't pay attention to it. He just stuck out his hand automatically, wanting to get this over with. Su Mucheng, however, didn't extend her hand.

"You played pretty well," Su Mucheng said, smiling.

"You..." Liu Hao was enraged. In this match, everyone else could be praised as "playing pretty well." Tang Hao, Zhao Yuzhe, even Lin Feng, they had all worked hard in the match, and even though they'd lost, they'd displayed their skill level. Only Liu Hao hadn't.

He'd been completely wiped out by Su Mucheng, which had destroyed Wind Howl's chance of success. He was absolutely the one person on the field that had disappointed the most. If there were an award for Least Valuable Player, Liu Hao would have earned it with no contest. Su Mucheng's "you played pretty well" to him was a statement filled with mocking irony.

Liu Hao felt powerless to argue and just wanted this all to end quickly. But Su Mucheng still did not shake his hand.

"I'm not like a certain person, who can't bear to waste time caring about all of the despicable things that you've done. Unlike him, I object greatly." Su Mucheng was still smiling, but after dropping those words, she completely ignored Liu Hao's outstretched hand and walked right past him.

Liu Hao stood there, stunned.

What grasping the key point of the match, resolutely attacking, going all-out on the offensive, beautiful performance...

It was none of that!

She just wanted revenge! She searched for an opportunity on the battlefield and ferociously opened fire upon him.

That fucker!

Liu Hao clenched his left hand into a fist. His right hand had been ignored by Su Mucheng, and now it seemed like even he had forgotten about it as it remained stiffly extended.

After Su Mucheng, the next Happy member to walk by was Mo Fan. He didn't pay attention to Liu Hao's state at all, and, seeing the extended hand, he simply took it and casually shook.

"You played pretty well," he said.

What?

This sentence struck Liu Hao awake like a bolt of lightning.

You're here to humiliate me too?

Liu Hao was furious, but Mo Fan didn't pause. After speaking, he was already swiftly walking past.

"You played pretty well."

"You played pretty well."

"You played pretty well."

Mo Fan mechanically shook hands with all of the Wind Howl players, giving all of them this same sentence. This was what he had learned was necessary to do after a match. Without any change, he delivered this message to every opponent. But for Liu Hao, after what Su Mucheng had just said, this was just rubbing salt in the wound.

Liu Hao felt faint.

You played pretty well. The sound of these mocking words seemed to reverberate around the whole stadium. It was as though all of the audience members, and his Wind Howl teammates, and all of the media reporters and commentators, were all gently smiling as they looked at him, and said: you played pretty well.

The world spun.

Liu Hao suddenly crashed to the ground.

Immediately, the stadium was in an uproar, and the players still onstage were in even more of a panic as to what to do. The stadium workers rushed onstage to carry Liu Hao away, and they swiftly looked for someone to treat him. Just like this, the post-match greetings came to a hasty close.

But the post-match press conference would go on as usual. Liu Hao instantly became the center of discussion, but it wasn't just because he'd fainted after the match. As the single largest contributor to Wind Howl's loss, this press conference would have been very difficult for him. Some reporters even questioned whether he'd pretended to pass out just to avoid this. Of course, such doubts couldn't be directly voiced, as it would be somewhat heartless. What if he really had fainted?

And so the press conference opened with everyone expressing false concern. After hearing that Liu Hao was not in any serious condition, the question "what are your thoughts on Liu Hao's performance this match" was naturally pulled out.

In the individual competition, Liu Hao had been defeated by Ye Xiu; in the team competition, he was wiped out by Su Mucheng, which directly orchestrated Wind Howl's defeat. He had been the biggest reason why Wind Howl had lost six points. Most teams, in a situation like this, would try to protect their

players who had performed poorly, even if it was just for appearances. But Wind Howl's Captain Tang Hao wasn't that kind of person. He very bluntly used "disaster" to describe Liu Hao's performance today.

What a shame.

This is what everyone was thinking, but they weren't pitying Liu Hao's disappointing performance today. No, they were thinking that it was a shame that Tang Hao had given such a blunt answer, breaking from what most other teams would do, but Liu Hao wasn't here to hear it. Otherwise, what sort of fireworks would have resulted?

This sort of merciless criticism was extremely rare to see. The reporters were all excitedly wondering how they should write their articles.

At this time, the results of the other matches this round had already been released.

301's match had ended the earliest. To no one's surprise, they took down Seaside in an easy 10-0 victory. They now had 239 points, 2 points ahead of Wind Howl and 5 points behind Happy.

Team Hundred Blossoms, at this critical moment, withstood the pressure. After lagging behind Tyranny 0-3, they furiously chased their points, and managed to win both the group arena and the team round, resulting in a final score of 7-3. With 237 points, they were now tied with Wind Howl. However, because they lost to Wind Howl in terms of their head-to-head score, they were still in ninth place for now. Still, they were able to carry their hopes into the final round.

Hundred Blossoms' fans were beyond excited. Their team's strong fighting spirit and refusal to give in gave them strong feelings of loyalty and pride. They held faith that this kind of team could definitely fight until the last moment, and achieve results that would make everyone happy.

Aside from this, Thunderclap had also managed to obtain victory in the team round against Samsara, ending the match 7-3. Right now, Thunderclap was tied with Happy at 244 points, but because they lost to Happy in terms of their head-to-head score, they were at sixth place for now. But in the final round, Thunderclap was facing Miracle. In terms of opponent, their final round was pretty relaxed, so everyone figured that Thunderclap had secured their spot in the playoffs. The celebrations in Thunderclap's home stadium were much more relaxed than those at Hundred Blossoms' stadium.

After seeing the results of all the other matches, Pan Lin and Li Yibo were still eagerly waiting for the final statistics of the match between Wind Howl and Happy.

Finally, the statistics were announced, and the MVP award for this match went to Luo Ji. The official analysis affirmed his outstanding performance and important role in this match.

"As expected of Coach Li." Having lost the bet, Pan Lin had to express his regret.

"Haha, time for you to pay," said Li Yibo.

"I know this one place that serves good dapanji ¹, let's go later!" Pan Lin was quickly back to his energetic self.

"Even though it's this late?" said Li Yibo.

“Let’s go, let’s go!” Pan Lin prompted him. The match broadcast announced its conclusion in the middle of the off-topic conversation of these two. By this time, all matches of Round 37 of Season 10 of the Pro League had ended. Aside from these five teams who were fiercely competing for playoff spots, the other teams dutifully played their matches well.

The biggest change on the leaderboard was that 301, after sweeping Seaside, finally returned to the top eight, while Hundred Blossoms was squeezed to ninth place. Which eight teams would make it to the playoffs? This would only be decided with the final round.

Aside from this, Blue Rain won 8-2 against Void, allowing them to once again surpass Tyranny to sit at second place. This competition of rankings would impact the playoff matchups, and so there were a number of people paying attention to this.

In Wind Howl’s post-match press conference, Liu Hao earned the public criticism his captain made to the media. Meanwhile, in Happy’s press conference, Luo Ji appeared for the first time. He was bombarded with questions from the reporters, enough to make his head spin. He pitifully looked to his seniors to save him, but no one was paying attention to him – Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were calmly chatting over to the side!

“You beat Liu Hao so hard that he actually fainted,” said Ye Xiu. “So ferocious of you.”

“As soon as I see him, I can’t help but explode,” said Su Mucheng.

“You have to stay calm!”

“We won’t see him again.”

“That’s not for sure, there’s still one round left,” said Ye Xiu.

“God Ye, could you talk about why the team chose to make such bold arrangements against Wind Howl this round?” At this time, Su Mucheng had actually taken out a handful of sunflower seeds and was munching on them right there on the press conference stage, and a reporter, feeling that this was just too much, finally interrupted the two’s conversation to ask this question.

“Oh? Was it bold?” Ye Xiu immediately adjusted his attitude to respond to the question. “I don’t think so. Wind Howl’s extreme tactics could be used for a while, but not forever. To get such excellent results in so many rounds, their luck is quite good. But if they really wanted to rely on such tactics to defeat every opponent under the sky, then they’re truly underestimating everyone far too much.”

“That’s to say, you don’t think Wind Howl’s prospects are good?” the reporter asked.

“Who’s Wind Howl’s opponent in the final round?” Ye Xiu asked.

“It’s Tiny Herb,” the reporter answered.

“Oh. If Wang Jiexi is killed by strategy like this, I think that he should just give up and retire,” said Ye Xiu.

“Uh... this...” The reporter felt awkward and had no idea how to continue.

“Didn’t you just say that nothing was for sure with the final round?” said Su Mucheng.

“The rankings aren’t for sure, but that doesn’t mean Wind Howl can win!” Ye Xiu said to her.

“Can you talk about Su Mucheng’s performance today?” the reporter asked.

“She astutely grasped the the key points of the match and decisively attacked. A beautiful performance,” Ye Xiu said.

“Then what do you think about Luo Ji’s performance?” the reporter continued to ask.

“We were able to achieve victory largely thanks to the foundation he laid down,” Ye Xiu said.

“Then will Luo Ji participate in the playoffs?” the reporter asked.

“That’s a secret we can’t announce beforehand,” said Ye Xiu.

“Then, can we ask, which team does Happy hope to encounter first in the playoffs?” asked the reporter.

“The season hasn’t ended yet, and Happy hasn’t entered the playoffs for sure. Answering that question now would be too improper,” Ye Xiu said, serious.

The reporters were speechless. Fuck, who was the person who’d announced, fresh out of beating the Challenger League, that they would be the Season 10 champions? It was you, wasn’t it?