

Godfather Of Champions

Chapter 10: The Referee Takes Center Stage Part 2

Defoe, who had gotten Bowyer's sullen retort, seemed to be in a bit of a temper. During West Ham's next attack, Joe Cole passed the ball to Defoe; Bowyer raised his hand to ask for the ball, but Defoe just kept his head down and was finally tackled by Dawson. Throughout it all he'd ignored Bowyer's request for the ball.

Watching the possession of the ball so easily wrestled by the Forest team player, he then fought back. Bowyer, who was in midfield, was not first there to prevent it. Instead he went straight to Defoe, who had just gotten up from the ground.

"What the hell are you blind? Can't you see I'm looking to you for the ball?" He yelled at Defoe, who was six years younger than him.

Defoe was also not to be outdone. "And what did you do when I asked you for the ball?"

The two berated each other on the field, completely ignoring the fact that the match was still ongoing.

"You n*gger son of a bitch!" Bowyer popped Defoe in the face and pulled him directly down to the ground. There was a loud hiss coming from the stands, which did not mean displeasure, but heckling. The Forest team fans were heckling those them.

Dawson, who was not far away from them, quickly rushed to pull the furious Bowyer away, to prevent him from punching and kicking Defoe. The referee's shrill whistling quickly came, and the West Ham players on the field, briefly startled, rushed to the spot. The Forest players, except Dawson, watched the show. Reid was more interested in seeing their manager's reaction on the sideline first.

Unexpectedly, he saw the manager looking very surprised.

The reason for Twain's surprise was because; his memory of Bowyer's fight with his teammate was in the match on April 2, 2005, Newcastle against Aston Villa in the Premier League game. Before that, he'd never heard of this guy striking his teammates on the field. Twain believed that after today's match was over, this story would be became widely known overnight by the media hype. In that case, would the incident at Newcastle still exist? He had never felt that his presence here would have any effect on the future, but now he felt it firsthand.

The future... was not as certain as he'd thought.

No matter what Twain was thinking, the Forest fans were ecstatic. They immediately changed the lyrics to the song again. "Lee Bowyer is a fantastic boxer, a beautiful left hook, and Defoe was knocked to the ground! The referee is calling out the seconds, oh yeah!"

Roeder hurled a bottle of water to the ground on the sidelines, "This fucking idiot!" The current circumstances for the team was already tense. To get a player sent off would make it even more difficult.

Motson was screaming in the press box. "Bowyer knocked down Defoe with a beautiful punch! But he seemed to forget that this is a football match, not boxing. That disgusting Bowyer is back. He is utterly confused about the present circumstances. West Ham will pay the price, they will definitely be one man down. This scene is incredible! I believe that his punch will get him on the front-page headlines of all the newspapers. This is the first time I've seen a player attacking his own teammate in a match! Lee Bowyer has made history, and he will be 'engraved' in people's minds for this forever!"

Twain soon put his fear of the future to the back of his mind. He stood up and walked to the side, and gave a thumbs-up to Reid. The "invisible hero" who had caused this scene. And then he got the team to press on. Joe Cole was frozen. Without Bowyer, the West Ham midfield was no longer scary. Though Defoe was purely a victim of this fight and would not be punished, his state of mind and condition would also be affected. If Roeder was smart enough, Defoe would not stay on the field for a few minutes more.

West Ham's attack was no longer a threat. For the remaining time, it depended on how the Forest team would steal back all the lost points one ball at a time.

The referee showed a red card to Lee Bowyer who threw the first punch. No surprise there. Loud jeering and hissing came from the stands. Bowyer turned angrily away from the field, completely ignoring his West Ham's teammates. Roeder was also very unhappy with Bowyer's actions. He stood on the sidelines and just let Bowyer pass him by to walk into the empty corridor. At this moment, Bowyer, who had just moved from Leeds, was alone.

Defoe was helped by the team doctor to the sidelines for examination and treatment. The referee signaled for two players from both teams to go to the midfield for the drop ball.

The situation in the match had basically been determined, but Tang En did not return to the technical area. He stood on the sidelines, his arms folded across his chest, waiting to celebrate the goal at any time.

He believed that the final victory of this match belonged to his team, because the second half went according to his plan so far, and there was no chance of any more surprises.

West Ham, who had one less player, had to recover all round. Given the state of play, the Forest players had now become particularly difficult to defend in their eyes. Many times, they had to resort to fouls to stop their opponent's frenzied offensive. And this gave the second half substitute, Jess, the opportunity to perform. The quality of the two direct free kicks were excellent, one struck the crossbar and flew out, the other was pathetically saved by James who flapped it out of the end line.

Seeing these two free kicks, Tang en also could not help holding his head and sighed repeatedly. Quoting the character Fu Biao from Big Shot's Funeral, "We're almost there, just a little bit more!"

When the match reached the 80th minute, the Forest team was finally given a chance to score the winning goal.

Reid drove the ball and broke through from the wing. The ball was then shot out of the end line by the second half substitute, Gary Breen, with a header, and the Forest team was awarded a corner kick.

As long as Jess was on the field, he would have the right to the positioning ball. He held the football and put it down in the corner, then backed up and leaned tightly against the billboard. Behind him was the Forest fans' stands. Countless hands patted him on the shoulder, cheering him on. The fans roared with excitement, "Jess! Send the ball straight in! You can do it!"

Jess looked back and smiled at the shouting fans. Fans always made it out like a three-year-old could do those difficult things, but it was a way for them to express their feelings, and they always expected a lot from the players they liked. The way the fans were shouting showed that they once again supported the Forest players.

Dawson had been cruising outside the penalty area, but he quickly heard Twain outside the field yelling, "Michael, what are you doing out there? Get in there! Go to the front of the goal!"

Dawson was tall and good at headers. The 19-year-old has a height of 1.9 meters and was indeed a threat in the air in front of the opponent's goal. He dutifully ran in, and immediately made James nervous.

"Keep an eye on him! Watch him! Don't let him jump.... damn it!" James had not finished his words when he heard the referee blow his whistle. And Jess had also sent out the ball.

Responsible for marking Dawson was West Ham's central defender, Ian Pearce, who was also 1.91 meters tall. Only he could contend against Dawson on height.

However, he was much worse at his jumping. Dawson still leapt higher despite the double team and shot a beautiful header!

Faced with such a close shot, James had no other choice but to watch the football fly into the goal!

“Yeah!” The City Ground reached fever pitch again.

“Michael Dawson! This is his first goal for the Forest team! The 19-year-old center back!”

“Well done!” Tang En saw the football fly into the goal post net and shook his fist.

The Forest team players also threw themselves at the excited Dawson, ready to score. But at this time, everyone heard the quick whistle of the referee. He stood in front of the goal area, pointed to the ground at Ian Pearce lying there!

“The goal does not count! What a startling turn of events... Michael Dawson’s goal was invalid. The referee thinks that when he jumped for the header, he had pressed down Ian Pearce. But obviously... Eh, what seems to be happening on the sidelines?” Following Motson’s voice, the television cameras cut to the sidelines, toward the Forest team technical area.

Incensed, Twain kicked the water bottle, and it flew on the sidelines. In his view, this was a good goal that could not be better, but it was inexplicably blown out by the referee. His venting attracted the concern of the fourth official.

“Mr. Twain, you’d better restrain yourself from your actions. I don’t want the referee to come over and give you a red card, and I don’t think that’s what you want either,” the fourth official came before Twain and sternly rebuked him.

At this time, Twain wanted to swear, but he was pulled away by Walker.

“I’m sorry, I promise this won’t happen again...” Walker apologized to the fourth official, while trying to drag Twain back.

“Let go of me, Des! That damn referee’s looking to balance things out...” Twain was still trying. This time Walker simply covered his mouth.

“Shut up, Tony! Do you want us to lose the most important player? The match is not over yet, we still have a chance!” At this moment, Des Walker, who was always all smiles and good-natured, gravely chided his boss. Twain stared blankly. Then he straightened himself and scratched his head, “You’re right, Des. I almost missed the bigger picture. Thank you for reminding me.”

Then he returned to the sidelines and yelled toward the field, “Don’t take it to heart, keep attacking! We still have a chance ...” In the end, he could not help but give vent to the frustration in his heart, “Hang them out to dry!!”

The fourth official heard Twain's words, looked distrustfully at him, but he finally found no trouble.

"Michael Dawson looks a little dejected. The first goal he scored for the Forest team disappeared just like that. But he is a good lad, a center back with great potential. I believe that in time, he will be England's new defensive line star." Motson predicted Dawson's future, but now it could not comfort the lad's heart. He could not imagine what it would be like to be England's defender, and he only wanted to help the team beat West Ham. And it was such a good opportunity a moment ago.

Dawson could swear on his future that he did not press anyone down with his header. If Pearce was really on the ground because of physical contact, there was only one explanation—Pearce was too good an actor.

Son of a bitch! Dawson clenched his fists; a defender also knew how to do a flop!

Tang En continued to stand on the sidelines with his arms around his chest.

So far, this match had been satisfactory because it helped him solve several problems: first, his new style has been fully demonstrated and accepted by everyone. Second, it helped him to establish enough prestige within the team. Finally, it let him find his confidence and direction.

The only regret was that ...

Tang En looked up at the electronic scoreboard on the west stand.

With less than seven minutes in the match, the score was still 2:3. The Forest team, dominating in the second half, still lagged the English Premier League West Ham United by a goal.

