

Godfather Of Champions

Chapter 26: The Crisis Of Two Consecutive Draws Part 2

Tang En, who had completely considered himself to be a manager, originally wanted to cause a stir in the transfer market. In the past when he used to play the football manager game, he looked forward most to the two weeks of transfer window before and during the season. He would chase after the players he was interested in and put on airs while expressing interest to them. Then, he would watch them become “flattered and shocked”, “troubled and perplexed.” At the same time, their manager would “fly into a rage.” Watching this was an exquisite form of entertainment for Tang En. Ultimately, he would win the players over to his team and make them do his bidding and say they looked forward most to playing under Tang En. However, Chairman Doughty cruelly destroyed this dream for Tang En. He told Tang En that the club had just recovered from a financial crisis, and therefore could not give him excess money to invest in the transfer market. Despite it being the winter transfer window, Tang En could only look at the other teams in envy, while they actively participated in the transferring of players.

The good thing was that the formation left behind by Paul Hart was not too bad. Aside from some minor issues in individual formations, it was useable with some tweaking and fixing. Tang En sighed once again, as he felt like he was just like Ranieri, reduced to a mere tinker man. Tinker men usually tended not to have good endings. After he used extremely foolish methods and lost the championship cup, Ranieri was fired by Abramovich. After which, Ranieri transferred over to Valencia F.C, where he also did not produce much results. After that, rumor had it that he went to Serie A as Parma Calcio F.C.'s manager and managed to avoid relegation. After that.... after that Tang En time travelled and did not know where Ranieri's next stop was.

Speaking of Ranieri, Tang En thought carefully about the current time period he was in. He discovered that his memories of the world football affairs were actually extremely distant and hazy, as if a long time had passed. However, in reality, the current time period was only four years apart from year 2007.

Tang En began collecting relevant news from various newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts, as he wanted to verify that the current time period and the one in his memories were the same. The influence of the incident where Bowyer got into fights with his teammates during the match, had been played down due to Tang En's 'Rapegate' incident. However, it still gave Tang En a kind of wake-up call. He was worried that the future would become completely different from what he imagined and knew it to be. If that was the case, there would be completely no purpose for his time-travel.

The past, although only four years had passed, in order to differentiate more easily, Tang En still referred to the current time period he was in as “the past.” In the past, during this time frame, Abramovich’s Chelsea had not completely invaded English football, and one was unable to read lengthy articles in the newspapers regarding “Who is Abramovich?”, “How rich is Abramovich?”, as well as “Who is Chelsea’s Next Target?” In the previous season, Leeds United, which shocked the European football world, did not go bankrupt nor did they become relegated. Although they sold a few of their players, people were still willing to believe in this team which brought a new gust of youthful wind to the English football world; that they would still be able to have an outstanding performance in the current and future seasons. At that time, Manchester United’s star player, David Beckham, also had not transferred over to the Spanish team, Real Madrid yet. However, the differences within him and Ferguson were becoming increasingly deep, as the battle of Spice Girl Victoria and Sir Alex Ferguson over David Beckham reached a white-hot stage. This was also something that Tang En paid much attention to, and he predicted that not long after, the show of “throwing a flying shoe in a rage, mentor-mentee relationship completely shattered without any regrets.” He had to see when Summer came, whether Beckham would really join Real Madrid. Maybe he could send anonymous letters to those trouble-stirring newspapers, passing off as a person with insider information and reveal to them the “truth” of Beckham going to Real Madrid? With this, he managed to find another way to make a living. Should Tang En really be fired from his job due to unsatisfactory results, he could still live off selling gossip to various newspaper agencies, albeit only for four and a half years.

His ‘Rapegate’ incident and Bowyer’s fight on the field were small things and insufficient to the direction and flow of time. So, even if these sort of things happened a few more times, it would not matter much. However, if half a year later, Tang En received news of Abramovich buying up the Tottenham Hotspurs F.C, he would then seriously consider whether the things which happened in the world four years before the current time, were even relevant. Although that Russian man was indeed once very close to buying up the Tottenham Hotspurs, to the extent that he even asked the price from Tottenham’s owner. Unfortunately, Tottenham’s owner, Daniel Levy, wrongly assessed the situation, and asked for too high a price. For his 22.9 percent of shares in the club, he asked for a price of £150,000,000, despite him estimating it at a value of only £50,000,000. In the end, the Russian man chose Chelsea, the club which was lower-priced and had more reasonably distributed assets. The remainder of the story is known to the rest of the people on Earth...

When Tang En recovered from the shock of travelling through time, he discovered that there were many interesting things in this time period. He observed things with the attitude of someone who had experienced it before, and he enjoyed it, just like the anticipation toward the next season of Prison Break. It was quite an enjoyable feeling.

Six days after the 18th, on January 25th, Nottingham Forest would be playing against the 18th ranked team in the season, Preston North End. Preston North End was also short of one match, and they currently only had 31 points. This was the rescheduled match for the 28th round.

Speaking of Preston North End, Tang En was very unfamiliar with this team. However, if it were regarding Preston's former manager, Tang En was extremely familiar with him. That person was David Moyes, who had just quit his managerial post in March during the previous season, and went over to Everton to become their manager. During his time as a football player, Moyes once played for Preston for five years, and he assumed the role of Preston's manager after he retired. As the manager for the 1999-2000 season, Moyes brought this team to the English Football League. After which, he went to Everton and attained complete success, becoming a famous manager in the English football world. There were even once rumors that he would become the successor of Ferguson, ruling over Manchester United. After which, when the English national football team was selecting a manager for the team, Moyes was also one of the candidates on the list.

This person was not the one who discovered and nurtured Rooney, but he was the one who made Rooney known to the whole of England. He had contributed a precious treasure to England.

After he left, Preston once again fell to the bottom of the pit, and now, their current goal was merely to remain in the English Football League.

Tang En had an epiphany that "the world was really very small." Even in the lower tier leagues, Tang En was able to meet various people whom he was familiar with. The previous opponent let him see the current situation of the previous star player from Liverpool, who was an integral player in securing Liverpool's five championship titles. On top of that, the upcoming match let him meet the first stop in Moyes' managerial path. Amidst the unfamiliar England, it felt extremely good to Tang En to know that he could still hear some of these familiar names. This also closed up the distance between him and this unfamiliar country.

No matter how one looked at Preston, they could not be considered a strong team in any way. Their abilities were very weak, and they were also the away team. Before the match, the Nottingham Evening Post predicted that even without their coach directing during the match, Nottingham Forest would still be able to claim victory with ease. The fans were also full of anticipation. Similarly, Tang En, who was seated in the VIP lounge with the two disciplinary members, was also filled with anticipation for the match, as he looked forward to the first victory since he came over.

And the result was?

Sixteen minutes into the match, David Johnson managed to secure an early lead for Nottingham Forest. City Ground stadium was filled with roaring excitement. However, just four minutes later, Preston's defensive midfielder, Lee Cartwright, made use of the corner kick to tie the match. This was even his first goal of the season.

City Ground's cheers were cut off by his goal, before it sounded loudly again. After that, Nottingham Forest players, under the supporting cheers from the fans, charged forth

and focused their offence on the Preston goalpost. The pitiful manager of the away team had to consecutively make three substitutions for the defensive players, who had vowed that they would have to at least obtain one point in their away match. After 70 minutes, his dreams would come true.

Nottingham forest possessed an advantage throughout the entire match, with their ball possession rate as high as 64 percent, 14 shots at the goalpost, seven corner kicks, and nine offensive free kicks. These statistics were those of an “offensive football”, and yet there was only one goal scored. On the other hand, Preston only had a measly four shots at the goalpost and a 36 percent ball possession rate. The only aspect which they beat Nottingham Forest, was in terms of the number of fouls, which was 29 times. No matter how badly they were jeered by the Forest fans, and regardless of how the fans humiliated them as “cowards”, they still emerged victorious, laughing as they left Nottingham with their precious one point, toward their road to remaining in the league.

This result left many fans extremely disappointed. Tang En was equally disappointed. The only thing was that he did not swear inside the suite, as his attention had been fixated on another thing.

At the end of the match, Tang En heard fragmentary jeers coming from the viewing platform. This was a warning to Tang En that, if there were no improvements to the results soon, even he, the manager, would lose the hearts of the fans. Looking at the leaving fans, Tang En frowned. He would not shake the hands or say goodbye to his two match “companions”, and it was Chairman Doughty who helped them out of their predicament, by extending a handshake to the two guys who stood there like idiots with their hands extended.

With the end of the rescheduled match, Nottingham Forest accumulated a total of 40 points in the 29 matches of the season, and shared the same points as Millwall, which was ranked 30th. With a higher number of wins, Nottingham Forest took the 12th spot in the league. With the season halfway through, this kind of result did not satisfy Tang En. He wanted to leave behind something that would prove himself in the first season, and nothing was more suitable for a manager, than victory and results.

Tang En decided to have a good talk with Walker about what was on his mind. As such, he invited Walker to Burns’ Forest Bar to have a chat over a few drinks.

Walker agreed.

Forest Bar had already become Tang En’s only place of choice when it came to treating drinks and organizing a gathering, because Nottingham’s best wine could be found there.