

A Bad Week for Jimi – Day 2

There was Wil, staring at the huge screen in front of him, shuffling about impatiently.

There was Freddy, trying to concentrate on his homework, but failing.

There was Alec, staring out of the window, all the time checking his mobile phone, which occasionally beeped back at him.

There was Jaz, tapping urgently into his laptop.

Here comes Hardy, clomping down the stairs.

‘It’s only four o’clock!’ said Freddy in the general direction of his brother.

‘I know, I know, just forty-five minutes to go!’, cried Wil, now jumping up and down.

‘Eh?’ said his brother.

‘I read it, I read it, it starts at 4.45!’ said Wil.

‘I don’t think so...’ said Jaz, tapping something into the computer.

‘Yes, yes...they’re three hours different from us, so if it normally starts around eight, this time it will start about five. Definitely’.

‘Definitely not’, said Jaz, definitively, ‘you’ve got your times wrong’.

‘No...eight take away three is five!’ replied Wil defiantly.

‘But they’re ahead of us. Look on the map. We’re here...and they’re over here. The world’s spinning this way, here’s Greenwich, here’s the dateline, here’s Moscow, round to the east – that’s the right to you – so they’re ahead of us. By three hours. That’s it.’

Wil scratched his head. ‘So you’re saying, I’ve got to stand here for another THREE HOURS?’

‘Precisely – in fact, it is now three hours and five minutes until kick-off. But I’ve got an idea – help me here’.

*****Hardy emerged into the room, which his Dad had equipped especially with the latest widescreen, megapixel, TFT, DVD, HD-Ready, PE, PSHE, DS, Wii, MUFC television. He picked up the sleek black remote control and pressed a few buttons.

‘Hey, Squidward, you’ve sat on my crabby-patty’ squeaked a little square voice.

‘Oi, turn that off, we’ve got work to do!’ said Jaz. They gathered round the figure hunched over the laptop.

Michael peered at the rows of figures Jaz had displayed on the screen. His brand new Arsenal shirt was perfect, pristine, and he was very proud of it.

‘Why are YOU wearing Arsenal?’ said Clara, who had joined Hardy in the blue of Chelsea.

‘Well, they’re my team, right?’ said Michael, ‘and I’ll support them ever more, even tonight!’. They all looked at him, a bit confused.

‘You might as well just support Lancaster Road instead’, said Hardy.

‘Well, I think we know who YOU are following!’, said Clara, laughing.

Hardy, as usual for important games, whoever was playing, had every bit of Chelsea kit on you could imagine. He had the latest Premiership home strip. He was wearing Frank Lampard-signed boots (aha! So that’s why he was clomping down the stairs), and he was carrying a Chelsea mug. On his head he had a blue Chelsea bobble hat with a picture of Didier Drogba on the front. He even had a mask of Drogba on a little stick, which he occasionally held up to his face, just to remind everyone who he thought was going to win, and who would score.

‘If Drogba performs tonight, Chelsea will win. He’s their driving force’, said Freddy in a matter-of-fact kind of way.

‘Did you say ‘diving force’?’, said Clara, leaping full-length onto the sofa.

‘Right, look here’, said Jaz. ‘I’ve done some calculations’.

‘Calculations? You don’t need to calculate anything!’, shouted Clara from deep in the sofa, ‘we’re going to win, two-nil, I can feel it!’ She waved her little Chelsea flag up at the others.

‘I’m not so sure’, said Freddy, his pride at being a Manchester United fan welling up inside him, ‘if Cristiano and Wayne get going, you won’t stop them!’

‘Well, if you look here like I said’, Jaz murmured, ‘you might get some ideas’. He worked urgently at the keyboard, then sat back, admiring the mass of numbers in front of him.

‘Look at this graph here. Rooney has played thirty-eight times and scored in twenty-four games. Ronaldo has scored forty goals in forty games, that’s one per game, a one hundred percent record. When Rooney and Ronaldo play together, United usually win by at least three goals. On the other hand, Ballack’s performances have been rising like this, and Lampard has come back to partner him and he has scored in the last three games’.

‘OK, so who do you think will win?’

‘I’m coming to that’, said Jaz, tapping some more. ‘Now, if you look at this line here, going up, and this one here, going down, round the corner, and up again, you can see what I mean...’

‘What DO you mean?’ said Clara impatiently.

‘Well...here, and here, shows that when Chelsea play on a Wednesday after seven pm, they tend to score first. And this table here shows that Man United, when it is below fifteen degrees in the stadium, always get someone booked just after half-time’.

‘Oh COME ON!’ said Clara, ‘WHO IS GOING TO WIN THE MATCH’.

‘I’m coming to that...again’, said Jaz, refusing to be ruffled under pressure, ‘the thing is...it is a Wednesday, the match is in Moscow, it will be ten degrees, there will be seventy thousand in the stadium, there is no ‘R’ in the month, a black cat strolled in front of our house this morning, and I accidentally walked under a ladder’.

‘You’re making this up!’ said Freddy, laughing.

‘Well, OK...m-m-m-maybe it’ll be a draw then’, stammered Jaz, sounding flustered. His computer gave a little beep and the screen went blank.

‘Actually, it’s going to be one-nil to Chelsea’, muttered Michael, ‘Drogba, early in the second half. Cross from Ballack’.

*****In the corner, Jimi, wearing all black, strummed a sad tune on his guitar. A Blues I think.

Or should that be a Reds?
