

4-3

A LARP SCENARIO ON THE GAME OF SOCCER BY OSCAR BIFFI AND ALESSANDRO GIOVANNUCCI

The city stops, gathered around the stadium. The derby splits it in two. In the locker room, eleven players prepare for something more than just another game. On the other side of the wall, their long-time rivals. A ritual, a sacred space for the length of the match, only extinguished by the referee's final blow on the whistle. And between that, some sublime moments and many ridiculous episodes. In a word, soccer.

Styles of play: Larp - *Tags:* Soccer, challenge, team vs individual, Italy.

Players: 7 to 11 - *Game time:* 90 mins total.

Game phases: 30 mins in the Locker room (Pregame), 10 mins in the Field (First half), 30 mins in the Locker room (Halftime), 10 mins in the Field (Second half), 10 mins in the Locker room (Postgame).

Game space: A rectangle with visible borders (7m x 5m minimum) to represent the Field. Preferably outdoors. An area with benches or other seats to represent the Locker room. Preferably indoors.

Game materials: Tactics, Tactical placement, Technique and Technical feat Cards to hand out at the start of the game; Derby Cards to leave available in the Locker room; Whistle and Goal Cards to put aside with the Commentator's table; a timer; a whiteboard or an A3 paper sheet to use as a Tactical board; a ball and a whistle for Field phases.

Designer's notes: Soccer is everywhere in Italy. It's a pop culture phenomenon that crosses over generations, social status and education alike. It's a conversation topic that never grows old, not in bars, not on public transportation, not in waiting rooms. Everywhere and in every way. With the exception of larp conventions. Soccer is unbearable in Italy. Hating it is the flag under which all geeks unite. Our dear translator, Chiara Locatelli, wholeheartedly agrees.

We've spent years toying with the idea of coming out as the rowdy hooligans we are and betraying the trust of our roleplaying friends. Not just because sport is as good a storytelling genre as any, but most of all because we think soccer has its own poetry, its own brand of romance. One that is not extraneous to roleplay. There is no Italian child that hasn't run about the courtyard yelling "I'm Baggio!" or "Baresi!", showing off their favorite player's jersey or imitating their unique celebrations. And it's the mask of those champions that allows them to attempt daring stunts with the ball, to escape through play from the unforgiving cogs of agonism. That sense of freedom and challenge, that tension towards greatness, is the same feeling you get when throwing on a mantle and playing wizard in the woods. Or walking the stage as an actor.

So we willingly submit to the benevolent teasing and awkward glances of our friends, and invite them to treat us like the sports addicts we are, but we are firmly convinced that 4-3, a larp about soccer with the stylings of a card game, will let us play together with those who have never even heard about roleplaying before. With no age distinctions. One day we'll get to play it with Blu, Alessandro's son, who's already kicking the ball around and narrating his plays well before the age of 3.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

Character sheets are a random combination of one of 11 *Tactics Cards* and one of 11 *Technique Cards*. *Tactics Cards* decide the character's Number, their role in the team, from Goalkeeper to Centre-forward, and come with 2 *Tactical placement Cards* representing role-appropriate plays during the game; *Technique Cards* are the character's archetype, from Captain to Rookie, and come with blank spaces to fill with that character's Number, as do the 2 associated *Technical feat Cards*. Each of us will start play with 6 cards, a possible combination being Number 3, the Captain.

Locker room phases are devoted to free play. Intimacy is absolute within the team: we chat in a group, and if we take someone aside to talk, there is something unusual going on. The personal issues in our character sheets

are there to be shared with our companions, with our friends. This game is not based on secrets. If there are less than 11 of us, let's pretend that unassigned characters are off to the side, prepping for the match.

The third and final Locker room phase, the Postgame, is solely focused on free play and serves to tie up the game. During the first two, however, each of us must choose how to conduct the following Field phase, by playing either a *Tactical placement Card* (meaning our character prioritizes discipline and teamplay over their personal skills) or a *Technical feat Card* (meaning they strike out and perform a daring stunt in spite of the team's strategy). During the Pregame, the Locker room phase preceding the First Half on the Field, we get to choose the option we best like from the four we have available; during the Halftime, before the Second Half, we need to choose from the three remaining options. The game mechanics thus play out twice in total.

We should not choose a priori, instead letting the team's overall mood influence our decision. At any time during the Locker room phase, one of us can place their chosen Card on the *Commentator's table* sheet, beside the *Whistle cards* and *Goal cards* we placed there during setup.

The first of us to play a Card, the quickest, gains the right to act as Coach the next time we get on the Field. As long as we are still in the Locker room, they still play their own character, with one difference: they are the only player allowed to write on the Tactical board.

They must first put their Number at the top, as a reminder to everyone that they have the right to play Coach, then they are free to write down any number of thoughts about their teammates. These will become the Coach's own opinions, known to everyone in the team.

E.g. Last chance, Number 4. Prove you've still got it or rot on the bench.

The right to play Coach may be contested. To reclaim it, as well as the privilege to write on the Tactical board, each of us may choose to draw a *Derby Card*, an unforeseen event. *Locker room Derby Cards* are significant events in the life of someone on the team, and must immediately be put in play by whoever drew one: they must work the

news into the narrative in a believable way, then discard the card. *Field Derby Cards* are instead placed on the *Commentator's table* and will form part of their play-by-play, with no effect before the Field phase.

Drawing a *Derby Card* means putting the team at risk in exchange for personal supremacy. Whoever draws one must erase the Number of the previous Coach from the *Tactical board* and substitute it with their own. Each of us may only draw one *Derby Card* per Locker room phase, so the last person to draw, the one whose number is still on the Tactical board when the 30 minutes are up, will get to play the Coach.

IN THE FIELD

After each Locker room phase, the Coach takes the *Commentator's table* with every card on it and leads everyone to the Field.

The Coach must direct the team to stand in the Field in the formation shown below, leaving gaps for any absent Numbers.

Let's use this transition to do some light warm-up, stretching our legs and arms, although we must keep paying attention to the Coach.

	3	11	
	5	8	10
1			
	6	4	9
	2	7	

When our formation is complete, the Coach first chooses a Commentator: the selected player gets the Commentator's table and goes to the sidelines. They can already start preparing the Cards according to their instructions. After this, the Coach must give a pep talk to the team as they finish warming up. They need to improvise and are free to say whatever they want, as long as they make two concepts perfectly clear: do they want the team to stick to their tactics and common strategy, or do they want them to rely on personal skills and technique? Do they want the team to privilege attack or defense?

Once the pep talk is over and reactions to it are finished, the Coach decides who stays in the Field as an Athlete and who goes to the sidelines as a Supporter. They owe no explanations to anyone, let alone a discussion. They are free to choose as long as they follow these rules:

7 players: 3 Athletes, 2 Supporters

8 players: 4 Athletes, 2 Supporters

9 players: 4 Athletes, 3 Supporters

10 players: 5 Athletes, 3 Supporters

11 players: 5 Athletes, 4 Supporters

When the Coach finally leaves the Field, the match can truly begin. The Coach, Commentator, Supporters and Athletes will each experience it in very different ways.

Commentator

The Commentator can never leave their post, but is the only one with the right to speak freely during the Field phase: they reveal and read their Cards one after the other, setting the pace with their enthusiastic play-by-play and improvising as needed to fill the 10 minutes of each Field phase. But before this, they must prepare their deck according to precise instructions, with help from the *Commentator's table*.

They first sort the Cards according to their type: *Whistle Cards*, *Conceded goal Cards*, and *Scored goal Cards* have already been prepared at the start of the game; *Field Derby Cards*, *Tactical placement Cards* and *Technical feat Cards* have been put in play during the Locker room phase. The ultimate goal is to produce a deck that connects them all in a single play-by-play of our match.

To do this, the Commentator must begin by calculating the current score, a procedure that only involves two types of Cards. The value of each *Tactical placement Card* or *Technical feat Card* is positive if in agreement with the Coach's choice between teamplay and individualism, and

negative if in disagreement. Each Card also bears a Number: if the Coach chose to privilege attack, the Card has that value; if the Coach chose to privilege defense, the Card has the opposite value on a scale of 1 to 11. *E.g. A Technical feat Card with the Number 1 on it equals a +1 if the Coach favors an individualistic, attack-based strategy, and a -11 if the Coach favors teamplay and defense.*

By adding up these Cards' values, the Commentator establishes the team's score. Now they need to establish the opposite team's score. In the First half, it starts out at 0; in the Second half, it starts out as -5 if our team ended the First half in the lead or +5 in the opposite case. Some *Field Derby Cards* have modifiers to add to the opposite team's score. Finally, the Commentator compares the teams' scores: to win, our team's score needs to be equal to or higher than their rivals' and lower than 21.

If our team wins the First half, the Commentator adds 3 *Scored goal Cards* and 2 *Conceded goal Cards* to the deck; if we lose, 2 *Scored goal Cards* and 3 *Conceded goal Cards* are added instead. If our team wins the Second half, 1 or 2 *Scored goal Cards* and 0 or 1 *Conceded goal Cards* are added, so that the result is 4-3; if we lose, 0 or 1 *Scored goal Cards* and 1 or 2 *Conceded goal Cards* are added, so that the result is 3-4. The final tally may differ: some *Field Derby Cards* may add a goal or two.

When the Commentator has established the correct number of *Goal Cards*, the deck is complete and ready to be shuffled. The only exceptions are *Whistle Cards*, which the Commentator must fill in and add to the deck according to the situation: the *Starting whistle Card* and the *End of first half Card* must be the first and last card of the First half deck, respectively; the *Start of second half Card* and the *Final whistle Card* must be the first and last card of the Second half deck.

At the end of each Field phase, before going back to the Locker Room, the Commentator can interview one or two Athletes. A single question each, with a handful of seconds to answer.

Supporters

The Supporters are the only ones aside from the Athletes with freedom to move around, but they must always stay out of the Fields. They may speak, but only in unison with cheers and chants; they are otherwise limited to hooting, clapping and improvising choreographies.

They must take care to never speak over the Commentator: they must first listen to each section of their play-by-play, and only react when it is over. Their mood affects the Athletes on the Field: if the Supporters cheer and incite them, the Athletes will run faster; if the Supporters boo and show their disappointment, the Athletes will run slower.

Coach

The Coach may not move, they must stay at their post, and may not speak, only gesture and blow their whistle. Their job is to berate failing Athletes and call for changes in formation.

Each time the Coach blow their whistle, the player with the ball must pass it to someone else. If they are late or let the ball fall to the ground, the Coach must show their disappointment.

As long as the score is tied, the Athletes are static on the Field in the position dictated by their Number, and pass the ball with their hands. As the score changes, however, so does the formation.

If our team gains the lead, the Coach raises their index finger and moves it in a circle: the Athletes break formation to stand in a circle and keep passing the ball with their hands at each whistle blow. Passing is easier now: being able to see each other, they control the game and the match.

If the team is at a disadvantage, the Coach raises their fist and waves it around: the Athletes break formation to stand in a circle and are only allowed to touch the ball with their feet. Playing becomes harder, as getting back in the game requires taking risks and errors become more frequent.

If the score goes back to a draw, the Coach raises their arm above their head with an open palm: the Athletes go back to their initial formation and pass the ball with their hands.

Whatever their formation in the Field, the Athletes must never stop running in place. If they do, the Coach must berate them.

Athletes

The Athletes are the only ones allowed in the Field proper, and the only ones who may touch the ball. They must not speak nor emit other sounds, their play is strictly silent and physical in nature.

Their goal is not to actually play soccer or show off their skills, but to represent their effort and physical engagement in the match. They must never stop running in place for the entire 10 minutes they spend in the Field, and pass the ball with either hands or feet, depending on their formation.

The Supporters dictate the Athletes' running speed, and the Coach establishes their formation on the Field, as well as the mode and speed of their passes, but the events of the match are all narrated by the Commentator. The Athletes must listen carefully and keep in mind that they are not simply playing their own characters, but the team as a whole. So the Goalkeeper plays the same role as everyone else, and when the Commentator describes a play, the protagonist on the Field is not the Number being called out, but whoever is holding the ball. They are the one to hug over a daring goal or curse over a bad mistake, with no regard for the current formation. In the end, soccer is first of all about emotion.

P.s. 4-3 is a tribute to the Partido del siglo, the Italy-Germany semi final in the Mexico 70 World Cup.

COMMENTATOR'S TABLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

TEAMPLAY	INDIVIDUALISM		ATTACK	DEFENSE
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**PLACE HERE
TACTICAL PLACEMENT CARDS**

**PLACE HERE
TECHNICAL FEAT CARDS**

FIRST HALF

TEAM:			OPPONENTS:	
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SECOND HALF

TEAM:			OPPONENTS:	
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**PLACE HERE
FIELD DERBY CARDS**

**PLACE HERE
WHISTLE AND GOAL CARDS**

1

The goalkeeper is the lone wolf, the eccentric, the one different from the others. Contrarian as you are it annoys you to corroborate the stereotype, but on the other hand, it's who you are. You play a different game, in the field and in life. In the locker room you like to question certainties, be the eye opener, play devil's advocate. After all, what can they tell you? You play alone.

2

The right-back runs tirelessly up and down the wing. You're ready to sacrifice yourself for the team, but if you're not perfectly lucid and you fumble a cross, you get all the insults. And they hurt. You are more than a runner, you have technique and good feet, you feel underestimated. You do not like it when an individual is blamed for the faults of the team and you're loyal to your wing partner, Number 7.

3

The left-back is the most imaginative of the defenders, with a god left foot and a license to aggrieve. Obstinate marking, keeping the line of defense, these are necessary nuisances for you. But you do not like complaining, so you joke about it. About your mistakes, about those of others and about life in general. At least there's someone who laughs at your jokes, your partner on the left wing, Number 11.

4

The centre-back is the soul of the team, the one who works hard and never gives up. There are so many ways to make a difference and running is not the least important. For you, surrendering is not an option and you can't stand your teammates giving up. In the field, in the locker room and in life. You are the squire of Number 8 and you run for them too, to leave them room to think.

5

The stopper is the last bastion of defense, always ready to close in on the opponent and sweep the ball away. You like to play simple, you have nothing to prove to those who like to blabber about artful plays and daring displays of skill. Soccer is a team game and you face it like life, with realism and sincerity. You can count on Number 6, they never get lost in chatter. Like you.

6

The sweeper is not limited to defense, they direct the game from the rear. In your position, every mistake can be decisive. You have learned to live with the weight of responsibility and take everything seriously, both on and off the field. Soccer is only a game for those who don't get it, and you make it a matter of life or death. Number 5 understands it, they never underestimate a situation.

7

The right winger plays by the sidelines, away from the center of the game, but they can turn it around in a moment. You don't need to be constantly present to make the difference, in the game or in an argument. You know it well, timing is everything and you know how to shoot at the right time. Number 2 covers for your absences and knows that it's worth it. That doesn't go for everyone else in the team.

8

The playmaker controls the midfield and thus the team. Your goal is not to get the solo, but to direct the orchestra. It's a challenge to harmonize eleven heads, eleven ways of thinking: everyone wants to be a protagonist. You can only win by keeping everyone involved and forcing them to reflect when needed. Number 4 is your opposite, which is why you complete each other.

9

The centre-forward is the finalizer and they live for the next goal. Nobody cares if you did your best or played for the team, you have always been and you will always be evaluated only for results you bring home. You can't hide behind anything or anyone. Yours is not selfishness, but you have never managed to explain it. Even if you need more, Number 10 is the only one who understands how you feel.

10

The striker is the wild card, genius and unruliness with a ball between their feet. Winning is not the only thing that matters, there is so much more to life than that. You consider yourself an artist and you're proud of it, you don't do anything to hide your ideas and don't care if others agree with you. You believe that Number 9 should rediscover this aesthetic sense, and you are ready to teach them.

11

The left winger is the elusive speedster, always dribbling and dashing around. You'd love to always have the ball, to show off, to get the last word. Teamplay is all well and good, but personal initiatives are what makes the difference in the end. With Number 3, you always end up stealing the ball from each other, but you laugh it off without getting lost in rhetorics.

The Captain

Nobody knows better than you what it really means to wear these colors. Soccer has given you everything, but it has demanded the same giving back gets harder every year. Your spouse is about to give you an ultimatum: either them or the ball. They do not understand that it's not just about the game, it's the city, it's the team. All your companions are worth the same to you, and you know you are their guide.

The Rookie

You have just ventured from youth soccer into a major league and you immediately realized that it's a whole other sport. The intensity, the pressure. This is your first derby and your future is at stake. Your father has never accepted your decision to abandon school altogether, but soccer is the only thing that matters to you. You are surrounded by legends and the Veteran has taken you under their wing.

The Veteran

This will be your last season. You're tired of suffering after all these years. You have always said you wanted to go out at your peak, before the inevitable decline, and your body is sending clear signals. You just have to find the courage to say enough. But then here comes a Rookie in the locker room, who doesn't even know how to tie their shoes, and how can you leave them alone?

The Injured

This is your first match after a terrible knee injury. It wasn't the first and do not dare to hope it will be the last. The medical staff has advised against rushing your return on the field, but this is the derby, you live for games like this and the coach has listened to your pleas. Watching from the sidelines is hard, the Extranged knows it well, and you've become friends sitting side by side on the bench.

The Extranged

You've burnt bridges with the coach and you feel like an extraneous body to the team now. You don't know what to make of his decision to throw you back into the fray just for the derby, but your journey with this team is now at its final stage, you've already discussed this with your agent. The only one to have supported you in these difficult months was the Injured. You will miss them.

The Reserve

You were sure that the coach did not understand you, but you're the one at a loss now. Months on the bench and now he chooses to let you on the field just for the derby. You want to prove you're up to the task, to him, to your teammates and to the chairman who has invested so much on you. After all, you've earned the respect of the Star player: that means that there must be something good in you.

The Star Player

You are the star of the team and things could not be otherwise. The chosen one, the prodigy, and so on and so forth. But you have not yet managed to leave your mark in the national team and the technical commissioner seems convinced that, outside the context of this team, you just aren't the same player. Your teammates are important, even the Reserve, but you do not depend on them.

The Foreigner

Soccer has taken you far from home, giving you a better life. This is not your city, you're feeling the tension of the derby without really understanding the reasons. This sport is a war in your country, as well, but only to avoid thinking about the real one that plagues it. When you see your team's supposed fans do everything in their power to make the Traitor's life hell, you doubt they have the heart in the right place.

The Traitor

Your first derby on the other side of the barricade, wearing the colors of your lifelong rivals. Soccer is strange, just like life. But some things are easy to predict, like the insults of your former fans every time you touch the ball. You were their idol. You wonder if you made the wrong decision. The Foreigner is the only outsider to these local quarrels, and this puts you at ease around them.

The Fighter

You are the darling of the fans. You were one of them and you've sacrificed everything to make your dreams come true in the derby. Every time is like the first and you will always be an ultras at heart. You want to dedicate another triumph to the guys who live for soccer like you do. There is really nothing incomprehensible to you in the Pragmatist's obsession with victory.

The Pragmatist

The only thing you do not care about winning is the fair play prize. Football is a war of nerves, aggression, cunning, and borderline plays. You hate losing, even in friendly matches, but this derby is special: your son is in the hospital and asked you to give him this joy. You would not disappoint him for anything in the world. Everyone needs to play the field like the Fighter does.

Tactical placement 1

Corner for the opposing team. The ball is on the ground, the player approaches the flag and prepares to kick. There goes the cross, soft on the second pole. The goalkeeper makes for an exit, but seeing the crowd in the penalty area they decide to keep to the posts. The opposing striker comes out and shoots! A strong blow, but it flies straight into the arms of Number 1.

Tactical placement 1

The play comes out of left field. The opposing striker converges towards the center while the fullback attacks from the rear, preparing for the cross. The ball rises as the usual crowd fights over the area. The goalkeeper hesitates between the poles, badly miscalculates the trajectory, but with a sudden surge they reach the ball! It bounces off the crossbar and ends in corner. Close call for Number 1.

Tactical placement 2

The opposing striker goes for the post, but the right-back closes in diagonally once again. A very diligent match for Number 2, though one with scarce offensive projection. Indeed, they keep going back and forth on the wing, but rarely dare to roam past the center spot. They're giving up any and all attempts at a cross in exchange for thorough defensive coverage.

Tactical placement 2

Number 2 takes advantage of the opposite team's indecision to steal the ball and move forward. They gain ground and aim for the area. They grind meters while the defense tries to regroup. But right-back slows down the race and prefers to serve their closest teammate. The play continues with a slower, calculated rhythm. Too bad, that's a lost chance to shoot for the goal.

Tactical placement 3

The left-back advances on the wing, gains ground and finds room to point towards the penalty area. They stop, move the ball to the right and seems intentioned to cut towards the center. Back to the left, trying to push forward, they meet resistance and they get the ball to midfield. Another cross from Number 3, ever relentless, even if they never dare to shoot.

Tactical placement 3

The left-back is not fooled by the feints of the opposing team's ace. They mark them tightly and don't let up. After all, promptness and reactivity are the trademarks of Number 3. Today, however, they appear less brilliant than usual and the lack of their contribution is felt. Even before this game it was obvious just how much this scheme limits them in the proactive phase.

Tactical placement 4

The opposing team leads the ball to the midfield. They're playing with one touch, with great confidence, without suffering pressure. The centre-back marks their zone, ready to cut off their passing line. There they go, recovering the ball and immediately restarting the play. Lucid and precise, it's strange how Number 4 is controlling their dynamism and aggression in a derby of all things.

Tactical placement 4

The ball travels by vertical lines. In this phase of the game, neither team seems to want to risk. During the pass the ball remains there, halfway to the receiver, and Number 4 readily makes it their own, recovering it in a single swoop. They could trigger the counterattack with a killer pass... Instead they elect to play on the safe side, with a pass to the playmaker.

Tactical placement 5

Thrown off by a misguided play, the opposing team starts off guard. Three against two, the ball carrier slows down, tries to gain time for the defense. They try to dribble past, with the support of the stopper. A good play, carrying them to the goal line. Number 5 grants the team a corner, but a wall is soon formed. But perhaps they could have tried to be more proactive.

Tactical placement 5

From the opposing defense comes a long throw cutting through the midfield, the ball rebounds and rises again. Number 5 takes position and goes for a header, raising the ball. But their intervention is clumsy, a continuous back and forth... In the end the danger is averted. The stopper gestures to their teammates over the lack of help, on a ball that wasn't that difficult after all.

Tactical placement 6

The sweeper intercepts the ball and fights against the opposing team's attacker. They gain ground and play with their head high. They could try for a long ball to serve the strikers, they're certainly up to the task. Instead they fall back on their nearest companion, giving the team a breather. Simple, elegant, Number 6 is a certainty. They could use some more forward projection.

Tactical placement 6

Number 6 keeps up the defense, ready to trigger the offside trap. They make a long pass, the opposing striker intercepts it and the position is regular: the left-back hasn't held the line. The opposing attacker advances towards the post, but the sweeper saves the day with a providential recovery. Good timing, but they should coordinate better with their teammates.

Tactical placement 7

The right winger receives, follows with a stop and the field is wide open for them. They go forward, ball at their feet, looking for a triangle with the striker and finding it. They move for the goal line, fake a pass, but then give up dribbling and get it back to midfield. The ball is intercepted and the opposing team is up again. Nice play for Number 7, perhaps they could have trusted in a personal solution.

Tactical placement 7

The action develops from the right with a series of back and forths, the opposing team manages to advance and become a threat. Fortunately, Number 7 manages to move back with perfect timing, to recover the ball and kick off another play. A good intervention from the right wing. Of course, they won't pose a threat for the goalie if they keep playing this deep.

Tactical placement 8

Once again, the ball gets to the playmaker's feet. A true metronome, they deal it to their teammates without fear of pressure from their adversaries. Never a touch too much for Number 8. They set the pace for the team, without demanding the spotlight for themselves. Of course, you always expect a player of their caliber to deliver the decisive blow, but in a derby you do not play for photographers.

Tactical placement 8

Number 8 is tireless, they run right and left to lord over midfield, as we have seen in so many other games. This time, though, it's not really an easy task. In particular, the playmaker is doing well in defensive coverage, but they don't seem to have enough clarity to set the game on the offensive. And games like this are won by scoring.

Tactical placement 9

Long ball for the centre-forward, they turn their back to the post and receive. They look for a short pass to their closest teammate and waste the opponent's defender's time. Here comes the return pass, they're ready to shoot... Out by a millimeter! Number 9 keeps fighting, and maybe it's all these maneuvers that cost them the lucidity to close the play.

Tactical placement 9

The team maneuvers the ball across the field as the striker moves in horizontal lines in search of the right gap. Here comes the serve: without thinking twice Number 9 shoots with enough force to fold back the hands of the goalkeeper. The ball bounces off the pole and then to the byline. Beautiful conclusion, but a bit hurried. But everyone knows attackers are selfish by nature.

Tactical placement 10

The striker comes for the ball on the three-quarters, points towards the opponent and starts dribbling. They gain ground, get rid of a second opponent with a feint and quickly reach the edge of the area. They try to shoot, no, it's another fakeout! They make for a killer pass to the left wing, but the throw is walled up. How altruistic of Number 10, they could have gone for one of their trick shots.

Tactical placement 10

Number 10 dashes to the edge of the area, taking advantage of a fault in the opponent's defense. They skip one opponent, then another, with series of feints to avoid interception. With a lightning surge they get a good pass and let the shot fly, powerful but centered. The goalkeeper blocks in two stages. A valuable action, even if they could have chosen to support their unmarked teammate in the area.

Tactical placement 11

The left wing calls for a pass and receives it on the run. Tight dribbling, then they start a cross that cuts across the penalty area... Without a teammate finding a way to step in. A good input from Number 11, but the team as a habit of leaving them unsupported in these incursions. They should maybe opt to strike out on their own and look for the goal instead.

Tactical placement 11

Corner, the ball is rebound by the defense. The left wing starts on the counterattack, the field wide open for them. They run to their opponent and overcomes them, skip around another and find themselves off to the side. They could go for the goal, but the centre-forward calls the ball to the area: fatal hesitation for Number 11, who suffers the return of the defenders. Nice action, even if it lacked teeth.

Technical feat - The Captain

With a commanding dash, the captain slips through and tears the ball from the opponent. Then they wave to the audience, inviting them to cheer! Number [] is truly the soul of the team, they know what it means to wear these colors and never let down the fans. They also took a big risk, if the timing was even a little off that would have been an easy penalty.

Technical feat - The Captain

Clash at the edge of the area, one player of each side falls to the ground in pain. As the tension rises, the captain approaches to settle the dispute. They takes their people to the side and go to complain to the referee, gesturing and raising their voice. The referee finally signals that the game can resume. Had they been a less charismatic player than Number [], they would have been punished for sure.

Technical feat - The Rookie

What a debut in the derby for our rookie! Just promoted from the youth league, they are never afraid of trying for a play. Here they go with another long shot. One would say it's the boldness of youth, we only need to hope that they won't be overwhelmed when the opponents finally size them up. However it goes, talent is certainly not lacking for this Number [].

Technical feat - The Rookie

The new arrival from the youth team might still smell of milk, but they have character to sell! They're always the first on the ball, both generous and determined. Also accurate in their passes, this rookie is showing us their repertoire and there's a lot of promise there. Let's hope they don't let the heat of the game and the desire to overdo it get the better of them. Recklessness must be a strength for Number [].

Technical feat - The Injured

And down they go. Another hard entry on Number [], who has just recovered from a long injury. Here they are, getting up, almost as if nothing had happened. This is a derby, no one can expect a discount, but who knows what ghosts haunt the mind of this poor kid. Yet they're not letting anything show, they always chip in and take their risks. It is a pleasure to see them back on the field today.

Technical feat - The Injured

Even if they advance with a conspicuous limp, they have already said no to a couple of substitution requests from the bench. Number [] really cares about leaving their mark on this derby. Another midair rebound, luckily they don't land on the sore leg, but this was another close call. Where does courage end and imprudence begin?

Technical Feat - The Reserve

Number [] wins a rebound and takes off without much trouble. It must be hard to get in the main roster just in time for the derby, after such a long time on the bench. Yet they seem to be ready. They know they must milk this chance for all its worth, they just need to fend off the inevitable temptation to overdo things. But so far, they're making a great impression.

Technical feat - The Reserve

The number [] resolves another dangerous situation. They're doing their part, even though they obviously can't play by heart like the rest of the team. They've got few appearances so far in this league, but a great spirit of initiative. We just hope they don't lose the lucidity necessary for challenges like this. They need to keep playing for the team.

Technical feat - The Star player

What a risk! And what a stunt. The audience goes completely crazy for Number []'s backheel. A difficult play to even imagine, but sometimes the most complex solution is also the best. The coach must've pulled a face, this is certainly not a shot you try in training. But real champions are all about genius and unruliness, with no fear of consequences.

Technical feat - The Star player

They invite the opponent to a duen, then confuse him with a feint and get free room to shoot forward. Such confidence, and what a foot! But the opponent dislikes the results and looks ready to get back at them. Number [] just keeps smiling. a valuable initiative, worthy of a true champion, but in a derby there's no room for suffering and riling up your rivals is a dangerous game.

Technical feat - The Veteran

The opposing striker sows panic in the area, is forced towards the sideline, but maintains control of the ball... Until Number [] swoops in. They go for the ball and take it home, moving towards the goal line. It's not even a corner. In these situations experience has its weight and it takes the nerves of a veteran to untangle the skein.

Technical feat- The Veteran

These are the matches where people like them are indispensable. If the derby is Hell then Number [] is our Virgil. They know their opponents and friends from first to last, they know exactly what to do. We only need to hope they don't end up resting on their laurels and take for granted a match as unpredictable as a derby can be. Every match is a story in itself.

Technical feat - The Traitor

A nice pass from number [] is greeted by the usual volley of whistles. The fans have a long memory and do not forgive those who change their jersey, not in a derby. The athlete does not seem to resent the chants calling them a traitor, but it must not be easy to find themselves on the other side of the barricade. Having to win over their new fans and being resented by the old guard.

Technical feat - The Traitor

Number [] takes the ball and advances, looking for room to verticalize. They valiantly face two defenders in an attempt to come through them, but is put down by the opposing captain. Their former captain. Even if they shake hands after getting up, the look between the two is a whole other story. The idea was good, but beware, the derby seems made especially for old grudges to come out.

Technical feat - The Foreigner

Number [] really seems to be dancing with the ball. Right, left, all with South American grace. They've adapted well to our championship, but even if you understand the dynamics of a derby, its significance for the city, its malice is never easy to handle for a foreigner. At the first mistake you risk being insulted by the audience just for smiling or enjoying the game.

Technical feat - The Foreigner

We are accustomed to the idea that the athletics of our league have no match abroad, but Number [] is keeping up with the team. Derbys are hot matches even in their country and they seem to be well prepared for the challenge. But they seem to be already tired, all this struggle has a price in terms of physical and mental energy. They must be careful to dose their efforts over the course of the game.

Technical feat - The Extranged

Bad tackle on Number [] but they resist and pull away the ball, before falling to the ground. Foiled danger. Nobody expected to see them in the field for the derby, after the rumors about the transfer request at the end of the season. Yet here they are, in a form that can not be perfect, but ready to fight in what could be their swan song in this stadium.

Technical feat - The Extranged

There were those who expected to see them already in the stands, as the last few times. Yet Number [] has worn the cleats and threw themselves into the fray. Of course, the public no longer acclaims them as the rest of the team, but even if the future is uncertain, the present is here, with their companions. Eleven players on the field, in search of victory against the enemies of all time.

Technical feat - The Fighter

Melee in the penalty area, the opponent striker falls to the ground... The referee signals to continue playing. Without much ado, Number [] grabs them by the arm and pulls them to their feet. It turns into a bickering, the two are face to face. They are separated, but ours continues to provoke the opponent. That determination! But they risk the card by acting like this.

Technical feat - The Fighter

What we are witnessing is a challenge in the challenge. Number [] and their direct opponent are sparing nothing, in a whirlwind of great play, grit and face to face at the limit of regulation. We did not expect anything less from them than a gladiator match. Let's just hope it won't become a two-player game, because their companions need them.

Technical feat - The Pragmatist

Clash in the penalty area and Number [] ends on the ground. They put their hands to their face, seem to have suffered a blow. The opponent spreads their arms, the referee consults with the linesman. He seems undecided, then lets it run. Was it foul or a simulation? The contact seems to be there, but it has undoubtedly been accentuated. It could be the punishment in favor, but also the yellow card.

Technical feat - The Pragmatist

The opponent striker seems really nervous today. And look how Number [] smiles! By now it is clear, they are trying to rile them up. They have been exchanging taunts from the beginning of the game, in a real war of nerves. It is part of the game and the derby is also this, but just a moment to overcome the limit and it is clear that the referee is on high alert.

Starting whistle

The city stops, gathered around the stadium. The derby splits it in two. In the field, twenty-two players prepare for something more than just another game. Long-time rivals, one in front of the others. A ritual, only extinguished by the referee's final blow on the whistle. And between that, some sublime moments and many ridiculous episodes. In a word, soccer.

End of first half

We go halftime on the result of [] a []. A challenge full of goals and opportunities on both sides, celebrated with great warmth by the fans. It is said that football is the most important thing of the less important things, but when you see games like these it can not seem like a euphemism. And who knows at this point what the second half holds for us?

Start of second half

After halftime, the teams return to the field and the ball is already in the midfield circle. The result is always [] to []. I wonder if the coaches in the locker room will have found the right words to ask their players to throw their hearts over the obstacle. The atmosphere in the stands is hot, the game is open to every outcome and who knows who will be able to check it out. Let's start once again!

Final whistle

The referee whistles the end. What a match! A whirlwind of goals and emotions that is not seen every day. But it was not a show for sympathizers or for sport lovers: more than anything it was a battle for the fans. For those who now rejoice, celebrating the victory, and for those who leave in tears, lamenting the defeat. That's all from the stadium.

Conceded Goal

Personal action of the opponent striker, launched on the run by opponent playmaker. They burn the marker on the shot, enters the area and fires the shot. Saved! Here comes the second striker from the rear... Goal! On the second conclusion the goalkeeper can't really do anything. But the line of defense has been slow and disunited. You can not leave this space to the attackers.

Conceded Goal

Series of passes between the opposing midfielders. They are looking for an opening, without finding it. Here comes the opponent playmaker, hiding the ball, gain a little space... And suddenly the shot fires. Incredible, it's a goal! Brave conclusion, but the complicity of the goalkeeper is evident. Completely unprepared on this shot from distance, a real slip.

Conceded Goal

The opposing left winger enters the area, steers, prepares to shoot... The stopper intervenes from behind and breaks them down. The referee approaches, while the defender repeats with a loud voice that they have taken the ball. Nothing to do, the referee indicates the spot: it is a penalty. The opponent centerpiece takes charge of the penalty shot, the whistle arrives... Goal! Goalkeeper to the right, ball to the left.

Conceded Goal

The striker approaches the edge of the area. They try to dribble, but the rebound disadvantages them. The opponents start off guard, the team is leaning forward. They try to dribble, they spread out on the right, two passes get them near the posts. The goalkeeper is ready to go out, they stay up to the last... But the opponent center-forward strikes through! Ground shot in the low angle. Goal.

Scored Goal

The sweeper advances beyond the midfield line, then widens towards the left winger. The winger switches gears with a long pass, cutting through the field. The right winger steps in, the stop is excellent, while the whole team comes together. They put it in the middle, veil by the striker who lets it slip out, the centre-forward receives and relies the defending midfielder who rushes forward. Shoot and net! What a team maneuver! What a goal!

Scored Goal

Corner kick. The playmaker takes care of the kick and sends it to the penalty area. The opposing goalkeeper makes a save, but the ball ends up on the feet of the right back who widens again towards the playmaker. Another cross in the middle, the stopper rises above the crowd and scored! They run under the curve in disbelief, while their companions flood them with hugs. First goal for the team in a derby!

Scored Goal

The striker keeps trying to dribble to the edge of the area, but they're tightly marked and their opponents won't let up. The striker stubbornly slips to the right, resists a few extra shots, pivots on the adversary and overcomes them. They shoot for the goal... And it lands in the upper corner! A good conclusion for a good play. What a great goal, an artist's masterpiece.

Scored Goal

The left back is just outside the area, they get the ball to the playmaker who sends it off and closes the triangle. But Number 3 is closed by two opponents. They break out of the fight and try for the cross. The centre-forward is in the grip of the opposing defenders, but they're half a step ahead of both, they get out and they shoot. Goal! What force!

Derby

Hard tackle by Number [] that gets the ball and their opponent's foot. Yellow card for them.

Field. *Two cautions make a dismissal. If an Athlete is cautioned during the First half, the Commentator must raise the opposing team's score by 2 during the Second half.*

Derby

Number [] is on ground, hands on their face. But the referee shows a yellow card. Simulation!

Field. *Two cautions make a dismissal. If an Athlete is cautioned during the First half, the Commentator must raise the opposing team's score by 2 during the Second half.*

Derby

Ball in the middle... Handball from Number [], just outside the area. Unavoidable caution.

Field. *Two cautions make a dismissal. If an Athlete is cautioned during the First half, the Commentator must raise the opposing team's score by 2 during the Second half.*

Derby

Clash between an opponent and Number [] who is immediately cautioned. Unexplained decision.

Field. *Two cautions make a dismissal. If an Athlete is cautioned during the First half, the Commentator must raise the opposing team's score by 2 during the Second half.*

Derby

Furious fray, an opponent collapses to the ground. A shove! Expulsion for Number [].

Field. *If an Athlete is dismissed during the First half, they may play no cards during Halftime and are forced to be Supporters during the Second half. The Commentator must raise the opposing team's score by 5 during the Second half.*

Derby

Desperate tackle by Number [] on the opponent. Last man foul! Inescapable expulsion.

Field. *If an Athlete is dismissed during the First half, they may play no cards during Halftime and are forced to be Supporters during the Second half. The Commentator must raise the opposing team's score by 5 during the Second half.*

Derby

The Coach calls Number [] to the bench. They hug the incoming partner and go to sit, knowing that they have given everything for this derby.

Field. *If an Athlete is substituted during the First half, they may play no cards during Halftime and may not become an Athlete during the Second half.*

Derby

The Coach calls Number [] to the bench. They avoid the hug of the incoming teammate, spit out a few angry words to the Coach and storm off to the locker room.

Field. *If an Athlete is substituted during the First half, they may play no cards during Halftime and may not become an Athlete during the Second half.*

Derby

Bad foul against Number []! They fall to the ground, holding their leg, while their opponent is cautioned by the referee. The stretcher enters immediately, it did not take this injury.

Field. *If an athlete is injured during the First half, they may play no cards during Halftime and may not become an Athlete during the Second half.*

Derby

The playmaker advances with their head held high, sees the centre-forward and serves them lightning fast. Shoot and goal! Protests from the opponents, the referee intervenes and cancels the goal: out by a millimeter, or so it seems.

Field. *The Commentator must substitute a Scored goal Card with this one. The team will score one less goal than established by normal rules.*

Derby

The opposing winger comes in from the wing and gets the ball to the area. The opponent's striker is on the ball, but Number [] rushes to anticipate it and... No! It bounces back in our own net. Own goal!

Field. *The Commentator must substitute a Scored goal Card with this one. The team will thus score one less goal and concede one more goal than established by normal rules.*

Derby

The Captain's spouse has left the stands to go home, with no explanation. This is the first time they haven't attended an entire match.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

The father of the Rookie is in the stands, along with the rest of the family. This is the first time he's ever accepted to follow the team and watch a game

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

Two managers, speaking in the locker room tunnel, have made it clear that this will be the last derby for the Veteran. They are about to retire and they have to find a substitute.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

The medical staff made a last attempt to convince the Coach not to deploy the Injured. If their knee gives out again, their career is over.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

The Extranged's agent is sitting in the stands next to the chairman of the opponents. They get along, all smiles and handshakes. Could they really jump off the barricade?

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

From the stands the chairman keeps his eyes fixed on the Reserve. He keeps whispering with the manager sitting next to him. Who can know whether he is satisfied or not?

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

Surprisingly, the commissioner is in the stands, in view of the call-up to the national team. He seems to be the only one not in awe of the Star player. Who knows if today's match will change his mind.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

There was a golpe in the city of the Foreigner. The attention on television is all for the derby and so the news barely mentioned it, but it seems that there are some dead.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

Every time the Traitor touches the ball, the insults coming from the stands are deafening.. Not only from their former fans, but also from our own. All this pressure can crush a player.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

Before the match there were scuffles between the fans and some arrests among the ultras. Among them there is a brotherly friend of the Fighter, he seems to have stabbed someone.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*

Derby

A call came from the hospital. There was an accident and they found a donor for the son of the Pragmatist, who has been hospitalized for some time. He's about to enter the operating room.

Locker room. *Whoever drew the Card must introduce this topic of discussion.*
