



BRAZILIANS GIVE YOUNGSTERS A MOST VALUABLE LESSON

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Article 5- by John Economos

(From Torre Del Lago, Italy)

CRACK BRASLIAN side, Gremio last Monday morning in a friendly hit-out, despite handing out an 8-0 spanking, simultaneously extended an extremely valuable lesson to APIA Leichhardt Tigers' very young players on how the World's most popular game should be played.

In the grandstand closely scouting the talent on display were a group of seven Player agents.

Later the same evening, the APIA camp was informed that one of the Gremio hulky strikers was snapped up by a Serie D club who paid \$320,000 for the South American striker.

Gremio's mobility, plus snapping passing, sharp mental awareness, plus their running off the ball, was a sheer pleasure to witness.

Not only a pleasure to watch but a pleasure to witness what the entire Gremio squad, did immediately after fulltime.

The whole South American squad, (Coaching staff included), walked across to APIA's squad and coaching staff to shake their hand and respectfully thank APIA for the training match.

Within 10 minutes the Brasilians almost scored from a fast counter-attack, but denied by APIA's goalie.

Ten minutes later the crack South Americans looked certain to open the score line, but were brilliantly denied by APIA's towering 17 year old custodian, Jarrod Eli Unicomb, just in front of his near left upright.

The technically superior Brasilians were dazzlingly brilliant with short, snappy passing dragging APIA defenders out of shape with ease.

Having said all this, one had to be well aware that the APIA touring starting XI included no less than two 15 year olds, four 16 year olds plus two 17 year old players.

In the 23rd minute Gremio again raided into APIA's box into a one on one situation with the 'keeper.

Despite young Jarrod's excellent parry, the Brazilian striker followed up to slam the rebound into the target and draw first blood.

In the 27th minute, again APIA's 'keeper made another outstanding block following a rocketing 15 metre drive fired in by a Gremio striker.

In the 29th minute attacking central midfielder, Hudson Fanini was forced to leave the field with an injury to his adductor strain to be replaced by Tyrone Gatt.

Seven minutes from the break, the South Americans were rewarded for their almost complete dominance and doubled the score line when their mobile left midfielder screamed down the left before blasting a rising, rocketing drive, that crashed just inside the right far post.

Just two minutes after the break Gremio trebled the score line with a quick ball cracked over the top of APIA's back-four for the Gremio striker to race behind, collect and slam into the target.

APIA's back-four of Brandon Kuzmanovski, Adrian Vlastelica, Frank Proietto and Alexander Gwozdecky found their task totally beyond them, exposed to the magical wizardry of the Brazilians.

Goal No 4 came in the 57th minute when a Gremio midfielder snapped a fast flat through ball that split APIA's defence, allowing a hulky Brazilian striker to flash through, latch onto the ball and first time drive it into the net.

Barely a minute later another Brazilian midfielder and on the run, exploded a 30 metre rising rocket that crashed onto APIA's horizontal.

APIA's young midfield quintet of Anthony Dahdah, Patrick Barba, Hudson Fanini, John Kanayama and Max Irish found it impossible to contain the Brazilians' brilliance and senior experience despite their courageous efforts in sustained chasing.

On the hour mark, APIA's goalie heroic Jarrod, again made a wonderful two gloved, mid-air save, that even drew admiration from the Gremio team.

A minute later Gatt was replaced by Chris Shaw and in the 65th APIA's centre-back Proietto advanced forward to let fly a 25 metre shot that screamed over the Gremio crossbar.

As had happened almost with monotonous regularity by the Brazilian midfield, another snappy, flat through ball in the 66th minute, spilt APIA's defence allowing a Gremio mobile striker to flash through. Calmly gaining possession he drove into the target goal No 5 that stuck into the bottom right corner.

In the 68th, 70th and 78th minutes, Gremio reeled off a staccato of treble goals to end the match.

Caretaker coach Tony Raciti stated:

"What a wonderful, invaluable lesson these Brazilians gave our youngsters.

"And a large number of our lads mentioned to me that it was by far the hardest match they had ever played in," concluded Raciti.

APIA LEICHHARDT TIGERS' team: Unicomb: Kuzmanovski, Vlastelica, Proietto, Gwozdecky: Dahdah, Barba, Fanini (Gatt 29th, Shaw 61st), Kanayama, Irish: Ward.