

The Times of India

Title : Doutie dazzles to turn it around

Author : Nilesh Bhattacharya

Location :

Kolkata:

Article Date : 11/19/2015

Defending Champions ATK Come From Behind To Humble Chennaiyin FC 2-1

Five months ago, Sameehg Douthie was eyeing for a move to Norway or Spain when South African club SuperSport United released him at the end of the season. Instead, the 26-year-old midfielder ended up playing in the Indian Super League (ISL). Atletico de Kolkata coach Antonio Lopez Habas had played a key role in convincing the South African to take up the ISL challenge.

On Wednesday, Douthie repaid the coach's faith by scoring a goal and setting up another in the defending champions' 2-1 win over Marco Materazzi's Chennaiyin FC.

The win took ATK to the second spot with 17 points from 11 games, brightening their chances of clinching a semifinal berth. Having suffered a third successive defeat, Chennaiyin FC stayed at the bottom of the table with 10 points from as many games.

The visitors started in right earnest when Raphael Augusto, their Brazilian mainstay in the midfield, gave them ahead in the 27th minute. But Douthie changed the contour of the game in telling fashion, netting the equalizer on the cusp of halftime. He then turned provider in the 63rd minute, sending in a brilliant cross to help Iain Hume notch up the winning goal. Hume, who has featured in ATK's all 11 matches, took his tally to five goals, equaling his last season's feat in Kerala Blasters' jersey.

The match got off to a sedate start with both teams reluctant to go on the offensive. The monotony was broken by an Elano Blumer shot in the 20th minute, which was deflected off a rival defender to reach Thoi Singh but Amrinder was alert to claim the Chennaiyin FC winger's attempted lay-off. This was followed by ATK's first attacking build-up, which saw Douthie's inviting cross being cleared by centre-back Mailson Alves for a corner.

Chennaiyin's next attack, in the 27th minute, led to the goal. Raphael started and finished in a move which involved a terrible mistake by ATK left-back Augustine Fernandes. Fikru, having received the ball from Raphael, relayed it in the path of his Brazilian teammate with a nice back-heel. Augustine, however, slipped while clearing the ball, thereby allowing Raphael space and time to, skip past Arnab Mondal and shoot home past a hapless Amrinder.

The goal shook the defending champions out of their slumber. They came close to levelling the score in the 34th minute when Hume sent Douthie through into the box with a delectable flick-on, but Dhanachandra cleared the danger with a nick-of-the-time tackle.

Dhanachandra, however, was responsible for handing ATK the opportunity to equalize on the stroke of halftime, when he needlessly conceded a free-kick on top of the box by handling the ball while trying to control it. Chennaiyin FC custodian Karanjit Singh initially punched away Jaime Gavilan's free-kick but Douthie volleyed it back into the goal from the edge of the box.

The South African lad celebrated with a double somersault, reminding ATK fans of their last season's hero Fikru, who was largely listless in Chennaiyin's shirt.

That goal galvanized the home team as they returned to the field hungry for more. There was clear instruction from Habas to stretch the Chennaiyin FC defence. Both Douthie and Valmiro Rocha 'Valdo' wreaked havoc in the Chennaiyin box with some delightful moves. It was the imperious Douthie who once again made the difference in the 63rd minute. The South African sent in the cross from the right for Hume to poke in and complete a remarkable turnaround for ATK.

ISL POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	D	L	P
Goa	10	5	3	2	18
Kolkata	11	5	2	4	17
Pune	10	4	3	3	15
Delhi	9	4	3	2	15
NEUFC	10	4	1	5	13
Mumbai	10	3	3	4	12
Kerala	10	3	2	5	11
Chennai	10	3	1	6	10



ATK's Sameergh Douthie exchanges 'high fives' with Borja Fernandes (above) before celebrating his goal against Chennaiyin with a double somersault (right)



Pics: Pradipto Datta, Sajal Mukherjee