A Change in Strategy: AFC Wimbly Womblys #89

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Hello, and welcome to HankGames Without Hank. My name is John Green, I'm the manager of the AFC Wimbledon Wimbly Womblys.

And, uh, funny thing happened a couple days ago: Seb Brown, our goal-keeper, our wonderful goal-keeper, came into my office and he said, "Uh, Boss, I gotta talk to you about something."

I said, "What is it? What is it, Seb?"

And he said, "Uh, I can't help but notice that, uh, that Milton Keynes, 'The Franchise,' the team that stole -- stole our identity away from us, is currently in 5th place in -- in the league -- in League 1."

And I said, "Well, you know, Seb, we can't pay attention to where other clubs are in the league, we need to focus on where we are. And where we are is at the top of the league which is exactly where we want to be, we want to win League 1."

And Seb said, "Yeah, Boss, we do, but the thing is if we win League 1 --" [John's cell phone rings]

Hold on, I've got a phone call. It's Elyse. Hold on. Hi, Elyse, I'm filming the Wimbly Womblys. Uh, can I call you back later? A'right, bye.

So, as you just saw there, the M.K., the Milton Keynes -- I'm not even going to say the-- the "D" word, because they have no relationship with Wimbledon whatsoever, but, um -- they are currently in 6th, which is the final playoff spot. So just to give you a quick update of how this works: the top two teams automatically advance to the league above League 1 which is called the Championship - helpfully called the Championship because it is the 2nd tier of professional soccer - 3 through 6 play each other in a playoff, and the winner of that playoff, um, then moves on to the Championship as well.

And what Seb Brown said to me was-- I was like, "So, we don't pay attention to other -- other teams, how they're doing, we pay attention to how our team is doing. Um, and we're exactly where we need to be, Seb, and I just need you to focus on that and not think about 'The Franchise' because who cares about 'The Franchise'?"

And Seb said, "Well, Boss, I care about 'The Franchise' and I don't want them to go to the Championship, because I don't want us to ever play them again."

And I was like, "Well, Seb, I can't guarantee that they're not going to go to the Championship, because they're in the playoff spots, and if they go to the playoff and they win the playoff they're gonna go to League 1."

And he said -- It's a goal... Oh... Actually, that's gonna be a bit of a problem.

Um, he said, uh -- he said, "Well, Boss, there is a way to stop them from going to the Championship."

And I said, "What? What is this way that you've been thinking of?"

And he said, "Well, the thing is, what we could do is we could lose our remaining games on purpose, finish 3rd in the league, and then go into the playoff and make sure that they don't get the playoff spot by winning the playoff."

And I was like, "Seb, that's insane!"

And do you know what he said to me? He said, "Well, Boss, I've talked to all the players, and they are in 100% agreement: we are not going to win another game this season until the playoff."

And I was like, "Seb, this is -- this is just absolutely ridiculous."

And Seb said, "Watch me."

You're not sad. You're faking it. It's a strategy.

It's a strategy, ladies and gentlemen, it's a shift in strategy an odd shift, an unusual shift, but I'M NOT SEEING "THE FRANCHISE" GO TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP. I stand with my boys, it's not gonna happen. Not today... maybe someday, but not today, not on our watch, no sir. Just not gonna happen. Just not gonna happen.

So we're gonna tank these next few games. Why did Seb get the own goal? I thought that should have gone -- I thought that should have gone to Hosea. I think he pretty clearly had the last touch. I'd like that to go to the Dubious Goals Board. Um, yeah, we're gonna tank our last -- our last few games here, we're gonna try to make them entertaining -- as entertaining as possible while also intentionally losing, um, just to make sure that Milton Keynes does not advance onward. into the-- into the Championship.

Oh! It could be! And it is! John Green with another beautiful goal! It's fantastic! We're gonna lose, but it was still a great goal. Yeah, you can hear us cheer! We sing:

[sings] He's big, he's tough,
He has a ginger puff,
Other John Green, Other John Green!

Beautiful finish. Um, but it's not gonna be enough. It's 2-2 against Port Vale in the 19th minute. Meredith, this is a very high-scoring game already. Oh, that's not a foul. That's not a foul, that was just a little sweep-the-legs-Johnny stuff. I mean, is there anything more fun than losing on purpose? What? What did I get a yellow card for? Is it my beautiful ginger mop? I often-- I often hear that from people.

Um, yeah, so this is our new strategy. We are -- it's--- it's unorthodox for sure. Oh! The Patron Saint of Lost Crosses to John Green! No! No. Well, it doesn't matter, we're still gonna lose. Um, we're just gonna try to score as many goals as we can while also making sure that our opponents score one goal more.

That's a nice ball, nice ball... Ah! It's a beautiful, beautiful ball for K. Sainte- Luce. Yes! Yes! No. Mm, Bald John Green, that was some good stuff though.

Now I know that a lot of the Wimbly Wombly faithful will say, "You need to win all your games, you can't care about what-- what 'The Franchise' is doing, this isn't about 'The Franchise', this is about the Wimbly Womblys. Why are you putting yourselves at risk of being back in League 1 again next year?" Well, first off, my players absolutely insisted on this strategy, and I can't play without them. Secondly, more importantly, on some level, ultimately I agree with them. I have faith that we can win that Championship, and in doing so if we can keep "The Franchise" in League 1, I mean, why not? Haven't they hurt us enough that we can inflict a little pain of our own? I think we have. I think we're ready. I think we can do this, Ladies and Gentlemen. It's crazy, I know it's crazy, but I -- I believe that we can lose this game, and the next game, and the game after that, and then we can get to the playoffs, win the playoffs -- it's possible that we will get to the playoffs, and we won't even play Milton Keynes, and instead they will play one of the other teams and that other team will beat them, and then we'll have to win a game against a team that isn't Milton Keynes, but the only way to absolutely ensure that they do not go up next season is to lose these games, go to the playoffs, and then, uh, yeah. That's what we're gonna do.

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Now, if Milton Keynes somehow drops out of that final playoff spot, we're going to respond to that with a desperate push to win our last couple games so we can get back to the automatic promotion spot. But yes, I -- I know it's a little weird, but we're here in the last four games of the season and, you know, we've just got to -- yeah, we've got to-- it's time to play a little weird, it's time -- time to to be a little -- little strange.

Oh, that was a handball in the box, I thought. Seb, you wanna -- no? Are-- hm? Oh, congratulations to Williamson on his heroic and stunning goal! I gave that to you, Williamson, that was my gift to you. Why are you pointing at your own name? You should be pointing at Seb Brown who wants to lose this game, and he darn sure will! Great defense by Sebby, not letting that ball in, and then he just -- he made a bit of a-- a bit of a mess of it.

And now we get to go for another goal, this is fun. I like -- I like this. I almost wish we threw all of our games. It's nice, it's relaxing, I don't have to be stressed out because I know that I can get the result that I want with relative ease. Are you gonna score there? Are you gonna score-- no, you're not. You're not. You're not good enough to.

So, um, yeah, I don't know how you guys are gonna feel about this. I feel like there are some Wimbly Wombly fans who are thumbing down this video, but, I mean, you have to understand: we had a football club for a century. We had a football club that won the FA Cup, and it was stolen away from us. And the people who did that, I mean, the owner of that club is still the owner of the club in Milton Keynes. The people who did that to us, they are still -- they are still working in football today. They are-- they were millionaires then and they're millionaires now. And, um, this is a way that regular people who support a regular-- who own a regular football club can make sure that, you know, they don't get any joy at the end of their season. And, um, you know, it's an extreme -- it's an extreme response to a rivalry for sure, but this isn't just any rivalry, you know? I mean, this isn't uh, Manchester City/Manchester United, this is a -- this is the idea of franchises vs. the idea of --

Oh, that was almost beautiful! I mean, I guess he was offside, but you could have at least let me finish the bicycle kick! Goodness gracious! that was gonna be pretty! Oh man, we are just having a great time. There's nothing as fun as losing! I wish that I had known about this months ago! Just so enjoyable.

So yeah, we're uh, yeah. That's the strategy! Um, I might try to lose my next game by like 30 goals, I don't know, because goal difference isn't going to matter. Oh, he's offside, he's offside. Why not shoot? All right, he's not gonna get a shot. That's too bad. Um, anyway, I'm proud of Seb for coming up with this insane strategy, it-- it speaks to the fact that even though he's still quite young, he's only 24, he's becoming a leader on this club, and he and Ya Bamba are really the heart of -- of the Wimbly Wombly's right now, and I'm really -- I'm really pleased with both of them and their response to the second season. It's been a challenging season in a lot of ways because both Bald John Green and Other John Green - I mean, they've played great, obviously they've scored a ton of goals, they are Bald John Green and Other John Green - but they've -- you know, their communication hasn't been what it has been in the past. I think we've all seen a little bit of a -- just a bit of a breakdown, it almost feels personal to me, it feels like it's not about the game of soccer, you know, it's -- maybe it's a seven year itch, maybe it's, you know, trying to -- trying to deal with family stuff, which can be very complicated --

Oh no, don't score! Just kidding, I'm fine with it. Congratulations to Port Vale. Oh, yes, you guys are so pleased with yourselves, but I wanted this to happen! All you're doing is enacting my vision, Port Vale. It's a beautiful idea, by the way, that the vale of life is just a port, a port that we're all sailing through. All right, here we go. Down the line, it's Ya Bamba. Ya Bamba cr--oh! Oh, he got dispossessed. That's fine, I wanna lose.

Um, but yeah, I just-- Bald John Green and Other John Green, clearly they haven't been the same -- quite the same strike force we've known through the years. Now, some of that is that they aren't as young as they used to be, some of it is that inevitably, you know, there are going to be difficult periods in your life, and you know something that people don't really think about is that, your -- you know, just like I'm affected, my--what's going on in my life affects my work, like, that's also the case for professional football players, you know? Like, you can't all-the-way tune it out, it's inevitably gonna be a part of the way that you imagine the world and stuff.

We should make some substitutions just so we can, you know, just so we can keep everybody healthy. That's important. It's important to be healthy. Mister -- yeah, That's A Moura, he's exhausted. I feel bad for him. I feel bad I put him through this situation. And then I'm just going to take off -- I'm gonna take off one of the John Greens for These Boots Were Made For Strutton, I'm gonna take off Less Moore for Kaz, and I'm gonna go ahead and put in The Gaulden Child as well, just kidding, I only get three substitutions. Okay! I'm so good at this game. Even Meredith knows that rule! Um, she was looking at me-- I don't mean that harshly, I just mean that, like, you know, you're not a huge soccer fan, it's not what you do every Saturday. It is what I do every Saturday, so you'd think that maybe I'd know the basic rules of the game.

But yeah, so, here we go. Let's keep finding a way to lose! We can do it! We can lose it! Oh, it's to Bald John Green! Oh, he was offside. He was offside. He doesn't have great vision these days. He's just massively offside, what is he thinking with that run? All right. 74th minute. Yeah, he's been offside three times today. That's disappointing. Of course it'd be -- you know, it's not that disappointing in the end, but -- 'cause we want him to perform somewhat poorly.

Oh, this is great. This is great, you can just tell -- you can just tell the Wimbly Womblys are having a great time on the pitch today. They don't want anything bad to happen, they're just having a good time. Some unnecessary slide tacklings going on, this is great. They're just -- you know, it's a beautiful, sunny spring day in England and they're, like, "Let's have a good time, guys." I wonder if the fans know what's going on, like, I-- I wonder if they've picked up on it. if they've started to cheer -- to cheer for losing, or, indeed, if they're going to support this strategy. But, listen, you know, it's like I said before: this is not a regular rivalry, these are the people who took our -- literally the people who took our club away from us. And we rebuilt it and what-- I'm very very proud of what AFC Wimbledon has done, but you know, Seb and the other boys have made the decision that they aren't going to -- they aren't going to see a Championship with the -- with "The Franchise" in it, and I support that decision. So, yeah, it's exciting. This is gonna be fun and weird. Just like -- just like the old school.

Come on, get back there! Get back there, Ya Bamba, and unnecessarily slide tackle, and get the steal! Are you Messi in disguise?! Ah, it's beautiful. All right, 89th minute, everything's coming up Wimbly and Wombly. Just gonna pass the ball out of bounds and -- should we give up one more goal? I feel like 4-2, it's a good score line, but can we have a better one? Can we have a better score line? Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh! Fake out, Seb, fake him out, fake him out, fake him out! Nope! Fake him out! Augh, Seb, you're too good!

D'aww, it's the end of the game. Thank you for watching. We lost. Huzzah. Best wishes.