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## THE TIMES

Final effort hold ds double threat

Liverpool 3 Everton 2 (after extra time; score at 90min, 1-1)

Kenny Dalglish celebrated the highlight of his glittering career at Wembley on Saturday but the Liverpool player-manager may unwittingly have endangered his club's chances of claiming a historic double. His side, in spending a precious 30 minutes too long in winning the FA Cup, may not be strong enough to lift the championship as well. The substitution of Staunton was delayed crucially until the start of extra time. Had Venison been ushered on earlier, there would probably have been no need for Liverpool, completing their sixth fixture in 17 days, to endure another half-an-hour inside the airless bowl where the temperature rose to 90 degrees. No-one in the crowd, least of all the followers of Everton, will complain about the extra time. The final, which might have closed with no more than Aldridge's spectacular goal in the fourth minute, was eventually elevated into one of the finest and most dramatic in memory.

The triumph, five weeks after the Hillsborough disaster, meant more to Dalglish "than anything I've ever been involved in. It gave me tremendous satisfaction", he said, "and a great emotional happiness inside". But at what cost? How fresh will they be against West Ham United tomorrow and Arsenal on Friday?

An exhausted McMahon admitted that "this has taken a lot out of everybody, not just physically but mentally and emotionally as well. But we can't afford to be tired. We are two games away from winning the League and we have to go for it". Dalglish himself was positive enough on Saturday. To the obvious displeasure of Aldridge, who might have scored with each of his first four touches, he introduced Rush in the 72nd minute "to win the game". Yet Liverpool, unmistakably superior throughout, needed then only to sit back on their lead and relax.

That Staunton should be the first to show signs of distress was predictable. At 20, the left back is not only the youngest and least experienced member of the side but he was also responsible for shadowing Nevin, an elusive winger and Everton's lone bright spark before the entrance of McCall.

Staunton was visibly drained of energy. His tackles became token gestures and a back pass should have been his closing contribution. Executed in a manner which confirmed he was suffering from fatigue, it was so ill-advised that his brain was clearly no longer capable of choosing the right option.

For 75 minutes there had been only one apparent flaw in Liverpool's defence. Grobbelaar, having put away the eccentric side of his nature, could not resist bringing it out again. The clown in the circus ring, he may have enchanted the audience but his colleagues were not so amused.

But the increasing deficiency on Liverpool's left flank was to provoke an unforeseen smile on Everton's faces. At last they could see a way through. It can be no coincidence that their three openings in normal time should all have been fashioned inside the closing 10 minutes in the area guarded by Staunton.

As Liverpool had scored with their first attack, so Everton were to equalize with their last during the scheduled hour and a half. Staunton, stretched to breaking point, could block neither Nevin's flick nor Watson's cross which was merely pushed by Grobbelaar out to the right boot of McCall.

Since Cottee had to evade the ball as it crossed the line, he must technically have been offside. If there were misgivings about the legitimacy of that goal, there could be no disputing the quality of the three which enriched the additional half-hour. Rush, turning the calendar back two years, for once resembled the forward considered the most fearsome in Europe before he left for Juventus. He has since lost his principal asset, his exceptional speed, but he demonstrated that he can still turn with alacrity and head with fine delicacy.

Crosses from Nicol and Barnes allowed him to set a new goal-scoring record in Merseyside derbies. He and Dixie Dean had claimed 19 and Aldridge, though Dalglish's present preferred choice, believes that Rush could add to his total of 21 against Everton and perhaps, he fears, at his own expense.

"Those who have been writing him off have done so at their own peril," Aldridge said. "I've said all along that he should be judged next season, not this one. I think that he will score a lot of goals and I just hope that we can play together".

Cottee, whose contribution was negligible, and Sharp might echo his words. Their partnership was again a conspicuous failure but their colleagues should shoulder a portion of the blame. For all of Everton's surprisingly hefty amount of possession, the standard of the final ball was consistently poor.

Once Nevin had lost his initial impetus and turned once more into a butterfly fluttering ineffectively on the periphery, Everton were short of inspiration. McCall, in belatedly providing it, suggested convincingly that he, and not the comparatively cumbersome Bracewell, should have been selected from the start. McCall crowned his abbreviated appearance by controlling a mis-directed header from the otherwise masterly Hansen and scoring with a precise volley. But Rush responded immediately and Liverpool were denied a more emphatic victory only by the remarkable agility of Southall, illustrated on no fewer than four occasions in the closing 10 minutes.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Ablett, S Staunton (sub: B Venison), S Nicol, R Whelan, A Hansen, P Beardsley, J Aldridge (sub: I Rush), R Houghton, J Barnes, S McMahon.

EVERTON: N Southall; N McDonald, P Van den Hauwe, K Ratcliffe, D Watson, P Bracewell (sub: S McCall), P Nevin, T Steven, G Sharp, A Cottee, K Sheedy (sub: I Wilson).

Referee: J Worrall.

## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Lightning Rush strikes twice to crush Everton

EVERTON 2. (4-4-2): Southall; McDonald, Ratcliffe, Watson, Van den Hauwe; Nevin, Steven, Bracewell (sub: McCall 58min), Sheedy (sub: Wilson, 77min); Cottee, Sharp.

LIVERPOOL 3. (4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Nicol, Hansen, Ablett, Staunton (sub: Venison 91min); Houghton, Whelan, McMahon, Barnes; Beardsley, Aldridge (sub: Rush 72min) Goals: Aldridge (4min) 0-1; McCall (89min) 1-1; Rush (95min) 1-2; McCall (101min) 2-2; Rush (104min) 2-3.

Weather: warm and close. Ground: firm. Referee: J Worrall (Warrington).

Attendance: 82,800.

PERHAPS it was just that Liverpool scored too soon; a marvellous goal by Aldridge after only four minutes but they strolled about when they should have consolidated, and Stuart McCall, the substitute and Everton hero, so nearly robbed them of the Cup. He scored twice, but Liverpool had their own substitute hero, none other than Ian Rush, who himself scored twice, each goal superbly taken in the first period of extra time, giving Liverpool the Cup which at one stage looked like slipping out of their grasp. You might call it the Cup Final as catharsis. Those, not least at the Liverpool club itself, who believed the match should never have been played must be treated with every respect. The fact remains that, for the Liverpool supporters massed beneath the scoreboard, the occasion was a welcome and a vibrant one. In a sense you might see the occasion as some kind of a gigantic memorial celebration for those who died at Sheffield. The opening minutes of the game in every sense matched the throb of expectation. In the first 60 seconds there could have been an Everton goal. Scarcely three minutes after that it was Liverpool who actually scored: a goal fit to grace any Cup Final.

Everton began brightly. A mazy run by little Nevin eventually set free another little man, in Cottee, who had shrewdly found himself space on the right-hand side of the Everton penalty area. Ablett frustrated him with difficulty, conceding a corner. Sheedy took it and Nicol, shades of Hansen at Wimbledon last week, misheaded the ball which skidded off the back of his head. Nicol, however, was luckier than Hansen, for McMahon booted the ball off the line. Soon came that spectacular score. It was the kind of goal which only Liverpool, of all English teams, seem capable of scoring. Sheedy, in a moment of carelessness, gave the ball away to Beardsley, but that was only the beginning of it. On it went to Nicol, who played a hero's part. His long ball devastated the Everton defence, and McMahon turned it on for Aldridge to gallop through and give Southall not the ghost of a hope. A substantial consolation for that penalty he missed in last year's final. Against the luminous clarity of Liverpool's football, Everton continued to find themselves in periodic trouble. In midfield, as many had anticipated, the slightly-built pair of Steven and Bracewell were palpably losing the battle against the physically stronger and always perceptive Whelan and McMahon.

In defence, something else which had been foreseen, Ratcliffe's loss of pace exposed the Everton centre. There was a significant moment soon after the half-hour when he could find no other way to stop a surge by Barnes than crudely to obstruct him. His name should certainly have gone into the book.

Barnes was always the threat. His long cross after 17 minutes gave Aldridge the chance of a flying header, which went not far outside. Five minutes later Barnes should have done better with Houghton's cross than nod it gently into Southall's arms. Later, after he had exploited a superb pass by Whelan, Barnes sent a centre whizzing low across the face of a vulnerable goal. But one goal, however well deserved, is a slender advantage, and with a goalkeeper as eccentric as Grobbelaar, there is always the chance of a chance. So it proved, shortly before half-time, when the keeper made a bizarre hash of an unexceptional cross by McDonald. He lost the ball. Sharp got it, but with Grobbelaar marooned Sheedy could only bang it against Hansen. The gifts were not one-sided. Five minutes after the break, Bracewell naively provided Beardsley with the perfect through pass. Luckily for Everton, Southall resourcefully blocked the shot with his legs. It had been an altogether unhappy, ineffectual afternoon for Bracewell, and it was no surprise to see the red-headed McCall limbering up. He replaced Bracewell eight minutes after that error. In contrast to the Liverpool team as a whole, who seemed content at times to stroll about, raising the pace when they thought fit, Houghton was almost a side in himself. His was the pass which gave Barnes another shot. The ball was deflected off McDonald, and had Southall plunging desperately to his right-hand post, giving away a corner. Liverpool took off Aldridge, who received colossal applause from the red ranks, and sent on Rush, hero of so many Wembley finals before he left for Juventus. Everton replaced the disappointing Sheedy with Wilson, a player scarcely dynamic enough to tip the balance. Suddenly and astonishingly, Everton were in the game; Liverpool were on the ropes. When Grobbelaar lost a corner from Steven, Whelan had to boot the ball away. Staunton was struggling against Nevin, and that was where, so dramatically, the equaliser would come from, in the last minute. A low cross from the wriggling, elusive Nevin, a shot by Watson, a futile dive by Grobbelaar, the ball spinning loose to be put in by the man who had made so much difference: McCall. Belatedly, Liverpool sent on Venison for Staunton. Now goals would come in abundance; two of them for Rush. The first, five minutes into extra time, came when, with a superb spin, he took a ball from McMahon on the left and drove it past Southall.