

Date: 11 October 1986  
 Opposition: Tottenham Hotspur  
 Competition: League

Sunday Times	Times	

11 October  
1986

## THE TIMES

Tottenham storm northern bastion

Liverpool ..... 0 Tottenham Hotspur ..... 1

The capital, in the shape of Tottenham Hotspur, and to a less extent Arsenal, have pounded out a warning that the days of northern dictatorship are facing their first serious challenge in more than 15 years. It is unlikely to come this season but there is irrefutable proof that one, and possibly two, challenges are slowly being mounted in north London. Following Arsenal's courageous performance in defeat at Anfield recently, Tottenham went up to Anfield this weekend in a similarly single-minded and positive mood - and succeeded in conquering Liverpool for only the second time at home in 74 years.

Never have I seen a Tottenham team play more fearlessly, more determinedly, and at the same time so skillfully. It was a victory to lay a few ghosts and superstitions, including those shared by their new inspiration, David Pleat, the manager.

'It's nice to come north and get something. I always had a fear everyone was against you; the crowd, the referee. It felt as if you had no friends', he said. Tottenham changed all that on Saturday, even if the referee did give Liverpool every conceivable chance in the last 20 minutes to save this absorbing game. It must be a while since Merseyside suffered two defeats against London on the same day, not to mention two in their own back yard in successive weekends - Charlton Athletic and Arsenal, respectively, have acted as Tottenham's allies in these combined assaults on the bastion of the English game.

It must be a while, too, since a visiting team were so downright disrespectful of the Liverpool legend. Waddle had limitless check. In a game of cut and thrust no one was more incisive. He left Beglin's reputation in tiny pieces.

There was not a Tottenham player who could not have delighted the manager, David Pleat. Even the stranger, Claesen, his expensive new signing, had him purring. 'I've told him he won't play in a faster first division game or against a better team. He'll improve as he gets to know us,' he said. The Belgian is quick and bright, very similar, as Pleat says, to Paul Walsh.

But all the promise and imagination of Tottenham's forward work would have counted for nothing if their defence had not been so combative, so secure.

Gough, one of the honest players - one with heart - stood defiantly at the centre of Tottenham's defence like a General Custer. So fast and clean was his tackling that Rush never knew what hit him. 'It was a good test for him .. you come to Liverpool and you find out what good football's all about,' Pleat said.

Within 29 seconds of the restart, Allen nipped in to get goal side of Grobbelaar to touch home Waddle's perceptive pass at the end of a superbly bold run for Allen's 12th goal in 11 games. And the response to the goal came not from Liverpool, but from Tottenham themselves. In the next few minutes they struck four times without reply at the Liverpool defence, and in fact Claesen put the ball in the net at the end of another damaging Waddle run, but the goal was disallowed for an infringement.

Pleat will not be kidded into believing that the revolution has made any significant progress yet. 'We can improve', he said.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Gillespie, J Beglin, M Lawrenson (sub: J Wark), B Venison, A Hansen, K Dalglish, S Nicol, I Rush, J Molby, S McMahon.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR: R Clemence; G Stevens, M Thomas, G Roberts, R Gough, G Mabbutt, C Allen, N Claesen, C Waddle, G Hoddle, A Galvin (sub: P Allen).

Referee: K A Redfern.

## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Spurs conquer the Kop

Liverpool ..... 0 Tottenham ..... 1

TOTTENHAM did it; and deserved to. Surviving some awkward moments in the early minutes, escaping twice in the first half when Rush and Dalglish wasted chances they would usually and gladly accept, Spurs eventually exploited Waddle's mastery of Beglin, cancelled Rush from the game, and might even have added to the goal Clive Allen scored within a minute of the second half.

For Hoddle, it was a thoroughly satisfactory and resourceful match. For Liverpool, confirmation that all the trouble they had with Fulham in mid-week was not only because they were playing in a holiday mood.

For Nico Claesen, Tottenham's new, expensive, Belgian international centre forward, it was an auspicious rather than a brilliant match. He could scarcely have been thrown in more emphatically at the deep end than at Anfield, where London teams, usually, come to die. Small sturdy, neat, a very quick turner and a very quick mover, he should find the generally less severe marking of English football to his liking when he eventually and fully settles down.

To their credit, Tottenham made no attempt to put out a defensive formation.

They deployed two genuine wingers, advancing or retracting them as the situation dictated.

In the opening minutes, what the run of play dictated was prudence. Liverpool, whom I was watching for the third time in eight days, were obviously glad to be at home again, facing neither the brainless long balls and the relentless hustle of Wimbledon nor the hiding to nothing which confronted them against Fulham's promising young side.

Yet even with Dalglish, recalling himself to the side, and Molby, full of tricks and cunning in midfield, Liverpool manifested a certain carelessness. For all their early vitality, there were a couple of occasions in the first 20 minutes when they could well have fallen behind. From Hoddle's inswinging corner from the left, Gough, at the near post, headed against the top of the bar. Then, after a misunderstanding between McMahon and Hansen, Clive Allen was allowed through for a shot which was saved by Grobbelaar, flinging himself at the ball.

Up front, too, Liverpool were curiously careless. Rush, set up by Molby and Lawrenson, bang in front of goal, shot with uncharacteristic feebleness at Clemence. Dalglish, racing through from the right when the ball broke to him rather fortunately off Hoddle, seemed certain to score; but shot wide of the far post.

The Kop had scarcely time to give their former goalkeeper, Ray Clemence, a hero's welcome after halftime when Tottenham had, shatteringly, scored. It was nearly all down to Waddle, and his mastery of Beglin, on the Tottenham right flanks. Past him he raced his long-legged way, carrying on almost half the length of the field without let or hindrance before making the easiest of goals for the ever-prolific Clive Allen.

Spurs had really found the range. Again, Waddle got away; this time, Grobbelaar saved at the near post. When Claesen crossed from the right, Hoddle headed back dangerously across goal, and Gillespie only just nodded away. Then Claesen actually put Waddle's low centre into the net, only to be given offside. Whatever had happened to Liverpool?

Yet again, Waddle was away, this time by courtesy of Hoddle's exquisite pass, breaching the Liverpool offside trap in a counter attack. Waddle should surely have scored again, but this time, he allowed Grobbelaar to block the shot with a desperate agility.

Thus retrieved, Liverpool began a bombardment of their own. Dalglish, twice, and Wark both having shots blocked. But a further breakaway, another subtle pass from Hoddle, set Allen clear for a shot which went only just wide of the post. Tottenham in this half had been far the more economical and effective team.

Weather: warm and sunny. Ground: firm.

Goals: C Allen (46min) 0-1.

Liverpool (4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Venison, Gillespie, Hansen, Beglin; Nichol, McMahon, Molby, Lawrenson (sub: Wark 67min); Rush, Dalglish.

Tottenham (4-3-3): Clemence; Stevens, Gough, Mabbutt, M Thomas; Roberts, Hoddle, Galvin (sub: P Allen 70min); Waddle, Claesen, C Allen.

Referee: Mr K A Redfern.