

Date: 16 November 1986 Opposition: Sheffield Wednesday Competition: League	Times			16 November 1986

# THE TIMES

## Liverpool's frustration shows

Liverpool ..... 1 Sheffield Wednesday . 1

The Big Match at Anfield featured the beauty and the beast. Yesterday's first division fixture, covered live by the cameras of ITV, lurched unpredictably between the good and the bad, with enough of the indifferent to provoke an audience of 28,020 to hail it at the close as 'boring'.

Sheffield Wednesday were the targets of their vociferous abuse. Yet the side that can no longer be justifiably described as 'the long-ball merchants of the north' had merely frustrated Liverpool with the tactical efficiency and the methodical effectiveness that has been inflicted on many a visitor to Merseyside over the past two decades.

The reigning champions failed to regain the leadership of the first division though they climbed to within a point of Arsenal. Muted in their own home, their performance matched the erratic nature of the afternoon. Even the crowd, by far their lowest of the season, contributed to the general theme.

The uglier side of life on the terraces, mercifully seen less regularly nowadays, was illustrated within ten minutes. A violent skirmish broke out in a corner of the ground and, before the police could contain the ill-disciplined bout of boxing, the Kop admirably voiced their disapproval of the disturbance.

Though their language was not of the cleanest variety, they called their own miscreants the excrement of the area. It took almost an hour for the action on the pitch to stir their passions again and the incident was once more not to their liking. Wednesday had taken the lead.

Liverpool replied instantly and the build-ups to both goals were laced appropriately with fortune. It was McMahon's mistake that allowed Johnsson to release Marwood on the right. Chapman, the scorer of two goals in each of his last three appearances, tucked in another from the ensuing low cross.

The source of Liverpool's equalizer was a ricochet. A similarly low cross from Beglin who had shrugged off the challenge of Marwood, bounced off the otherwise reliable Hodge and rolled into the path of an even more prolific scorer, Rush. He immediately claimed his 21st goal of the season so far.

Grobbelaar was the epitome of the ever-changing mixture. One minute he was diving at the feet of Marwood, a constant danger who had broken through Liverpool's square back four, or turning over a header from Hart. The next he was flapping feebly at a succession of corners and centres.

The referee was inconsistent, too. Inexcusably, he failed to punish the ebullient Hirst for a late challenge that threatened to dismember Johnston. Subsequently he booked Knight for the less dangerous offence of time wasting, a characteristic that Wednesday players seem to feel is their professional duty. Sadly, they are far from unique.

As for Liverpool .. whenever Molby was in charge, they threatened. Whenever Walsh was on the run, they were dangerous. But collectively they were neither quick enough in action nor imaginative enough in thought to dismantle the physical power and the mental discipline of their opponents.

Yet they did create two notable opportunities at the end of each half. Both of them happened to fall to their two central defenders, Gillespie and Hansen.

Between them they have collected 30 goals in almost 900 matches.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G. Gillespie, J. Beglin, M. Lawrenson, C. Johnston, A. Hansen, P. Walsh, S. Nicol, I. Rush, J. Molby, S. McMahon.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY: M. Hodge; M. Sterland, N. Worthington, P. Hart, I.

Knight, S. Jonsson, B. Marwood, G. Megson, L. Chapman, D. Hirst (sub: G Snodin), G. Shelton.

Referee: R Milford.