

Date: 20 September 1987  
 Opposition: Newcastle United  
 Competition: League

Times		

20 September  
1987

# THE TIMES

Rivals warned as Liverpool reveal majestic qualities  
 Newcastle United ..... 1 Liverpool ..... 4

The nation will now be aware of the stunning all-round strength and power of Liverpool's reformation. They arranged a glorious exhibition of their lavish qualities yesterday for the benefit of the BBC's cameras and to the detriment of Newcastle, their hapless and helpless victims at St James' Park. A limited audience had already witnessed the ruthless efficiency of their defence, the expansive imagination of their midfield and the irresistible potency of their attack. Newcastle saw for themselves at painfully close quarters the control and the movement that are the common links in Kenny Dalglish's formidable reshaped side.

In a unit overflowing with talent, the versatile Nicol emerged as the decisive individual. Formerly at left back, he moved up and across to the right side of midfield to claim two goals of the utmost simplicity and another of rare merit. He is now the joint leading scorer in the first division.

Aldridge, also with six goals so far, shares the honour with him after maintaining his record of scoring in each game that he has started for Liverpool. The manner in which he accepted his opportunity, with a flick of his boot from close range, was reminiscent of his prolific predecessor, Rush.

Barnes, during another hearteningly mercurial performance seen by England's manager, Bobby Robson, contributed as much as anybody before the interval. Nor were Beardsley, booed predictably on his return to his old home, McMahon and Whelan insignificant members of their creative departments. In short, there were six sharp prongs to their attack.

Their back four, containing Newcastle's comparatively negligible ideas at all, moved forward in support. Liverpool's command, like their football, was total. Their victory, which lifts them into third place (and they still have two games at Anfield in hand) was utterly predictable. Their display although frightening in a way, was a job to watch.

Newcastle, bemused and dishearted well before the interval, never looked remotely likely to collect their first home point of the season. As they praised Mirandinha, the lone and lonely threat to Liverpool's overwhelming superiority, the biggest crowd of their season called for the resignation of the chairman and his board.

But Newcastle, though they tottered on the edge of an embarrassing humiliation for an hour, could have done little to halt the speed, the variation or the flow of Liverpool's assaults. Many other clubs, whether they be hosts or not, will similarly be allowed to play only a bit part in the over all afternoon or evening entertainment.

Newcastle's defence, which eventually lay in as many broken pieces as their demolished stands on two sides of the ground, was opened initially in the nineteenth minute. Barnes jiggled, swerved and accelerated his way past several challenges, exchanged with Beardsley and curled in a low cross.

Anderson's intended clearance was promptly swept in by Nicol. Moments after having one effort disallowed, Aldridge added the second, again with the assistance of Barnes, and Liverpool might before the interval, have been heading rapidly towards double figures. But they had to wait until the second half for their third. Lawrenson released Beardsley through a rearguard that had long since crumbled and the unattended Nicol prodded in the ensuing cross. After the hour he completed his own and Liverpool's tally. Freed by Aldridge, he ran on towards Kelly before lifting the ball over Newcastle's goalkeeper. It was pure and delightful impudence.

Newcastle did eventually respond. They had nothing else to lose and at least their complaining supporters were given a moment of cheer. Mirandinha, in chasing Goddard's flick, was felled by Gillespie inside the area. McDonald converted the penalty on the hour but rarely can consolation have seemed so empty.

NEWCASTLE UNITED: G Kelly; N McDonald, J Anderson, D McCreery, P Jackson, G Roeder, P Stephenson, K Wharton, P Goddard, Mirandinha, G Hodges (sub: D Jackson).

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Gillespie (sub: N Spackman), B Venison, S Nicol, R Whelan, A Hansen, P Beardsley, J Aldridge, M Lawrenson, J Barnes, S McMahon.  
 Referee: K Hackett.