

Date: 26 October 1988
 Opposition: Nottingham Forest
 Competition: League

Times		

26 October
1988

THE TIMES

Forest forestall Liverpool rise

Nottingham Forest 2 Liverpool 1

There is nothing Brian Clough has enjoyed more over the years than ambushing Liverpool at a packed City Ground. Nottingham Forest did it again last night, even being able to afford the luxury of a missed penalty as they deservedly inflicted the champions' third League defeat in four matches.

No one who saw the sparkling game, however, will believe that Liverpool's decline is anything but a temporary phenomenon.

The sadness of England's two most successful travellers in Europe meeting in a League match on a European night could not be forgotten, but the two teams began as if determined to recall their great matches in that exulted company. The result was a feast, suggesting that Europe is losing as much as we are by the absence of English clubs.

By half time, with Webb and Clough proving that English football can imply brain as well as brawn, Forest held a slight advantage on points. Liverpool's makeshift defence was soon looking vulnerable to the probing of Crosby, and in the early minutes Hooper had to produce a save of which Grobbelaar would have been proud, to deny Rice's point blank shot as the winger's cross reached him at the far post.

The blunter instruments of Chapman and Foster were equally testing for the visitors from corners and by the interval, Venison three times had to clear off the line. But with Barnes and Beardsley determined not to be overshadowed, and Spackman returning to bring greater mobility to midfield, Liverpool held their own.

The only thing lacking at the interval had been goals, and that was soon rectified as three came in the first 15 minutes of the second period. The first arrived in the 54th minute, a rather unsatisfactory affair as Rice bundled the ball over the line after Crosby's throw glanced off Ablett's head.

Four minutes later, Rush's search was ended as he pounced on Houghton's header to swivel like lightening and drive the ball past Crossley. Liverpool's joy, however, was swiftly curtailed as Clough and Webb combined for Webb to beat Hooper with a rising drive from 20 yards.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST: M Crossley; S Chettle, S Pearce, D Walker, C Foster, S Hodge, G Crosby, N Webb, N Clough, L Chapman, B Rice.

LIVERPOOL: M Hooper; G Ablett, B Venison, S Nicol, R Whelan, D Burrows, P Beardsley, R Houghton, I Rush, J Barnes, N Spackman (sub: J Aldridge).

Referee: T Holbrook.