

Date: 1 May 1990
 Opposition: Derby County
 Competition: League

Times		

1 May 1990

THE TIMES

Command performance a triumph for Dalglish

Liverpool 1 Derby County 0

THE celebrations that began after Liverpool's title-clinching victory on Saturday resumed long before the start of their last home match of the season. With the League trophy back at Anfield for the eighteenth time, the occasion was always going to be more important than the result.

That was just as well, given Derby County's gritty resilience last night, which restricted the home side to just one goal, despite numerous half-chances.

Indeed, the biggest cheer of the night was reserved not for the goalscorer, Gary Gillespie, but for the manager, Kenny Dalglish.

Held by the Kop as a long-lost friend, Dalglish made an emotional return to the first division midway through the second half.

Derby packed their defence from the off, and sat back to soak up the waves of Liverpool pressure for most of the game. Their dour resistance was punctuated only rarely by forays into the Liverpool half.

Liverpool dominated most of the first half, with McMahon and Molby combining with great effect to take charge of the midfield engine room.

Molby's performance was doubly admirable, given a wincing clash with Geraint Williams in the seventh minute, which left the big Dane with a bloodied nose and mouth. Molby recovered to strike an excellent shot narrowly wide of Shilton's goal on the quarter-hour.

Minutes later, Barnes and Rush worked a series of sweet close, quick passes to find Houghton, whose shot was well saved by the England goalkeeper. This was vintage Liverpool and real exhibition stuff, which produced football of a quality that has been seen only rarely in the first division this season.

The half nevertheless ended goalless and, though the home side maintained a high standard of play after the restart, some anxiety about the result did begin to creep into their game.

Dalglish responded by replacing Steve Staunton with Ronnie Rosenthal, much to the approval of the 38,000 plus crowd. The crowd have taken the bustling Israeli to their hearts, and he soon had them singing his praises, creating a series of chances which his colleagues were frustratingly unable to convert.

By now, the whole ground was baying for Dalglish to take to the field, and he eventually entered the fray at the expense of Molby in the 62nd minute to a cheer which could have been heard by stay-at-home Derby fans across the Pennines.

The master was soon puffing and red-faced, yet he still managed to produce a handful of breathtaking touches of world-class quality.

Sustained Liverpool pressure finally forced the breakthrough in the 82nd minute.

The ball broke free to Rosenthal on the edge of the county penalty area. Cutting inside, the Israeli saw a gap and struck a low, firm shot which Shilton could only parry, the ball falling free for Gillespie to hammer into the gaping net.

The night was now complete and a party-like atmosphere prevailed. A carnival broke out on the Kop as the massed ranks of Liverpool fans wildly cheered the players in the directors box and even the travelling contingent of Derby supporters at the Anfield Road end.

After the final whistle, the delirium continued. Bitter memories of a similar balmy night a year ago were finally consigned to the pages of history as the triumphant Liverpool squad in turn lifted the famous old trophy before parading it in front of their jubilant followers.

Dalglish said he had no regrets about making the crowd-pleasing appearance he had hinted at yesterday. "You've always got to want it, if you lose that you lose everything. The crowd wanted me on and anyone would have loved to play out there."

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Hysen, B Venison, G Ablett, G Gillespie, S Staunton (sub: R Rosenthal), J Molby (sub: K Dalglish), R Houghton, I Rush, J Barnes, S McMahon.

DERBY COUNTY: P Shilton; M Sage, N Forsyth, G Williams, M Wright, J Davidson, D Sanders, M Harford, P Williams, C Ramage (sub: M Francis), M Chalk.

Referee: B Hill.