

Date: 27 October 1990

Opposition: Chelsea

Competition: League

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THE TIMES

Liverpool punish luckless Chelsea

Liverpool 2 Chelsea 0

KENNY Dalglish, the Liverpool manager, has always refused to criticise his players publicly, but he can scarcely have been happy with what he saw during the course of an entertaining game, dominated for long periods by a Chelsea side which ultimately suffered the consequences of poor finishing and wretched luck. The difference between the two teams was the ability to successfully finish moves of promise. Liverpool took two of the six genuine chances they created while Chelsea missed an identical number, although Townsend will still argue that his fiftieth-minute shot had crossed the line before Grobbelaar scooped it away to safety.

After Rush had climaxed an imperious move involving Barnes and Beardsley to give Liverpool the lead in only the third minute, Chelsea played some sweet football, but Wilson and McAllister were both guilty of bad misses.

Typically, Liverpool took full advantage. After 17 minutes, Barnes's immaculate close control took him past three defenders, and although his cross drifted beyond Rush, its intended target, Nicol was lurking unattended at the far post to finish precisely.

Confirmation that Chelsea's ceaseless endeavour was to go unrewarded came in the 65th minute, when Durie fired in a free kick from 20 yards only to have the effort disallowed because the referee, Keiron Barratt, was still organising Liverpool's defensive wall.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Hysen, D Burrows, S Nicol, S Staunton, G Gillespie, P Beardsley, R Houghton, I Rush, J Barnes (sub: R Rosenthal), S McMahon (sub: J Molby).

CHELSEA: D Beasant; S Clarke (sub: J Bumstead), A Dorigo, A Townsend, D Lee, K Monkou, K McAllister, P Nicholas (sub: G Le Saux), K Wilson, G Durie, D Wise.
Referee: K Barratt.

the guardian

Barnes plays virtuoso role

AT THE start of the season one of those earnest television interviewers inquired of Kenny Dalglish if the 'Liverpool machine' would keep grinding on. Dalglish exposed such ignorance with a winning answer: in any game of human endeavour and frailty there is no room for machinery.

Just so. By the standards they have set there must be occasional off-days, and although there was much to admire in the way they made it five home wins out of five against a lively Chelsea side, too often their passing was faulty, their marking lax, their finishing weak.

As they prepare for Wednesday's Rumbelows Cup tie at Old Trafford, when Manchester United will aim to atone for last month's 4-0 defeat at Anfield, Dalglish could do worse than borrow George Szell's post-concert address to the Cleveland Orchestra: 'You played very well, gentlemen, but the spontaneity was missing. So this morning we rehearse the spontaneity.'

His preparation undoubtedly extends beyond Wednesday. Should Liverpool win their 19th championship they are likely to be permitted to try to win their fifth European Cup. And anything Villa can do against high-profile Milanese, Liverpool may think, if not openly state, they can do better.

That is correct with regard to the making and taking of chances. But defensively there is a lot to put right, as Chelsea proved by repeatedly getting men to the line on both flanks and delivering crosses which could easily have brought them at least two goals in each half.

There is always Barnes, however. Until he was substituted 10 minutes into the second half, to ensure that his tweaked hamstring did not keep him out of Wednesday's game, he led Chelsea a giddy dance along the left whenever he received the ball, no matter how far from goal.

In the first 18 bewitching minutes he fashioned two goals and would himself have scored but for Beasant's blocking save with his legs. Rush had time to control the ball before scoring the first from eight yards; Nicol, making ground impressively in support of Rush, firmly headed the second.

Rosenthal, Barnes's replacement, has pace but little sense of direction, although he did bring an excellent fisted save from Beasant. Chelsea were unlucky not to find the net; indeed they did so, when Dorigo bent a free-kick around the wall, but the referee had not blown for the kick to be taken.

SCORERS: Rush (4min), Nicol (18).

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Hysen, Burrows, Nicol, Staunton, Gillespie, Beardsley, Houghton, Rush, Barnes (Rosenthal, 55), McMahon (Molby, 35).

Chelsea: Beasant; Clarke (Bumstead, 82), Dorigo, Townsend, Lee, Monkou, McAllister, Nicholas (Le Saux, 82) Wilson, Durie, Wise.

Referee: K Barratt (Coventry).

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Liverpool lay on limousine style

Liverpool 2 Chelsea 0

LIVERPOOL 2

(4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Burrows, Hysen, Gillespie, Staunton; Houghton, McMahon (sub: Molby 35min), Nicol, Barnes (sub: Rosenthal 55min); Rush, Beardsley.

CHELSEA 0

(4-4-2): Beasant; Clarke (sub: Bumstead 82min), Lee, Monkou, Dorigo; McAllister, Nicholas (sub: Le Saux 82min), Townsend, Wise; Durie, Wilson.

Goals: Rush (3min) 1-0; Nicol (17min) 2-0.

Weather: damp. Ground: soft.

Referee: K Barratt (Coventry).

WHILE John Barnes was running wild and free, there was little Chelsea could do to resist Liverpool's rampant attack. By the time he had departed injured, Liverpool were two ahead and the game was in their pocket.

Twice thereafter they reshuffled their formation, but the virtue had largely gone out of them, and Chelsea, fighting back boldly, deserved a goal at least. Dorigo, Wise and Townsend never said die.

So Liverpool stride on; but that defence is scarcely concrete.

With Dixon missing from their attack and their central defence so vulnerable, the last thing Chelsea needed at Anfield was to give away an early goal. But it happened. Liverpool, still unbeaten, with only two points dropped all season, came smoothly away along the left till Rush did final execution.

Barnes set off in his limousine style, to the boos of the Chelsea fans. That did not worry Barnes. It never does. On he went, exchanging passes with Beardsley, getting almost to the byline, then making the simplest of opportunities for Rush to score with a low cross-shot.

Give Chelsea credit; they struck back almost at once, and so nearly had the equaliser. Durie went steaming away down the right and exposed the Liverpool defence before delivered an excellent cross. Townsend swooped, and only a desperate tackle by Burrows prevented a score.

At once, more clever work by Beardsley, and away went Barnes again, Chelsea all at sea, Beasant alone to beat. A second goal looked a foregone conclusion, but Beasant bravely threw himself at Barnes's feet to block.

Chelsea then gave Liverpool several more uneasy moments. They were making a considerable amount of progress down the flanks, where Liverpool were using Burrows on, so to speak, his wrong (right) foot, and had put Staunton back on the left.

There was an awkward moment for the champions after a corner, when the ball found its way to McAllister in the Liverpool goalmouth, but it bounced into the grateful hands of Grobbelaar.

Then, with 17 minutes gone, Barnes was away on another of his glorious, irresistible runs. This time he went by Monkou with almost insulting facility, and his immaculate cross was headed in by Nicol, who had made ground rapidly to get there.

Though they had, somewhat unexpectedly, decided to use Houghton in a central midfield position, and Nicol in Houghton's customary place on the right wing, and though they lost McMahon 10 minutes from half-time and replaced him with Molby, Liverpool could do little wrong going forward. The football continued to flow, and Rush continued to alarm Chelsea's uncertain defence.

Beasant had to perform another of his death-defying dives at feet. When Rush almost split the Chelsea rearguard with a delightful backheel, Lee nearly put through his own goal as he stretched.

Liverpool did not look wholly secure, and Chelsea, to their credit, never gave up. A couple of minutes before half-time Dorigo, playing with pace, commitment and intelligence, now in defence, now in attack, sent over a cross from the left which Durie met with a fearsome volley that flew narrowly wide of the far post.

As if to save Chelsea from further punishment and torment, Barnes limped off with a pulled muscle after 10 minutes of the second half, giving way to the man whose eight goals clinched the championship for Liverpool last season, Rosenthal. Rush and Barnes had already missed second-half chances, Nicol had headed Barnes's cross just wide and Townsend, after a subtle Chelsea move, had brought Grobbelaar full stretch to his near post. Now Rosenthal played alongside Rush, while Beardsley dropped into a deep outside-left position.

Chelsea, showing quite properly less and less respect for Liverpool's questionable defence, kept pegging away with little luck. True, there was a moment when Clarke got on the wrong side of Rosenthal and Grobbelaar had to save. And Dorigo seemed unlucky when he slipped his free-kick low through the defence into the net only for the referee to order the kick to be retaken.

Wise was now dancing around to substantial effect. Might Chelsea have done better to use him on each wing in turn, and have an extra midfielder, rather than McAllister, another winger, in the team? A shot by Wise took a huge, high deflection, and Grobbelaar was glad to get it over the bar.