

Date: 27 February 1991

Opposition: Everton

Competition: FA Cup

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# THE TIMES

## Watson ends the Mersey saga

Everton 1 Liverpool 0

NEVILLE Southall has broken Liverpool's dream of achieving the double this season. In protecting a lead provided by Dave Watson in the twelfth minute of last night's FA Cup fifth-round second replay at Goodison Park, Everton's goalkeeper also condemned the local rivals to four more days of deep and unnerving anxiety.

In the week since they controlled the 4-4 draw in the first replay, considered to be the finest derby staged on Merseyside, Liverpool's fortunes have collapsed. They have lost their manager, the leadership of the first division and, it is being suggested, a semblance of their formidable stature.

Kenny Dalglish cannot be held wholly responsible for the decline, which began during the heavy defeat at Highbury at the beginning of December. Yet, four days before they complete the return League fixture against Arsenal, they are potentially in turmoil as unforeseen as his own sudden departure.

Only once, in 1987, had they failed to reach the last four of the FA Cup under his guidance. During this campaign, they were almost eliminated by two second-division sides, Blackburn Rovers in the third round and Brighton in the fourth, and have now been knocked out by their neighbours.

The psychological effect of the defeats on Luton Town's wall-to-wall carpet and, in sharply contrasting conditions, at Goodison promised to diminish their challenge for the title. It will also ruin the celebrations of Ronnie Moran, their temporary manager, who this morning woke up to his 57th birthday.

He will reflect on the contribution of Watson, ironically once an employee at Anfield, and especially of Southall. Everton's last line of defence provided a spectacular display, throwing himself at shots which rained on him in the closing stages as persistently as the heavens above.

In preferring McCall to the more creative Nevin, Howard Kendall indicated that Everton, lining up again with three central defenders, would seek additional security in a tenacious and muscular midfield. The ploy worked, although it was one of Liverpool's physical transgressions which was responsible for the decisive goal.

As has often been the case in the absence of Gillespie and Hansen, Liverpool were shown to be vulnerable in the air. Atteveld's free kick taken from near the halfway line was nodded on by Sharp. Keown's attempt was blocked by Grobbelaar but the rebound fell kindly for Watson.

He had never before scored against the city rivals and Rush, more prolific than anyone else in the history of Merseyside derbies, was Southall's principal victim. At the start of each half, for instance, he spun away from the scrambling Keown and threatened to add to his record total of 24 goals.

On each occasion his shot was blocked by his Welsh colleague, whose defiance reached heroic proportions after the interval. Apart from catching Beardsley's header, he tipped over a dipping drive from Nicol and parried another of the Scot's attempts with his legs.

He had earned the one slice of luck to come his way. Rush, four goals short of Denis Law's record collection of 41 Cup goals, should have claimed the equaliser which Liverpool earnestly sought in the second half. For once he evaded Southall but his glancing header from Nicol's cross drifted wide of the far post.

Everton, who took the lead for the first time in the prolonged series of games in the 222nd minute, held on to their slender advantage and repeated their victory at the same stage in 1967. The scorer then was Alan Ball. Their reward this time is a visit to West Ham United in the sixth round on March 11.

Watson's strike has also maintained their interest in a season which would otherwise have been empty. Liverpool, who were once heading towards another row of prizes, have been reduced to only the pursuit of the championship.

In the last three games they have conceded eight goals, a total they would usually have yielded over half a season. Sunday's television show at Anfield represents a critical point in their effort to recover from one of the darkest weeks in their recent history.

Everton are quoted at 9-2 by William Hill to win the Cup. Arsenal are 15-8 favourites and Tottenham given at 7-2.

EVERTON: N Southall; N McDonald, A Hinchcliffe, K Ratcliffe, D Watson, M Keown, R Atteveld (sub: P Nevin), S McCall, G Sharp, M Newell, J Ebbrell.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Hysen, B Venison (sub: D Speedie), S Nicol, J Molby, G Ablett, P Beardsley, R Houghton, I Rush, J Barnes, S Staunton.

Referee: J Worrall.

# the guardian

## Southall deepens Liverpool's woes

IN THE end Everton held a lead better than Liverpool could hold a manager and a Merseyside FA Cup tie which had produced an epic in its first replay was won at Goodison Park last night by the side who had initially appeared likely victors in the original game at Anfield.

Less than four months after Howard Kendall returned to restore a sense of direction and purpose to a rudderless side, Everton have reached the last eight of the Cup in a manner calculated to restore faith among their most critical supporters.

Last week, two days after the teams had drawn 4-4 at Goodison, Kenny Dalglish announced he was giving up as Liverpool manager because the strain of achieving success was getting to him. Last night's defeat will hardly have eased the ensuing stress at Anfield.

Ronnie Moran, caretaker in the wake of Dalglish's untimely, some would say ill-timed, departure, now has to face Arsenal, who displaced Liverpool at the top of the First Division last weekend, at Anfield on Sunday.

Moran has never given the impression of having a nervous disposition, which may be just as well. For while Liverpool again produced imaginative attacking football last night the state of their defence continued to give cause for alarm.

Southall did more than anybody to assure Everton of a sixth-round tie at West Ham on Monday, March 11. After Watson, a youngster at Anfield before he moved on to Norwich, had given Everton an early lead the match increasingly became a contest between Liverpool's attack and their opponents' three central defenders. Several times they outwitted Kendall's sweeper system, but they could not beat Southall.

This game never became another classic but it was a small miracle that only one goal was scored. For all Southall's excellence, Rush did produce a header in the 65th minute which looked certain to bring the scores level. Nicol's cross beat the defence and Rush met it with one of those sideways glances which usually bury the ball. This time, however, he put it a foot wide.

For the last 20 minutes, however, all Everton could do was defend with eight or nine men and clear the ball anywhere.

This time, however, nobody came to Liverpool's rescue. No defender obligingly beat his own goalkeeper, their salvation at Blackburn, the finishing spark which had thwarted Brighton was not there and last night the team who had lost the lead four times a week earlier could not recover it once they had fallen behind for the first time in the tie.

Everton, with Nevin only coming off the bench for the last half-hour, were short of players to run at Liverpool's hag-ridden defenders but from the start put pressure on

Hysen, Ablett and Grobbelaar.

Everton scored what proved to be the winner after Grobbelaar's best save. In the 12th minute Atteveld's free-kick was nodded on first by Sharp then by Watson to Keown, lurking to the left of goal. Grobbelaar kept out Keown's drive but Molby only half-cleared the ball to Watson, who walloped it back into the net.

Liverpool had first half chances, the best when Molby found Rush unmarked and Houghton failed to produce the power to beat Southall. But they did not bring out the best in the Everton goalkeeper until after half-time.

Then Southall's anticipation and agility thwarted Rush and Nicol (twice) and Liverpool never again came so close. 'One man saved Everton in the second half,' said Moran, 'and that's what his job is all about.' It may be a little time yet before Moran's own job specification enjoys equal clarification.

Everton: Southall; McDonald, Hinchcliffe, Ratcliffe, Watson, Keown, Atteveld (Nevin, 60min), McCall, Sharp, Newell, Ebbrell.

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Hysen, Venison (Speedie, 70), Nicol, Molby, Ablett, Beardsley, Houghton, Rush, Barnes, Staunton.

Referee: J Worrall (Warrington).

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## PRESS ASSOCIATION

### Super Southall

The hex that Liverpool have held over Everton in recent seasons has been broken and with the beginning of a new era at Goodison Park, the future at Anfield is looking decidedly less prosperous.

Liverpool, who have dominated English football for the past 15 years, look like a club at the end of a dynasty with a less than certain future.

Losing to Luton was expected on their plastic pitch, but against their closest rivals the Reds noticeably lifted their game with more than just pride at stake.

The Toffeemen were hopeful that Liverpool's incredible run of luck against Blackburn Rovers and Brighton could not hold out forever and in the shape of Neville Southall it did.

A despairing Rush said Liverpool would have won if it had not been for "world class Southall."

### Threatened

Everton manager Howard Kendall was delighted that his side had finally triumphed in this epic FA Cup Fifth Round: "At long last Neville may have learned to dive the right way when Rushie is through on his own. Long may it continue."

Apart from Dave Watson's goal in the 11th minute, Everton rarely threatened Grobbelaar, but predictably it was a high ball that did the damage.

Ray Atteveld's free-kick on the halfway line caused Glenn Hysen some problems and Graeme Sharp outjumped him and Gary Ablett.

Martin Keown benefitted from his knockdown, but Grobbelaar's flailing left boot denied the central defender but his partner, Dave Watson, stabbed the ball home.

As early as the third minute Rush signalled his intentions when he turned Keown, but Southall was equal to Rush's low strike to his right.

Rush again punished Keown's hesitation in the 47th minute, but Southall pulled off another inspirational save.

Rush was having a tremendous game and he set up Steve Nicol in the 55th minute, but the Welsh keeper again made a remarkable save and denied the same player again nine minutes later.

Rush has scored 23 goals in Merseyside derbies but Southall was determined he would not achieve his 24th and with Rush their most potent threat, it was clearly evident that Liverpool's luck had run out.

Southall also turned over a header by Peter Beardsley, but it would have taken a deflection or a penalty to beat him in this inspired mood.

Everton 1, Liverpool 0

Half-Time : 1-0.

Attendance : 40,201.

Team : Grobbelaar, Hysen, Vension (Speedie 73), Nicol, Molby, Ablett, Beardsley, Houghton, Rush, Barnes, Staunton.

Substitute not used : Tanner.