

Date: 2 October 1991

Opposition: Kuusysi Lahti

Competition: UEFA Cup

Times	Guardian	British Soccer Wk	

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## THE TIMES

### Liverpool prove poor travellers

AN EXPATRIATE Englishman who failed to reach the required standard at Wimbledon dented **Liverpool's** self-respect in Finland last night when they lost 1-0 to Kuusysi Lahti in the first round, second leg of the Uefa Cup.

Although the aggregate score was 6-2 in **Liverpool's** favour, and Mike Belfield's goal for the Finns, a looping header after Bruce Grobbelaar ill-advisedly rushed off his line midway through the second half, failed to impede their progress in the competition, it again exposed a new found vulnerability away from Anfield.

Once the past masters of the counter-attack, **Liverpool** have laboured on their travels, where they have scored only three League goals this season, and they'd struggled to break down the Finnish resistance.

Graeme Souness, the **Liverpool** manager, laid the blame firmly at the feet of Grobbelaar. "I was not too unhappy until Bruce decided to get in on the act. We made one bad mistake and it cost us a goal," he said.

Belfield, aged 30, whose family watched the match on a television set at their Wimbledon home, said; "The goal was a tremendous thrill. It is the highlight of my career."

## the guardian

### Liverpool make it almost easy for Kuusysi

NO MATTER the number of injuries, and no matter the five-goal advantage carried over from the first leg, nobody at Anfield will want reminding about this game during the course of what looks increasingly likely to be a long and awkward season for Graeme Souness.

The mitigating excuses for such a deeply ordinary performance are considerable and perhaps it would be best to draw a veil over the whole of yesterday's 90 minutes. For a start Liverpool, because of injuries and the Uefa limit on non-English players, mustered only a 15-man squad, an embarrassment almost as great as the scoreline.

Barry Jones, a 21-year-old defender, may eventually have a long and distinguished career at Anfield. But on this occasion he provided a somewhat bizarre footnote to Liverpool's illustrious European history, playing his first game for the club because there was nobody else once Burrows had twisted his knee after 15 minutes.

Lahti, the venue for the 1989 world ski-jumping championship, is not a town brimming with soccer tradition, and the Kuusysi team are to football roughly what Eddie the Eagle is to his sport. But this was the night when the mighty fell in a horrible heap.

It did not much matter, of course, although the rest of Europe will eye this result and perhaps suppose that Liverpool are not quite the force of six years ago. They would be right. The only consistent aspect to Liverpool's play was Rosenthal's supreme ability, no matter how the ball was delivered, to run offside.

The evening belonged to Mike Belfield. The former Wimbledon player was deeply disappointed not to score at Anfield where he had at least two excellent chances. Hope was fading again in a match singularly lacking in goalmouth incident. Then came Grobbelaar.

The one-handed catch is the Liverpool goalkeeper's speciality, a spectacular little trick but fraught with dangers. When Lehtinen centred from the right Grobbelaar shot out his right hand with a magician's aplomb. But this time the timing was wrong, the ball was missed, and Belfield looped a gentle header beyond the exasperated Nicol.

The huge conifers surrounding the neat little ground momentarily shook as several thousand Finnish voices let rip. Briefly Liverpool made as if to retaliate, but even that was beyond them. McManaman, untouched, fell dramatically in the area, but this was not Anfield.

In the final few minutes Kuusysi officials could barely contain their anxiety as a famous victory edged ever closer. They need not have worried. Rush has scored many a goal in the 89th minute, but this was never going to be one of those nights.

Kuusysi Lahti: Rovio; Remes, Saastamoinen, Jarvinen, Jantti, Viljanen, Lehtinen, Rantanen, Kinnunen, Belfield, Annunen.

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Ablett, Burrows, Nicol, Marsh, Harkness, Rosenthal, McManaman, Rush, Walters, McMahan.

Referee: K Hych (Czechoslovakia).

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## BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

### I blame Brucie

Liverpool booked their UEFA Cup second round place despite a shock defeat by the Finnish part timers of Kuusysi Lahti.

But manager Graeme Souness returned to England cursing two new injury blows long after he had dismissed the night's defeat, courtesy of a second half goal by Englishman Mike Belfield, from his mind.

Welsh international Dean Saunders was ruled out with thigh and knee injuries and England B defender Dave Burrows limped off after 15 minutes with knee damage.

These latest injuries brought the number of Anfield casualties to 11.

It was just as well Liverpool were not required to extend themselves after their 6-1 first leg win. Their second half possession football was enough to guarantee European passage on a 6-2 aggregate but hardly provided much excitement for viewers watching live television transmission in both countries.

And it could have been worse for Liverpool.

Belfield, left unmarked, lobbed weakly into Bruce Grobbelaar's hands and Petri Jarvinen had a goalbound shot blocked by substitute Barry Jones, a former amateur with Prescott obtained by a 500 pound donation. He was pressed into his debut as a replacement for Burrows.

Ian Rush, still looking far from his sharpest, missed with a couple of close range chances before Belfield punished a 66th minute error by Grobbelaar.

Finnish international Jarvinen crossed from the right and, with Grobbelaar failing to collect after advancing from his line, the former Wimbledon reject rose to score a looping header. It was no more than the gallant Finns deserved.

Manager Graeme Souness laid the blame for Liverpool's defeat firmly at the feet of Grobbelaar. "I was not too unhappy with the way things were going until Bruce decided to get in on the act when it wasn't necessary. We made one bad mistake and it cost us a goal."

Belfield's family were gathered around the television set at their Wimbledon home to see him become a Finnish national hero. He said: "They will have enjoyed that. It was tremendous thrill for me to score a winning goal against a team with such a formidable reputation as Liverpool. Even the fact that we are out of the competition can't spoil that. It is probably the highlight of my football career. We had a lot of young players in Europe for the first time. They might have said to themselves 'we are leading by five goals from the first leg, let's hold onto that.'"

"They will learn from that," added Souness.