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 Opposition: Peterborough United
 Competition: League Cup

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THE TIMES

Kimble punishes lax Liverpool

Peterborough United 1 Liverpool 0

A BLUNDER of the kind which have been all too commonplace in the topsy turvy career of Bruce Grobbelaar condemned Liverpool to their most ignominious defeat of modern times last night and sent Peterborough deservingly through to the quarter-finals of the Rumbelows Cup.

It was a victory for Peterborough to compare handsomely with those of their cup runs of the mid-Sixties when the likes of Terry Bly were the scourge of many a top side. In fact, 1966 was the last year in which they reached this stage of the competition, formerly known as the League Cup.

As for Liverpool, the four-time winners of the competition, this was the first time they had been beaten by a team outside the first division since Swansea City had the pleasure 12 years ago when the Welsh club was in the second division. It was the first time that Liverpool and Peterborough had played one another; neither side will forget the experience in a hurry.

Garry Kimble, an honest journeyman, is no Bly when it comes to goalscoring, but then neither did he need to be to bag the nineteenth-minute winner and a slice of history.

Grobbelaar literally handed the chance to him when he flung himself at a cross from Luke and allowed the ball to slither through his fingers. Kimble had only to aim his shot at the empty net, which he did unerringly. Liverpool's traumatic season was about to hit a new low.

From the outset, Liverpool found themselves upstaged by their mid-table third division rivals and perhaps none more so than Grobbelaar. Barber, his opposite number, had taken to the field wearing a silly mask, as he has done, apparently, for each home game since a bet last New Year's Day.

Grobbelaar will have appreciated, more than most, such clowning, and by the end of the evening might have been advised to borrow the disguise to facilitate his escape from London Road.

Liverpool had come to Peterborough in good heart after six games without defeat. That and the fact that they had never been beaten by a third or fourth division team in this competition may have explained their lackadaisical start, always a mistake against lower order sides, particularly one with Peterborough's reputation.

Peterborough had accounted for Wimbledon and Newcastle United in previous rounds and were on something of a high themselves after seven wins in nine games, even without the presence of the mighty Reds to lift them to an even higher plateau of achievement.

Evidence of disquiet in the Liverpool defence was apparent after 15 minutes when a cross skimmed off Tanner's head to Charlery and only a fortuitously placed Liverpool body saved the Merseysiders then.

If that missed opportunity asked questions of Liverpool's marking, the goal four minutes later served to underline this deficiency in Liverpool's defence, never mind Grobbelaar's goalkeeping.

Grobbelaar at least went part of the way towards atoning for his dreadful error in the 21st minute. A shot by Charlery, a constant menace to the Liverpool defence, took a fierce deflection, causing Grobbelaar to change direction in mid-air.

Somehow, on his knees, he contrived to push the ball against the underside of the crossbar and as it fell, he could do no more than pat it once more in the direction of Charlery, who was hustled out of it by Nicol.

Peterborough had Liverpool on the rack and were stretching them unmercifully at the back, which they proceeded to do on the counter-attack throughout the second half.

It was not until injury time that Liverpool produced their first shot worthy of the name and then Barber was the equal of McManaman's effort.

Liverpool had reason to thank the eccentricity of Grobbelaar on one occasion when he raced out of his goal to deny Riley after a wretched back pass by Ablett. But he was entirely at Cooper's mercy when Charlery cut back a pass to his team-mate, who, had he shown greater accuracy in his finishing, might have spared Peterborough a tense finale.

PETERBOROUGH UNITED: F Barber; N Luke, P Johnson, M Halsall, D Robinson, S Welsh, W Sterling, G Cooper, D Riley, K Charlery, G Kimble.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Ablett (sub: S Harkness), D Burrows, S Nicol, M Wright, N Tanner, D Saunders, R Houghton, S McManaman, J Molby, M Marsh.
 Referee: R Bigger.

the guardian

Nimble Kimble the toast of proud Posh

The Posh to all who love them - can swagger in soccer circles this morning after springing one of the biggest upsets in the history of the English game. The club had known giant-killing feats before, but the removal of Liverpool registered highest on the London Road Richter scale last night.

Garry Kimble, a servant of eight clubs, delivered the most memorable goal of his well-travelled career after 19 minutes, and at the final whistle the winger freed by Gillingham last summer was hailed on the pitch by Peterborough fans as the instigator of the club's finest hour since Arsenal were humbled here in the FA Cup in 1965.

This triumph was truly collective, based on sound central defence, hard running and incisive passing. Rarely did Chris Turner's mid-table Third Division side look second best to Graeme Souness's men, who looked grossly flattered by a League station 47 places higher. Liverpool's awesome cup reputation, built on four successive triumphs in this competition in the Eighties, counted for nothing.

Peterborough go into the last eight for the first time since 1966, leaving Liverpool to lament their worst humiliation since 1959, when non-League Worcester City eliminated them from the FA Cup. This defeat, the first to a club outside the top two divisions since then, must be deemed worse than their elimination by Sheffield United in 1978, Watford in 1970 and Swansea in 1964, as these teams were from the Second.

Curiously, Liverpool's latest setback comes at a time when they appeared to have stabilised their traumatic season with six previous unbeaten games. But few reputations will be spared after this. The team-sheet at Southampton on Saturday will make fascinating reading, and Grobbelaar has most to lose when Souness analyses this defeat. His goalkeeper again mixed the brilliant with the bizarre, but it was the latter that mortally wounded his side.

'After they outfought us and outplayed us, we gifted them a goal,' said Souness. 'We thought it was a Sunday game until the second half.'

Turner's team indeed had induced nervousness in Liverpool's ranks before Kimble capitalised on Grobbelaar's blunder. When Luke crossed from the right, the goalkeeper chose to advance 11 yards from his line to collect, but he succeeded only in pushing the ball towards Kimble, whose left-foot shot found an empty net. The crowd was still celebrating when Kimble delivered a fierce shot that was blocked by Wright. And a minute later Grobbelaar conjured a save that was surreal even by his standards. Charlery's shot, taking a massive deflection off Nicol, caught him completely off balance but from a sitting position he somehow pushed the ball up against the underside of the bar and Charlery just failed to touch in a second goal.

Fired no doubt by the hottest interval pep-talk of Souness's regime, Liverpool displayed much greater conviction after the interval, but the chances continued to fall not to the despairing Saunders and McManaman but to Peterborough's eager raiders.

Cooper had lofted a measured Charlery cross wastefully over before Ablett aimed a weak back-pass that forced Grobbelaar to race 35 yards to deny the on-rushing Riley.

Liverpool created so little that the former Evertonian goalkeeper Barber had nothing to save after holding Marsh's third-minute shot.

As Peterborough betrayed understandable injury-time nerves, Barber magnificently parried McManaman's fierce 20-yard shot and held a less menacing drive from Nicol to ensure a famous victory.

Peterborough United: Barber; Luke, Johnson, Halsall, Robinson, Welsh, Sterling, Cooper, Riley, Charlery, Kimble.

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Ablett (Harkness, 63min), Burrows, Nicol, Wright, Tanner, Saunders, Houghton, McManaman, Molby, Marsh.

Referee: R Bigger (Croydon).

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BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Red Faces

Liverpool suffered their most humiliating knock-out as third division Peterborough marched gloriously into the quarter-finals of the Rumbelows Cup on the back of a glaring error by goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar.

Grobbelaar's 19th minute blunder gifted Garry Kimble, a free transfer signing from Gillingham, the decisive goal and a famous victory which ranks with Peterborough's 1965 FA Cup beating of Arsenal.

But Liverpool could easily have lost by an even more embarrassing margin as famed giantkillers Posh, in front of the disbelieving eyes of a 14,000 plus London Road crowd, hustled them into an amazing catalogue of errors.

Peterborough goalkeeper Fred Barber ran out for the game wearing a "mad professor" mask but it was his opposite number Grobbelaar who played the clown with his incredible mistake settling the tie.

He raced recklessly way out of goal for a Noel Luke cross in the 19th minute but only managed to flap it straight to Kimble who drove it into an empty net. That set the stage for Liverpool's first ever defeat in this competition by a third or fourth division club but within two minutes they could have been buried.

Defender David Robinson chipped just wide after Mark Wright could only charge down a Ken Charlery shot. Then Grobbelaar, sent the wrong way by a Steve Nicol deflection on Charlery's shot, sprang up from a sitting position to push the ball against the underside of the bar.

Robinson and central defence partner Steve Welsh played historic roles, preventing Dean Saunders and Steve McManaman hitting back but after that Peterborough grew in confidence and kept their illustrious visitors, unbeaten in the previous six games and seemingly emerging from their early season problems, at full stretch.

Liverpool had more of the game in the second half but found neither rhythm nor composure against the defence in which Robinson was a giant figure.

Peterborough, already the conquerors of Wimbledon and Newcastle in previous Rumbelows Cup rounds, made their mighty opponents look second rate and could easily have had more goals on the counter-attack when Gary Cooper and David Riley blasted clear chances too high.

Peterborough had to survive one last gasp escape before booking their place in the quarter-finals for the first time since 1965 when Barber brilliantly saved from McManaman in injury time.

To make matters worse on a shambles of a night for Liverpool they also incurred bookings for Wright and Ray Houghton, both for dissent. Graeme Souness, shattered by Liverpool's humiliating defeat, admitted: "They outfought us and outplayed us but we gifted them the goal. We played as though we didn't realise what was happening and thought we were in a Sunday game until the second half."

Peterborough manager Chris Turner stayed remarkably calm but said: "Although it hasn't sunk in yet it is obviously the highlight of my managerial career. Perhaps I still don't believe it and maybe the players think I am a miserable so-and-so. Maybe I will realise what we've done when I wake up tomorrow but I still rate Liverpool the premier team in the league. I told the lads to close them down for the first 20 minutes and not let them play the usual Liverpool way. In the end I thought we well deserved it and I don't really care what people say about our style. I thought we were good value."

Goal hero Kimble said: "After this I think we can go all the way and I mean that. We have beaten Liverpool, so what else is left?"