

Date: 29 August 1992  
 Opposition: Leeds United  
 Competition: League

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29 August 1992

## THE TIMES

Souness lets his silence speak volumes

Leeds United 2, Liverpool 2.

IT WOULD be fashionable to say that Graeme Souness was sulking, doing a Graham Taylor, by refusing to talk to the press after victory at Elland Road was denied him on Saturday by an 87th-minute equaliser. Others, such as Howard Wilkinson, would no doubt interpret his silence differently, see it as a display of what he calls "a mean streak" the main ingredient in Liverpool's recipe for success over the past three decades.

In attempting to analyse the Liverpool dominance and comprehend how only they have been able to defend the championship in the past 33 years, the manager of the incumbent champions has concluded it is because "they've produced, recruited or groomed such tenacious and durable personalities as Kevin Keegan, Kenny Dalglish, Ronnie Moran and Graeme Souness".

Subconsciously, he may have been asking himself whether Leeds possess any men of that ilk as they strive to become the first club since Liverpool, in 1977, to retain the championship. The answer that Leeds's performance for a considerable part of this match gave him cannot have been very encouraging.

One cannot imagine the Liverpool of Souness's playing era, never mind that of Bremner's Leeds, allowing any opposition to have climbed back from off the floor as this Leeds did. Having been rocked by a stunning right-foot volley from McAllister in the seventh minute, Liverpool were knocked from pillar to post by a Leeds team which, at that stage, seemed intent on inflicting similar punishment to that which it dished out to Tottenham earlier in the week.

Chapman and Wallace were inches away from delivering the blows that would anaesthetise Liverpool when, for some reason, they allowed the Merseysiders to unscramble their senses. A minute from half-time, a reverse-pass from Stewart found Whelan and he curled a shot that was about accuracy, more than anything else, beyond Lukic.

Until then, one had only feared for a Liverpool team that was punchless in attack, soft in its centre and vulnerable in defence. Stewart, redeployed as a forward for only the second time in two years, was not a revelation, even if he did have a hand in the two Liverpool goals. Liverpool's attack cried out for a Beardsley, just as its midfield called for the bite of a McMahon. The irony of their absence should be lost on nobody.

But if Souness's sales have been less than prudent, at least give him credit for some of his purchases. Liverpool would have been done for had it not been for the startling agility and fine handling of James, their giant acquisition in every sense from Watford.

Liverpool also had their luck to thank or so it seemed when, in the seventieth minute, they won what, on the face of it, looked like a classic Anfield penalty award when Walters, dramatically, went down under an innocuous challenge from Newsome though the replay showed otherwise and Molby converted without fuss from the spot. The damage had been done when Batty, in trying to juggle the ball away to the safety of the touchline, lost possession to Stewart. Wilkinson had plenty to say on that, too, but suffice to say that he thought if the powers that be want to tamper with the rules and improve the product, "let's have the goals twice as big, then you will see a lot more goals". Even a fellow of James's wingspan would remark that they are quite big enough already, thank you, as he was painfully reminded three minutes from time.

James tarnished his image somewhat by coming and failing comprehensively to collect a Strachan corner, leaving the predatory Chapman plenty enough goal to aim at with his head. To his credit, though, James, who had cause to be every bit as upset as his manager, still agreed to face the media afterwards.

LEEDS UNITED: J Lukic; J Newsome, A Dorigo, D Batty (sub: S Hodge), C Fairclough (sub: G Strachan), C Whyte, E Cantona, R Wallace, L Chapman, G McAllister, G Speed.

LIVERPOOL: D James; R Jones, D Burrows, S Harkness, R Whelan, M Wright, D Saunders (sub: M Walters), P Stewart (sub: M Marsh), I Rush, J Molby, J Redknapp.

Referee: R L Dilkes.

## the guardian

Batty moment is costly for the champions

THE football may not have satisfied the purists, but this was cracking entertainment. The result may not have pleased the partisans, but it extended Leeds's unbeaten home record to 26 matches.

Their last league defeat at Elland Road was in April 1991 - to Liverpool. More significantly, they are unchanged since they beat Liverpool 43 in the Charity Shield. Rocastle, the former Arsenal midfielder, cannot even get on to the bench and Leeds can afford to hold Strachan and Hodge in reserve as last-minute matchwinners.

Conversely Liverpool have used 21 players in their worst start in 30 years.

Koppites looking for the team's place in the table have had to lower their sights, and so has the club, which is strapped for cash.

The manager, Graeme Souness, whose relationships with the supporters, the press and some members of his board were damaged by the exclusive sale of his heart-operation story to the Sun, is rumoured to have been given until Christmas to get the Anfield show on the road. Yet who could do better? If only Jack Walker had been a Liverpoolian . . . but now we are into the realms of fantasy.

Some of Liverpool's new shoots are a bit green - Harkness and Redknapp were called into service, because Nicol and McManaman, among others, are injured - but the side's roots go deep. There were enough members of the old school in Whelan, Molby and Rush to get a grip on this game after Leeds's storm blew itself out in the first quarter of an hour.

The champions, with Middlesbrough's rebuff assuaged by the annihilation of Tottenham, were firing on a heady mix of adrenalin and confidence. McAllister's stunning volley from Chapman put them ahead in only the seventh minute and they threatened to dominate the game, but Liverpool's survival instincts gradually surfaced and they began to gain ground.

They equalised just before the interval when Whelan lobbed in Stewart's cross, but only after James had kept them in the game with some courageous saves that will undoubtedly secure him the place vacated by Grobbelaar, again away on Zimbabwe international duty.

Saunders, who tries so hard but achieves so little, was substituted and Stewart later came off injured, but Liverpool went ahead thanks to Batty and the back-pass rule. The Leeds midfielder juggled when he should have hoofed, Walters profited, Newsome took his legs and Molby converted the penalty.

Howard Wilkinson reinforced the attack with Hodge and Strachan, and the latter's corner was flicked on by Whyte and headed in by Chapman for the equaliser. The otherwise faultless James admitted liability.

Two minutes from time he was beaten again, only for Chapman's effort to be disallowed. The referee ruled that Harkness had been trampled in the rush for a winning goal - an experience that doubtless awaits many teams yet to visit Elland Road this season.

SCORERS: Leeds United: McAllister (7min), Chapman (86). Liverpool: Whelan (44), Molby (pen 72).

Leeds United: Lukic; Newsome, Dorigo, Batty (Strachan, 77), Fairclough (Hodge, 77), Whyte, Cantona, Wallace, Chapman, McAllister, Speed.

Liverpool: James; Jones, Burrows, Harkness, Whelan, Wright, Saunders (Walters, 66), Stewart (Marsh, 73), Rush, Molby, Redknapp.

Referee: R Dilkes (Mossley).

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## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Chapman saves Leeds pride

Leeds United 2, Liverpool 2.

LEEDS UNITED 2(4-3-3): Lukic; Newsome, Fairclough (Strachan 79min), Whyte, Dorigo; Batty (Hodge 79min), McAllister, Speed; Cantona, Wallace, Chapman. LIVERPOOL 2(4-4-2): James; Jones, Wright, Burrows, Harkness; Saunders (Walters 66min), Whelan, Molby, Redknapp; Stewart (Marsh 74min), Rush. Goals: McAllister (7min) 1-0; Whelan (44min) 1-1; Molby (pen, 72min) 1-2; Chapman (86min) 2-2. Weather: cloudy. Ground: firm. Referee: R Dilkes (Mossley).

HOWARD WILKINSON is not one to flaunt himself or his team, but he was so looking forward to being able to welcome Liverpool to Elland Road with a championship pennant flying over the ground, and a squad to strike fear into the hearts of Leeds's oldest and fiercest enemies. His chest swelled with pride when McAllister plunged the opening dagger high into Liverpool's net with the game only seven minutes old, but by the end it was more with relief than satisfaction that he had to settle for a point. Had it not been for Chapman's equaliser with only four minutes left, Liverpool would have stalked away with a most improbable victory after being outshone for much of what turned out to be a rather messy and disappointing game. Venturing north of Sheffield must have seemed a bit like crossing the 32nd parallel after what happened to Spurs on Tuesday. Take your eye off the skies for a second and Chapman is liable to make nonsense of the air exclusion zone. Either that or a chap from the French Foreign Legion plays havoc with your ground forces. Cantona stands out like a Gitanes in a room full of Woodbine smoke. He was the difference between these sides in the Charity Shield and in patches had us swooning again yesterday. If he had more pace, the French could not possibly leave him out of their national side. Surprisingly, having seen at Wembley what a nightmare Newsome went through attempting to combat the speed and trickery of Walters, Graeme Souness left the winger on the bench. When Souness eventually introduced Walters, Liverpool went ahead for the first time and should have been in a perfect position to take all the points. That they did not is a tribute to Leeds's famed resilience, although they cannot continue to drop points like this if Wilkinson is to fulfil his ambition to retain the title. McAllister's opening goal was in a class of its own. Chapman had possession in the area with his back to goal and defenders breathing down his neck. He laid the ball back obliquely to McAllister, who teed it up and crashed a swerving volley from 20 yards beyond the reach of James's left hand. Superb stuff and quite uncanny. McAllister was regularly the leading marksman in his Leicester City days, but as excellently as he has functioned in midfield, he has singularly failed to score the goals of which he is capable. Ironically, he recently sighed: "Perhaps I should try to get closer to goal." Few speak of Chapman as England material these days, but Graham Taylor could do worse than include the 32-year-old front man in his squad for the friendly in Spain next week. Chapman is not as immobile as his detractors would have you believe. Having fashioned Leeds's first goal, he turned provider again, flicking the ball deftly over his left hip for Cantona, who had read it perfectly. A certain second goal failed to materialise because James positioned himself even better for the resulting pile-driver. Not only that. When all seemed lost it was Chapman who rose above the Liverpool defence to meet Whyte's flick-off from Strachan's corner and head the equaliser. Liverpool were fairly shapeless, the creative abilities of Whelan and Molby smothered in midfield and Stewart, for the first half at least, a fish out of water playing alongside Rush. The Jekyll and Hyde qualities of Leeds, however, allowed Liverpool back into the game. First, when Stewart surprised us by turning inside Dorigo and laying the ball out to Whelan by the left touchline. The No5 saw Lukic well off his line and chipped him quite beautifully from fully 25 yards for the equaliser. Leeds's concentration slipped again midway through the second half, although according to Wilkinson, confusion arose because of the new back-pass law. At any rate, Batty was guilty of messing about in his own six-yard area, lost the ball to Stewart and it was quickly transferred via Rush to Walters, who had only been on the field for four minutes. The winger cut inside Newsome, who brought him down. It seemed a clear enough penalty from the press box and Molby buried it. Although the Leeds manager thought Batty was preoccupied trying not to pass the ball back to Lukic, there was nothing preventing him from hoofing it into the terraces. The fact that Liverpool were still in this game, let alone ahead, was due almost entirely to the heroics of James in goal. He was immaculate in everything he did and conjured three breathtaking saves in the second half alone, when Leeds were in full cry. Cantona ran half the length of the pitch before unleashing a belting right-foot drive which seemed destined for the bottom corner. James flung himself sideways to palm it away. Within minutes Batty, uncharacteristically, turned ball-player, cutting inside Burrows and shooting ferociously for the far corner. James covered himself in glory once more. The most spectacular of his saves denied Hodge, whose diving header from Dorigo's cross was packed with dynamite. Sadly for James the resulting corner led to the equaliser. Strachan took the kick, the goalkeeper came for the ball at his near post, made his only misjudgment of the afternoon and there was Chapman's dependable head to force the ball over the line after Whyte flicked it back. Wilkinson and 30,000 supporters were miffed when referee Dilkes discounted a second goal for Chapman immediately afterwards. Mr Dilkes said that the striker had fouled Harkness before turning the ball into the net after James had saved from Cantona. The video evidence seems to support the referee's view.

## BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Chapman to the rescue

Lee Chapman salvaged Leeds' long-running home record with a late equaliser against Liverpool.

But after heading home in the 86th minute, the towering striker was denied a dramatic winner for the champions moments later when his thumping shot was controversially disallowed for pushing. For the second time in less than a month these two sides provided spectacular entertainment. Leeds had shaded a seven-goal Wembley thriller in the Charity Shield curtain raiser that set the tone for the new Premier League.

At Elland Road they looked on their way to a more comfortable win after Gary McAllister cracked in a superb opening goal after only seven minutes and Eric Cantona celebrated with a sizzling first-half display.

But Liverpool, the last side to win a league game here in April last year, were hauled back into contention by the delicate touch of Ronnie Whelan and the defiance of goalkeeper David James. When they took the lead to a controversial 72nd minute penalty from Jan Molby, it looked like Liverpool could sneak it. But then Chapman intervened as manager Howard Wilkinson's double substitution, sending on Steve Hodge and Gordon Strachan, paid dividends. Hodge's low drive won a corner and Strachan floated the ball over for Chris Whyte to flick on and Chapman to lunge in and head his third goal of the season. Leeds thought they had won when James could only parry Cantona's shot and Chapman cracked in the loose ball. But Lancashire referee Roger Dilkes ruled he had barged over David Burrows.

Leeds had made an assured start, boosted when McAllister caught Chapman's flick with a 20-yard right foot volley that left James rooted to his line.

But the former Watford goalkeeper, already tipped for England senior recognition, then blocked further Leeds progress, saving magnificently from Cantona after 35 minutes.

With only seconds left of the first half Liverpool hit back with a goal from Whelan that rolled back the years. In an echo of the 1983 Milk Cup Final against Manchester United, he skilfully chipped the ball over John Lukic from the angle of the penalty area after Mark Wright's pass enabled Paul Stewart to beat the offside trap.

Leeds showed signs of a self-destructive streak, only a week after they crashed at Middlesbrough. But they were furious when Jon Newsome was penalised for what looked like a dive by Liverpool substitute Mark Walters - though the original sin was David Batty's for trying to be too clever in his own penalty area.

After the protests subsided, Molby drove the ball emphatically past Lukic from the spot and until Chapman's late intervention, the champions were struggling. Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson was upset to be denied the victory over Liverpool that would have taken the champions within touching distance of leaders Blackburn.

He thought striker Lee Chapman had followed up his late equaliser with an even more dramatic goal at Elland Road and said: "I thought he had got our winner. But what I think doesn't matter. It's what the referee decides that's important. I'm happy to let referees make decisions. It was a great fightback considering the two goals we conceded, one on the stroke of half-time and a penalty with not much time left. But in the end their goalkeeper and perhaps the referee's decision made the difference between one and three points."

Wilkinson added: "Everyone talks about the pressure of being champions and the fact that all other teams want to do well against us. But at the moment we are showing we've got the character to deal with that."

Liverpool manager Graeme Souness was clearly annoyed at having a much-needed victory snatched away. He emerged more than an hour after the end of the game, saying merely: "I'm disappointed - I won't say more than that."