

Date: 22 September 1992

Opposition: Chesterfield

Competition: League Cup

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THE TIMES

Liverpool's woes are exploited by Chesterfield

Liverpool 4 Chesterfield 4

WHILE all Liverpool's results should be kept in perspective, such is the depth of their injury problems, last night's performance against Chesterfield, of the third division, did, at times, beggar description.

Liverpool were eliminated from this competition by Peterborough last season and it is possible that, on the strength of this schizophrenic performance, the same fate may await them at Saltergate in a fortnight's time.

Lacking nine members of his acknowledged first team, Graeme Souness, the Liverpool manager, watched his depleted side trail 3-0 after 48 minutes and 4-2 after 69 minutes.

Liverpool can count themselves fortunate to still have an interest in this Coca-Cola Cup second round tie such was the naivety of much of their football.

Their problems, of which there were many, began in the seventh minute when Chesterfield successfully applied an incisive finish to one of their many moves of consequence.

Rogers crossed deep to the far post where Morris outjumped Wright to head the ball down into the path of Norris, a reliable and prolific forward, who turned the ball home with the neatest of flicks.

It was, perhaps, understandable that several members of Liverpool's makeshift side chose to confront the mounting adversity by delegating responsibility, and Chesterfield continued to pose questions which their opponents often struggled to answer in a meaningful or effective manner.

Having defended stoutly in the face of some persistent, if largely unco-ordinated pressure, Chesterfield moved forward to deservedly lay claim to a second goal in the thirtieth minute, one which further undermined Wright's already poor relationship with the club's supporters.

Faced by two Chesterfield forwards some 25 yards from his goal, Wright drilled the ball back towards his goalkeeper. However, the pass, which was overhit, bobbed up off the foot of James and was coolly despatched by the grateful Lancaster.

Wright's night of personal torment was far from over and three minutes after the interval he was guilty of an identical error, so allowing Lancaster to score his second, and the visitors' third goal.

It was at this point, when they were staring embarrassment full in the face, that Liverpool finally groaned into life. Rosenthal dived forward to turn in a cross by substitute Kozma after 51 minutes and seven minutes later the deficit was further reduced when Hutchison swept in a fine drive from 20 yards.

Predictably, Liverpool committed men forward as they searched for an equaliser. This casting of caution to the wind was punished in the 69th minute when Norris broke clear to score a fourth.

The evening was of such a bizarre nature that Liverpool's almost immediate response, in the form of a Walters goal, came as no surprise. And predictably there was a sucker punch; five minutes from time Wright partially atoned for his earlier indiscretions by heading in a Kozma cross.

LIVERPOOL: D James; M Marsh, D Burrows, N Tanner, J Redknapp, M Wright, R Rosenthal, P Charnock (sub: I Kozma), D Hutchison, J Molby, M Walters.

CHESTERFIELD: M Leonard; P Lemon, C Carr, S Williams, A Brien, L Rogers, S Cash, S Norris (sub: L Turnbull), A Morris, D Lancaster (sub: M Kennedy), T Hebbard.

Referee: P Wright.

the guardian

Chesterfield pile on Anfield anguish

THE problems facing Liverpool and their manager Graeme Souness were underlined at Anfield last night as Third Division Chesterfield led them 3-0 before being pegged back to 4-4 in their Coca-Cola second-round, first-leg tie.

It was still a deeply embarrassing night for a club suffering its worst start to a season since 1964, with a team racked by injuries but boasting five full internationals.

Chesterfield, managed by Lawrie McMenemey's son Chris, led after seven minutes when Norris, on his 31st birthday, scored his seventh goal of the season and his first of two on the night.

It was 20 on the half-hour, when the Liverpool captain Wright gave James a nightmare back-pass and Lancaster forced the ball over the line as James tried to control it. Lancaster struck again three minutes into the second half after another wobble by Wright.

Then Liverpool came back. Rosenthal scored with a diving header and after 58 minutes Chesterfield's goalkeeper Leonard saved brilliantly from Walters only for Hutchison to follow up with his first senior goal for Liverpool: 3-2.

Leonard saved well from Marsh and Walters. Then, with Liverpool committed forward, Norris picked up a long clearance on 69 minutes for 4-2.

Liverpool bounced back on 72 minutes when Walters held off Williams' challenge to score in the corner and five minutes from time Wright atoned for his earlier mistakes by scoring with a header.

'I feel 3-1 going on 2-1,' said Norris afterwards. Souness probably felt 3-8 going on 8-0.

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BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Super spireites

Heroic underdogs Chesterfield gave troubled Liverpool and boss Graeme Souness a nightmare in an astonishing Coca-Cola Cup tie at Anfield.

The magnificent third division outfit, roared on by 5,000 fans, piled on the agony for Souness by racing to a 3-0 lead before his side began to make a fight of it.

Liverpool managed to scrape a draw but it was still a deeply embarrassing night for a team racked by injuries but boasting five full internationals.

It was a super birthday celebration for former Halifax striker Steve Norris and it sets up a mouth-watering prospect for the second leg at Saltergate on October 6. Chesterfield took the lead after just seven minutes, Andy Morris rising to head on Lee Rogers' right wing cross for Norris to tuck his seventh goal of the season inside the post.

They then sustained a spell of Liverpool pressure before capitalising on a dreadful blunder in the home defence on the half hour.

England centre-half and Liverpool captain Mark Wright gave David James the kind of back-pass goalkeepers are having nightmares about this season, and striker Dave Lancaster pounced to force the ball over the line as James tried to control it. Lancaster could have had his second five minutes before half-time, heading straight at James from Cliff Carr's cross.

But three minutes into the second half he struck again, capitalising on another uncertain moment by Wright to drill home a precise shot.

The Liverpool supporters were finally given something to cheer about a minute later with an 'international' goal when Hungarian substitute Istvan Kozma crossed from the right for Israeli international Ronnie Rosenthal to score with a diving header.

And it was 3-2 after 58 minutes when Chesterfield goalkeeper Mick Leonard saved brilliantly from Mark Walters only to see Don Hutchison follow up with a cool piece of finishing to give him his first senior goal for Liverpool.

Leonard then brought off two fine saves to turn a blistering 20 yard shot from Mike Marsh wide and block a Mark Walters shot as Liverpool went all out for the equaliser.

But with Liverpool committed forward Carr punted a long clearance up field in the 69th minute and Norris raced clear before slotting the ball past James who left it late to come off his line.

Liverpool were not done and after 72 minutes Walters held off the challenge of Steve Williams to arrow a low shot into the corner.

Five minutes from time Kozma floated in a right wing cross for Wright to atone for his earlier mistakes by powering in a header that unlucky Leonard got a hand to but could not keep out. The drama was complete when Hutchison's injury time shot rebounded off a defender onto a post, avoiding a last ditch defeat that would have been so cruel on the valiant visitors.

Graeme Souness, the Liverpool manager, announced yesterday that Bruce Grobbelaar will replace David James in goal for the Premier League game against Wimbledon at Anfield tomorrow. His decision follows the embarrassing 4-4 draw with Chesterfield, of the third division, in the Coca Cola Cup on Tuesday.

James, an England Under-21 international who was signed from Watford for 1.2 million pounds, has played in all 11 of Liverpool's senior fixtures this season, conceding 20 goals and failing to keep one clean sheet.

"David was at fault for one of the goals in midweek," Souness said. "I am bringing Bruce back into the team in the hope that his influence will spread to those around him. His experience could be very valuable to us at the moment."

Although Liverpool's inconsistent start to the season - the poorest in more than 30 years - was discussed at a meeting of the Board Of Directors yesterday, Souness' position is not thought to be in jeopardy.

The bookmakers, however, have made Kevin Keegan favourite to succeed him, although Keegan yesterday declared himself a non-runner. "I think it is absolutely disgraceful that they should start a book on a job which isn't even vacant," Keegan said. "But I am not interested. I said when I came to Newcastle that this is the only club for me, and that when I walk away from here it will be back to my stud farm. That still stands."

Since his arrival in February, Keegan's impact on Newcastle has been astonishing. With maximum points from their first seven games, their start to the season has been in stark contrast to Liverpool's.

Keegan has always insisted that Newcastle have the capacity to match Liverpool or Manchester United and on recent performance they are on course to fulfil such lofty ambitions. Newcastle supporters are already convinced that Keegan will leave, but only for the England job when it becomes available.