

Date: 14 August 1993  
 Opposition: Sheffield Wednesday  
 Competition: League

Times	Guardian	Sunday Times
British Soccer Wk		

14 August 1993

## THE TIMES

Clough supplies dividend on wise investment policy

Expectations of a championship challenge are high at Liverpool after summer spending.

Keith Pike judges an early bonus at Anfield

THOSE who went to Anfield confident of witnessing the reawakening of an English football giant were euphoric after Liverpool's 2-0 victory over Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday. It was understandable, but perhaps they should reserve judgment a while longer.

After two years of expensive and unwise transfer dealings, Graeme Souness knows the job he held on to against expectations last season still hangs in the balance. Successive sixth placings in the championship would guarantee some managers the freedom of the city, but not at Liverpool. If they are not challenging for the FA Carling Premiership by Christmas, Souness may yet be taking an extended winter holiday. Time remains his greatest enemy.

The signs are, though, that Souness has at last invested wisely. It may have cost him the best part of Pounds 5 million, but the acquisition of Neil Ruddock and Nigel Clough has given his team the heart and the brains so lacking for much of last season.

There was little risk attached to the purchase of Ruddock. A stopper in the mould of Ron Yeats, he has developed an immediate rapport with Liverpool's supporters, if not yet with Mark Wright, his partner in the centre of defence. While Ruddock is prepared to thunder into headers and tackles with relish, and move forward to such effect at set-pieces, the Kop are likely to forgive his occasional recklessness. The more intriguing signing was that of Clough, who has neither the pace or purposefulness of Keegan nor the presence of Dalglish, Liverpool's most revered former No7s, but an intuitiveness which has rarely been fully exploited by club or country. After a season battling in vain to save his father's job at Nottingham Forest, Clough already seems reinvigorated. His two goals on Saturday were celebrated by a man who appeared content with his new responsibilities.

It remains to be seen, however, whether Souness will get the best out of him. Whatever Clough is and despite a commendable average of a goal every three games for Forest, he is not a natural striker he is at his most effective when facing the opposition's goal, creating space and then delivering passes to others. Now, as Souness's preferred partner for Ian Rush, he is having to drop out of the firing line to link with his midfield colleagues. How much more potent Liverpool would be if Dean Saunders was still there to capitalise on Clough's precision.

None of that seemed to concern the majority on Saturday. Two hours before kick-off there was not a parking space to be had within a couple of miles of Anfield, and the great stadium reverberated with acclaim as Wednesday were seen off. Liverpool's task had been made easier by the sending-off in the thirteenth minute of Palmer, whose lunging challenge on Molby long after the ball had gone was properly punished by Gerald Ashby. It was not the least encouraging moment of the afternoon: here was a referee prepared to act decisively, no matter that it was early in the match or that the perpetrator was an England international. Wednesday, without Palmer to protect Sheridan, were robbed of both their playmaker and their midfield lungs, and how Liverpool made them pay, exploiting the space with their traditional virtues of passing and movement. Clough scored thrillingly from 20 yards just before half-time and more routinely just after it when Woods failed to hold Ruddock's header, and had Liverpool not eased off it could have been a rout.

"There were shades of the Liverpool of old," Tommy Smith, a vociferous critic of the Souness regime, said, "but it is only the beginning." The doubts, rightly, will persist a while longer.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): B Grobbelaar R Jones, M Wright, N Ruddock, S Bjornebye S Nicol, R Whelan, J Molby (sub: J Redknapp, 74min), M Walters I Rush, N Clough.  
 SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (4-4-2): C Woods R Nilsson, D Walker, A Pearce, P King C Bart-Williams (sub: G Hyde, 58min), C Palmer, J Sheridan, N Worthington P Warhurst (sub: M Bright, 81), D Hirst.  
 Referee: G Ashby.

## the guardian

Souness awakes to brighter dawn

ONCE when the Dallas scriptwriters were stuck for a good story they decided that the past 18 months had never happened. All that ten-gallon drama and intrigue were wrapped up in a bad dream and Bobby Ewing awoke to find that all was well with the world.

Graeme Souness may experience something similar this morning. Certainly he will sense a return to the good old days when the only way to beat Liverpool at Anfield was to let the ball down. Last season the only thing punctured was his expectations.

The key to any campaign is continuity, and Liverpool have not been blessed with that for several years. Only five of the team which began last season turned out on Saturday - and that is probably the best possible omen.

Souness has not always invested his millions wisely but in Nigel Clough and Neil Ruddock he has bought pedigree rather than promise. Clough's first touch was a delightful flick to Walters; Ruddock's a knee-trembling tackle on Hirst. Each pleased an appreciative Kop.

This was not the Clough who hid his talent under an American bushel last June; rather the one who flaunted it at the City Ground. Anfield is the right setting for the son to rise again.

The watching Graham Taylor must have relished Clough's vision in curling Liverpool's first past Woods just before half-time and his reactions in snapping up the second after the goalkeeper had parried Ruddock's header soon after the interval. The goals were his first at Anfield, the victory his first in a senior game there.

Last season Clough fell victim to his own versatility, patching up Forest's defence and attack when required and seeking to fill Gascoigne's boots at international level. On Saturday he played a tad behind Rush, which seemed to suit his positional sense, and only Woods's quick reactions denied him a hat-trick. Taylor will also have noted the re-emergence of Rob Jones at right-back and could hardly have missed the disgraceful tackle on Molby which led to Carlton Palmer's dismissal. The long, flailing limbs did not disguise cynicism of intent and Palmer will be serving out his three-match club ban when England play Poland in a World Cup qualifier on September 8.

His dismissal after 12 minutes on Saturday threw Wednesday hopelessly out of kilter and Trevor Francis was understandably reluctant to pass judgment on the 10 that remained. Wednesday's manager will again attempt to prise Sinton from Arsenal's grasp this morning, when Souness hopes to bring Flowers from Southampton. Wednesday's need seems the greater.

SCORERS: Liverpool: Clough (39 and 47min).

Liverpool: Grobelaar; Jones, Bjornebye, Nicol, Wright, Ruddock, Clough, Molby (Redknapp, 74), Rush, Whelan, Walters.

Sheffield Wednesday: Woods; Nilsson, Worthington, Palmer, Warhurst (Bright, 78), Hirst, Sheridan, Pearce, Bart-Williams (Hyde, 58), Walker, King.

Referee: G Ashby (Worcester).

Date: 14 August 1993  
 Opposition: Sheffield Wednesday  
 Competition: League

Times	Guardian	Sunday Times
British Soccer Wk		

14 August 1993



## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Clough joins the magnificent sevens

LIVERPOOL 2 (Clough 39, 47) - SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 0

(4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Jones, Ruddock, Wright, Bjernebye; Nicol, Molby (Redknapp 74min), Whelan, Walters; Clough, Rush.

(4-4-2) Woods; Nilsson, Pearce, Walker, King; Bart-Williams (Hyde 58min), Sheridan, Palmer, Worthington; Warhurst (Bright 82min), Hirst.

1-0 Nicol hit a low pass inside to Clough who scored with a strong diagonal shot into the far corner, in off the bar.

2-0 Ruddock headed down a corner, Woods could not hold it, and Clough shot in from close range.

Sent Off: Palmer (13min). Weather: sunny. Ground: lush. Referee: G Ashby (Worcester).

Razor sharp: Ruddock added bite to Liverpool's defence and enjoyed a better debut than Wednesday's Walker Hugh Routledge

NIGEL CLOUGH made the perfect start to his Anfield career, shooting the goals either side of half-time which gave Liverpool the win they deserved. His performance suggested that the famous No7 shirt, worn by Keegan, Dalglish and Beardsley, is tailor-made for him. But there was controversy too. Palmer, Wednesday's England international, was sent off early in the game, a decision which angered both the visiting players and their followers. The Wednesday terraces booed referee Ashby for much of the afternoon.

To take the nastiness, which happened in front of Graham Taylor, first. In the 13th minute, Molby, who had already shown he was going to have a major influence on the match, stroked the ball forward, only to be tackled late by Palmer.

Palmer's boot caught Molby above the knee, Molby went down, writhing, and the referee immediately produced the red card.

It was both a correct and brave decision. What incensed the Wednesday team and their supporters was that Molby, as it transpired, was not seriously hurt. He showed no ill-effects, although he was substituted late on. Obviously Wednesday thought that Molby had been play-acting. But such thoughts were irrelevant. Palmer's tackle was quite awful.

Liverpool took their time in squeezing the breathe out of their 10 opponents. There was nothing wrong in that. It is just what the Liverpool of old would have done. But in the end they were easy winners and it took a diving palm-away by Woods to stop Clough, who had beaten two men, from completing his hat-trick. Wednesday were left with only two second-half chances, both of which Warhurst missed, and a penalty appeal when Warhurst went down against Grobbelaar.

Liverpool were good. Their defence, leaky last season, was strong, even though Grobbelaar, 35 and starting his 13th season at Anfield, almost gave the Kop kittens after only 30 seconds, catching a sliced shot on his upper knee, as casual as ever. Ruddock, who cost even more than Clough, showed every sign of becoming a huge favourite. His name won the biggest cheer when it came over the loudspeakers. Every decisive Ruddock intervention and there were a few was likewise cheered. It was Ruddock, giving a fair imitation of a bulldozer arriving at high speed, who powered in the header from a corner which Woods, forgivably, could not hold, and which Clough stabbed in for his second goal soon after half-time. It was surprising in that defence to see Bjernebye at left-back instead of Burrows. But Bjernebye did well, especially going forward. In midfield, it was golden oldie time. Molby and Whelan, their combined age 61, passed and worked impressively. At least until the legs went near the end. It was a hot day, young and old felt the pace, and afterwards Graeme Souness emphasised how tired his men had been. Up front Clough was alongside Rush as a pure striker there was no question of his operating in the hole behind two front men. Despite wearing the distinguished No7 shirt Clough refused to be overawed. He was just going to sling the shirt on and nip on to the pitch.

Clough, like Liverpool, took his time. He was neat but peripheral until six minutes before half-time when Nicol, who had more than once progressed down his right-midfield territory, knocked a pass inside. Clough took it and from the edge of the area hit a lovely diagonal shot which went into Woods's far corner, off the bar. Clough did not look back. Despite yesterday's goals, though, Souness may not want to use him as a striker all season. Nor was the Liverpool manager reading too much into this one result. His disagreements with senior players Grobbelaar, Barnes, Wright and Rush appear over and he is looking to the old Anfield hands to right the ship six of yesterday's starters were 30 or over.

Barnes was injured, again, yesterday; as was Waddle. So we saw Hamlet without two of the princes. And, as far as Wednesday were concerned, they will simply forget this day. Their new signing Walker was only fitfully involved; likewise Pearce, another newcomer, alongside him.

There was no sign of that lovely, biting football that carried Wednesday to two Cup finals last season. Sheridan was their lone success until the 58th minute, when Hyde arrived for a forlorn young Bart-Williams and pepped up the side. Warhurst (surely Kenny Dalglish was not ready to pay Pounds 3m for him?) missed with a volley from 18 yards just before Hyde entered the fray. Next there was frustration as Grobbelaar produced the save of the match from Warhurst's header. Wednesday's following, the few who were allowed tickets to Anfield, thought that Warhurst was felled by Grobbelaar in the last quarter. They had a strong case. Warhurst then departed, to be replaced by Bright. Surely Howard Kendall has not really offered Pounds 1m for him?

## BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

Clough hits two on debut

Nigel Clough marked his Liverpool debut with two goals after Wednesday were rocked by Carlton Palmer's sending-off. Graeme Souness' summer signings, 2.275 million pound Clough from Nottingham Forest and 2.5 million pound Neil Ruddock from Spurs, both proved an instant hit with the home fans in a bumper 44,000 crowd.

Clough turned neatly on Steve Nicol's pass after 39 minutes and hammered a fierce shot in off the underside of the Wednesday crossbar. Two minutes after the break Ruddock headed down powerfully from Stig Bjernebye's corner and when Chris Woods fumbled the ball on the line, Clough reacted instantly to stab home from close range.

England midfielder Palmer had been shown the red card after just 12 minutes following a lunging late tackle on Liverpool's Danish midfielder Jan Molby. Until that incident Wednesday had dominated the early exchanges, with Palmer almost grabbing a goal in the first minute when his shot deflected off Ruddock for Bruce Grobbelaar to catch over his head.

Ruddock and central defensive partner Mark Wright gave England 'keeper Chris Woods his hardest first half tests, Ruddock with a 35-yard power drive and Wright with a near post header. A misplaced Ruddock defensive header saw Paul Warhurst volley just wide for the Yorkshiremen in the second half, and when the striker did find the target with a header Grobbelaar tipped the ball over with a fine one-handed save.

Clough was almost put in for his hat-trick by Ian Rush, shooting just wide under pressure from Des Walker, and then heading over from a Mark Walters cross. Wednesday were denied what looked like a clear penalty after 78 minutes when Warhurst went down over Grobbelaar's outstretched legs. Clough almost grabbed that elusive third goal a minute from time, skipping past a defender's challenge only to see Woods somehow scramble his shot wide.

England midfielder Palmer could be out of the crucial World Cup qualifier against Poland next month following his sending-off. Manager Graham Taylor was at Anfield to see the lanky Sheffield Wednesday player dismissed. Palmer could now face a three-match ban - which would threaten his chances of playing against Poland. Wednesday boss Trevor Francis refused to criticise referee Gerald Ashby over the sending-off incident and television evidence backed the Worcester official's judgement that Palmer deserved a red card for his wild, late lunge on Molby.

"Liverpool were the better team and deserved to win," said Francis. "When you play 78 minutes with 10 men it isn't easy in normal circumstances - but playing a team who pass as well as Liverpool do on the first day of the season with players struggling for their fitness we did as well as could be expected. My initial reaction was that after 12 minutes of the game a sending-off was a bit severe. I would have no complaints at all about a booking but if the referee thought it warranted a sending-off I'm not one to argue. It obviously had a huge bearing on the game. Carlton is bitterly disappointed and when you've worked for five weeks in pre-season building to this game it is disappointing for him and the team when it happens like that."

Liverpool boss Graeme Souness refused to comment on the incident beyond confirming that Molby suffered a "thump above the knee".

And on Clough's two-goal debut he said: "He is the one who will grab the headlines but it is all about what we do as a team."

Clough's fellow Anfield new boy Neil Ruddock said of the striker: "He is always sharp around the box. Playing against him he has always been a tough opponent, so having him in our side is a great bonus. I think Brian Clough will be happy with his young man."