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THE TIMES

Barker and Ferdinand dismissed at Anfield

JOHN Barnes's latest step along the comeback trail was overshadowed last night by the dismissals of Simon Barker and Les Ferdinand as Queens Park Rangers slipped to a controversial 3-2 defeat against **Liverpool** at Anfield.

Barnes's first-half goal was an encouraging sight for Graeme Souness, the **Liverpool** manager, who has been desperate for the player to give his side some guidance and inspiration, but it was a disastrous night for Rangers that turned sour in the space of five minutes after half-time.

After Vic Callow, the referee, had awarded **Liverpool** a penalty when Barker blatantly pulled Jamie Redknapp back in the area, a linesman drew the official's attention to something happening amid the angry scenes that followed the incident and Barker was dismissed.

Jan Molby kept his head while others around him seemed to be losing theirs to convert the penalty and score what proved to be the winner. However, if that was bad enough, worse was to follow for Rangers four minutes later when Ferdinand, booked in the first half, was sent off for a second bookable offence after kicking the ball away after being caught offside. Ferdinand, who claimed later he had not heard the whistle, reacted furiously and had to be pulled away from the referee by the combined efforts of **Liverpool** and Rangers players. Gerry Francis, his manager, finally led him from the pitch.

"Obviously I didn't want to see his reaction," Francis said afterwards. "He genuinely felt the referee had made a mistake. Les is absolutely adamant he did not hear the whistle and he struck the ball over the top. He was more then frustrated to find he was then going to be sent off, but if it is genuine what he said about not hearing the whistle, I can understand him being a bit frustrated."

On a night of appalling conditions, Rangers took the lead after ten minutes through Ferdinand's measured shot before Barnes scored the equaliser a quarter of an hour later. It was his first goal of an injury-hit season, but the winger was to limp out of the action once again, to be replaced by Steve Nicol, after 73 minutes. Ian Rush put **Liverpool** ahead after 32 minutes, but Barker levelled matters just after the break.

A mistake by Dave Beasant sentenced Southampton to their fourth defeat in five matches as Ipswich Town won 1-0 at The Dell, plunging the home side deeper into relegation trouble. A misunderstanding with Micky Adams allowed Chris Kiwomya to claim a simple winner.

the guardian

Red cards for Ferdinand and Barker

THE Solihull referee Vic Callow was held up by bad weather on the way to the match at Anfield, and probably wishes he had missed it completely.

A game that for 75 minutes struggled manfully to rise above dreadful conditions of wind and driving rain ended in mayhem when Queens Park Rangers had two players dismissed after Liverpool secured victory with a hotly disputed penalty. Simon Barker was sent off for disputing Mr Callow's decision too hotly. Already on shaky ground after bringing down Redknapp in a goalscoring position, he compounded his folly by pushing his opponent in the face and accusing him of taking a dive.

In the 10 minutes that remained after Molby scored from the spot, Peacock was lucky to escape with a booking after a bad tackle on Redknapp, and Ferdinand introduced an element of farce by collecting his side's second red card for the trivial, unnecessary offence of kicking the ball away after the whistle had gone. Ferdinand had already been cautioned for dissent in the first half, leaving the referee with little option but to send him off. This did not save him from an astonishing display of petulance from the England striker, who was eventually persuaded to leave the field only by the joint efforts of Ray Wilkins and the Rangers manager Gerry Francis.

It was a pity that the game had to end in such a fashion, because both sides had contributed to a contest that was as exciting as it was eventful. As the second half progressed with the scores locked at 2-2, Liverpool had a succession of penalty appeals turned down; one or two of them looked as valid as the incident that eventually settled the issue.

In the first half Rangers had taken a shock lead when Ferdinand made the most of a poor clearance from Grobbelaar, who presented him with the chance by kicking unsuccessfully into the wind.

But with Barnes and McManaman creating a steady stream of chances with accurate crosses from both flanks, Liverpool kept their nerve and were in the lead before the interval, Barnes and then Rush converting right-wing crosses from the dangerous McManaman.

But Liverpool's advantage was wiped out after only 48 seconds of the second half when Impey broke down the right wing to find Barker in a surprising amount of space.

Controversy apart, Liverpool looked worth the points. 'I thought that was our best performance of the season. I hope you aren't just going to write about the two dismissals,' said the manager Graeme Souness.

Francis said he was disappointed with Ferdinand's dismissal. 'It was harsh after such a good game. We were 3-2 down with 10 men and Les claims he didn't hear the whistle.'

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Jones, Wright, Ruddock, Harkness, Barnes (Nicol, 73min), Molby, Redknapp, McManaman, Rush, Fowler.

Queens Park Rangers: Stejskal; Bardsley, Peacock, Ready, Wilson, Barker, Wilkins, Impey, Meaker (Penrice, 84), Ferdinand, Allen.

Referee: V Callow (Solihull).

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BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

Two off as QPR crash

QPR had England striker Les Ferdinand and Simon Barker sensationally sent off in an explosive last 13 minutes as Jan Molby's penalty gave Liverpool victory on a stormy night at Anfield.

The Londoners had survived a string of second-half penalty appeals but referee Vic Callow's tolerance finally ran out after 77 minutes when Barker blatantly pulled Jamie Redknapp back in the area. A linesman drew Mr Callow's attention to something in the angry scenes which followed and Barker was shown the red card.

Danish international Jan Molby stepped up to calmly convert the penalty which proved the winner for Liverpool.

Worse was to follow for Rangers four minutes later when Ferdinand, who was booked in the first half, was sent off for a second bookable offence after kicking the ball away in frustration after being caught offside. The big striker reacted furiously and had to be pulled away from the referee by the combined efforts of Liverpool and QPR players. His manager Gerry Francis finally led him from the pitch.

The game was played in atrocious conditions with a vicious swirling wind and driving rain.

QPR took the lead after 10 minutes when Bruce Grobbelaar's weak clearance went straight to Ferdinand. Mark Wright's attempted slide tackle missed completely and the striker had time to curl a measured shot round the 'keeper and just inside the post.

John Barnes scored the equaliser after 25 minutes with a perfectly placed first-time shot from Steve McManaman's cross after Clive Wilson's clearance had rebounded off Robbie Fowler. It was Barnes' first goal of an injury-hit season and the winger was to limp out of the action once again to be replaced by Steve Nicol after 73 minutes.

Ian Rush put Liverpool ahead after 32 minutes. His shot from McManaman's cross was only half-hit but the wet ball somehow squirmed through 'keeper Jan Stejskal's hands and into the net.

Rangers caught Liverpool's defence napping less than a minute into the second half, Andrew Impey skipping round Steve Harkness to cross for Barker who side-footed the ball home. Rangers boss Gerry Francis will not punish his England striker any further. Francis said: "Obviously I didn't want to see his reaction. It is not something you want to see but if it is genuine what he said about not hearing the whistle I can understand him being a bit frustrated."

He said he had never seen Ferdinand react so angrily before and added: "He is not that type of person. Obviously he genuinely felt the referee had made a mistake. Les is absolutely adamant he did not hear the whistle and he struck the ball over the top. He was more than frustrated to find he was then going to be sent-off. I can understand it the other way round - if we had been 3-2 up with seven minutes to go. I spoke to the referee afterwards and he felt he had to interpret the laws of the game about kicking the ball away."

Liverpool boss Graeme Souness declined to comment on the controversial incidents but said: "That for me was our best performance of the season in what were extremely difficult conditions. If you are a Liverpool supporter you have gone away happy tonight because you have seen your team get a victory and play very well."