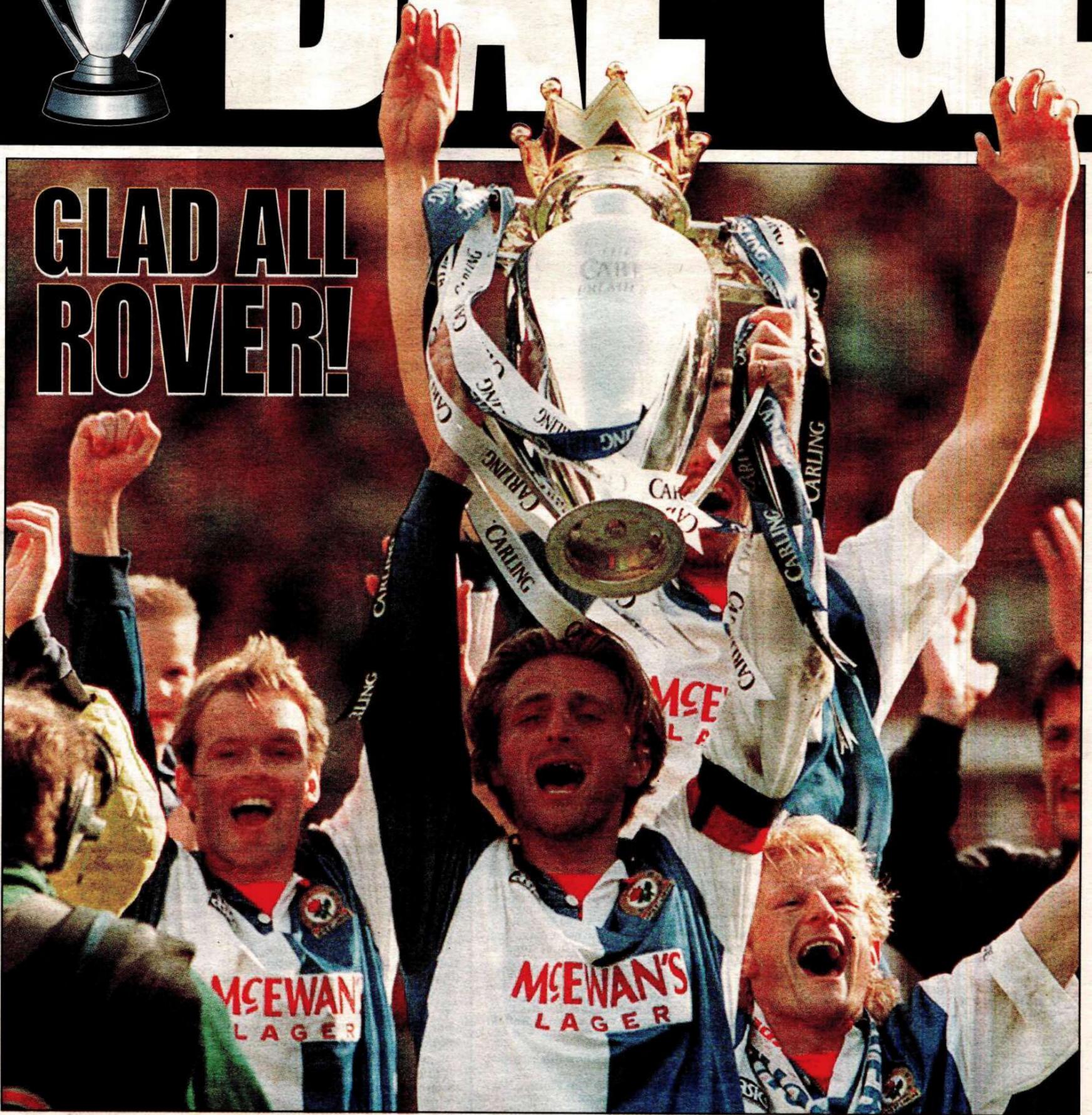


Mirror Sport on the crowning glory + Mirror Sport on the crowning glory +



DAL-GL

GLAD ALL ROVER!



CHAMPION FEELING

BLACKBURN'S crowning glory as skipper Tim Sherwood lifts the Premiership trophy, flanked by team-mates Henning Berg and Colin Hendry.
Picture: ALBERT COOPER

Mirror Sport on the crowning glory + Mirror Sport on the crowning glory

FRESH!



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Kenny is the King

THE NEW Kop stood as one to salute King Kenny and his Blackburn champions.

He may be ruler of a new dynasty but to every Scouser in red-and-white he's a legend, who has now won nine championships as a super player and a super boss.

Dalglish applauded them in turn to cement the touching relationship with the fans who still idolise him four years since he left Anfield a drained and jaded man.

Now he was beaming as the screams of "Champions, champions" came from the Liverpool faithful.

The atmosphere was unbelievable. The Kop could hardly have made more noise if their own side had won the most precious prize in soccer.

And they couldn't have been happier after the title had cruelly eluded their bitter rivals Manchester United.

Tear

It was all too much emotion for Rovers' owner Jack Walker, whose £60million investment has made the dream possible.

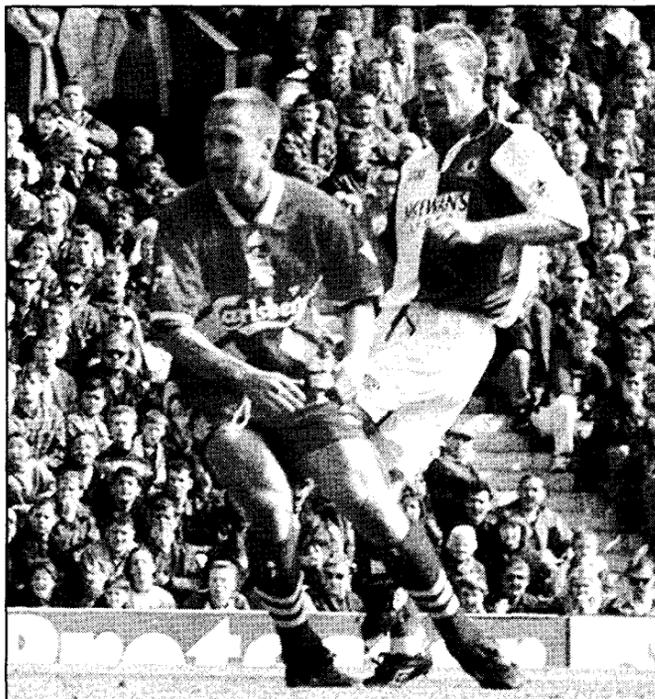
He shed a tear in the VIP box as skipper Tim Sherwood lifted the Premiership trophy draped in blue and white rosettes.

Then on the pitch the Blackburn fairytale was complete as Walker finally got his hands on the silverware 20 minutes after the final whistle.

The 64-year-old mega-millionaire danced with goal scorer Alan Shearer, and Dalglish — anyone who would trip the light fantastic.

Every Blackburn player joined the party, singing along with both sets of fans in a rousing chorus of "Are you watching Manchester."

Rovers had lost the game but won the ultimate prize. Liverpool had conquered the newly-crowned champs to blow out suggestions



STRIKE ONE! Shearer blasts Blackburn ahead



Liverpool 2 Blackburn 1

that they would lie down and die. But when they won the game with a Jamie Redknapp free kick the Liverpool midfielder looked down apologetically for what could have spoiled Blackburn's big day.

Seconds later, however, the thousands of radios pinned to ear-holes crackled with the news that Manchester United had drawn 1-1 and that Blackburn were champions.

The whole of Anfield erupted.

Rovers hadn't performed at their best despite generous encouragement from a Liverpool side who went through the motions and looked sheepish about putting Blackburn in any kind of danger.

John Barnes epitomised the mood when he suddenly found himself in the clear. He harmlessly scooped over and you were left with a feeling that the home side weren't about to break sweat to make their old boss suffer.

Dalglish needed to relax as he stood stony-faced watching the proceedings. He got that wish in the 20th minute when Blackburn blasted ahead. Shearer brought

winger Stuart Ripley into play and then streaked into space for the return ball which he walloped into the bottom corner.

It was his 34th Premiership goal of the season — equalling Andy Cole's record set last year.

The Kop stood and applauded — another rare sight on an away ground for the England hit-man.

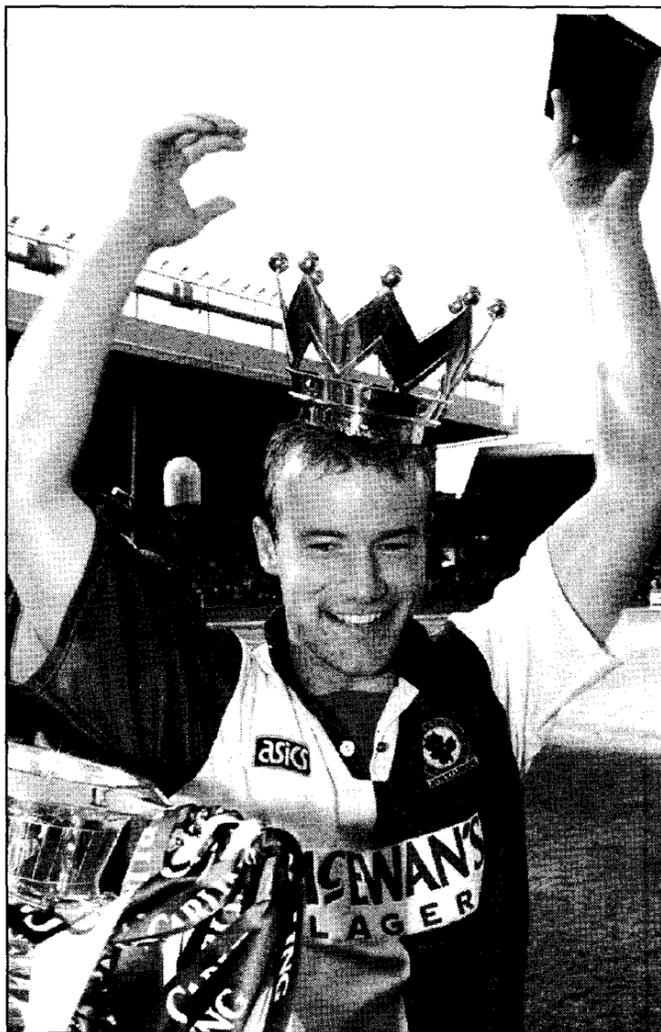
Those cheers were only superceded in the 31st minute when news filtered through about West Ham's opener at Upton Park and Walker's face lit up the whole of Anfield.

Script

It was just a matter of time it seemed before this game, which resembled a pre-season friendly, would result in the good news for Jack.

But in the 64th minute John Barnes rewrote the script. Mark Kennedy whipped over a ball and the England star tucked it into the bottom corner.

Then the gods were with Dalglish in the 76th minute as David Batty



THE CROWN FITS: Rovers goal machine Alan Shearer

hacked down Robbie Fowler in the box and held up his hands for what looked like a certain penalty.

But referee David Elleray waved play on with Batty and his Blackburn buddies taking another huge breath of relief.

And Rovers' hopes were raised when Phil Babb boomed just outside his own area.

Shearer cashed in and his deflected shot spun to Chris Sutton who rolled the ball tamely towards the empty net, allowing John Scales to complete a desperate chase to hook the ball away.

As the game grew in passion Blackburn looked for the first time as though they were going to finish like the champions they are.

Sutton's deflected shot wrong-footed keeper David James but bobbed agonisingly inches wide.

Then Shearer, with the goal at his mercy, blazed over. The nerves showed on the Blackburn bench as

they feared a late United winner at West Ham would rob them of their biggest day of glory.

And you could see Dalglish and his backroom staff visibly slump into their seats when in injury time Liverpool stunned even their own fans with a dramatic winner.

Redknapp took a free kick just outside the area and curled the ball into the top corner that passed the outstretched arm of Tim Flowers.

Redknapp didn't raise an arm in celebration and instead trooped off with the expression: "Oops, what the hell have I done!"

He didn't have long to wonder as the whole of Anfield rose to acknowledge United's result and cheer on King Kenny.

The celebrations were spontaneous with the Kop pinching the Old Trafford theme song with a rendering of "Always look On The Bright Side of Life."