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Rush justice saves Liverpool in bruising Goodison clash

Everton 0 Liverpool 1

Ian Rush once again demonstrated his remarkable capacity for scoring decisive late goals as he struck the winner seven minutes from time to stun Everton and send Liverpool striding into the Littlewoods Cup semi-finals in a bruising Merseyside Derby at Goodison Park last night.

But Liverpool's celebrations at their third victory of the season over their fiercest rivals were marred by the broken leg suffered by Jim Beglin, their Irish international defender, after 25 minutes of a confrontation bathed in drama before a massive crowd of 53,323.

Everton determination to break Liverpool took the game to frenzy-pitch in the first half. Sharp and Heath - twice - shot narrowly wide before the sickening injury to Beglin, after a tackle by Gary Stevens, ignited an atmosphere already charged by the occasion.

The incident not only provoked anger in the crowd but the Liverpool trainer, Ronnie Moran, was clearly furious with a linesman who was close to the tackle. The player was stretchered off to hospital where it was revealed he had sustained a broken left leg, while back on the pitch, Whelan was booked by the Nantwich referee, Neville Ashley, for dissent.

Liverpool sent on Venison to right back with Lawrenson switching to Beglin's position and the incident seemed to upset Everton more than Liverpool who finished the half strongly after sustaining heavy pressure.

Liverpool reorganised their resources again at the interval with the substitute Irvine on for McMahon, Lawrenson and Venison moving into midfield while Whelan and Molby dropped back into defence. But as so often happens in adversity, Liverpool somehow seemed to find strength, and although Everton fought manfully to dictate the pace it was Kenny Dalglish's men who began to look menacing.

Irvine, a rangy striker signed from Falkirk before Christmas, revealed remarkable pace to outstrip the subdued Stevens and cross for Walsh who was unmarked on the edge of the box. The Liverpool striker picked his spot and beat Southall with a superb drive which crashed back off the inside of the post and across the face of goal.

Walsh was causing no end of trouble as Everton struggled to maintain a footing in the game. Their frustration was mirrored in a booking for Sharp, who elbowed Molby in the face before Liverpool surged onto the attack again. The ball broke in the box for Walsh, who fired in a low drive which arrowed its way through a crowd of legs before being hacked off the line by Stevens.

With seven minutes left, Everton's misery was compounded. The ball broke in the Everton box for Rush, whose lethal left foot whipped in a fierce drive which Southall could not prevent screaming into the net to take the scorer's tally to 25 goals this season and leave him just two goals short of Dixie Dean's record in Merseyside derbies.

EVERTON: N Southall; G Stevens, N Pointon (sub: P Wilkinson), K Ratcliffe, D Mountfield, P Power (sub: I Snodin), T Steven, A Heath, G Sharp, A Harper, K Sheedy.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar, G Gillespie, J Beglin (sub: B Venison), M Lawrenson, R Whelan, A Hansen, P Walsh, C Johnston, I Rush, J Molby, S McMahon (sub: A Irvine).

Referee: N Ashley