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 Opposition: Charlton Athletic  
 Competition: League

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# THE TIMES

Liverpool prevail but Charlton make a fight of it

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Anfield's reputation as the home of pure unadulterated excitement was further enhanced last night as Liverpool staged a dramatic recovery to triumph in a quite magnificent game.

With 19 minutes remaining, Charlton were on the verge of claiming an improbable scalp and yet were to leave the field shaking their heads in disbelief, the latest victims of Liverpool's irresistible early season form.

Beautifully crafted goals from Alan Hansen and Steve McMahon in the 71st and 73rd minutes secured the points for the Merseysiders and left hapless Charlton cursing their luck and reflecting on a meagre return of just one point from their opening six fixtures.

Charlton, who boldly opted for an attacking formation which incorporated three frontrunners, refused to play the designated role of sacrificial lambs and produced some well co-ordinated football which belied their position at the foot of the first division table.

Having enjoyed the better of the early exchanges, they took the lead in the eighth minute with a goal which owed much to the extraordinary vision of Garth Crooks. An accurate lofted pass from Humphrey set him free down a thinly-populated right flank and as Grobbelaar, the Liverpool goalkeeper, advanced from his line to narrow the angle, the much-travelled forward lobbed the ball with unerring accuracy into the far corner of the net from 25 yards.

The celebrations were not allowed to overrun, however, as Liverpool, never more dangerous than when wounded, swept upfield to equalize within a matter of 90 seconds.

Shirtliff upended John Aldridge as he bore down on goal and after dusting himself down, the Republic of Ireland international, stepped forward to convert an uncontested penalty.

Liverpool gained the upper hand thereafter and came close to moving in front on the half hour when a Gillespie header from a Barnes free kick cannoned back into play off the crossbar.

Despite ending the first half very much on the defensive, Charlton continued to exploit space when they could find it and should have regained the lead after 46 minutes when Crooks drove firmly into the legs of Grobbelaar after Peake had taken advantage of a rare lapse in concentration within the Liverpool ranks.

But an intriguing game, whose balance of power was constantly shifting, was to regain tilt in the visitors' favour after 59 minutes when Colin Walsh superbly drove home a free kick from well outside the penalty area after Gillespie was adjusted to have fouled Crooks.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; D Gillespie, B Venison, S Nicol, R Whelan, A Hansen, P Beardsley, J Aldridge, N Spackman (sub: M Lawrenson), J Barnes, S McMahon.  
 CHARLTON ATHLETIC: N Johns; J Humphrey, S Griftt, A Peake, P Shirtliff, p Miller, R Milne (sub; P Williams), M Stuart, C Walsh, S Mackenzie, G Crooks.  
 Referee: M Reed.