

Date: 9 May 1988  
 Opposition: Luton Town  
 Competition: League

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# THE TIMES

Liverpool leave room for polish in their final act

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While the solitary point from last night draw with Luton Town last night was not enough for Liverpool to beat the first division's point record of 90 - they had to be content with equalling the mark set three seasons ago by Everton - Liverpool will have been more concerned by having to finish the game with only 10 men following the injuries to Gillespie and Spackman.

Having been denied the services of the injured Hansen, and having opted to rest Beardsley, Dalglish went a good way to ensuring that his Wembley line-up will remain open to speculation by against shuffling his pack.

Spackman moved into the heart of defence alongside Gillespie, with Whelan handed a roving midfield role and Houghton, for a time at least, asked to play as a forward.

Having failed to make any real impression on a resolute Luton side, McMahon inadvertently ignited the proceedings with an appalling tackle on Oldfield in the twelfth minute and was promptly booked.

Although Liverpool's approach play was as composed as it was simplistic, chances were hard to come by, and it was only the opportunism of Aldridge which gave the game its opening goal, Aldridge bicycle-kicked the ball into the bottom corner. Luton drew level midway through the half with a goal superbly taken by Olfield. Against the run of play, he outpaced the defence before driving the ball just inside a post from 12 yards.

There had been a reluctance by Liverpool to enter into bonejarring tackles with the usual venom, which was perhaps understandable under the circumstances. Then Anfield rose as one in the 62nd minute, when Dalglish climbed out of the dugout to replace Johnson.

At the age of 36 and with a magnificent managerial career already behind him, it could prove to have been the great Scot's last appearance in the red shirt of Liverpool.

----- LIVERPOOL: -----

B Grobbelaar; G Gillespie (sub: K MacDonald), G Ablett, S Nicoll, N Spackman, R Whelan, C Johnson (sub: K Dalglish), J Aldridge, R Houghton, J Barnes, S McMahon. -----

----- LUTON TOWN: -----

----- A Dibble; T Breacker, R Johnson (sub: James), A Grimes, S Foster, M Johnson, D Wilson, I Allinson (sub: G Cobb), D Oldfield, D Preece, K Black. -----

----- Referee: D Phillips.