

Date: 11 December 1988

Opposition: Everton

Competition: League

Times

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# THE TIMES

## Clarke conspires again to deny Liverpool victory

Liverpool 1 Everton 1

Wayne Clarke, who ended Liverpool's triumphant opening sequence last season, has halted their progress again. The scorer of the goal in March which prevented them from surpassing Leeds United's record of 29 games without defeat, yesterday claimed the equalizer which postponed their challenge for the leadership of the first division.

Yet had Southall not made several extraordinary saves, Liverpool would still have risen ominously into third place, a mere three points behind Norwich City, their visitors on Saturday. Houghton confirmed the opinion shared by many when he described the Everton goalkeeper as "a daunting figure. His save from Barnes was incredible. Had we gone 2-0 up then, we would have won easily".

Liverpool were initially appreciably the more measured and constructive in their work. They were prepared to dwell on the possibilities even deep in their own territory, an area regarded as so treacherous by other teams with defenders less comfortable on the ball that it should be cleared with the utmost urgency.

Liverpool gave themselves as much time in midfield as well. There was no need for them to be hurried. The player in possession was offered so many options that all he had to do was select the most advantageous. Their approach was consequently as simple as it was effective.

Everton, in contrast, appeared to be forever toiling twice as hard as their rivals for less than half the reward. Their clearances, rather than being considered and purposeful, were invariably hefty and struck in the hope that a colleague might be in the vicinity when it landed.

They were equally limited in defence. Their principle protective measure, apart from the inspired Southall, was the offside trap, a method which is secure as long as Ratcliffe retains his speed. Yet in his recovery from injury, their captain is unusually vulnerable to the through ball.

It was to be the source of all of Liverpool's openings as well as their goal. Barnes, retrieving the ball after Burrows had been dispossessed, and Houghton appreciated the flaw on the half-hour. The precision of Barnes's pass, the timing of Houghton's run, his evasion of the goalkeeper and his eventual finish were all perfect.

The champions never matched the move again, although they glimpsed at least four other opportunities. McMahon, brushing aside the ineffective Bracewell, released Aldridge on the right, for instance. His measured cross was volleyed cleanly enough by Barnes but Southall, reacting instinctively to tip it over, defied belief.

Before the interval, Beardsley accelerated into a central path, which was guarded only by Ratcliffe and Watson, with Aldridge accompanying him on the right and Barnes on the left. He delayed momentarily before choosing to free Aldridge, who had by then wandered inadvertently into Everton's trap.

In the second half, Beardsley repeated the run and the idea. Aldridge, hesitating fractionally before starting his sprint, was through but Southall was again too substantial a barrier. Rush, introduced with a quarter of an hour to go, could do no better as he chased Whelan's delicate threaded pass.

Dixie Dean's record of 19 goals for Liverpool in Merseyside derbies was under obvious threat as Rush, who equalled the figure before leaving for Juventus, closed in on his Welsh compatriot. But his flick drifted over the bar and, with it, departed Liverpool's ambition.

They might even have collected nothing for their superiority which was less marked after the interval. Everton had produced nothing of genuine note until Burrows, the youngest and most impetuous member of Liverpool's otherwise assured back four, bundled Steven over unnecessarily in the 51st minute.

Clarke, the scorer of the ensuing penalty, appeared to have added another after the hour. But, in climbing at the far post to nod in Wilson's cross, he was adjudged to have leaned on Burrows. Liverpool escaped punishment then and Cottee was also to spare them later.

A similar chip from Wilson deceived Ablett in the air and dropped conveniently at the feet of the forward valued at Pounds 2 million. He swung his boot powerfully enough but connected with nothing more substantial than the cold evening air.

LIVERPOOL: M Hooper; G Ablett, B Venison, S Nicol, R Whelan, D Burrows, P Beardsley, J Aldridge, R Houghton, J Barnes, S McMahon.

EVERTON: N Southall; I Snodin, P Van den Hauwe, K Ratcliffe, D Watson, P Bracewell, T Steven, S McCall, W Clarke, A Cottee, I Wilson.

Referee: J Worrall.