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Opposition: Millwall

Competition: FA Cup

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Liverpool lionized at The Den

Millwall 0 Liverpool 2

Liverpool, who overnight had lost their place to Manchester United as favourites to win the FA Cup, proved in typical style yesterday that they are still in the hunt for the trophy. As John Docherty, the Millwall manager, observed: "During the past 20 years Liverpool have set the standard which the rest of us have had to try and aspire to."

A crowd of 23,615, the best of the season at The Den, sportingly accorded them an ovation at the end. Goals from Aldridge and Rush in the second half, after Liverpool had soaked up considerable aerial pressure, showed that they are still past masters at coping with pressure.

Despite a couple of aberrations during the second period, Grobbelaar, with some clean handling, seems to be back to his best now that he has been restored as Liverpool's first-choice goalkeeper.

Kenny Dalglish, their manager, had underlined his intention, or perhaps his fear of Millwall's aerial power, by including Watson, a defender, for his first game of the season and relegating two expensive signings, Beardsley and Houghton, to the substitutes' bench.

With an audience of millions watching on television and a near-full house at The Den, including Colin Moynihan, the Minister for Sport, and Roy Hattersley, the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Millwall pressured Liverpool throughout a first half that, in the event, produced only one shot, from Hurlock, and that was off target.

An almost intimidatory background of noise from the terraces accompanied Liverpool's first-ever visit to Cold Blow Lane and, as visiting crowds have experienced with the Kop at Anfield, they got a taste of their own medicine. From the opening minute, when a long ball high into the Liverpool area was headed over his own bar by Watson, the Lions snapped at their opponents and harried them.

Having drawn 1-1 at Anfield in the League in November, Millwall were not overawed by reputations. As Aldridge chased forward hopefully after the ball, Horne came out of his area and chested it wide of his opponent. Horne withstood a challenge from Aldridge and recovered to dribble the ball around Rush before completing his clearance.

Grobbelaar had to be on his toes. He showed his class when Hurlock floated one of the incessant high balls forward favoured by Millwall by taking it cleanly off the heads of Cascarino and Sheringham.

Daws and Wood were in inspired form for Millwall and made a series of interceptions and tackles that prevented Liverpool getting in range. Hurlock and Briley had the better of the midfield.

There was a moment of danger for Liverpool when George Courtney, a thoroughly efficient referee, awarded the Lions a free kick in the area when McMahon's boot caught Briley on the head and he needed treatment. Sheringham touched the ball to O'Callaghan, whose shot cannoned back off the wall of defenders lined up in front of Grobbelaar's goal.

The second half had scarcely got under way when the game had its first shot on target. Grobbelaar cleanly held an effort from Hurlock that took a slight deflection. Carter, who flitted in and out of the game, provided Sheringham with the chance of a header that went narrowly over. Liverpool, at this stage, were reduced to clearing their lines.

The crowd, 10,000 more than watched last week's televised game against Norwich City, was almost stunned to silence when Liverpool took the lead after 57 minutes. Aldridge emerged from among the pack of defenders as a corner from Barnes came over and his header soared past Horne for his thirteenth goal of the season.

The Liverpool contingent, outshouted until then, made their vocal presence felt. A second goal followed after 63 minutes, a move started and completed by Rush for his seventh goal of the season. Aldridge cleverly dummied as Rush put the ball across from the right, Barnes back-heeled and Rush, who had continued running, scored with a shot in off a post.

Millwall tried to keep their momentum going despite the reverses. Grobbelaar saw a shot from Carter come off the ground and hit him on the chest. The Millwall dream, however, was over.

MILLWALL: B Horne; D Thompson, I Daws, T Hurlock, S Wood, A McLeary, J Carter, L Briley, T Sheringham, T Cascarino, K O'Callaghan.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Ablett, D Burrows, S Nicol, R Whelan, J Molby, A Watson, J Aldridge, I Rush, J Barnes, S McMahon.

Referee: G Courtney.