Date: 22 September 1990
Opposition: Everton
Competition: League

Times	Guardian	Sunday Times

22 September 1990

THE TIMES

Liverpool still on course for record

Everton 2 Liverpool 3

EVEN before the game, bookmakers were quoting odds of only 20-1 against Liverpool surpassing Tottenham Hotspur's record of opening the season with 11 consecutive wins. After the way they survived Everton's storm, the odds must be considerably shorter.

Everton, displaying all the passion and commitment of the underdogs in a Merseyside derby, went as close as anyone with their direct approach. It was still not enough against a team containing the supreme talents of Barnes and Beardsley.

Beardsley was the first among equals in his first away game of the season, Dalglish having previously preferred the extra security of a sweeper. Beardsley made his point, scoring twice and sending Rush free to attract the penalty which brought Liverpool's other goal with a superb through ball.

But Barnes too had his moments, both winning the free-kick from which Beardsley opened the scoring after 35 minutes of almost unrelenting Everton pressure, and playing a part in Beardsley finding the net as his blind-side run distracted Southall just enough.

Barnes scored from the spot two minutes later, and when Beardsley added the third after 69 minutes, the home team was briefly facing humiliation.

Instead, with a spirit which augurs well for the beleaguered Colin Harvey, Everton rallied. A quickly taken free-kick, one of several awarded for fouls on Sharp, Everton's outstanding player, enabled Hinchcliffe to score. Suddenly it looked as if everything was raining down on the Liverpool defence.

Hysen's inadvertent own goal five minutes from time ensured a hectic finish, but miracles do not happen at Goodison Park often these days. The question is whether, with Liverpool's mood, they will happen anywhere else.

EVERTON: N Southall; R Atteveld, A Hinchcliffe, K Ratcliffe, D Watson, M Milligan (sub: N McDonald), P Nevin, S McCall, G Sharp, M Newell (sub: A Cottee), J Ebbrell.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Hysen, D Burrows, B Venison, R Whelan, G Gillespie, P Beardsley, R Houghton, I Rush, J Barnes, S McMahon.

Referee: R Milford.

theguardian

Liverpool on high as Harvey sinks further

COLIN HARVEY does not make the trek up to the fourth-floor Goodison press room for the post-match chat these days. Heaven knows why. His team have nothing to be ashamed of . . . except their results.

Kenny Dalglish, used to high places, went along to say his side 'nearly cut their own throats' as a comfortable lead was chopped from under them in the last minutes of the Merseyside derby.

Rarely can Liverpool have spent so much time pinned in their own half. But in this wham-bam foot-down-and-go encounter Everton, whose recent rigorous approach owes more to necessity than desire, kept them under constant pressure, clawed back two goals having been three down, and in the last five minutes had Liverpool scrambling about their goalmouth to hang on to their lead by the anti-skid patches on Grobbelaar's gloves.

It was stirring stuff, but while it endeared Everton to their supporters it did nothing to alleviate the misery of being third from bottom with only two points from six games. They threw everything they had at Liverpool, but with Barnes, Rush and Beardsley sharp as Stanley knives it was not quite fair to say they were just unlucky to be three down.

Beardsley was again in cracking form. He scored the first goal with a 20-yard bending free-kick, which would have been difficult enough for Southall without the added hindrance of a dummy run across the face of goal by Barnes. Atteveld, who had worked hard and well to contain the England winger, conceded the kick, and then within 84 seconds a penalty as he brought down Rush.

The Everton full-back protested his innocence afterwards, saying the referee had promised him champagne if television proved his decision wrong. It did not.

Barnes put the spot kick through Southall's legs and Liverpool went three ahead through Beardsley in the second half. It was his seventh goal in four games, his fifth in seven days.

Much will happen before the end of the season but it will take something cataclysmic to knock Liverpool off the top, and this without Nicol, who has a recurrent groin injury, and with a player of Rosenthal's quality in the reserves. Ablett and Molby were the substitutes, Dalglish obviously thinking that if he needed reinforcements at all it would be in defence. How right. Everton, who have not been in the lead this season, had everyone bar the goalkeeper in Liverpool's half for long spells in the second period and produced a storming finish.

Gillespie's handball gave Everton a free-kick, which Nevin played smartly for Hinchcliffe to strike past Grobbelaar. McCall's back header from another free-kick hit the underside of the bar and then the back-tracking Hysen, who was powerless to stop it rebounding off his stomach for an own goal.

In appalling weather, the ball greasy and the pitch slippery as ice, Whelan cleared off the line and Grobbelaar made two stupendous saves to deny Everton an equaliser in a breathtaking last 10 minutes.

With performances like their last three, surely Everton cannot stay near the bottom for long. Sadly, though, they owe much to do-or-die. Science is now a fiction at Goodison.

There is no doubt Harvey gets the best out of what he has got. The question is whether what he has got is good enough for Goodison. Regrettably but inevitably, the same is being asked about the manager.

SCORERS: Everton: Hinchcliffe (71 min), Hysen (og, 85). Liverpool: Beardsley (36 and 69), Barnes (pen, 37).

Everton: Southall; Atteveld, Hinchcliffe, Ratcliffe, Watson, Milligan (McDonald, 63), Nevin, McCall, Sharp, Newell (Cottee, 63), Ebbrell.

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Hysen, Burrows, Venison, Whelan, Gillespie, Beardsley, Houghton, Rush, Barnes, McMahon.

Referee: R Milford (Bristol).

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Liverpool hang on by a thread as Everton rally

EVERTON 2 LIVERPOOL 3

EVERTON 2 (4-4-2): Southall; Atteveld, Watson, Ratcliffe, Hinchcliffe; Ebbrell, McCall, Milligan (sub: Cottee 63min), Nevin; Newell (sub: McDonald 63min), Sharp.

LIVERPOOL 3 (4-3-3): Grobbelaar; Venison, Hysen, Gillespie, Burrows; Houghton, Whelan, McMahon; Rush, Beardsley, Barnes.

Goals: Beardsley (36min) 0-1; Barnes (pen 37min) 0-2; Beardsley (69min) 0-3; Hinchcliffe (71min) 1-3; McCall (85min)
2-3.

Weather: cloudy. Ground: firm.

Referee: R Milford (Bristol).

LIKE Waterloo, this turned out to be a damn near thing. At one point Liverpool were cruising home 3-0. In the last five minutes they were hanging on for dear life.

Hinchcliffe, the young full-back signed from Manchester City, put Everton on the road back with a goal from Nevin's quickly-taken free kick. Not that this should have surprised Liverpool: the referee had warned them that he would allow such enterprise.

Then, in the 85th minute, it was suddenly an inexplicably 2-3. McCall's back-header hit the bar, and then Hysen, fast going more grey by the minute.

There was still time for Atteveld to hit a seige-gun shot which demanded considerable athletics by Grobbelaar, and for one more serious Everton assault. But they could not draw level, nor did they deserve to.

The obvious lesson from the afternoon is that the only team that can prevent Liverpool from wrapping up the championship by Christmas are Liverpool themselves. Kenny Dalglish was affable afterwards, and that Stan Laurel face even broke into a smile.

But Liverpool should never, ever, throw away a 3-0 lead in the last 20 minutes, and when Dalglish arrives at the training ground tomorrow morning he may well kick one or two rear ends. Admittedly, he and Liverpool set out their stall with conviction. We saw an aggressive three-man attack of Beardsley, Barnes and Rush from the kick-off.

Beardsley was as destructive as he had been in the 4-0 televised romp against Manchester United. His record is interesting: this season he has been dropped twice, played only four matches, and scored seven goals. Rush gave the most determined show sprinting 20 yards here and there to block a clearance that one has seen from him since his return from Juventus. And Barnes was just Barnes. Not in the match that much, but so destructive in bursts. With these front three against them, Everton should never have had a sniff of a point. They would not have had but for the limitations of Liverpool's midfield, cut to three. Whelan was ordinary, Houghton not the Houghton we saw on television last Sunday, and only McMahon showed enough grit. But he should not have tweaked Sharp's nose when the two faced up late on.

Liverpool also had to thank their centre-backs and Grobbelaar. Defensively, the full-backs are questionable. Venison wants to leave Anfield because Nicol, injured yesterday, is first choice, though that could be for the best.

What of Everton, already 16 points behind their neighbours across Stanley Park? It is hard not to feel for a side when the goalkeeper stages a sit-in on the pitch and when two players, Sheedy and Keown, come to blows on a night out to restore team morale. Everton must hope that the talented Ebbrell can work one flank, Nevin the other, and that their better players, McCall, Sharp, and perhaps Cottee, will lift the rest. The early action centered on the duel between Barnes and Atteveld. Atteveld was holding his own until the 36th minute when he fouled Barnes. Beardsley hit a low, curling free kick from 22 yards, diagonally out. Southall thought Barnes, or somebody, would get a touch and was deceived. The ball sped in.

Liverpool's second goal was a penalty. Beardsley hit a lovely forward ball, Rush the greyhound got there, Mr Milford decided Atteveld had fouled him. Barnes scored. Liverpool's third was their best. Rush crossed low, Beardsley gave one of those delicious little shimmies of his and he beat Southall.

Suddenly the underdog barked. It was as well because, until the finale, there was limited passion.

Liverpool now face Sunderland, Derby and Norwich. Do we call off the First Division at Christmas and start again?

Hopefully, Arsenal and Tottenham will mount a serious London challenge.