

Date: 10 November 1990

Opposition: Luton Town

Competition: League

Times	Guardian	Sunday Times

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# THE TIMES

Luton glad to get off so lightly

Liverpool 4 Luton Town 0

IF THERE was any consolation for Luton as they became Liverpool's latest victims, it lay in the scoreline. An 8-0 defeat would have been a much fairer reflection of the play as the team gave Jan Molby a farewell to remember.

That, of course, is assuming that Molby does leave for Barcelona this week. Kenny Dalglish, perhaps feeling, like the Kop, that there had not been enough real conflict on the field, decided to enliven the post-match press conference by insisting that the move was not certain.

Nobody else had any doubts, including Molby, who decorated the game with some splendid passes and followed the tradition set by the watching John Aldridge of saying his farewells by scoring Liverpool's second goal from the penalty spot in the ninth minute, which effectively ended the game as a contest there and then, leaving only the margin to be decided.

Luton had already been softened up by the first goal, a quite dazzling move beginning with Grobbelaar's short throw and culminating with Rush speeding through a square defence to meet Houghton's perfect pass. Thereafter they submitted quietly. "Thank God it's over," a chastened Jim Ryan, the Luton manager, remarked as he left Anfield.

Beardsley, who set up the third goal, another superb pass piercing the heart of the Luton defence for Rush to again round Chamberlain, and scored the fourth after a superb passing movement involving Burrows, Houghton and Molby, was on this occasion only first among equals. Rush, who Dalglish says is playing "better than before he went to Italy" was like quicksilver.

"There are not many teams in Europe who can start with the ball in the goalkeeper's hands, pass with great precision and end up at the other end to score within seconds," Molby's admiring compatriot Lars Elstrup said afterwards. "They're the best club side I've ever played against."

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Hysen, D Burrows, S Nicol(sub: S Staunton), G Ablett, G Gillespie, P Beardsley (sub: R Rosenthal), R Houghton, I Rush, J Molby, S McMahon.

LUTON TOWN: A Chamberlain; M Johnson, R Harvey, S Williams, D Beaumont, J Dreyer, L Elstrup, D Preece, I Dowie, C Hughes (sub: S Farrell), K Black.

Referee: G Ashby.

# the guardian

Luton torn apart

Liverpool 4, Luton 0

IT IS doubtful whether England can stand the loss of John Barnes quite so easily as Liverpool did. He missed this game through a hamstring injury, and the Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish confirmed that the winger will not be fit to play for England against the Republic of Ireland on Wednesday.

Liverpool gave Luton, then lying a respectable eighth from top but now eighth from bottom, the courtesy of allowing them to play for the first five minutes and then, with as little compassion as a Sioux war party, skinned them alive.

Luton were mortally wounded by two goals in the first ten minutes and stabbed in the heart with a third just before half-time. Liverpool finally stopped the body twitching with a fourth in the second half. In between, Luton suffered the most excruciating torture, and the kill would have been a good deal bloodier but for the goalkeeping of Chamberlain.

Bill Shankly is on record as saying he used to hand toilet rolls to visiting players as they ran out of the Anfield tunnel. This was such a day. And the Luton manager Jim Ryan left Liverpool saying: 'I'm glad it's over.'

However, even with Luton two goals down after ten minutes, he said: 'I did not think it was going to be a monstrous score. I didn't spend the next 80 minutes thinking there were another seven goals in it.'

Nearly everybody else did, especially with Rush zinging. For weeks Dalglish has been saying Rush has been playing better than before he went to Italy. On Saturday he proved it: lean, mean, goal-hungry and now, with a tally of 12 in all competitions, the division's top goal scorer.

'He was awesome,' said Ryan. So were most of the rest, not least Beardsley and Houghton, in for Barnes, who produced the move that gave Rush the chance to draw out Chamberlain and skip past him for the first goal.

Four minutes later the supporters were denied what promised to be a glorious goal when Nicol's tremendous sprint down the right ended with Harvey bringing him down. Molby, who was playing his last game for Liverpool if the proposed move to Barcelona goes through this week, converted the penalty.

Another great pass from Beardsley gave Rush almost a copycat second goal, except this time he used the other foot, and midway through the second half Beardsley received similar service from Houghton for the fourth.

Beardsley's parting shot hit a post before he was substituted, his energy saved for England. Nicol went off too, but he was limping and will not be fit for Scotland.

SCORERS: Liverpool: Rush (5 and 39min), Molby, pen (9), Beardsley (71).

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Hysen, Burrows, Nicol (Staunton, 82), Ablett, Gillespie, Beardsley (Rosenthal, 80), Houghton, Rush, Molby, McMahon.

Luton: Chamberlain; Johnson, Harvey, Williams, Beaumont, Dreyer, Elstrup, Preece, Dowie, Hughes (Farrell, 81), Black.

Referee: G Ashby (Worcester).

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## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Liverpool show off enterprise initiative

LIVERPOOL 4 LUTON 0

LIVERPOOL 4 (4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Ablett, Hysen, Gillespie, Nicol (sub: Staunton 85min); McMahon, Molby, Burrows, Houghton; Rush, Beardsley (sub: Rosenthal 81min).

LUTON 0 (4-4-2): Chamberlain; Johnson, Beaumont, Dreyer, Harvey; Hughes (sub: Farrell 82min), Preece, Williams, Black; Elstrup, Dowie.

Goals: Rush (5min) 1-0; Molby (pen 9min) 2-0; Rush (40min) 3-0; Beardsley (71min) 4-0.

Weather: bright. Ground: firm.

Referee: G Ashby (Worcester)

At a time when Mrs Thatcher is worried about British sovereignty and German technocrats taking over the world, Liverpool football club should provide her with some solace.

If ever a British business was run with slide-rule precision and ruthless purpose it is Liverpool forward line. Twice in the first nine minutes Luton's goalkeeper was dismayed to find a Liverpool enterprise initiative finish in the back of his net. The first, thanks to Houghton's pass and a swivel of Rush's hips as he rounded the goalkeeper, looked ominous for Luton. Molby's penalty three minutes later effectively ended the contest.

There followed a neat procession of events. Another goal from Rush, one from Beardsley, Molby waving goodbye to the Kop having announced his move to Barcelona, and Kenny Dalglish hotly denying that his great Dane is going anywhere.

In the resulting confusion Dalglish was asked twice to explain the Molby mix-up. "Jesus Christ, is there an echo in here?" cried the Liverpool manager, before going on to explain helpfully that Molby will remain at Anfield ... until he goes. Dalglish being rude to the press set the seal on a typical Liverpool afternoon. Rush appeared silkily efficient, McMahon was influential in midfield despite the strain of keeping the elbows of God to himself, and Luton demonstrated their ability to concede away goals.

The gulf between the two sides was graphically illustrated by the comical sight of Black running round in ever decreasing circles with the ball and shouting in some desperation: "Who wants it? Who wants it?" Answer: nobody wearing a white shirt.

By comparison, Liverpool's delivery service was second to none. The through ball from McMahon which obliged Harvey to trip Nicol to grant Molby his penalty was faultless. For variety's sake, Rush rounded Chamberlain from the other direction for his second goal of the match and 12th of the season. One appreciates these moments of novelty. Liverpool scoring goals with relentless frequency could be seen, beyond Merseyside, as dreadfully boring.

By half-time, the only crackle in the air was coming from the radios tuned to Radio 5 in an attempt to find out how many Everton were losing by. In this fervent hope, the crowd was thwarted, but Beardsley's 10th goal of the season was some consolation.