

Date: 19 August 1992  
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Times		
British Soccer Wk		

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# THE TIMES

## Stewart helps restore morale

Liverpool 2 Sheffield United 1

WHILE lacking the assurance and self-confidence which has been their hallmark during the past two decades, Liverpool raised their game to collect their first Premier League points of the season last night.

After the defeat at Nottingham Forest on Sunday, their need for victory far outweighed the desire for a performance of fluidity and style, although Sheffield United's belligerent approach always looked likely to reap a tangible reward. It was Liverpool's abject failure to remove the ball from positions of danger when the opportunity presented itself which so contributed to the threadbare nature of their football.

On this occasion at least, Graeme Souness's fondness for experimentation could not be held responsible because the threat of a persistent aerial assault precipitated the return of an orthodox back four with Burrows and Wright paired together at the heart of the defence.

Although United's less measured attacks did carry slightly more threat, they seldom looked to be capable of underlining a marginal supremacy which made the events of the 36th minute all the more improbable.

Gage, the United full back, delivered a pass deep into the Liverpool half, one which Burrows would normally have dispatched back to his goalkeeper. However, possibly mindful that James's first ever appearance at Anfield had embraced both positional and handling errors, Burrows obviously did not feel inclined to deliver a pass which his colleague would be unable to pick up.

Deane, sensing his opponent's unease, promptly intervened, stealing the ball before drilling home accurately from 18 yards.

It is conceivable that had Walters's splendid equalising goal from 20 yards in the 43rd minute not acted as an antidote on Liverpool's catalogue of mostly mental and nervous ailments, United could have taken something away from a match to which they contributed much.

However, once the impetus had changed hands, the likelihood of the home side being denied victory receded so dramatically that the decisive goal in the 65th minute was, if anything, overdue.

Saunders's clipped pass behind a static United rearguard was so precise that Stewart would have looked foolish indeed had he failed to find the target.

LIVERPOOL: D James; R Jones, D Burrows, S Nicol, R Whelan, M Wright, D Saunders (sub: R Rosenthal), P Stewart, S McManaman, M Walters, M Thomas.  
 SHEFFIELD UNITED: S Tracey; K Gage, D Barnes, J Gannon (sub: C Hartfield), P Beesley, A McCleary, C Bradshaw (sub: A Cork), M Lake, I Bryson, B Deane, G Hodges.

Referee: D Elleray.

## BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

### Paul's pearler

Liverpool's new 2.3 million pound Paul Stewart crowned an impressive Anfield debut with the winning goal against Sheffield United.

Dean Saunders beat two defenders on the right, chipped deep to the far post and Stewart stole in unmarked to tuck the ball away under Simon Tracey's body after 65 minutes.

Liverpool fell behind after 35 minutes when David Burrows hesitated deep in his own half, allowing bustling Sheffield United striker Brian Deane to rob him, stride forward and score with a thunderous shot.

But two minutes before the break Ronnie Whelan's intelligent pass found Mark Wright in space on the edge of the United area and the winger's low angled drive flew into the far corner of the net.

United had escaped in the first minute when Tracey went down injured outside his area in a challenge on Walters. In the resulting scramble Stewart lobbed the loose ball over the bar.

Deane saw a half-blocked shot smack straight into the arms of Liverpool keeper David James, also making his home debut, and then tried an overhead kick from a Carl Bradshaw header with James stranded, but saw his effort clear the bar.

Liverpool's Steve McManaman pulled a ball back from the right flank for whelan to chip over the Sheffield rearguard, Stewart's outstretched leg diverting the ball across the face of the goal and fractionally wide.

After the break chances were at a premium until Stewart pounced, Michael Thomas producing the first notable save from Tracey with a rising shot from a tight angle on the right.

United almost grabbed the equaliser when Ian Bryson rose unmarked and came within a whisker of connecting with a Glyn Hodges corner in the closing stages. Stewart described his winning goal on his home debut as "the perfect start" to his Anfield career. "It's always nice to score a goal at home or away, but it's obviously special because it was my home debut and I wanted to do well for the fans. It's the perfect start for me. I felt comfortable as soon as I came here. The lads made me very welcome and I felt part of the club straight away."

Manager Graeme Souness said: "We worked hard and played some good football and deserved to win against a side who always make life hard for you. There are still a lot of things to iron out, but we played very well in patches."