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THE TIMES

Liverpool's win spoilt by Stewart's dismissal
 Apollon Limassol 1 Liverpool 2 - (Liverpool win 8-2 on aggregate) - LIVERPOOL, for whom little has gone according to plan this season, recorded a commendable, if unimpressive, victory in the Tsiron Stadium last night, only to see their achievement devalued by the stupidity of one of their experienced players. Paul Stewart was ordered from the pitch in the 72nd minute for slapping Michalis Christophi in the face, a blatant act of petty malice which was witnessed by a linesman. The dismissal came when the tie had been effectively settled and Liverpool had moved into the last 16 of the Cup Winners' Cup against the part-timers of Apollon Limassol.

The Limassol goalkeeper made the proverbial meal of an innocuous tap to the side of the face after the two men had collided, but by raising his hand to an opponent, Stewart, an England international, had committed one of football's cardinal sins.

Graeme Souness, the Liverpool manager declined to defend Stewart, who will face a three-match suspension from European competition if his actions are deemed to constitute violent behaviour. "Paul Stewart raised his hand and if you do that, you deserve to go off," he said.

The sending-off, the first time a Liverpool footballer has been so punished in the European arena since Kenny Dalglish against Benfica in Portugal eight years ago, briefly threatened to provoke trouble within a small section of the ground's main stand.

Stewart was fortunate not to be ordered off in the sixth minute, after he had recklessly kicked out at Charalambos Christophi during an unpleasant opening period when tempers often threatened to spill over. The 6-1 deficit from the tie's first leg at Anfield did little to dampen the natural enthusiasm of Limassol. Sadly, football of a constructive nature was well-nigh impossible on a dry and hard playing surface.

Although McManaman was a little unfortunate to see his firm drive saved well in the sixteenth minute, Liverpool's football was unconvincing, and by half-time Limassol had begun to puncture a previously well-organised defence.

Limassol's frustration began to match Liverpool's indifference as the second half unfolded, but both sides scored goals within 90 seconds. In the 61st minute, Limassol deservedly moved in front when Spoljaric swept home a Pittas cross, only for Rush to claim his fifth goal of the tie and his twentieth in European football when he neatly turned home a Hutchison cross. Rush now requires one more senior goal to equal Roger Hunt's 286 goals for Liverpool.

Liverpool assured that a slightly circuitous victory would be theirs in the 69th minute when Hutchison displayed great composure within the penalty area before turning in a McManaman cross.

APOLLON LIMASSOL: M Christophi; A Andrellis, C Pittas, D Ionnou, C Christophi, Y Yiangoudakis, G Iosiphides, M Spoljaric, C Juras, A Tsolakis, D Kenny (sub: D Yennaris).

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; M Marsh, D Burrows, N Tanner, J Redknapp, D Hutchison, S McManaman, P Stewart, I Rush, J Molby, M Walters (sub: S Harkness).

Referee: S Loris (Italy).

BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Breathing space for Reds but Stewart is sent off
 Liverpool's smooth passage through to the second round of the European Cup Winners' Cup was marred by the dismissal of Paul Stewart 18 minutes from time in Cyprus.

Influential midfielder Stewart will now have to serve a Euro ban after being shown the red card for raising an arm to Apollon goalkeeper Christophi. Under pressure manager Graeme Souness said: "It was foolish of him. If you raise your hand in any game you will go off. Paul didn't strike out; it was more of a brush and the goalkeeper threw himself down two or three seconds after the incident. It was unfair but, hopefully, Paul will have learned from it."

As for the game, Souness added: "It's always hard to motivate yourself in situations like that and the pitch caused us as many problems as anything. We still had to go out there and do a job."

Liverpool looked distinctly nervous in the first period as Isofedis hit a post with a drive from outside the box and Bruce Grobbelaar was forced into making a great save when Ionnou sent the rebound towards the net.

Grobbelaar, who was again preferred in goal to David James, then made a second spectacular save from Spoljaric's hopeful shot.

Steve McManaman occasionally tormented the Cypriot defence with darting runs down the Liverpool wing and it was the youngster's drive from 25 yards which represented Liverpool's best chance in the first half.

Ian Rush, captaining the Liverpool side in the absence of Mark Wright, went close in first half stoppage time. However, the Welshman headed Mark Walters' cross straight into the arms of Christophi.

With a scoreless draw looking likely, the game came to life in the 60th minute - and it was Apollon who took the lead. Milenko Spoljaric hit a hard, left-foot shot from the edge of the area, which was the signal for a mini pitch invasion from the volatile home fans.

But a minute later Liverpool were level - and it was Rush who stepped in to score his 5th goal of the tie and 20th in European competition. He is now within one goal of Roger Hunt's all-time Liverpool scoring record.

Don Hutchison secured victory for Liverpool in the 68th minute when he beat Christophi but the Reds had hardly finished celebrating when Stewart received his marching orders.