

Date: 7 November 1992
 Opposition: Middlesbrough
 Competition: League

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British Soccer Wk			



Rosenthal lifts Liverpool's gloom
 Liverpool 4, Middlesbrough 1.
 LIVERPOOL 4

(4-4-2): Hooper; Marsh, Nicol, Piechnik, Burrows; McManaman, Hutchison, Stewart, Redknapp; Rush, Rosenthal.

MIDDLESBROUGH 1

(5-3-2): Pears; Fleming, Kernaghan (Morris 15min), Whyte, Dittens, Phillips; Mustoe, Falconer, Proctor (Slaven 75min); Wilkinson, Hendrie.

Goals: Rosenthal (8min) 1-0; Rosenthal (37min) 2-0; Phillips (pen 40min) 2-1; McManaman (45min) 3-1; Rush (89min) 4-1.

Weather: drizzly. Ground: soft. Referee: D Gallagher (Banbury).

LIVERPOOL tired towards the end of their 23rd game of the season, but they had done enough in the first half to destroy Middlesbrough and extend the northeastern club's run to 10 games without a win.

Lennie Lawrence, the Middlesbrough manager, put it down to rank bad defending, but his use of three centre-backs at the expense of midfield cover gave acres of space to Rosenthal on the left, which the Israeli international exploited so well it posed the question: why was he playing in only his sixth League game?

His two goals doubled his season's tally and, with McManaman registering his second in the League, Liverpool were home and dry by half-time. Rush headed powerfully home right at the end. As if to reinforce what a lean time Liverpool have been experiencing, it was only his second of the season and his first at Anfield since May.

Much has been made of the tiredness factor after the worst showing by English clubs in European competition for 30-odd years, but nobody was suggesting that was the case when Liverpool were winning 10 championships and four European Cups in 20 years under Shankly, Paisley and Fagan.

Managers are unwilling to accept that today's top footballers do not work as hard to master their trade as their European counterparts. How can they on three hours' training a day? Shankly founded a dynasty at Liverpool upon his infectious enthusiasm, embracing the very simplicity of the game and inculcating it into the players who were bought from the lower divisions.

Significantly, he assembled his next generation of players while his first fine team was winning the League title. Of that team, seven had come up through the juniors, with only Strong, Stevenson, Yeats, and St John bought in.

It was extraordinary that Clemence, Lindsay, Lloyd, Hughes and Evans were all teenagers when they were taken to Anfield, and Keegan not long out of his teens. They were followed by Rush and Case, but after Fagan's two years in charge the well ran dry. Dalglish, properly celebrated as a player, did not sustain the line and towards the end of his seven years in charge paid the price, with no alternative but to join the transfer market with its inflated prices.

It may be churlish to criticise Middlesbrough in the same way as Liverpool: they have neither the pedigree nor the resources. Their wafer-thin staff has left them exposed and Lawrence said: "We need one or two experienced players. The Premier Division is no place for players who might or might not perform, or for inexperienced kids. "I shall be looking for reinforcements in the next fortnight, probably a foreign player, because we don't have much money to spare. I learnt more today than in the last seven weeks or so." Rosenthal, with a cross and shot, and McManaman with a jinking run into the penalty area, threatened, but Middlesbrough's extra defender proved superfluous when Gittens made an awful mess of a back-pass and, from an acute angle, Rosenthal beat Pears to it and slotted in Liverpool's first goal in 279 minutes' football. Middlesbrough suffered a further blow when Kernaghan was forced to leave the field, but Morris, the substitute, took his place in a back five, spreadeagled once again when Rush broke down the right. His cross was perfect, but Pears made a brave and confident save as Hutchison got the final touch.

The Middlesbrough goalkeeper had to race from his line again to stop Redknapp reaching Rosenthal's penetrating ball from deep in his own half, which provided further evidence that the defensive system was not working.

Rosenthal was a constant thorn, with his effervescent running on the left, and he had already flicked a header just over and been clumsily stopped by Gittens when he scored again. Hooper's long punt was flicked on by Redknapp and Rosenthal ran 20 yards before steadying himself and hitting a shot so hard that, although Pears got both hands to it, he could not stop it.

But in a rare breakaway, Hooper was judged to have brought down Hendrie, who made a meal of it, Phillips scoring with a penalty which flew into the roof of the net off the goalkeeper's arm. That slender thread of hope, however, was snapped immediately before half-time. Inevitably, it was Rosenthal who curled in a ball which McManaman neatly collected and hammered into the roof of the net.

In the second half, Middlesbrough wisely reverted to a flat back four, with Morris moving onto the right of midfield, and that had the effect of removing the uncertainty from the defence.

But still Liverpool were able to push the ball about much as they wanted and Stewart, from a deep position, with Hutchison and Redknapp pushing forward, eagerly controlled the midfield.

Somebody asked why Liverpool did not play like this against the Russians in midweek. The answer is that, in terms of football, Moscow, like the rest of Europe, is light years away from Middlesbrough.

BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Reds shed heartache

Two fine goals by Israeli international Ronnie Rosenthal and Ian Rush's 200th League goal helped Liverpool shake off their midweek European exit with a convincing home win against Middlesbrough.

Liverpool attacked with confidence against a hesitant Boro defence in a victory that will give manager Graeme Souness great satisfaction against the team he played for before signing for the Reds as a player.

Rosenthal scored the opening goal after nine minutes, interrupting Jon Gittens' weak backpass to skip around the desperate challenge of 'keeper Stephen Pears and score from a narrow angle.

His second was a brilliant individual effort after 38 minutes in which he held off the luckless Gittens to hammer in a rising shot Pears could only touch into the top corner.

Boro fought back and John Hendrie was brought down by Liverpool keeper Mike Hooper after slipping the ball past him on 41 minutes. Jimmy Phillips scored the penalty with a powerful low drive that Hooper did well to reach but could only divert high into the net.

But Liverpool virtually killed off the game on the stroke of half-time when Don Hutchison found Steve McManaman who lashed home a rising shot.

Ian Rush kept the fans waiting until the 89th minute to score only his second league goal of the season, rising to head home Paul Stewart's deep cross.

Pears had been the busier keeper throughout, distinguishing himself with a brave double save from Hutchison and Rush, who also had a header cleared off the line by Phillips. Eight minutes from time Pears denied Rosenthal his hat-trick, parrying brilliantly from close range.

After 87 minutes Hooper got down well to parry Robbie Mustoe's low drive through a crowded penalty area and substitute Bernie Slaven followed up to hit the post.

Liverpool hope to have England winger John Barnes available for the next Premier League game at Queens Park Rangers.

Barnes has faced a long fitness battle after being injured against Finland in the build-up to this summer's European Championships but he completed his first 45 minutes of competitive football this season in Liverpool A team's 1-0 defeat against Tranmere Rovers.

Delighted boss Graeme Souness said: "He played 45 minutes today and came through without any problems. His target now really should be QPR. I'm hoping he will work exceptionally hard and his target will be to get on the Liverpool bench for that game. I originally said we would be lucky to see him this side of Christmas, which took the pressure off him but he has worked very hard and I hope he sees his target as we do."

Souness was also delighted with his side's triumph against his old club Middlesbrough. "In the second half the pace of the game and the hard 90 minutes in midweek told on us, but we were worthy winners today. We gave 110% on Wednesday and to do that and get nothing can affect you - but it didn't today and I'm absolutely delighted."

Welsh international striker Ian Rush scored his 200th League goal in the closing moments of and admitted: "I wasn't sure beforehand that it was the 200th but it was very nice to get it - especially at the Kop End."

Middlesbrough boss Lennie Lawrence said the match convinced him of the need to sign at least one new player to bolster his injury-hit side, which lost skipper Alan Kernaghan with a hamstring injury.

"The team needs more help and I've got to provide it. One or two of them are finding it hard to cope with the continuing high demands of this league," said Lawrence. "We've been beaten before but this is the first time we've been walloped and it has focused my mind clearly."