

Date: 19 December 1992 Opposition: Coventry City Competition: League	Times	Guardian	British Soccer Wk	19 December 1992
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THETIMES

Capable Coventry rediscover their touch
Coventry City 5, Liverpool 1
ON FRIDAY, Peter Robins, the Coventry City chairman, told the club's annual meeting: "I believe this team is capable of beating anybody." On Saturday, his words were amply justified as Coventry City inflicted on Liverpool their heaviest domestic defeat since they lost 5-1 to Aston Villa in 1977.
This was not a bad way to end a run of 11 games without a win but hard experience warned Bobby Gould against getting over-excited. In his first spell as manager in 1983, Coventry beat Liverpool by four goals on the Saturday before Christmas.
"At Easter, they beat us 5-0 at Anfield and, as I saw the other results coming up, I thought we'd be relegated," Gould recalled. Instead, as so often, Coventry won the last game of the season to survive.
Their recent plummet down the table revived the pattern of too many previous struggles but their second-half display on Saturday suggests they should have more in hand this time. Even without the exciting Ndlovu, the speed and breadth of some of their attacks was too much for Liverpool.
John Williams was in thrilling form on the right, Gallacher was a constant handful for Liverpool on the other wing and Quinn scored two breathtaking goals to take his tally to eight in five games since his arrival from Newcastle United.
"He's round, he's fat," Gould, quoting the terrace chants, said. He then added his own second verse: "But he gets in the box and his finishing is pure quality."
By the time Quinn's stunning half-volley and precise header finished off two sweeping moves, which covered half the length of the field, Liverpool's tatty defence was in shreds.
Graeme Souness, the Liverpool manager, was less concerned about his team's flaws than those he spotted in the performance of Kelvin Morton, the referee.
At 5.10pm, he told radio listeners that three decisions had determined the game. By 5.30pm, in a corridor outside the directors' box, his sense of grievance had strengthened.
"We were in command for an hour but the referee made four strange decisions which totally changed the whole course of the game," he said, adding doubts about the third goal to his earlier complaints about the first two and the dismissal of Redknapp for his second bookable offence.
Souness had half a point. Liverpool dominated the first half hour and showed they can still pass the ball better than most. But Jonathan Gould enjoyed his debut, justifying his father's decision to convert a slow full back into a goalkeeper on the strength of his catching prowess in cricket, and Coventry survived.
Then came Borrows's penalty and Souness's first complaint. The award for handball, as Redknapp fell, looked harsh but his push on Hurst that preceded the fall suggests Morton had done the right thing if for the wrong reason.Souness was also upset about Borrows's second goal, after an indirect free kick, but television showed Wright's foot at the level of Quinn's throat and justified the decision.
The third goal was less clear cut, Gallacher looking offside as he streaked clear, but it is a risk that defences which dabble with offside have to face. If there was some sympathy for Redknapp, who was sent off for blocking Gallacher after having already been booked for encroachment at a free kick, it was muted.
Souness might be better advised addressing his complaints to some supposedly international defenders.
COVENTRY CITY: J Gould; B Borrows, P Babb, P Atherton, K Sansom, J Williams, L McGrath, L Hurst, R Rosario, M Quinn, K Gallacher.
LIVERPOOL: M Hooper; M Marsh, R Jones (sub: D Hutchison), S Bjernebye, T Piechnik, M Wright, P Stewart, J Redknapp, I Rush, J Barnes, M Walters.
Referee: K Morton.

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Gould enjoys a family day rout
MICK QUINN and Bobby Gould had for some time been warning anyone who cared to listen that when Coventry clicked again someone would get a good thrashing. But even the newly signed striker and his bubbly manager were surprised that Liverpool were the victims.
If Gould reserved the biggest hug for his goalkeeper after such a convincing victory, he could be excused a touch of fatherly pride. His son made a capable deputy for the injured Ogrizovic, and Gould said: 'I'm happy for Jonathan, but I had 11 sons out there.'
And indeed his 'family' did him proud. Which is a lot more than can be said for the lamentable Liverpool, whose manager Graeme Souness accepted defeat with something less than grace. He complained about three goals and claimed that Redknapp was unlucky to be sent off for a blatant body-check on Gallacher. As Redknapp, also watched by his father, had earlier been booked, Souness was not making sense.
Redknapp at least scored the goal - a cracker of a free-kick from 25 yards - that cut Coventry's lead to 31 and set a few nerves jangling. But he had already conceded the first-half penalty, a harsh decision for hands, from which Borrows put the home side in front against the run of play. All in all it was a day he will want to forget.
Borrows, like Quinn a Liverpooldlian, scored from 20 yards soon after the break when Gallacher rolled a free-kick - 'It should never have been allowed,' said Souness - to him. He said afterwards that the previous time he scored twice was at school.
Gallacher's, offside according to Souness, and two more goals from Quinn completed the rout - Liverpool's worst domestic defeat for 16 years and Coventry's best result against them.
Quinn has now scored eight goals in five games since arriving from Newcastle, and few could argue with Gould's assessment: 'He's fat, he's round, but he's quality.'
Liverpool looked quality only in the first half, when Barnes was a constant threat and Bjernebye, the Norwegian international making his debut, appeared the calmest man on the field. But even his assurance evaporated as all about him collapsed in the face of Coventry's blistering second half.
A spiteful foul by Hutchison on Gallacher just before the end emphasised the depths of Liverpool's embarrassment. They are mere mortals right now but always at their most dangerous after a heavy defeat; there may be some fun at Oldham on Boxing Day.
SCORERS: Coventry City: Borrows (pen 37min, 54), Gallacher (61), Quinn (70, 73). Liverpool: Redknapp (64).
Coventry City: Gould; Borrows, Badd, Atherton, Sansom, Williams, McGrath, Hurst, Rosario, Quinn, Gallacher.
Liverpool: Hooper; Marsh, Jones (Hutchison, 61), Bjernebye, Piechnik, Wright, Stewart, Redknapp, Rush, Barnes, Walters.
Referee: K Morton (Bury St Edmunds).

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Liverpool fall to famous five
COVENTRY 5 (4-4-2): Gould; Borrows, Atherton, Babb, Sansom; Williams, McGrath, Hurst, Gallacher; Quinn, Rosario.
LIVERPOOL 1 (4-5-1): Hooper; Jones (Hutchison 61min), Wright, Piechnik, Bjornebye; Walters, Redknapp, Marsh, Stewart, Barnes; Rush.
Goals: Borrows (pen, 37min) 1-0; Borrows (54min) 2-0; Gallacher (61min) 3-0; Redknapp (64min) 3-1; Quinn (70min) 4-1; Quinn (73min) 5-1.
Weather: overcast. Ground: soft.
Referee: K Morton (Bury St Edmunds).
Bridge too far: McClair of United, grounded as he struggles to break through the Chelsea defence, is confronted by sentinel Fleck Chris Smith
THE SCORELINE looks like a misprint and most of the 19,779 crowd the biggest at Highfield Road in the Premier League could be forgiven for thinking they were dreaming. Coventry in the second half played with the sort of explosive bravura normally associated with films about boxing starring Sylvester Stallone. It was marvellous and it was scarcely credible.
It also flew in the face of the statistics. Coventry's last win was three months ago and even that had to be against a team like Scarborough and in the League Cup. Only Crystal Palace had managed fewer than Coventry's two Premier League home wins and only Everton and Nottingham Forest had scored fewer home goals all three of those teams scraping along the bottom.
Two players will remember this match with special poignancy. Jonathan Gould, the Coventry manager's son, and Stig Inge Bjornebye, were both making their debuts. Gould was in because Coventry's giant regular keeper, Steve Ogrizovic, has a neck injury. Bjornebye, a Norwegian international full-back, was transferred during the week from Rosenborg for Pounds 600,000. Both can feel happy about the way they performed.
Neither Gould nor most other keepers could have done anything about the goal which he let in. A 30-yard free kick from Jamie Redknapp, the son of a manager himself, momentarily defied the laws of physics. And Bjornebye was Arctic coolness personified, even though Liverpool collapsed round his ears.
Bjornebye's new manager has become his newest admirer. "I thought," said Graeme Souness, "he was the best player on the pitch."
But Souness soon relapsed into the kind of whingeing that has alienated so many Liverpool admirers. "I felt," he said, "that for an hour we were very much in command, but then the referee made three strange decisions which changed the whole course of the game."
Souness must have been the only person at Highfield Road who believed that Liverpool controlled two-thirds of this match. And the referee, Kelvin Morton, from Bury St Edmunds, handled a fast, physical, and passionate game with some aplomb. Souness then reeled off Coventry's first three goals. The first came from a penalty, the second from a free kick, the third the game's first from open play. Souness questioned the referee's reading of the first two incidents and claimed that the other "was clearly offside in my opinion".
Souness added that "for Coventry's second goal, when the referee awarded the free kick for dangerous play, even the Coventry players were saying the decision should have gone the other way".
Finally, though, Souness seemed to come to terms, if grudgingly, with the reality which was that his side had been played off the park. "By Liverpool standards we were very, very poor."
Coventry's task was eased by Redknapp's sending-off. But this did not come until the 69th minute and, by then, Coventry were already 3-1 up. "I thought the decision was very harsh," Souness said.
What seemed clear from the press box was that Redknapp committed an ice hockey-style bodycheck to follow up his first yellow card for being less than 10 yards away from a free kick. The bodycheck was as clearly an offence as was the first a yellow-card offence. And in this game two yellows make red.
If Souness was less than gracious in defeat, his counterpart, Bobby Gould, was notably moderate in victory.
"We've been on the verge of a result like that for a few weeks. We've gone into the lead and then things have collapsed around us. Our plan against Liverpool was to try and keep up the pace in the absence of Ndlovu."
The Zimbabwean prodigy is away playing for his country against Egypt and the absence of his speed and vision makes the dimensions of this victory even harder to believe.
There was also a debut of sorts for Mick Quinn. It was Quinn's first game since his Pounds 250,000 transfer. While on loan he scored six sensational goals in only four games. Quinn scored the fourth and fifth Coventry goals but his joy was not quite unalloyed. He comes from Liverpool. Coventry is Quinn's sixth club and those goals in his 484th game (29 as sub) were the 247th and 248th of his career. An average strike rate of a goal every two games is rare and, at 30, he is looking as sharp as he ever did. He was surprised that Newcastle let him go. So is everybody else.
Liverpool, like so many teams this season, have been plagued by injury and they played this match, unusually for them, with five across the midfield and only Rush foraging upfront. This formation worked well in the opening stages but, as Coventry slowly turned the screw, the line-up, along with the will to fight, disintegrated.

Souness clearly has a problem with this Liverpool squad. But the way they fell apart says as much about their moral commitment as about their technical ability which is as high as almost any team in the country.

This was Coventry's best-ever result against Liverpool, although they won 4-0 at Highfield Road in the equivalent fixture in 1983. They lost the return 5-0 at Anfield. That defeat seemed at the time to have consigned Coventry to the Second Division.

It turned out that they did not go down after all but Gould is still grateful to Ronnie Moran, then Liverpool boss, for the words of advice and encouragement he gave him after that Anfield thrashing.

"I was a very young manager then," Gould said. "And some of the things that Ronnie Moran said to me I still remember to this day."

BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Liverpool thrashed

Jamie Redknapp was sent off as shell-shocked Liverpool crashed to their biggest defeat for more than 16 years.

They were losing 3-1 when the midfield player was given him marching orders for his second bookable offence in the 68th minute.

By that time Coventry were well on the way to victory and they made sure of their first win in 12 matches with two goals from new signing Mick Quinn who took his total to eight in five games since he joined them from Newcastle.

Liverpool, who had dominated for more than an hour, were left reeling. They were in complete control of the first half yet went 1-0 down through a penalty conceded by the unfortunate Redknapp.

He pushed over Lee Hurst after 37 minutes as they chased a Robert Rosario through pass. Referee Kelvin Morton pointed to the spot and old Evertonian Brian Borrows fired home from the spot kick.

Borrows made it 2-0 against the run of play in the 54th minute. Quinn was obstructed on the edge of the area and Kevin Gallacher knocked the ball sideways for Borrows to rocket home a shot from 25 yards.

Liverpool went 3-0 down when Rosario knocked the ball through and Gallacher squeezed it past the advancing Mike Hooper.

Redknapp, who had been booked in the 42nd minute, atoned for his earlier mistake when he shot home a 64th minute free-kick. But four minutes later he crudely hacked down Gallacher and was shown the red card by referee Morton.

Coventry went to town; Quinn headed home from Kenny Sansom's cross in the 71st minute and three minutes later he did it again, this time from Robert Rosario's knock-back into the goalmouth following a deep cross from John Williams.

The defeat equals Liverpool's worst since December 15, 1976 when they lost 5-1 at Aston Villa.

Two of the Coventry scorers had special reason to be delighted - Borrows started his career at Goodison while Quinn is Liverpool born and a fan of the Reds all his life.

Borrows said: "We've had some whackings from Liverpool so it's nice to put one over them. As an Everton fan it's superb for me."

Quinn had a coachload of family and friends at the match. "I am in a rich vein at present and I hope it lasts. I would have loved to have played for Liverpool but it was not to be. Scoring against them is the next best thing I suppose."

It was Coventry chairman Peter Robins' 50th birthday and cases of champagne were shipped into Coventry's dressing room. Manager Bobby Gould said: "We have been playing exciting football in recent weeks and the lads have been on the verge of a result like that for some time."

Graeme Souness, Liverpool's manager, complained that Bury St Edmunds referee Kelvin Morton treated them harshly in awarding the penalty, the Borrows free-kick and in sending off Redknapp. But he conceded: "By Liverpool's standards we were very, very poor."