

Date: 5 February 1994  
 Opposition: Norwich City  
 Competition: League

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| Times        | Guardian | British Soccer Wk |
| Sunday Times | Observer |                   |
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5 February 1994

## THE TIMES

Evans warms to task of reviving faith in Liverpool

Norwich City 2 - Liverpool 2.

AN HOUR after the match had ended on Saturday, Roy Evans was still being pestered for interviews. The new Liverpool manager was beginning to realise, he said, just how much the welfare of his club meant to the country, not just Merseyside.

Evans talked a good game, too. Liverpool, who had twice come from behind to force a draw, might have nicked it at the death, he argued, and a place in Europe was not beyond them. "The spirit was tremendous. I thought my players were absolutely magnificent," he said.

Perhaps it was the fog now gripping Carrow Road that blinded Evans to a more obvious conclusion. The club was once the pride of the nation, but the team he has inherited from Graeme Souness is a depressingly ordinary outfit.

There were plus points. McManaman, direct and purposeful as he put his pace to good use down the right flank, again looked a fine prospect, while Rush and Whelan, two of the six 30-somethings in the side, are ageing well. It is even conceivable that Whelan, selected for the first time in nearly five months, might have saved Souness's job. His hunger for the tackle and eye for a pass, two attributes Bristol City did not have to contend with in the FA Cup, made him Liverpool's most influential player here.

But elsewhere, Liverpool were either lacking or slacking and, collectively, they were mundane. Clough, Walters and Barnes, potential match-winners all, entered the fray only fitfully, and defensively Liverpool looked decidedly suspect. Fowler, Redknapp and Ruddock are in the Liverpool

wings, and this is hardly a sinking ship. The Cup defeat was their only reverse in ten matches, and fifth place in the FA Carling Premiership does not equate to a crisis. But it remains disquieting to see Liverpool merely jostling for position in the pack. That, once, would have been the height of Norwich's ambition. They might struggle to win at home, but Norwich are as attractive a team as can be found. Robert Chase, the Norwich chairman, who said he had no need or intention to sell Ruel Fox and then sold him, spent Saturday insisting he had no need or intention to sell Chris Sutton. Quite. John Deehan, the Norwich manager, was more realistic.

Deehan, too, maintained initially that Sutton "is not going anywhere in the foreseeable future", but later conceded that Norwich have little hope of holding on to one of the country's outstanding strikers.

"That is the way our club survives, that is the way it is run," Deehan said. "I understood the limitations when I took the job and I abide by the rules." All that needs to be resolved is the size of the cheque from the likes of Tottenham or Blackburn.

Sutton's stock certainly rose with the two goals that took his season's tally to 20. Both were scored with his favoured right foot, one from close in and the other from distance. The first confirmed he has that priceless gift of awareness, for when Ekoku's low cross was intercepted by the stretching Wright, Sutton might have hesitated. Instead, as the ball sat up conveniently, he pounced: right time, right place, Wright punished.

Sutton's second was a beauty; a one-two with Goss, a flick of the outside of the boot to tee up the ball, and a curling, dipping shot into the top far corner.

Had Ekoku possessed the same decisiveness, or Grobbelaar not saved splendidly from Goss, Norwich would have left Liverpool no way back.

Instead they were caught, first when Megson's error led to Culverhouse turning Rush's cross into his own net, and then when Barnes finished simply 14 minutes from time. Television evidence later showed that Gunn had been prevented from making a save by Rush's foul.

No replay was necessary, though, to confirm that the goalkeeper was correctly sent off two minutes from time for handling McManaman's lob ten yards outside his area.

NORWICH CITY (4-4-2): B Gunn, I Culverhouse, J Poulston, R Newman, C Woodthorpe, M Bowen, G Megson (sub: D Eadie, 82 min; sub: S Howie 90), I Crook, J Goss, C Sutton, E Ekoku.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): B Grobbelaar, R Jones, M Wright, D Matteo, J Dicks, S McManaman, R Whelan, N Clough, M Walters, I Rush, J Barnes.

Referee: D Gallagher.

## the guardian

Old problems in a new era

TRICKY things, eras. The best of them often emerge only in retrospect. New eras, like new orders, tend to be little more than expressions of hope unsupported by reality.

When Liverpool appointed Roy Evans to succeed Graeme Souness as manager one sensed a yearning for the seamless transition 20 years ago which saw Bob Paisley emerge from the Anfield boot room in the aura of the departed Bill Shankly.

Evans's position could hardly offer a greater contrast to the situation that faced Paisley in 1974. For although Shankly's resignation, unlike the departure of Souness, had not been predicted his legacy ensured that the strength of continuity which was Liverpool's greatest asset would be maintained.

With 28 years on the Anfield coaching staff behind him, Evans represents not so much continuity as an attempt to pick up an almost forgotten thread. Mild of manner with a pleasant personality, he made all the right noises after Saturday's 2-2 draw at Norwich but gave few clues about how he intends to conduct the salvage operation which is all the present season has to offer his team.

Statistics can deceive. Liverpool have now gone 10 Premiership matches without defeat. Indeed they have lost only two league games in 18. But their defence is still a thing of shreds and patches and remains dependent on opposition charity. At Carrow Road, had Ekoku's finishing touch matched his exceptional speed, Evans might have spent half-time recalling a December night at Aston Villa in 1976 when Paisley's team found themselves 5-1 down. One of Shankly's early Liverpool sides lost 7-2 at Tottenham amid similar scenes of defensive disarray. Instead Evans, courtesy of an own-goal by Culverhouse, a sharp equaliser from Barnes and some luck with the referee, found himself able to declare that he was delighted with the lads and their spirit and looked forward to spending the rest of the season trying for a Uefa Cup place. Thin hope, fat chance.

After the brief promise they showed at the start of the season Liverpool have merely exacerbated the problems, at a cost of the pounds 5 million or so spent on Ruddock and Clough, which brought Souness to the point of departure last May. Evans has inherited Souness's expensive failure to turn the team round after Kenny Dalglish left it a season too late.

Apart from Liverpool's slightly more diligent pursuit of a point at Carrow Road the only immediate difference lay in the fact that the manager now watches them from a sedentary position instead of adopting the Franz Beckenbauer stance of Dalglish and Souness.

Deprived of Ruddock through suspension and Nicol through injury, Evans was forced to use Matteo, compared to Chris Waddle in the Liverpool pen pictures, alongside Wright at centre-back. Imagine Waddle playing at centre-half and you have an idea of the torment suffered by Matteo.

'He was a bit too nice in the first half,' Evans admitted later, an accusation that could never be levelled at Ruddock. In fact Norwich's opening goal, scored by Sutton after Ekoku had brushed Matteo aside as he gathered a superb crossfield pass from Crook, was largely down to Wright's failure to cut out a low centre at the near post.

If Liverpool are the boot room revived, Norwich are the boot sale personified. Threatened demonstrations about the pounds 2.25 million transfer of Ruel Fox to Newcastle did not materialise but the departure of Sutton might cause more than a mere ripple of discontent.

Ten minutes after Liverpool had drawn level, Megson having given the ball away to Rush whose low cross was deflected into his own net by Culverhouse, Sutton showed another of those touches which Norwich will expect to command a transfer fee of around pounds 3 million. Accepting a return pass from Goss, the 20-year-old striker chipped a wonderful shot beyond Grobbelaar's prodigious reach.

Barnes's equaliser might instead have been a Liverpool penalty, for Polston fouling Rush, or a Norwich free-kick, for Rush impeding Gunn as the goalkeeper scrambled for the ball. Certainly McManaman, sent clear by Whelan's lob, was cheated of a probable winner by Gunn charging out of his penalty area to punch the ball clear.

Off went the Norwich goalkeeper amid impotent protests, and on came his deputy, Howie, to push away Dicks's firm free-kick. 'If it had been my goalkeeper,' Evans said of Gunn, 'I would have wanted him to do the same thing.'

If it had been Liverpool's goalkeeper the ball would probably have been headed away or missed altogether. This is Evans's biggest initial problem. Liverpool have rarely been such fun to watch, but not for the right Liverpool reasons.

SCORERS: Norwich City: Sutton (12 and 63min). Liverpool: Culverhouse (og 53), Barnes (76).

Norwich City: Gunn; Culverhouse, Polston, Newman, Woodthorpe, Bowen, Crook, Goss, Megson (Eadie, 82; Howie, 88), Sutton, Ekoku.

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Jones, Dicks, Wright, Matteo, Whelan, Clough, McManaman, Barnes, Rush, Walters.

Referee: D Gallagher (Banbury).

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**BRITISH SOCCER WEEK**

**Gunn had to go says City boss**

Furious Bryan Gunn raced 20 yards to confront Banbury referee Dermot Gallagher after John Barnes grabbed a controversial late Liverpool equaliser.

The Norwich goalkeeper appeared to have been impeded by Ian Rush in the build-up. But his angry protest left Mr Gallagher unmoved and there was worse to follow for the Scottish international.

With just over a minute left, Gunn raced from his goal to handle outside the penalty area under pressure from Steve McManaman. Referee Gallagher had no alternative but to produce the red card although it took him some time to persuade Gunn to leave the field.

Norwich sent on Scottish Under-21 international goalkeeper Scott Howie as substitute and with his first touch in the first team he sent Julian Dicks' free-kick around the post.

Liverpool's new manager Roy Evans will have been delighted with the fighting spirit in his makeshift side as they came back to salvage a point after twice trailing.

Norwich chairman Robert Chase slapped a 6 million pound price tag on England Under-21 striker Chris Sutton - and he looked to be worth every penny. He darted in to open the scoring after 12 minutes when an Efan Ekoku cross hit Mark Wright and bounced past Bruce Grobbelaar.

But after an Ian Culverhouse 53rd minute own goal had brought Liverpool level, Sutton produced a real gem. Receiving the ball with his back to goal, he spun to beat Grobbelaar with a curling shot for his 10th goal in nine games and his 20th of the season.

Norwich missed a stack of chances to put the result beyond doubt before Barnes sparked off the late drama with his controversial equaliser.

Norwich manager John Deehan had no complaints about goalkeeper Gunn's sending-off.

Deehan said: "The referee made the right decision. Bryan had to go."

Gunn, who argued with the referee for some minutes before leaving the field, refused to comment on the incident afterwards or about his earlier protests when Barnes shot Liverpool's second equaliser.

Deehan added: "We are our own worst enemies at the moment. We keep letting the opposition back into games and no team is better at doing that than Liverpool. We should have killed the game off by going two goals ahead but we couldn't manage it."

Deehan maintained Sutton would not be the next departure from Carrow Road following winger Ruel Fox's 2.25 million pound move to Newcastle United in midweek.

"Chris is going nowhere," said Deehan.

Evans admitted he felt the tension before his first game in charge, saying: "I was a little more nervous than usual and I felt the pressure but the players took it off me. They were absolutely magnificent and showed enormous spirit to come back twice."

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5 February 1994



## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Norwich allow Liverpool to make a point

Norwich 2 - Liverpool 2.

NORWICH 2 (Sutton 12, 63)

LIVERPOOL 2 (Culverhouse 53 og, Barnes 76)

(4-4-2): Gunn; Culverhouse, Polston, Newman, Woodthorpe; Bowen, Megson (Eadie 82min; Howie 89min), Crook, Goss; Ekoku, Sutton.

(4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Jones, Wright, Matteo, Dicks; McManaman, Whelan, Clough, Walters; Barnes, Rush.

1-0 Ekoku held off Matteo's challenge, centred, Sutton scored at near post.

1-1 Rush centred from near the byline, Culverhouse shot into his own goal.

2-1 Sutton curled his shot into the far top corner from 18 yards.

2-2 Gunn could not hold a through-ball, Barnes shot home loose ball.

Sent off: Gunn (89min). Weather: clear. Ground: yielding. Referee: D J Gallagher (Banbury)

A BIG day for both these clubs. At the end of it Norwich must have been angry that they did not score more goals and that once again they failed to win at Carrow Road. Liverpool must have been pleased that they showed Roy Evans, the new manager, he has plenty to work with.

It was often exciting. In the last two minutes that excitement boiled over.

McManaman raced clear, promising to win it for Liverpool, only for Gunn to dash 10 yards outside his area and handle the ball. The referee had to send him off.

The introduction of the substitute goalkeeper in such cases should not be allowed. But Norwich did the sensible thing. They took off Eadie, himself a substitute, and brought on Howie, Gunn's deputy. It was just as well they did, because immediately Dicks forced Howie to make an athletic save.

The messages splashed on the advertising hoardings outside were emphatic.

"Chase Out" said one. "Chase Out Now" said another. But that was as far as it went. There was no demonstration against the sale of Fox outside the main entrance. Inside, Norwich have created a stadium which, on three sides, now has shining yellow and green seats. Robert Chase, the chairman, says that Norwich cannot have both the shining new seats and Fox when a club like Newcastle comes in waving mega-money.

And defeat against Manchester United last Sunday, Fox's farewell, means that Norwich have not had a Cup run, despite their wonderful showing against Bayern Munich. They have often been a delight for the armchair viewer but, in terms of achievement, they have promised rather than achieved.

Fox has gone, Sutton lives on. Still only 20, doubtless an England player before long, Sutton scored both goals, the second being a gem. According to John Deehan, the Norwich manager, Sutton will be staying at Norwich for the foreseeable future.

Roy Evans, having picked his first Liverpool team after 30 years at Anfield, must have had kittens in the first half, as Norwich scored once and threatened to get two or three more. Evans's injured, though, included Fowler, Molby and Redknapp. Among his suspended was Ruddock.

Of those on parade, Rush was the best forward, still fast and eager. Barnes was off the pace; still not fully fit. The two wingers, McManaman and Walters, were good. In central midfield, Whelan, the recalled veteran, was more effective than Clough. Somehow the former Forest man still does not seem to fit easily into the Liverpool set-up. The defence was the least happy area. Over the distance only Dicks, weaving his way forward effectively, looked the part. Wright and young Matteo had poor first halves. But there was enough to make Evans smile at the end. It had been an awkward week, he confessed. For so long he had been in the background, then suddenly it seemed as though the nation's media were in his backyard. "Hopefully it will die down," he said. "I was delighted with the lads' performance. We were a goal down twice but came back. It must have been a terrific game." Evans said that he would not be experimenting. Liverpool's supporters wanted results. Europe is still a possibility, he believes.

But Evans is in the happy position of being able to juggle names around for the rest of the season. Two choices yesterday carried the smack of experiment. First was Whelan in midfield and the second was Matteo, 19, at centre-back. Matteo is 6ft 1in but he was bounced off the ball all too easily for Norwich's first goal.

Ekoku took Matteo out, centred, Wright made a hash of clearing at the near post and Sutton scored. Norwich should have been two or three up at half-time.

Whatever Liverpool had been discussing in their much-publicised post-Souness talks during the week, it was not marking.

Norwich paid the price because they were not the same after half-time and Liverpool soon equalised. Megson gave the ball away, Rush centred and Walters mis-kicked, inadvertently selling Culverhouse a dummy. Poor Culverhouse could only shoot into his own net. Sutton made it 2-1. He collected Goss's pass on the 18-yard line and sent a curler into the far top corner beyond Grobbelaar.

If Fox is worth Pounds 2.25m and amid all the brouhaha it has not been suggested that it was good business selling him for that Sutton must be worth Pounds 4m.

Liverpool saved Evans's day when Dicks passed forward to Rush, the ball rebounded off Gunn and went loose, and Barnes was there to slot it home.

"If Gunn had been my keeper I would have wanted him to do something like that," Evans said, referring to the sending-off incident.

Evans is a pleasant man. Let us hope that Liverpool's policy of going back to the last of the Shankly boys is indeed the right one.

## The Observer

Lucky Liverpool survive Sutton.

Norwich City 2

Sutton 12, 64

Liverpool 2

Culverhouse 53(og), Barnes 76

Att: 19,746

WHATEVER else the promotion of Roy Evans to manager may bring Liverpool it promptly brought them luck. They might have suffered a rout, such was the chaos into which Sutton, Ekoku and Crook threw their defence in the first half, but they emerged with a draw that left them unbeaten in ten Premiership matches.

Though the Norwich goalkeeper, Gunn, hotly disputed Barnes's equaliser he could have no complaint with the referee's decision to send him off a couple of minutes from the end. With Liverpool threatening to steal victory, Gunn ran out of his penalty area and handled McManaman's attempt to find the unguarded net. And still the danger was not over, for Dicks's free kick got through the wall and had to be scrambled away by the diving substitute goalkeeper, Howie.

To the extent that Liverpool showed resilience they were authors of their own fortune, but Evans appeared to paraphrase Mrs Lincoln's inquisitor when he said:

'Apart from the first half I thought we were magnificent.' Norwich had been entitled to feel that Sutton's second, majestic goal, giving him one this season for each of his 20 years, was a worthy confirmation of the superiority they generally held.

Astutely blending long balls into their customary neat game, they let Sutton and Ekoku bewilder a rearguard lacking the suspended Ruddock, and ought to have been uncatchable by the interval. But Norwich are so often fragile at home, where they have won only once in four months, and this was just another example.

Muted pre-match concern around the ground reflected the view that it is a little early for the fans to despair, given Norwich's talent for regeneration since (and, to a degree, before) Robert Chase became chairman.

All clubs must look ahead and Norwich, once it became apparent they would not win a trophy this season, were wise to start doing business immediately. Too often teams are rebuilt hastily in the summer. Taking pounds 2.5 million for Fox, an uncapped 26-year-old, was half a good deal; the other half depends on whom Norwich bring in. If it is someone of the potential of Coventry's Ndlovu fine. Other names said to be in John Deehan's mind are less encouraging.

What cannot be doubted is Chase's determination to run the club so it is not hostage to a single poor season. Modest wages and big bonuses add up to economic sense, even if the policy cost Norwich Mike Walker, a manager whose erstwhile assistant and now successor Deehan, must banish a suspicion that the job has come his way too soon.

Evans, another appointment from within, was the worried one here while his first selection spent the first half apparently trying to resolve Norwich's difficulties.

Wright was conspicuous in a defensive horror show, being caught in possession by Sutton, who chipped too high, and then obligingly putting out a foot to take the pace off a cross from Ekoku so Sutton had no difficulty in poking the home side ahead.

That fine move had been made by Crook, and the midfielder's delightfully precise promptings kept Norwich firmly on top. Only the inability of Ekoku, twice, and Sutton to beat Grobbelaar when clean through kept Liverpool in the match as repeatedly they were caught square and stranded. On another occasion Jones saved them with a marvellous last-ditch tackle on Ekoku and they ended the half desperately grateful for the enduring reactions of Grobbelaar, who brought off outstanding saves, first with a leg from Megson, then a hand from Ekoku.

An error by Megson, Norwich's player-coach, shortly gave Liverpool heart, Rush intercepting his pass and sending over a low cross that evaded Walters but was diverted past Gunn by the blameless Culverhouse. Yet Sutton's gorgeous goal, curled over Grobbelaar from 20 yards after the youngster had played a one-two with Goss, still seemed capable of settling the issue.

Had Norwich stayed solid it would have done. But it took Gunn's sharp save from a deflected drive from Walters to keep Liverpool out before Dicks cleverly dropped the ball between Rush and Gunn, who pushed it away only to find the Welshman craftily obstructing his route to recovery; this was the basis of Gunn's complaint but Rush had made no contact and the referee allowed Barnes to score.