

Date: 19 March 1994 Opposition: Chelsea Competition: League	Guardian	Sunday Times	British Soccer Wk	19 March 1994
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BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Liverpool target Europe
 Hopes of a return to European action next season were kept on course with a 2-1 victory against in-form Chelsea.

Glenn Hoddle's side came to Anfield with a record of five wins in their last six outings, including their victory over Wolves that takes them within one step of an FA Cup final appearance.

But Ian Rush gave Liverpool an early lead, tapping home in front of the Kop after eight minutes for his 17th goal of the season.

Craig Burley's own goal 11 minutes later appeared to have opened the flood gates but Chelsea stuck to their task well and the 22-year-old Scot made amends with a superb left-foot volley after 50 minutes.

The goal gave the visitors hope and they pressed forward but were denied any share of the points by the superb goalkeeping of David James.

Liverpool continued to look dangerous on the break, with McManaman going close from Rob Jones' cross in the 62nd minute.

David Hopkin replaced Dow in the 67th minute to vary the visitors' options as they searched for an equaliser, and three minutes later Michael Thomas joined the action for Liverpool at the expense of Barnes.

In the 74th minute Reds defender Rob Jones almost broke his scoring duck with a tremendous shot that beat Kharine, but was denied by the woodwork.

Two minutes later Ronnie Whelan let in Ian Rush with only the keeper to beat but the Russian was quick to race out of his goal and save at the Welshman's feet.

Liverpool manager Roy Evans bemoaned his side's wayward shooting.

"We didn't capitalise on the goal chances," he said. "We created so much and I would have been happier if we had a four goal lead at half-time. We lost it a bit after the interval and Chelsea came back into it to their credit. In the end it seemed a close game."

Hoddle admitted: "In the first 20 minutes we could have been three or four down. The consistent levels are not there and that's something I don't like to see. But teams that have gone 2-0 down in 20 minutes at Anfield could have got trounced but we showed a lot of courage, commitment and skill in the second half and perhaps were worthy of a point."

Man of the match Steve McManaman said: "It would have been nice to cap it off with a goal but I can't seem to score at the moment."



Sunshine, Evans above and a spring in the step at Anfield
 IT IS a fair bet that Graeme Souness never felt obliged to print his name on his training shoes. Anyone inadvertently slipping on the manager's size nines during the imposing regime of old would have risked execution at dawn.

Roy Evans does write his name on his shoes, but then Evans is a different kind of Liverpool manager. 'Roy,' it said politely, in black felt-tip. Since they demolished the Liverpool boot room, one cannot be too careful.

Supremacy does not figure actively in Evans's vocabulary. Souness's Liverpool used to play with a stern recognition that they would be answerable to a higher authority if things went awry. Things often did, and they often were. Evans's Liverpool, in beating Chelsea, played with a relaxed and joyful air that made Anfield a pleasurable place to be.

With the first hint of spring, Liverpool rinsed clean the grim memories of midwinter. McManaman, Redknapp and Jones gambolled through the afternoon with wit, energy and invention; Rush and Fowler proved that admiration and understanding can pass between the generations; James kept goal with wondrous athleticism. Only Ruddock's crude assault on Wise in injury time provided a reminder that the devil's work is never done.

Chelsea contributed to the mood, initially by a docile start that granted Liverpool a two-goal lead by the 18th minute, latterly by an equal insistence on trying to pass the ball. After five successive wins their confidence was high, and their optimistic movements in the second half, encouraged by Peacock's twists and angles and the keenness of Wise, might have brought a point.

McManaman had a corking match, dashing down the right with eager assistance from Jones, both striking a post. Dow, the Chelsea left-back, has a look of Le Saux about him but the only Jersey that concerned him was worn by McManaman and he never got close to it all day. He was substituted, a tormented man. As Evans said: 'If McManaman performs like this the goals must eventually come.'

Goalscoring has always come naturally to Rush, who put Liverpool ahead after eight minutes. Wright's stooping header from Fowler's chip tumbled from Kharine's grasp and Rush reacted the quickest to poke in from close range. Burley, under challenge from Fowler, headed McManaman's cross into his own net 10 minutes later, an unfortunate lapse in an otherwise creditable game. His goal, thundered home on the bounce from 25 yards, continued a familiar theme. 'Six goals outside the box this season, left and right foot, all humdingers,' said his manager Glenn Hoddle.

Hoddle frittered away three scoring opportunities before half-time - his 36 years showing in particular when he failed to reach Peacock's chip to the back post - but it was James's flying saves, from long-range shots by Dow, Peacock and Burley, which took the breath away. This fellow catches shots lesser men would wave by.

SCORERS: Liverpool: Rush (8min), Burley (og 18). Chelsea: Burley (50).

Liverpool: James; Jones, Wright, Ruddock, Dicks, McManaman, Redknapp, Whelan, Barnes, Fowler, Rush.
 Chelsea: Kharine; Clarke, Johnsen, Kjeldbjerg, Dow (Hopkin, 68), Burley, Newton, Hoddle, Wise, Peacock, Shipperley.
 Referee: R Gifford (Mid Glamorgan).

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Evans heartened as Liverpool respond to orders

Liverpool 2, Chelsea 1

LIVERPOOL 2

(Rush 8, Burley 19 og)

CHELSEA 1

(Burley 50)

(4-4-2): James; Jones, Wright, Ruddock, Dicks; McManaman, Redknapp, Whelan, Barnes (Thomas 69min); Rush, Fowler.

(4-4-2): Kharine; Clarke, Kjeldberg, Johnsen, Dow (Hopkin 68min); Hoddle, Newton, Burley, Wise; Peacock, Shipperley.

1-0 Wright's shot was blocked by Kharine but Rush followed up.

2-0 Barnes looked to have touch McManaman's chip in but Burley finally diverted the ball in under pressure from Fowler.

2-1 Burley's left-foot lob from 25 yards looped over James after Ruddock failed to clear.

Weather: pale sunlight. Ground: good. Referee: R Gifford (M Glamorgan).

ROY EVANS got what he wanted. Liverpool's new manager had demanded disciplined creativity from the Anfield players, and they obliged in a manner reflected by the width of his post-match smile.

If Liverpool keep playing like this, Evans can surely contemplate next season with a measure of confidence and excitement. Wonderfully entertaining, and commendably clean, this game could have produced many more goals.

Liverpool's superior positioning and passing saw them through, however, despite a much-improved second half by Chelsea. Perhaps Hoddle whose team had won their previous five games should consider replacing his ever-changing formation with a more settled system. Not to mention encouraging his goalkeeper to catch cleanly.

Kharine, Hoddle's unorthodox Russian keeper, has a penchant for punching rather than catching. This was highlighted when Kharine played a big part in helping Rush open the scoring.

A better last line of defence would have caught Wright's header. And even after making the initial mistake, Kharine failed to narrow the angle as Rush steamed in from eight yards.

The lead was quickly reinforced, McManaman using his right foot to devastating effect in the build-up to goal number two.

McManaman has found scoring them himself unusually difficult this season but nobody could dispute his efficacy down Liverpool's right.

If only he was capable of using his left foot for more than standing on. Being so right-footed makes rounding rivals that much harder. But he still led Dow a merry dance.

And Chelsea? Their sole first-half chance was sent wide by Hoddle from Peacock's cross, with James preferred to a fit Grobbelaar beaten. Up against Redknapp in midfield, Hoddle looked every one of his 36 years. Perhaps Chelsea's exhausting pre-match aerobic warm-up had taken it out of him. Or maybe Chelsea's ultra-flexible formation has confused even their player-manager.

Liverpool, by contrast, resolutely stuck to their shape. Everybody wearing red seemed to know where they should be and what they were expected to do.

Hoddle preferred to blame attitude: "We weren't at the races in the first half," he said. "We could have quickly been four down. I am disappointed because I thought I had stamped out that sort of attitude."

That Chelsea seemed to quadruple their second-half effort presumably reflected his interval message. Burley especially was outstanding. His beautifully taken lob, compensation for that headed own-goal, seemed to galvanise Chelsea.

They might even have equalised. James's kamikaze dash out of his area to confront Shipperley bore the hallmark of Grobbelaar at his most eccentric.

But having got away with that, the goalkeeper quickly redeemed himself.

Illustrating why Graeme Souness paid Pounds 1m for him, James made a difficult, but decisive catch from Peacock's curler before pulling off an even better save from Dow.

Having briefly looked to be losing control, Liverpool remembered Evans' pre-match directive. Regaining their cool, and not forgetting that shape, they rallied once more and only Kharine's smothering dive came between Rush and another goal.



McManaman is the danger man

Liverpool 2

Rush 7, Burley 18(og)

Chelsea 1

Burley 50

Att: 38,629

HERE'S a tip for anyone, Manchester United for instance, seeking a way to beat Chelsea. Buy Steve McManaman. Failing that, and Liverpool are unlikely to be thinking of parting with him at the moment, any right-winger will probably do, as long as he is comfortable on the ball, can go past people at will, and is confident enough to vary his wide game with dangerous incursions from the wing.

McManaman was the most confident and dangerous player on view here, and his right-wing partnership with Jones is developing into something so promising that it can only be a matter of time before Terry Venables thinks of them as an England item.

Watching Dow, Johnsen and the Chelsea defence in general shredded by McManaman's purposeful running, it was difficult to understand how United, with their abundance of wingers, had failed even to score against the London side in their two defeats this season. But if McManaman has an eye and an attacking instinct which Giggs and Kanchelskis may lack, he does not have the same goal-scoring touch.

McManaman helped make both Liverpool's first-half goals as well as several chances which went begging. And when Chelsea pulled a goal back five minutes after the interval, the spindly winger dribbled straight into the visitors' area and crashed a shot against a post.

Chelsea could not have complained at going three or four goals down, but though Roy Evans's first unchanged side brought in three points for a second time in a week, against opponents unbeaten in their previous six matches, Liverpool celebrations will be premature until they rediscover the killer instinct. Chelsea should never have been allowed to come back after conceding two goals in the first quarter, but after half-time the Liverpool defence began to look vulnerable. Hoddle failed to get a touch when an open goal beckoned after 35 minutes.

Burley, who beat James from outside the area when Liverpool failed to clear a Chelsea free-kick, had earlier brought an athletic save from the goalkeeper with an equally well-struck shot. Midway through the second half the home defence parted alarmingly to allow Peacock to test James again, and right at the end Kjeldbjerg almost salvaged a draw with a header which looped only inches over.

None of this looked likely when Rush stabbed home Liverpool's opener after seven minutes, after Kharine failed to hold Wright's header. The home side were opening the Chelsea defence almost at will when McManaman cut inside to reach the goal-line and send over a cross which gave Barnes time to choose his spot. Unfortunately for Chelsea, Burley got his head to the ball while Barnes was still making up his mind, but the defender beat Kharine as comprehensively as the Liverpool player would have wished.

A goal at the other end was some compensation for Chelsea's best player, while being substituted completed Barnes's disappointment.