

Date: 17 October 2010
 Opposition: Everton
 Competition: League

Times	Guardian	Mail
Telegraph	Mirror	Echo
Independent		



17 October
2010

THE TIMES

Hodgson in both denial and danger

Everton 2 Cahill 34, Arteta 50 Liverpool 0 Referee: H Webb. Attendance: 39,673 It was the best performance of his time at the club, he said. So good was the display that there was not more he could have asked of his team. These were not the words of David Moyes, basking in the glow of a derby victory so emphatic that it left the Scot wearing a grin from ear to ear. They were spoken by Roy Hodgson. Denial can rarely have sounded so delusional. If this was as good as it has been, Liverpool's new owners must have been wondering how bad it was before their arrival. With each and every game Liverpool plumb a new depth and only Hodgson appears to believe that things are on the up, despite presiding over the worst start to a season by any Liverpool manager since George Patterson in 1928. The Liverpool manager flew in the face of the inescapable logic provided by the previous 90 minutes by insisting that there were positives to be drawn from the display, even though the result had been settled so emphatically and so deservedly in Everton's favour. "It was a cruel result because we played so well," Hodgson said. "In my opinion the way we played the game was as good as I've seen us play this season. I can't have any real qualms with my players with the performance they gave. "I hope that fair-minded people see the game the same way. I think it's a bit unfortunate that after such a good game of football, everything revolves around the fact that Liverpool didn't win it.

"The shape of our team was good, the quality of our passing was good. We didn't score goals and Everton did, but I refuse to sit here and accept we were in any way outplayed or were in any way inferior." Liverpool were not just inferior, Everton were the better side from start to finish, taking their collective boots off the throat of their opponents only when the game was won.

In their previous encounter, the tone had been set by Jamie Carragher with a bone-shuddering challenge on Steven Pienaar in the opening minutes. It was the catalyst for a belligerent display that was sufficient to earn a victory hard fought in the truest sense, even though Liverpool played most of the game at a numerical disadvantage. This time around, Carragher's only involvement of note early on was to become embroiled in an all-too-visible spat with Fernando Torres; a barked rebuke aimed in the direction of the forward earning a gesticulated response from his team-mate, who clearly felt that Carragher would be better off keeping such opinions to himself.

If Everton had feared that the takeover by the owners of the Boston Red Sox would spark an immediate revival, here was the most vivid evidence they could wish for that it will take a great deal more than debt removal to restore harmony at Liverpool, never mind be the catalyst for an instant improvement in form.

Everton, by contrast, were the model of teamwork, every player working for one another, following a tactical plan built on a belief instilled in them by their manager - and supported by recent results - that Liverpool were there for the taking if their weaknesses were played on. Moyes may have identified the flaws, and on the evidence of yesterday they are numerous, but it was up to those whom he selected from a squad once again affected by injury to exploit them. They thrived on the responsibility to such an extent that the Everton manager's subsequent claim that his team had not even needed to be at their best said as much about their opponents as it did about them.

Moyes's career at Goodison Park has been built upon making the most of the meagre resources available to him and rarely can a goal have illustrated how well he has performed that task than the one that gave Everton the lead. Seamus Coleman, a [pounds sterling]60,000 signing from Sligo Rovers, first shrugged aside [pounds sterling]5 million Lucas Leiva before rounding [pounds sterling]4 million Paul Konchesky and providing Tim Cahill, a [pounds sterling]2 million bargain, with a shooting opportunity that he gleefully accepted. "In the past we've probably lacked the quality to match Liverpool," Moyes said. "I don't think we do now.

We've got players of real quality who could play for the top clubs. We've got some really good technical footballers." Mikel Arteta is the embodiment of the kind of technique that Moyes was referring to. Even playing with a hamstring injury that cut short his afternoon, the Spaniard, out of all the midfield players on show, was the one whose talent, poise and craft was most evident. The goal he struck from the edge of the penalty area after a corner was only partially cleared will go down in derby folklore, at least for the blue half of Merseyside, such was its ferocity.

Hodgson, though, will wonder why none of his players saw fit to mark an opponent of such conspicuous class in a part of the pitch in which his ability dictates that he always has the potential to inflict maximum damage. "We are conceding too many goals, but today we were unlucky to do so," Hodgson said. "We weren't shipping chances left, right and centre. Strangely enough, Konchesky's half-block takes the ball past [Martin] Skrtel, who would have been in an excellent blocking position if the ball had come flat across the goal and deflected into the path of Cahill. Even that was unfortunate - as was the fact Arteta got hold of the ball well with the outside of his boot for the second goal." There was nothing unfortunate about Liverpool's latest defeat and Hodgson's dream of being the manager who guides the club to No 19 has been fulfilled, but not in the way he intended. It is nineteenth position in the Barclays Premier League that he has taken them to, not that much-cherished league title of the same number, and the brave face he is putting on does not mask the predicament that even he accepts they are in.

Ratings LIVERPOOL 4-4-1-1 J M Reina 6 J Carragher 4 S Kyrgiakos 6 M Skrtel 4 P

Konchesky 4 MRodriguez 0 4 R Meireles 0 5 Lucas Leiva 4 J Cole 4 S Gerrard 6 F Torres 0 5 Substitutes: D Ngog (for Lucas, 71min), R Babel (for Cole, 79), M Jovanovic (for Rodriguez, 84). Not used: F Aurelio, J Spearing, M Kelly, B Jones. Next: Blackburn Rovers (h). EVERTON 4-4-1-1 T Howard 6 P Neville 6 S Distin 8 P Jagielka 8 L Baines 7 S Coleman 7 J Heitinga 6 M Arteta 8 L Osman 7 T Cahill 0 7 Yakubu Ayegbeni 7 Substitutes: D Bilyaletdinov 5 (for Osman, 46min), A Hibbert (for Heitinga, 72), J Beckford 0 (for Arteta, 74). Not used: J Mucha, J Baxter, M Gueye, S Mustafi. Next: Tottenham Hotspur (a).

the guardian

Predatory Cahill shows Liverpool's new owners there will be no quick fix Everton are everything that Liverpool must now become. John W Henry, owner of the visitors, surely arrived at this match eager to learn more about the Anfield club he now owns, but the reward was a thorough understanding of its inadequacies. While that may serve him well in the long term, Henry must also have admired the efficiency of the soundly constructed winners.

David Moyes has been engaged in this project for eight years and his employers must be amazed as they are grateful that he has not been lured away to a club of heftier means. Were it not for the uproar and animosity that would well up in the city, he might be seen as the ideal man for Liverpool to recruit.

For the time being, Roy Hodgson still holds the post, but he is unlikely to have either the length of tenure or the endorsement from the owner that Moyes can count upon from his chairman, Bill Kenwright. That trust has been earned. Everton are a mere three points in front of Liverpool, who now lie second bottom of the Premier League, but few doubt that Moyes can lead the side back to a respectable place in the table. The proof of his acumen is seen everywhere. While Liverpool may be crestfallen that the Bosman signing Joe Cole has been vapid as he illustrates why Chelsea preferred not to hand him a lavish new contract, Everton had a true bargain here. The mere presence of Seamus Coleman ought to have seemed laughably inappropriate considering that he is a 22-year-old taken from Sligo Rovers for a piffling pounds 60,000 at the start of 2009. He came to England as a right-back, but Moyes is now turning him into a midfielder. The rationale behind that decision was painfully clear to Hodgson's team at the opener. Coleman tore past Paul Konchesky on the right and saw his cut-back converted by Tim Cahill at the near post in the 35th minute. The scorer had thus taken his career total against Liverpool to five, a haul unmatched by an Everton player in Merseyside derbies since the days of Dixie Dean, who joined the club 85 years ago. Despite Cahill's endeavours, the comparatively small budget at Moyes's disposal can be felt in the lack of a devastating finisher who would ensure a far greater reward for the overall work of the side.

Everton did prey on the muddled nature of Liverpool's play when extending the lead in the 51st minute. A Leighton Baines corner was headed out by Sotirios Kyrgiakos, but the centre-half had not angled the ball towards the wing and it dropped for Mikel Arteta. The Spaniard reacted to the windfall by shooting beautifully beyond Jose Reina. Liverpool did not lack spirit and that, in its own way, was disturbing since it underlines the fact that the ejection of the previous owners, George Gillett and Tom Hicks, was an essential yet still modest start in the re-establishment of the club.

At 2-0 down, there was finally a sense of urgency to Liverpool and Everton had to look to men such as Phil Jagielka to marshal the defence. The centre-back, unavailable for England's goalless draw with Montenegro last Tuesday, looked entirely free of the hamstring trouble that had been affecting him.

With Jagielka around, the likelihood increased that Fernando Torres would be stifled once again. In this context, the Spaniard might almost be commended since he saw Tim Howard tip his header over the bar in the first half and drew a save from the goalkeeper when Liverpool flickered into life for a spell when their fate was already sealed.

Individualism is still the affliction of the Anfield line-up. With men such as Xabi Alonso and Javier Mascherano gone, there is less cohesion and focus to the play. Recognising that, a player such as Steven Gerrard can scarcely resist the temptation to attempt putting matters to rights single-handedly. He could do that in his mid-20s but it was an approach even then that spoke of the frailties in others who could not combine with him. Gerrard impressed lately while deputising for Rio Ferdinand as England captain, but it must have been revitalising to link with team-mates who are of a similar calibre.

Hodgson cannot create such a context for him at Anfield. His acumen should be beyond dispute after taking Fulham to a Europa League final a mere five months ago, via Craven Cottage nights such as a 4-1 drubbing of Juventus. All the same, his burden is heavier nowadays and Liverpool, Champions League winners five years ago, will not see him as a charismatic leader.

Hodgson spoke highly of his side's efforts here. That may have been an act of defiance intended to fend off discussion of the real state of affairs, but the trip to Naples for Thursday's Europa League fixture ensures that Liverpool's suffering and Henry's possible remedies will stay under constant discussion.

Man of the match Seamus Coleman:

The Irishman was asked to play in midfield instead of at full-back and carried a threat on the right flank that even the meticulous Roy Hodgson could not have anticipated.

Best Moment The 22-year-old's run and cross into the box for Tim Cahill's opening goal

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The Mail

HENRY SEES A HORROR SHOW; Gutless Liverpool make new owner suffer at Goodison

Everton 2 Liverpool 0

Next: Tottenham v EVERTON (Saturday), Napoli v LIVERPOOL (Thursday)

AFTER witnessing one of the most abject Liverpool displays in the long history of this derby, John W Henry and his colleagues might now wonder if they, rather than their predecessors, are the victims of an epic swindle.

They could be forgiven for thinking they've been had and for starting to worry that they paid too much for Liverpool - even at the price Tom Hicks and George Gillett have claimed is way below market value. This performance against a vastly superior Everton side would suggest you don't get much for [pounds sterling]300million these days, so inept were Liverpool's players in trying to ease the pressure on Roy Hodgson. That pressure must now be considerable, whatever statements have been made in the last 72 hours. 'We're here to win,' said Henry in delivering his mission statement on Friday but right now these Liverpool players do not even appear capable of winning a relegation battle.

It was, as the Everton supporters declared in joyous unison at the sound of the final whistle, 'easy' for a side that continues to impress under the expert guidance of David Moyes.

Goals from Tim Cahill and Mikel Arteta secured their second win in as many games to propel the club away from the danger zone and up the Barclays Premier League table. There was little in response from Liverpool. No urgency, no fluency. Nothing, the occasional Jamie Carragher outburst aside, that even resembled what you might term defiance. That Hodgson thought his team played well will only weaken his position. He thought this was their finest performance of the season; that his team played well; that in no way, particularly in the second half, were they either lacking in confidence or inferior to their hosts.

On Friday he also said that, had that defeat to Blackpool at Anfield been scored on a boxing-style points system, his team would have emerged triumphant.

But then he would also have us believe that the [pounds sterling]20m he spent on Raul Meireles, Paul Konchesky and Christian Poulsen amounts to good business. Liverpool's new owners say they are not going to walk into Anfield 'like a bull in china shop' and start making immediate changes. But before they commit money to the next transfer window in January, when some major surgery on the squad will be required, they might have serious misgivings about letting Hodgson be the man who spends it. He thought only Fernando Torres was lacking confidence, when so many players appeared to be struggling yesterday. Players such as Konchesky, Meireles, Joe Cole, Maxi Rodriguez and Lucas looked like they would rather be anywhere but here at Goodison.

As a drama it was absorbing. The sight of Liverpool players hiding; the sight of Hodgson watching helplessly from the technical area, seemingly cemented to the ground where he stood and unable to inspire any kind of fightback from his troops; and then the sight, at the front of the directors' box, of Henry deep in conversation with a colleague during the half-time interval. One can only imagine what was being discussed. Perhaps Henry was expressing his regret in not sticking to his guns and saving his first taste of English football for a game at Anfield. But even someone as new to this game as the Americans would have seen that something needs to be done - and fast - to revive this stuttering side. Perhaps Kenny Dalglish, sitting behind the new owners yesterday, has one or two ideas. Hodgson still appears to think he can turn the situation round and it would be wrong to dismiss a manager of his considerable experience. But even for Hodgson this must be unique pressure and the evidence at Goodison suggested he is starting to struggle.

Everton had endured a difficult start to the season, too, but they responded to their manager when Moyes decided to 'get back to basics'. 'It wasn't just because we went mountain climbing,' he said. 'It's been a lot of hard work. The players haven't had much time off lately.' They were working from the start of this encounter, not least for each other. Where Liverpool were disjointed, Everton were determined and organised. Where Liverpool lacked spirit, Everton possessed a collective will to win. They dominated the opening half, scoring the goal their skill and industry deserved in the 34th minute when Donegal native Seamus Coleman surged past both Lucas and Konchesky before delivering a perfect ball for Cahill. It still demanded a terrific rightfoot finish from the Australian international, who became Everton's highest post-war goalscorer in league Merseyside derbies. But Coleman's run exposed the ineptitude of Liverpool's defending. Less could have been done about the goal that followed from Arteta five minutes after the break. It was a quite brilliant strike and one that was all the more impressive because Moyes revealed the Spaniard had been a doubt due to a hamstring injury suffered in training on Saturday. Only then did Liverpool even begin to react. Only then did Liverpool's players even seem aware that this might not be the ideal way to respond to the arrival of new owners. Not that their response amounted to much. After taking only six points from eight games, they now sit second from bottom in the Premier League. And while many would no doubt disagree with Alan Hansen when he suggested this was Liverpool's biggest game in 30 years, it is probably their lowest ebb. It is certainly hard to recall a Liverpool team worse than this one and hard to imagine that Hodgson will be

given long to prove otherwise.

MATCH FACTS

EVERTON (4-4-2): Howard 7; Neville 7; Jagielka 7, Distin 7, Baines 7; Coleman 7, Heitinga 7 (Hibbert 72min, 6), Arteta 8 (Beckford 74, 5), Osman 6 (Bilyaletdinov 46, 6); Cahill 8, Yakubu 6. Subs not used: Mucha, Shkodran Mustafi, Magaye Gueye, Baxter. Booked: Cahill, Beckford. Scorers: Cahill 34, Arteta 50.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-1-1): Reina 6; Carragher 6, Skrtel 5, Kyrgiakos 6, Konchesky 4; Rodriguez 3 (Jovanovic 84, 5), Lucas 3 (Ngog 71, 5), Meireles 4, Cole 4 (Babel 80, 5); Gerrard 6; Torres 5. Subs not used: Jones, Aurelio, Kelly, Spearing. Booked: Meireles, Rodriguez, Torres. Man of the match: Tim Cahill. Referee: Howard Webb 8. Attendance: 39,673.

TORRES BY NUMBERS

Attempts on target	2
Attempts off target	1
Passes	26
Pass completion	77%
Fouls	2
Yellow card (88min)	1
Accurate passes.....	20
Key passes (assists for attempts)....	1
Tackles.....	1
Tackle success.....	100%
Successful clearances	0
Free-kicks won	1

HISTORY DOESN'T LIE

ROY HODGSON's woeful Anfield start is the worst since George Patterson's over 80 years ago. A player for Merseyside club Marine, Patterson (above) took over as secretary-manager midway through the 1928-29 campaign. Leading the club to fifth in his first full season, he brought Matt Busby to the club in 1935 before ill-health ended his eight-year reign in 1936.

The Daily Telegraph

Lifeless Liverpool sink further into the mire

Everton 2 C

ahill 34, Arteta 50

Liverpool 0

Att: 39,673

At the end of a week of legal victories, Liverpool lost in the people's court. As Goodison Park bayed with delight, Liverpool discovered to their horror that they had left all their silk in the High Court. The finest QCs in the land could not overturn a result greeted with a verdict often heard in court. "Going down," chanted the ecstatic members of David Moyes' People's Club.

In football's jungle, there is no law that states such an august institution as Liverpool are exempt from the threat of relegation. They are in a dogfight and must start scrapping for their lives. Quickly. Up next are Blackburn, Bolton, Chelsea and Stoke.

The January transfer-window cavalry is a long way off but Liverpool must start planning. Pepe Reina, Jamie Carragher, Steven Gerrard and Fernando Torres need proper support. At least four of Roy Hodgson's starting XI, Paul Konchesky, Sotirios Kyrgiakos, Lucas and Maxi, simply do not deserve to wear the famous shirt. Liverpool's new owner, John W Henry, once spent \$50million on a pitcher for the Boston Red Sox and he needs to lavish a similar sum on a striker, a winger, a holding midfielder and a left-back. Otherwise his investment will atrophy. Henry met Hodgson after the match and the manager's position remains safe, although comments such as "I refuse to accept we were outplayed or in any way inferior" are insulting to the eyesight of his new employer and to the Liverpool fans forced to endure this derby humiliation.

What yesterday really highlighted was that Henry must rebuild the squad before even considering rebuilding Anfield or constructing a new stadium.

On buying a property, it is always polite to pop across to see the neighbours and Henry was royally entertained by Everton's chairman, Bill Kenwright. That was as far as the hosts' largesse extended. Do have some tea, seemed the gist of Everton's welcome, while we have the points.

Welcome to Merseyside, welcome to the Premier League and welcome to Liverpool's myriad problems. Henry stood in the directors' box at half-time, surveying one of the grand old stages of English footballing theatre, home to some of the quickest wits in sport.

"John, John," shouted an Everton fan from the cheap seats. Henry turned and waved politely. "You bought the wrong club, John!" came the reply to general merriment. At the final whistle, Everton fans unfurled a banner that read "God Bless America", chorused "going down" at the vanquished and serenaded Hodgson with "you're getting sacked in the morning".

Unlikely. He has meetings planned with Henry to discuss what the team need. It will not be a short meeting. Henry, who sounds sensible, has promised no knee-jerk reactions but he must have been horrified by this supine display and thoroughly deserved defeat. Liverpool lacked all the adrenalin and passion patently coursing through their opponents' veins.

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Times	Guardian	Mail
Telegraph	Mirror	Echo
Independent		



17 October
 200

Everton's spine was strong and unbreakable. Sylvain Distin was immense at centre-half, a mobile roadblock in Torres's way. Tim Cahill was everywhere, scoring Everton's first and selflessly dropping back from his role in the hole to assist midfield and defence. Yakubu, resembling a swarm of particularly muscular bees, was outstanding up front, constantly embarrassing Kyrgiakos and Martin Skrtel.

Powerful through the centre, Everton also impressed out wide. Seamus Coleman was terrific driving down right midfield, creating Cahill's goal, while Leighton Baines was tireless on the left.

If Moyes engendered a far more competitive mood in his charges than Hodgson achieved with his, Everton's manager also comprehensively outthought his Liverpool counterpart. Gerrard had no room to move such was the pressing of Cahill and company.

When Liverpool finally awoke with 20 minutes remaining, Moyes simply sent on Jermaine Beckford to make a nuisance of himself, harrying Liverpool.

If Henry wanted to observe the depth of the Premier League drama, as well as the breadth of Liverpool's problems, he succeeded. The floodlights were on at lunchtime on a sunny day, ladies in historic costumes threw confectionary into the crowd and the sound of Z Cars filled the air, closely followed by caustic ditties about certain stars. Welcome to English football, John.

And then the match started, the tone set after 11 seconds when Yakubu flattened Kyrgiakos. The whole Sturm und Drang of the English game was on parade. Carragher and Torres exchanged angry words as Liverpool came under immediate pressure. Raul Meireles was racing around, putting out fires, putting in important tackles. Still Liverpool dominated, Phil Jagielka and Yakubu going close.

Uncertainty coloured Liverpool's actions. Gerrard caught Mikel Arteta and was fortunate to escape a caution, fortunate that Howard Webb sought to manage the passion play with a mixture of understanding and authority. When Maxi dived in on Baines midway through the half, Webb reminded the players of the presence of his yellow card.

For a brief period, Liverpool seemed to have walked through the storm. Gerrard released Joe Cole, who delivered his one decent ball, lifting in a cross that Torres met with a flicked header only to be denied by Tim Howard.

But the force remained with Everton. Their industry was rewarded when Coleman embarked on a marvellous run, eluding the hapless Lucas and then Konchesky. Coleman's cutback was met perfectly by Cahill, whose shot flew into the roof of the net, lifting the roof off Gwladys Street.

In derby collisions, the very least fans expect is commitment. Hodgson is a good manager but he singularly failed to motivate his men at the break.

Instead, Everton extended their lead. When Diniyar Bilyaletdinov swung over a corner, Kyrgiakos headed out but Liverpool were too slow to deal with the continuing threat. As Meireles and Carragher dived in vainfully, Arteta neatly controlled the dropping ball and then sent it flying past Reina.

Mikel the Merciless.

Hodgson could point to absent friends, notably Dirk Kuyt and Glen Johnson, but Moyes could simply list the names of Jack Rodwell, Marouane Fellaini, Steven Pienaar and Louis Saha. The emotion Everton stir in everyone from players to chairman to supporters was embodied as the injured Fellaini headed to the exit, hugging stewards and fans after a famous victory.

As Everton climb the table, Liverpool have some work to do - a lot of work - to stop the rot.

Foul Play

The Premier League's most notorious fixture produced its first foul after 11 seconds and its first booking inside 20 minutes - though Howard Webb did well not to brandish a yellow card long before. It lived up to its reputation, but was a fierce contest rather than a nasty one. Rating 3/5



19TH NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

IT WASN'T the chant of "Going down" from the Gwladys Street that will have hurt Liverpool fans most.

Or even the "You're getting sacked in the morning" directed at Roy Hodgson. No, the most devastating arrow to Red hearts was the triumphant chorus of "Easy, easy" that rang around Goodison Park at the end of this typically intense Merseyside derby.

It was so viciously cutting because it was true... a deadly accurate barb into the open wound of failure that is painfully leaking the lifeblood out of this Liverpool team at the moment.

Even before Everton confirmed their obvious superiority in one of the more comfortable victories they have enjoyed in recent derby history, the jokes had started flying.

As new Liverpool owners John W Henry and Thomas Werner watched the spectacle of Merseyside pageantry with slackjawed awe, one Blue-shirted fan in front of them shouted: "I hope you kept the receipt."

From the start Everton were a yard quicker to the ball and a yard ahead in terms of the wit required to gain any edge in what are always frenetic exchanges. The bare statistics suggest Liverpool enjoyed a 67-33 advantage in possession, but until the final few minutes, when Fernando Torres, David Ngog and Raul Meireles all had good opportunities, they created little.

The home side, conversely, dominated the opening half-hour, grabbed a crucial goal soon after, and then defended with the swagger of a team who knew they had a winning lead.

Despite the subsequent protestations of their manager, Liverpool lacked confidence. Not just in front of goal in the woefully forlorn shape of Torres but behind him in the nervous passing of Joe Cole and the determination to pass responsibility of Maxi Rodriguez and the woeful Lucas.

Only Steven Gerrard (left) and Jamie Carragher showed the commitment required for one of these games. Contrast that with Everton, who had heroes throughout their line-up.

Phil Jagielka and Mikel Arteta performed magnificently, despite both carrying hamstring injuries, What Everton had in addition was the leadership shown by Phil Neville - a crucial component. He provided a calming voice of authority for his side which was conspicuously absent in the opposition.

Gerrard, as always, tried but his frustration with his underperforming team-mates was always bubbling near the surface and likewise Carragher, who launched into a savage attack on Torres and his unwillingness to run.

He had a point. It is all very well being an international superstar, but if you are not prepared to work even in a Merseyside derby, then you are not much use in a red shirt. Too many Liverpool players were a disgrace to that shirt yesterday.

For Everton, everyone was ready to work, and that was never more evident than when the effervescent Seamus Coleman burst down the right to deliver a cross that found Tim Cahill with the help of a deflection off Paul Konchesky.

The Aussie, with some venom, converted brilliantly on the halfvolley at the near post.

Liverpool did start the second half brightly, but their confidence vanished visibly as the home side added another goal within five frantic minutes as Arteta slammed home a brilliant 20-yard shot after finding himself unmarked when Sotirios Kyrgiakos's headed clearance landed at his feet.

From there, Everton were happy to concede possession, such was their comfort in repelling what little the visitors had to offer.

Their victory showed they had the desire and courage to escape the bottom three, while Liverpool's lame display suggested Werner and Henry may have even more of a job on their hands than they bargained for.

EVERTON: Howard 7, Neville 8, Distin 8, Jagielka 8, Baines 7, Coleman 7, Arteta 8 (Beckford 74, 6), Heitinga 7 (Hibbert 72, 7), Osman 7 (Bilyaletdinov 46, 7), Cahill 8, Yakubu 8.

LIVERPOOL: Reina 6, Carragher 7, Skrtel 6, Kyrgiakos 6, Konchesky 5, Rodriguez 4 (Jovanovic 85), Meireles 6, Lucas 4 (Ngog 71, 6), Cole 5 (Babel 79); Gerrard 7, Torres 5.

REFEREE: Howard Webb.

ATT: 39,673



Dominic King's Merseyside derby verdict

THEY started with a huddle but ended as a disorganised, dispirited, demoralised muddle to give their new owners an idea of the enormous task which lies ahead. John W Henry and Tom Werner spoke with great pragmatism when they arrived on Merseyside this weekend, making it clear that the job of restoring Liverpool to the summit of English football will not be completed overnight.

Maybe the club's new owners had seen a DVD compilation of their new club's performances this season; if they hadn't the chastening, harrowing 90 minutes they had the misfortune of sitting through at Goodison Park yesterday gave an idea of the depths to which the Reds have fallen.

Talk about a classic case of what is given with one hand is taken away with another; while a certain sense of satisfaction can be taken from the fact Liverpool's financial house is coming back under order, the playing side of affairs remains in utter disarray. Defeats can be taken at the home of your oldest rivals if you know that your team has fought ferociously, carved out chances and exerted huge amounts of pressure only to yield to a moment of brilliance or a performance that could not be contained.

Full credit to Everton. Nobody is disputing they were the better side, playing cohesively, fighting for one another and deserving the goals which first Tim Cahill and then Mikel Arteta gleefully smashed in but, quite simply, it was made easy for them. The contrast could not have been more stark. Though Liverpool looked as if they meant business when gathering in a group before kick-off, within two-and-a-half minutes the unity started to unravel as Jamie Carragher and Fernando Torres locked horns.

Carragher's obvious dismay at a short ball was greeted with the sight of Torres gesturing to his team-mate to 'shush' and, instantly, the cracks the huddle had tried to hide started to become exposed again and the only way to describe what ensued was completely and utterly woeful.

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At times during an opening 45 minutes that left Liverpoolians sinking further and further into their seats out of pure embarrassment, the passing from Roy Hodgson's men resembled a drunken game of pin the tail on the donkey. Balls missed their intended target with such regularity that it actually became something of a surprise when a Red shirt found another Red shirt; other than dealing with a routine header from Torres, Tim Howard could have had the afternoon off.

Utterly woeful. And, more importantly, completely unacceptable. The first thing you need to do against David Moyes' Everton is match their commitment and endeavour, to try and run them off the park before you can earn the right to play. "This press conference was always going to be a very difficult press conference for me to handle unless we won the game," said Hodgson, as he attempted to explain the reason why Liverpool have now gone almost two months since their only Premier League win.

We didn't win the game and therefore people will read a lot of things into the performance and my attempt here is to juggle things – the result was quite clearly very very bad for us but I'm refusing to accept it was a bad team performance." As he is sticking to his guns, many will simply have to agree to disagree with him; in the corridors of Goodison Park's Main Stand, several former disbelieving Everton players – without mischief or malice – pointed out that it was the worst Liverpool team they had seen in a generation.

Normally upon hearing such statements you would stand and fight your corner but here, lamentably, witty, defiant ripostes were out of reach – cast a glance at the Premier League table and you see why.

Second bottom. A goal difference of minus six. One, scruffy win to their credit. The worst start to a campaign since 1928. This is not mischief making, it is simply pointing out the grave situation in which Liverpool find themselves.

Forget about breezing up the table and jostling for a position in the top four; don't even allow yourself to take it for granted that Liverpool will be playing European football next season – this squad simply is not good enough.

For Hodgson to suggest it was the best performance he had seen from his players since taking charge defied belief – this was not a patch on what they produced against Arsenal and that, if we are honest, was not a complete 90 minutes.

It might be true that Liverpool dominated possession after the Blues extended their lead with Arteta's thumping drive but what precisely did they do with it? Absolutely nothing – and the biggest cause for regret is that Everton may have wobbled had the Reds shown some dynamism.

But they didn't and, for that reason, this performance must rank alongside the nightmares of September 1993, November 1994, October 1997 and September 2006; many, with good reason, would say it was the worst of the lot because Liverpool never looked like getting back to it.

"The way we played was as good as I've seen us play this season. I can't have any qualms with my players," said Hodgson. "I hope fair-minded people see it the same way. I think it's a bit unfortunate that after such a good game everything revolves around the fact that Liverpool didn't win it."

An odd thing to say when you consider the derby has just been lost. Nobody in the city is fair-minded after one of these games and if that happens to be as good as Hodgson thinks they have been, then the winter is going to be long.

Messrs Henry and Werner are not going to come in and demand that the wheel be reshaped immediately but, equally, they are going to want to see signs that Liverpool will be able to hold their own before the reshaping starts.

One day Henry and Werner will want to be able to say they played a role helping Liverpool bring that elusive nineteenth league title back to the club which is why there is a dark irony that after 20 years spent looking for that number, they suddenly have it.

Nineteenth in the Premier League table, however, is nothing to boast about; improvement, quite simply, immediately demanded.

EVERTON (4-4-1-1): Howard, Neville, Jagielka, Distin, Baines, Coleman, Heitinga (Hibbert 72), Arteta (Beckford 74), Osman (Bilyaletdinov 46), Cahill, Yakubu. Not used: Mucha, Gueye, Mustafi, Baxter.

CARDS: Booked – Cahill, Beckford;

LIVERPOOL (4-2-3-1): Reina, Carragher, Skrtel, Kyrgiakos, Konchesky, Gerrard, Lucas (Ngog 71), Meireles, Cole (Babel 79), Maxi (Jovanovic 84), Torres. Not used: Jones, Aurelio, Spearing, Kelly.

CARDS: Booked – Maxi, Meireles, Torres.

GOALS: Cahill 34, Arteta 50.

REFEREE: Howard Webb (S Yorkshire).

ATTENDANCE: 39,673

THE INDEPENDENT

Dismal Reds show Henry the extent of his problems

It must have been in the boardrooms of Wall Street that John W Henry developed his poker face as a useful tactic in closing big deals, and at Goodison Park yesterday it came in handy concealing the true emotions of a man who had just spent [pounds sterling]300m on a team that is shot to bits.

There was no other description for a Liverpool side whose performance was so far from the level required for this match and this stage in their tumultuous history - not to mention their precarious league position - that at times it was hard to believe. There have been some bad moments in the life of this club in the last two years but now that the hated Tom Hicks and George Gillett have gone, who do the supporters take to the streets to protest against? Roy Hodgson appears to be in a state of denial. Fernando Torres looks like he would sooner be playing for Recreativo Huelva. Steven Gerrard wears the expression of a man who needs a phone call from the Samaritans. After eight games of the season, the most successful club in British football history are 19th in the Premier League with six points from eight games, only above West Ham by virtue of a better goal difference. The Everton fans saw off their illustrious neighbours with the chant "Going down" and ludicrous though that sounds it is by no means an impossibility. The man from Boston has been carried into his new club this week on a wave of optimism and understandable hope that the storm - to borrow a familiar line - had passed. Unfortunately, Liverpool walked straight out from under that rain cloud into the perfect storm at Goodison Park, where they were ambushed by a team that looked more coherent, more confident and much more capable than Hodgson's players.

As the hand-wringing goes on this week over Liverpool it will probably be forgotten that David Moyes' team found themselves in a familiar position before yesterday's game. They too had only six points before yesterday and were languishing near the bottom of the Premier League without a bountiful new American owner to celebrate, but they approached this Merseyside derby very differently to their neighbours. Tim Cahill and Mikel Arteta took their chances well and, when they had to defend for long periods of the second half, Sylvain Distin and Phil Jagielka were excellent. For all their own false dawns over the years, Everton have never been engulfed by the torpor afflicting Liverpool now. They are bad at the moment and Joe Cole is having the season from hell. Hodgson will, unfortunately, be obliged to take most of the flak from an appalled Liverpool support. It is a pity because, in a profession that often favours the bully, the Liverpool manager is virtually incapable of a harsh word. He tried to admonish a Norwegian journalist for asking questions about Torres' fitness but never quite built up the head of steam for a proper monsterring. The trouble with Hodgson's decision to claim that this was a good Liverpool performance - or at least the best during his time in charge - is that it was so evidently a tactic designed to protect his players. This was a dreadful Liverpool performance and everyone knew it, none more so than Hodgson's players. There was no capital in defending them. No one would have blamed Hodgson for calling it as he surely must have seen it. If Hodgson really thought this was a decent performance then Liverpool's problems run deeper than even Henry had first presumed. The American has said that he has no intention of getting rid of Hodgson but his club is fast reaching the point when critical decisions will have to be made. Liverpool have fewer points than Hull City did at the same stage of the season 12 months ago. It did not look too clever as early as the first few minutes when Jamie Carragher shouted at Torres to make a run in order to receive a pass and Torres responded by putting his finger to his lips. Increasingly, there is the feeling that Torres is doing Liverpool a favour by turning out every week and that the club have become a millstone for him rather than a great platform on which to perform. There was a moment in the first half when Gerrard's ball over the top to the right wing to Torres that put him in a race with Distin that he never looked like winning. All of a sudden Torres looks like a newly arrived foreign player who does not want to cope with the physical demands of Premier League defenders rather than the man who, two seasons ago, was the best striker in the division. Everton's first goal was made by the impressive 22-year-old Seamus Coleman, a [pounds sterling]60,000 signing from Sligo Rovers, who went down the right wing past Lucas Leiva and held off Paul Konchesky long enough to get the ball across for Cahill. The ball took a deflection off Konchesky that Hodgson said was responsible for it eluding Martin Skrtel and presenting Cahill with the chance to score from close range. The goal was a reward for the pressure that Everton had in the early stages when the game was at its most intense. That it never really threatened to boil over was only because Liverpool's confidence had all but disappeared by half-time. Arteta and Cahill both left a bit on Gerrard in one surge forward from the Liverpool captain in the first half but Gerrard had bigger problems to worry about than a row with those two. Five minutes after half-time Sotirios Kyrgiakos managed only a weak clearing header from Leighton Baines' corner and the ball fell nicely for Arteta on the edge of the box. He struck it on the half-volley and the shot came quickly through a crowd of players. It was close to Pepe Reina but the ball was past him so fast he could not react in time. A comeback was never really on the cards. Henry, who chose not to go back into the Everton directors' suite at half-time, stayed stoically to the end. It was not the way that the new era was supposed to begin. It could be worse from Liverpool's point of view - they could still have Hicks and Gillett in charge - but that is about all the comfort that could be taken.