

Date: 9 January 2011  
 Opposition: Manchester United  
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9 January  
2011

## THE TIMES

Dalglish is taken back to the future

Manchester **United** 1 Giggs 2 (pen) **Liverpool** 0 Referee: HWebb. Attendance: 74,727 TONY BARRETT The most compelling argument against Kenny Dalglish's return to **Liverpool** is that the game has moved on in the two decades since he left the club. Conflicting evidence was put forward yesterday to suggest that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Ryan Giggs was less than a fortnight away from the league debut that launched a stellar career when Dalglish walked away from Anfield on February 22, 1991. With both anniversaries approaching, it was Giggs who took Dalglish back to the future in the cruelest fashion, scoring the decisive penalty that cut short the celebrations that had greeted the return of King Kenny and **Liverpool's** hopes of salvaging their shambolic season with a single stroke of his left foot.

If that was a blast from the past, then the managers' reaction to the disputed penalty provoked even stronger feelings of déjà vu. Dalglish claimed that Howard Webb, the referee, had been wrong to penalise Daniel Agger for the minimal contact that prompted Dimitar Berbatov's tumble after 31 seconds, insisting that "it wasn't a penalty". True to form, Ferguson disagreed. "It was a definite penalty," the Manchester **United** manager maintained, before proffering that Webb had enjoyed "a good game". As managerial spats go, particularly in this most combustible of fixtures, it may have been fairly tame and fallen some way short of Dalglish's assertion that "you'd get more sense out of my six-week-old girl" than Ferguson in one clash from their earlier years, but it ended the entente cordiale that had been in place between the managers of **Liverpool** and **United** during Roy Hodgson's brief tenure.

Few on either side of North West football's biggest divide can lay claim to uniting opinion, but the evergreen Giggs is perhaps one of them. His class is as evident now as it was when he burst on to the scene as a teenager, even if the searing pace that characterised his emergence has dropped a gear or two.

With the 37-year-old on the pitch, **United** boast a technician and a talisman who is so often a key figure in their most important victories. Statistics struggle to do justice to his artistry but they still provide an undeniable body of evidence in testament to his value. In the FA Cup, **United** have won 75 per cent of the 57 games that he has started, a figure that drops to 52 per cent in the 27 matches that he has not. If Dalglish is looking for an example of how genius need not be unduly diminished by the ravages of time, he could do worse than to highlight the enduring excellence of the player who ensured his return would not be blessed with the kind of fairytale ending that he will have dreamt of. He will have feared that the game was up after only 32 minutes when Steven Gerrard curtailed what had started out as a promising performance with a two-footed lunge on Michael Carrick that invited the red card duly administered by Webb. Dalglish disputed that decision as well, but his grounds to do so were far less secure than the ones that prompted his contesting of the penalty award. Having left the ground and bared his studs, Gerrard put the referee in a position in which only the flouting of the letter of the law would have allowed his continued participation.

The dismissal of their captain did not terminate **Liverpool's** competitiveness, although had Jonny Evans's header from a corner by Giggs on the stroke of half-time found its way into Pepe Reina's goal instead of striking a post, their resistance would surely have ended there and then. As it was, that stroke of fortune allowed them to retain a foothold in the game that they continued to grow into, despite being at a numerical disadvantage, without looking particularly threatening. Chances came and went for **United** but neither the sublime Berbatov nor the fleet-footed Javier Hernandez could provide a finish when opportunities came their way. In one attack Reina was forced into making four saves in less than ten seconds, his heroics keeping alive the tie and ensuring that the home team's slender lead would give them cause for increasing concern even though their opponents were struggling to produce anything to suggest that parity would be restored. Not surprisingly, the closest they came to doing so was from a set-piece rather than open play as Tomasz Kuszczak did well to claw away a free kick by Fabio Aurelio that would have found the top corner without his agile reaction.

The combination of the collective stubbornness shown by **United's** back four and **Liverpool's** impotence in the face of it, with Fernando Torres again a pale shadow of the player who had brought Old Trafford to its knees less than two years ago, ensured that Ferguson held sway over Dalglish in the latest and most unexpected instalment of their epic rivalry.

On a day when they had been defeated by their greatest adversaries through a controversial goal, lost their captain to a three-game ban and saw their hopes dashed of lifting domestic silverware for the first time since 2006, it would take something out of the ordinary to dare to suggest that there were positives for **Liverpool** to take from such a damaging defeat.

The manner in which they played, though - with defensive organisation back and possession of the football again cherished after six months in which route-one play was used far too often - indicated a return to the kind of approach for which the club are famed. There was also ample evidence that they now have a manager who is prepared to manage, best illustrated by Dalglish opting to withdraw Torres after 77 minutes, the kind of decision that Hodgson had shied away from as he lost his grip on the team and events.

This one seemingly innocuous event suggested that Dalglish has what it takes to make the decisions that matter, even if the team he has inherited may fall short of the standards set by Giggs and **United**.

## the guardian

Defeated Dalglish returns with a rant: Liverpool manager furious at penalty and red card: Gerrard was 'reckless' says Ferguson after 1-0 victory

There was no triumphant return as Liverpool manager for Kenny Dalglish, only the familiarity of a dispute with Sir Alex Ferguson as he condemned the decisions that gave Manchester United victory in the third round of the FA Cup.

Dalglish's first game as Liverpool manager for almost 20 years ended in controversial defeat after the referee, Howard Webb, awarded a first-minute penalty that enabled Ryan Giggs to decide the contest and dismissed Steven Gerrard in the 32nd minute for a two-footed tackle on Michael Carrick.

Ferguson, who greeted his fellow Scot and former adversary with "welcome back" in the tunnel before kick-off, claimed the World Cup final referee called both major decisions correctly. Dalglish, almost inevitably, thought otherwise. "The penalty was a joke," said Dalglish, who accepted John W Henry's invitation to replace Roy Hodgson while on a cruise and denied his iconic Liverpool status will be at risk over the next five months.

"I've seen the replay and unless they have changed the rules it is not a penalty. The other one, I can't see that as a red card either. In the dressing room before the game someone said to me the game hasn't changed that much and I said I thought it had become a non-contact sport. Maybe I was right."

United were the dominant side throughout but reliant on Daniel Agger's slight trip on Dimitar Berbatov for the penalty that secured a fourth-round tie away to Southampton. "Of course it was a penalty," the Bulgarian striker said. "There was enough contact for me to lose my balance and people know I do not go to ground easily."

The start to Dalglish's second coming as Liverpool manager deteriorated further when Gerrard caught Carrick with both feet off the floor. The Liverpool captain will now miss the trip to Blackpool on Wednesday, the Merseyside derby with Everton on Sunday and the game at Wolverhampton Wanderers as a result of a three-match ban.

"I don't think there was any doubt. I think it was two-footed. He was off the ground too," said Ferguson. "It was a reckless challenge. Steven Gerrard is not that type of player really but I don't think he left the referee with any option. I thought it was a penalty too. The replay shows he slightly touched him but the momentum is enough to bring the player down."

The United manager said he was "amazed" the game ended 1-0 but credited 10-man Liverpool with a resilience that was absent in Hodgson's final game in charge at Blackburn Rovers, and gave Dalglish confidence that he can revive the club's sorry campaign.

Dalglish said: "If we can get everyone pulling in the same direction - players, staff, owners and supporters - we are going to have a good chance of improving things going forward." He denied making any additions to his backroom staff but is expected to install the former Chelsea and West Ham United No2 Steve Clarke as his assistant.

"I don't think any of the players could be faulted for effort and commitment. Yes, we might pass and finish a bit better but it is a difficult place to come and win a game. To lose a penalty in the first minute and get a guy sent off in the first half was always going to make it difficult for us."

Dalglish, right, was tempted, he said, "to do a Mourinho or Gary Neville and run down to that corner" when he faced Liverpool supporters for the first time as their manager since a 4-4 FA Cup replay draw against Everton in February 1991. He also countered suggestions that, 10 years after his last managerial experience at Celtic, he had been out of the game too long and was placing his reputation at risk at Liverpool by attempting to correct their recent decline.

"How do you know you have anything unless you try?" he said. "I will give everything I have got to put the club in a better position than it is now. Whether that's going to be sufficient for everyone, I don't know. I can't see into the future. I can only promise 100% commitment. That is the way to look at it. For me, it was a no-brainer. Whatever other people think, they are perfectly entitled. I made the decision and I made the one I think was best for myself and the football club."

"I was on a boat and I was happy when I got a phone call from John Henry to say he had spoken to Roy and would I like to come and look after the team until the end of the season."

"I would not have insulted the club by saying no. I have to say the cruise people were fantastic. They got us off at Bahrain and got us on to a plane and I was home last night."

Reports last night claimed that 15 arrests were made inside Old Trafford for public order offences and criminal damage.

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## The Mail

**KENNY'S SUNK IN CHOPPY WATERS;** Gerrard red card adds to Dalglish nightmare

Manchester Utd 1 Liverpool 0

AFTER 32 seconds Kenny Dalglish was reminded what a frustrating game this can be. After 32 minutes he must have been longing for that cruise ship; the chance to be back in a marina with wife Marina. This was a tough re-introduction to the world Dalglish has been away from for more than 12 years. Not enough to make his head explode but not far off given the dubious nature of the penalty that secured victory for Manchester United and the reckless nature of the challenge that then led to the dismissal of Steven Gerrard. The two incidents determined the outcome of this disappointing tie, first in the way Ryan Giggs was able to seize the lead for United and then in the way Liverpool's chance of battling their way back into the contest was removed. Without Gerrard they lacked drive and invention from midfield, leaving Fernando Torres a forlorn, isolated figure up front. Dalglish was heartened by the commitment of the players he had met only at 10.30 yesterday morning, and this was certainly an improvement on the sorry performance at Blackburn that proved to be Roy Hodgson's last game in charge. But only now does the work begin for Dalglish as he tries to rebuild the club that, in the words of United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, were still on their perch when he left 20 years ago. Gerrard and Torres might be class acts but not many of these players would have secured a place alongside Rush, Beardsley and Barnes.

Even after losing to their fiercest rivals, Liverpool's interim manager could not hide his delight at being back. 'Brilliant,' was how he described his feelings after what has been an extraordinary 48 hours. 'Less than 48 hours,' he retorted. He was, he said, sitting in the bar when the distress call came from John W Henry; a call that appears to have been followed by a message to the bridge to pull into the next port. 'The cruise ship was fantastic in letting us get off at Bahrain,' he said. Presumably, the conversation with Henry was a brief one. Dalglish has been longing for this moment, long before he put himself forward for the job in the summer by withdrawing from the search for Rafa Benitez's successor.

He said it was 'a no-brainer'; the chance to address some 'unfinished business' with the club who remain such an integral part of his life. There was a buzz among the travelling supporters that has been absent all season and it was evident the moment Dalglish appeared from the tunnel and walked along the touchline with Ferguson. 'He said, "welcome back",' revealed Dalglish. 'And it's amazing how quickly the memory comes back to you.' His team talk, he explained after paying tribute to Hodgson, concerned the need for unity, and the words he chose must have been rousing ones judging by the response. Gerrard might be 30 but the overwhelming desire to impress clearly played its part in his early departure.

Even Ferguson noted the fact that he is not a player one would normally associate with two-footed lunges, although the challenge that left Michael Carrick with a sore ankle also looked like an act of retaliation after seeing Rafael da Silva escape punishment seconds earlier for a similar clash with Raul Meireles. Dalglish bemoaned Howard Webb's decision but the referee was right. The game has changed since he was last here, especially when it comes to lunging two-footed challenges. If Webb was right to dismiss Gerrard, he was horribly wrong when it came to awarding the penalty. The contact between Daniel Agger and Dimitar Berbatov was minimal at best; the collapse to the ground depressingly delayed by the Bulgarian. It was symptomatic, perhaps, of an era when even referees like Webb are explaining to players that they have a right to go down should there be contact but something that remained unjust on this occasion. Some 25 yards behind the action, Webb was in no position to see the incident clearly and the fact that his assistant did not raise a flag should have planted some doubt in his mind. But Webb pointed to the spot and Giggs did the rest. In the end, United just about deserved their fourth-round trip to Southampton. In Giggs, who made his debut for United a month after Dalglish's shock resignation in February 1991, and Rio Ferdinand they had the two best outfield players, and they also had the better of the other chances. While Jonny Evans sent a header crashing against a post, Pepe Reina somehow made four saves in little more than four seconds to deny Rafael twice as well as Berbatov and Patrice Evra. This, however, was far from United's best and Dalglish will know as much. Had Gerrard remained on the field for longer than 32 minutes his side might have threatened more. In the end Fabio Aurelio went closest with a decent free-kick. Dalglish praised Torres for his workrate, having focused on the Spaniard in his column in yesterday's Irish Mail on Sunday. But reviving his spirit will be as important as making the changes that are sure to follow. Steve Clarke would be a sound appointment as a coach, while adding some strength to the squad would also be useful.

Yesterday Dalglish made some positive changes. No Paul Konchesky at left back. The return of Agger at centre half. Torres off after 77 minutes. All displayed the strength we have long associated with the man. As he said, he will not know if he's still got it until he has tried. But in the eyes of the Liverpool supporters, and probably the players too, he already looks less out of place than his predecessor. **MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2):** Kuszczak 6; Rafael 7, Ferdinand 8, Evans 7 (Smalling 84min), Evra 7; Nani 6, Fletcher 6 (Anderson 63, 6), Carrick 7, Giggs 8; Hernandez 6 (Owen 75, 6), Berbatov 6. Booked: Fletcher, Anderson.

**LIVERPOOL (4-3-2-1):** Reina 8; Kelly 7, Skrtel 6, Agger 6, Aurelio 6; Meireles 6 (Shelvey 60, 6), Lucas 6, Gerrard 6; Kuyt 6, Rodriguez 6 (Babel 60, 6); Torres 6 (Ngog 77).

Sent off: Gerrard. Man of the match: Ryan Giggs.

Referee: Howard Webb.

## The Daily Telegraph

United show Dalglish size of the challenge ahead

Manchester United 1

Giggs 2 pen

Liverpool 0

Att: 74,727

For a man often castigated for jumping ship as Liverpool manager 20 years ago, Kenny Dalglish's return to the role was rather fitting. In another port, halfway around the world, Dalglish hopped off his cruise ship in Bahrain on Saturday morning, responding to the distress signal sent up by the club he loves.

Watching Ryan Giggs gliding around Old Trafford yesterday and hearing Sir Alex Ferguson greet him with a cheery "welcome back", Dalglish could have been forgiven for wondering what had changed.

This was familiar fare from his days at Newcastle United and Blackburn Rovers.

Dalglish quit Anfield in 1991 just as Ferguson was building towards dominating the domestic game and Giggs's career was taking off.

Just as Ferguson and Giggs remain imbued with a deep passion for the game and a razor-sharp competitive edge, so has Dalglish craved renewed involvement.

That is the nature of these footballing obsessives; they cannot stop or retire.

Even while relaxing on the Silver Wind as it floated between Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Muscat and Bahrain, Dalglish was thinking about Liverpool. This is a man once given a mug for Christmas that read "we interrupt this marriage to bring you the football season". Now it was a holiday with his wife being interrupted.

Having left behind one gulf, Dalglish was reminded here he must seek to bridge another. Even without Edwin van der Sar, Nemanja Vidic and Wayne Rooney, United were largely in control of this FA Cup third-round tie, victory sending them to the port of Southampton in the fourth round.

Defeat will hurt but Dalglish's priority revolves around so much more than a 90-minute Cup tie. In his six months at the helm here, the shrewd Scot has to steady the ship, unify the club. He started doing this with his opening words to the players about all singing from the same song sheet.

He needs to introduce some leadership into a club that has witnessed behaviour bordering on Animal Farm recently. At least Dalglish's return has instantly ended the fans' mutinous nature; 9,000 of them chanted his name long and loud here.

Cloaked in a coat that seemed a size too big, Dalglish will know the scale of the assignment with Liverpool. He must also link first team and academy, and the performance of young Martin Kelly gave real hope at right-back.

If the choice of the starting XI was Roy Hodgson's final act as manager, some significance could be read into Dalglish's bench. When Glen Johnson's partner went into labour, Dalglish promoted Kelly and sat the 19 year-old defender, Danny Wilson, among the reserves.

Joe Cole suffered an injury in training but nether Paul Konchesky, so disliked by the Liverpool fans, nor Milan Jovanovic, so far from Liverpool standards, made it. Dalglish's tactics were sound enough, 4-5-1, with Steven Gerrard and Raul Meireles breaking towards Fernando Torres. The tempo and hunger were better. But he needs to improve an average squad. He also needs a coach, whether somebody such as Steve Clarke, although there will always be a place for the loyal Sammy Lee. Dalglish will need more dynamism from Torres, who was eventually replaced by David N'Gog, and more discipline from Gerrard, whose reckless challenge on Michael Carrick brought an inevitable red.

Before going a man down, Liverpool went a goal down. Dalglish's players had probably only just dried out from a mischievous sprinkler before kick-off when they learned that it only rains when it pours.

Within 31 seconds of Howard Webb's opening whistle, the World Cup final referee was pointing to the spot following Daniel Agger's challenge on Dimitar Berbatov.

Liverpool were outraged by the way United's No9 milked the minimal contact, collapsing to the floor. Berbatov insisted he was no diver, and that contact was made, but he reacted rather like a feather in a wind tunnel. Agger, though, was naive to make such a challenge in an era when scruples have long been burned on the altar of win-at-all-costs expediency. Giggs duly swept the penalty home. Along with Giggs, Rafael demonstrated why Gary Neville's retirement may be imminent. Liverpool responded, Dirk Kuyt wriggling through until stopped, and then Gerrard shooting low but failing to trouble Tomasz Kuszczak.

Gerrard's next act was irresponsible, not an X-rated lunge like past ones on Gary Naysmith, George Boateng or Kevin Campbell but still dangerous.

As Webb summoned Gerrard over, Liverpool's captain fiddled with the armband, as if trying to remind the referee of his status. Webb would not be swayed and pulled out a red card. It's a simple rule with tackling nowadays: leave the ground and you are likely to leave the pitch. Gerrard is now kicking his heels for the games with Blackpool, Everton and Wolves.

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Maybe an element of frustration had stained Gerrard's thought process. Carrick had just caught him and Rafael escaped with a twofooted challenge on a hesitant Meireles moments before. As Gerrard trooped away, the Stretford End broke off from their usual barracking of the **Liverpool** midfielder to assail Dalglish's ears. "You're getting sacked in the morning," sang **United** fans. He is unsackable. Dalglish's six-month tenure hardly began in the most auspicious manner, and there was almost worse when Jonny Evans headed Giggs's corner against the bar, but there was sufficient to encourage the Scot after the break. Torres's half-volley struck Rio Ferdinand. Ryan Babel and Fabio Aurelio tested Kuszczak.

For **United**, Michael Owen then replaced the subdued Javier Hernandez and was greeted with: "Where were you in Istanbul?" Owen responded by nutmegging Martin Skrtel and Kuyt. As the tie slid into injury time, there was Giggs still running, still twisting and turning. This was never going to be a cruise for Dalglish. He has a lot of hard work ahead.

The key moments on return of Kenny

11:50am Third man off the **Liverpool** team bus, greets Old Trafford security guard with a handshake and a smile.

12:30 Announces his first **Liverpool** team for almost 20 years, making five changes from Roy Hodgson's final line-up, which lost 3-1 at Blackburn.

13:28 Emerges from tunnel alongside Sir Alex Ferguson, applauds the 9,000 **Liverpool** fans and then signs autographs for **United** supporters next to dug-out.

KICK-OFF: 1 min Leaves dug-out to complain to fourth official Andre Marriner about decision to award **United** a penalty on 35 seconds. Lipreader not required to gauge Dalglish's comments.

17 mins Shouts instructions to Dirk Kuyt after the midfielder allows Rafael da Silva to break into space on **United's** right flank.

32 mins Stunned reaction to Steven Gerrard's dismissal for lunge at Michael Carrick, but quickly begins to change tactics in another touchline chat with Kuyt.

33 mins Watches Gerrard challenge on touchline monitor. Retreats to dug-out in resigned fashion.

35 mins Taunted with chants of 'You're getting sacked in the morning' by gloating **United** supporters.

HALF-TIME TV cameras catch a seemingly angry Dalglish berating referee Howard Webb in the tunnel as teams return to dressing-rooms.

60 mins Replaces Maxi and Meireles with Ryan Babel and Jonjo Shelvey in a bid to find a route back into the tie.

64 mins Jumps in anticipation and then puts hands to his head as Fabio Aurelio's free-kick is well saved by Tomasz Kuszczak.

77 mins Decides to end Fernando Torres's nightmare performance by replacing the forward with David Ngog.

90 mins Embraces Ferguson and **United** assistant manager Mike Phelan before applauding **Liverpool** fans.

90 mins+ Leaves pitch to chants of 'Going Down' from the Stretford End.

## THE INDEPENDENT

King Kenny has brought hope despite defeat to bitterest enemy  
 What took the Americans so long? Liverpool needed so much more than any old caretaker manager and no one could say they didn't get a little of it at Old Trafford yesterday when Kenny Dalglish responded to arguably the most desperate SOS in the history of football.

Their requirement was obviously greater than anything Roy Hodgson was going to provide after he became a figure of hate and ridicule on the Anfield terraces and - to be fair to the instinct if not the style of the mob who took him down - someone who plainly had neither the strength nor the nerve left to tackle a job that had become next to impossible.

Impossible, certainly, for someone who didn't have the gravitas of the man who was cruising in the Middle East when the club he had served so superbly, both as a player and a manager, was disappearing even further up the creek.

It took Liverpool a long, long time, and too many false turns and miscalculations and betrayals to comfortably list here, to reach the nadir of that wrenching home defeat by bottom-of-the-table Wolves but there was no mystery about the most crying need.

Despite the FA Cup defeat by Manchester United, it may not be too soon to say that some of it may have been put in place.

We are talking about a sense of pride and responsibility, an ability to do something more than lay back and accept the worst that fate has bestowed.

Liverpool may not have been able to muster quite enough of it to overcome two devastating decisions by referee Howard Webb - or disguise the fact that first Dalglish and then the man who is even now, apparently, being head-hunted to succeed him in the summer face restoration work that can only be described as epic.

Still, you have to start somewhere and at Old Trafford the mere presence of King Kenny had several obvious benefits even as the referee's hammer blows were delivered. Not least was the fact that mocking the man in the Liverpool dug-out would have been an outrage even in these anarchic days on the terraces.

It would have been blasphemy, cause for excommunication; so, it seemed, would any suggestion of disrespect or disinterest from professionals who had recently hinted they had lost the will to live, let alone play.

So Liverpool remained committed to achieving something, even if it was some basic defiance, after Dimitar Berbatov was awarded a penalty inside a minute for a dive flagrant even by today's standards. Observers of the experience of Sam Allardyce and Gareth Southgate both agreed that the Bulgarian had cheated, or, as they say in the game, gone down a little easily after fleeting contact with Daniel Agger, but only in the way any working professional would have done, with the possible exception of the new Theo Walcott.

Dalglish was also aggrieved by the red card given to Steven Gerrard after he flew at Michael Carrick with both feet off the ground.

Here, the Anfield redeemer was on less comfortable ground, even if he had seen Webb merely offer a yellow card to Holland's Nigel de Jong for his gruesome airborne assault on Xabi Alonso during the World Cup final.

Gerrard's absence for three games is a nightmarish blow for the new manager but it is not without a little redemption. Before the red mist, Gerrard looked not only interested but something like his old self.

This could not, unfortunately, be said of Liverpool's other great player, Fernando Torres, but here again Dalglish's mere presence seemed to have brought a new dimension, one in which a new level of professional accountability might just have a part to play.

Unlike Hodgson, Dalglish had the nerve to do something about it. He withdrew Torres and threw in the younger legs and currently more obvious ambition of David Ngog. Ryan Babel and Jonjo Shelvey were already on the field and Martin Kelly, who looked roughly three times a more natural defender than a Glenn Johnson taking early paternity leave, had been on from the start.

It didn't swing the result, didn't threaten United's man advantage which became more apparent as the game wore on, but it was evidence of life, even a hint that already some powerful reassessments might just be in place.

Torres, it seems increasingly obvious, is destined for other places and plainly Dalglish comes to him without the aura he no doubt occupies in the minds of someone like Gerrard or young Kelly, a strong-minded Lancastrian who has grown up at the club. Even so, Torres may just recognise in Dalglish a man who has no reason to be overawed by evidence of outstanding talent, even a genius to score goals.

At this time of all times it can be no bad thing to have in charge the man who is not only arguably the best Liverpool player of all time but one who has displayed the professional nous to deliver four titles, three to Anfield and one to Blackburn, and whose mere presence, we were reminded yesterday, is guaranteed to inflame the hackles of no less than Sir Alex Ferguson.

There is, of course, a theory that Dalglish's re-awakened appetite for the game, dulled no doubt by his experiences in the disaster area of Newcastle United and a Celtic who could hardly have separated themselves further from the days of Jock Stein, has come too late.

Allardyce suggested as much when he said that Dalglish's anger over the Gerrard decision was an indicator of his time away from the game. Maybe it is so, maybe not, but there are some things that are eternal, in football as elsewhere. They concern standards and demands, and most pertinently in the recent history of Liverpool Football Club, a strong idea about who can play - and who can't.

After just 24 hours back on the job, even Dalglish would no doubt admit that he has absolutely everything still to prove. However, who could say that it was pure coincidence yesterday when Liverpool looked at least a little like, of all things, Liverpool?

Sam Wallace, page 9  
 Stan Hey, Newspaper, page 4  
 KING KENNY  
 DALGLISH'S CAREER AT LIVERPOOL

- \* As a Liverpool player, Kenny Dalglish made 515 appearances between 1977 and 1990, scoring 172 goals.
- Playing honours at Liverpool
- \* Five League titles: 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984.
- \* Three European Cups: 1978, 1981 (right), 1984.
- \* European Super Cup in 1977
- \* Four League Cups: 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984
- \* The Scot was appointed the club's first player/ manager in 1985 at the age of 34. He stayed in charge for six successful years, before resigning two days after the 4-4 FA Cup fifth-round replay draw with Everton in 1991.
- Managerial honours at Liverpool
- \* Three League titles: 1986, 1988, 1990.
- \* Two FA Cups: 1986 and 1989.
- P W D L Win %
- 307 187 78 42 60.9
- \* Became a club ambassador in 2009.



25 years on, Kop are well and truly knocked off their perch while Giggs & Co go for another Treble..thanks to MR UNFLAPPABLE; RETURN OF KING KENNY

WHEN Sir Alex Ferguson took over at Manchester United, his ambition was to "knock Liverpool off their f\*\*\*\*\* perch".

Twenty-five years on, Liverpool have not so much been knocked off their perch, but left spark out on the floor of the cage.

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2011

Not even the second coming of Anfield icon Kenny Dalglish as manager, following the sacking of Roy Hodgson, could save the Merseysiders from an 11th defeat of the season and an immediate FA Cup exit. United did not even have to be anywhere near their best to dispose of their arch-rivals with the minimum of fuss. The dismissal of Steven Gerrard, for a reckless twofooted challenge on Michael Carrick in the first half, ultimately made United's task easier. But the heroics of keeper Jose Reina saved Dalglish from a humiliating first day back at the office. The Spaniard rescued Liverpool on no fewer than six occasions, including four blocks in one frenetic second-half goalmouth scramble. At the other end, Tomasz Kuszczak could have had his feet up and a cigar on. The Pole was called upon just once to make a save of any note. That, in a nutshell, is the difference between the sides. United are unbeaten this season in the Premier League, brimming with confidence, in control of the title race and have their sights on the Champions League and FA Cup. Liverpool are racked by selfrecrimination, lurching from one crisis to another on and off the field. It took less than a minute for the euphoria among the 9,000 travelling Liverpool fans, ecstatic about Dalglish's appointment, to subside. King Kenny emerged from the Old Trafford tunnel and responded to the adulation from the away support by punching the air with both hands. It was an ill-advised, premature gesture from a man summoned to take over a club in chaos.

And within 31 seconds of kickoff, the scale of the task facing Dalglish became apparent as a clumsy challenge from Daniel Agger on Dimitar Berbatov saw Liverpool concede a penalty. TV replays showed there was minimal, if any, contact between the players, but Berbatov took full advantage of Agger's decision to stick out a leg. The Bulgarian tumbled over it to great effect, although the referee's assistant, who had the best view of all, did not flag for a foul. Wayne Rooney was absent, having suffered a reaction to his injured ankle 24 hours before the match. So spot-kick duties fell to Ryan Giggs, who made his United debut less than a fortnight after Dalglish quit as Liverpool boss in 1991, his health in jeopardy and his mind scrambled. Giggs (right) showed customary composure to beat Reina, although the keeper deserved credit for guessing the right way and almost getting a hand to the penalty. But the game's turning point arrived in the 32nd minute, with the dismissal of Gerrard for a dangerous lunge on Carrick.

Only seconds earlier, Rafael Da Silva had gone in two-footed on Raul Meireles. The crucial difference was that, unlike Gerrard, the young Brazilian's feet remained on the ground.

Gerrard complained at the clamour of United players calling for his dismissal, but he pulled off the captain's armband as soon as referee Howard Webb produced a red card. In that instant it was game over. United could and should have won by a more emphatic margin, but a combination of Reina's heroics, and the home side's failure to turn their dominance into more goals, kept the scoreline down, Jonny Evans hitting a post with a header just before half-time. Liverpool threatened to equalise once, Fabio Aurelio's curling freekick met by an acrobatic save from Kuszczak. For United, the Treble is still on in a season in which, ominously for all their rivals, they have yet to hit top gear. For Liverpool and Dalglish, the search for a way out of the mire continues, their plight bleaker now they will be without Gerrard for three games in what could be a costly suspension.

MAN UTD: Kuszczak 7, Rafael 8, Ferdinand 8, Evans 7 (Smalling 84), Evra 7, Nani 7, Fletcher 7 (Anderson 63, 6), Carrick 7, Giggs 8, Berbatov 7, Hernandez 7 (Owen 75, 6).

LIVERPOOL: Reina 8, Kelly 7, Skrtel 6, Agger 6, Aurelio 6, Kuyt 6, Lucas 7, Miereles 6 (Shelvey 60, 5), Rodriguez 6 (Babel 60, 6), Gerrard 5, Torres 5.

REF: Howard Webb ATT: 74,727



Luke Traynor on how Kenny Dalglish's hopes for an Anfield revival is a big ask

AT just after 11am on Saturday the mood on the Red half of Merseyside was joyfully buoyant.

News was quickly filtering around the city that prodigal son Kenny Dalglish had been appointed into the Anfield hotseat, ending Roy Hodgson's beleaguered reign.

With the Kop's favourite son now back in charge, it almost seemed fated that his first assignment would be facing up to his old sparring partner Alex Ferguson for a crunch FA Cup Third Round clash against Manchester United.

For a moment, it was almost just like the good old days.

Fergie, who had been preparing to warmly welcome his ally and friend Hodgson, must have found it hard not to reserve a growl for Dalglish, his old foe, as they shook hands.

But while in the 1980s, Liverpool ruled the roost in the north west with The King at the helm, times have certainly changed.

And if this 1-0 defeat proved anything, it showed that turning round Liverpool's ailing fortunes will not be a quick fix, whoever the man is in charge

Fast forward 24 hours from the celebration of Saturday, and it took a mere 32 seconds on the Old Trafford pitch for the Liverpool smiles to turn to frowns.

A debatable early penalty for Man Utd was an early nail in the coffin for Dalglish's men from which they never recovered.

In effect, it was a game of two big decisions, with referee Howard Webb, a man never far from controversy, at the centre of both.

Just after the half-hour mark, he gave Steven Gerrard his marching orders for a late challenge on Michael Carrick.

While Webb might have got the sending-off right – the captain sliding in high and late on the midfielder – the penalty award in the first minute was undeniably harsh.

There could have been few complaints with Gerrard's early bath, however, the captain lunging in on Michael Carrick's ankles with both feet off the ground.

There was nothing malicious about the challenge, but following the letter of law, the red card was understandable.

Liverpool faced an uphill battle for the last hour of the game, but while the scoreline remained 1-0, they were always in with a chance of nicking a replay.

Despite positive changes from Dalglish to grab an equaliser – Babel, Shelvey and Ngog all being introduced in the second half – the Reds never really threatened the United goal while Pepe Reina was kept busy as the league leaders continued to press.

The Liverpool boss could be rightly proud of his players, and there will be easier challenges ahead than this.

shuffled his pack, bringing in Aurelio, Agger, Kuyt and Meireles, while Martin Kelly was a last minute inclusion for Glen Johnson whose partner had gone into labour.

It was a heartwarming sight to see the Scotsman stride out onto the Old Trafford pitch with purpose before the game, saluting the raucous Liverpool travelling contingent to roars of appreciation.

The 9,000 Liverpool fans packed into the away end, vocally eulogised their new manager through the words of The Fields of Anfield Road.

But their afternoon was quickly on a downward spiral when the Reds fell behind within the first minute.

The ball was floated forward to Dimitar Berbatov who cannily waited for the ill-advised challenge of Daniel Agger.

There was contact, but it was minimal and the Bulgarian eagerly capitalised on the error of the Dane's ways by crumbling easily to the turf.

The spot kick was crashed home by Ryan Giggs leaving Pepe Reina with little chance.

Liverpool regrouped and through the midfield triumvirate of Gerrard, Lucas and Meireles began to claim some meaningful possession.

One confident passage of play saw Gerrard release a rampaging Kelly on the right, and his dangerous cross failed to find Torres.

But the Reds' afternoon turned to disaster when Gerrard, who was beginning to show signs of stamping his authority on the match, was sent off.

It was a contentious decision from Howard Webb, but it seemed the skipper could have few complaints.

As Gerrard departed to waves from the delighted Old Trafford faithful, it was hard not to accept Liverpool had just said goodbye to any hope they had of grabbing a result.

At times, the Reds were hanging on and they were fortunate not to go behind in first half injury time when a Jonny Evans header crashed against the upright.

Dalglish's men rode their luck in the second half as United tried to find the second goal to put the match beyond their rivals.

But to the Reds' credit, they refused to buckle, and Ryan Babel and Jonjo Shelvey were introduced to give the Reds more attacking options.

Aside from a curling Fabio Aurelio free kick, however, which was well saved by Kuszczak, an equaliser never looked likely.

The only silverware now on offer to Dalglish this season is the Europa League, as attention will now turn to the Premiership.

Fixtures against Blackpool, Everton and Wolves have been made a whole lot harder with the likely three match ban for captain Gerrard.

This was not the fairytale start to his Liverpool return that Dalglish might have hoped for.

But there are more crucial battles to be won ahead, and with The King now in charge of the Reds destiny, there is renewed vigour at Anfield to meet those challenges head on.

As Dalglish trudged off the pitch at the end, the travelling Liverpool fans were loud and proud as they saluted their new manager.

It seemed they knew that, while this was one battle lost, the war was just beginning. And they have their chosen commander leading them from the front.

*"We are not going to be pleased to lose a match but the most important thing for us is that we got a great deal of effort and commitment from the players and that was matched by the supporters."* KENNY DALGLISH.

*"Dimitar says he was definitely clipped. The replay shows he slightly touched him but the momentum is enough to bring the player down"* ALEX FERGUSON

MANCHESTER UNITED: (4-4-2): Kuszczak, Evra, Ferdinand(capt), Evans (Smalling, 83) Rafael Da Silva, Giggs, Nani, Fletcher (Anderson, 62) Carrick, Berbatov, Hernandez (Owen, 74) Not used: Fabio Da Silva, Obertan, Gibson, Lindegaard

LIVERPOOL: (4-5-1): Reina, Kelly, Aurelio, Skrtel, Agger, Maxi (Babel, 59) Lucas, Meireles (Shelvey, 59) Kuyt, Gerrard,(capt) Torres (Ngog, 77) Not used: Gulacsi, Kyrgiakos, Wilson, Poulsen,

GOALS: Giggs(pen), 1

CARDS: Booked – Fletcher, 9, Anderson, 62. Sent off – Gerrard, 31.

REFEREE: Howard Webb.

ATTENDANCE: 74,727.