

Date: 11 April 1987  
 Opposition: Norwich City  
 Competition: League

| Times | Sunday Times |  |
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11 April 1987

# THE TIMES

## WEEPS Liverpool's hopes crumbling away

Norwich City ..... 2 Liverpool ..... 1

For Liverpool a season without a trophy is like bread without butter. Yet it looks as if there will be no more silverware to add to Anfield's extraordinary collection this year. Liverpool's hold on the League championship, the last competition they can win, is weakening.

Liverpool are losing their grip in more ways than one. A week ago they were defeated in the Littlewoods Cup final despite leading with a goal from Rush (the first time they has lost a game in which he had scored). The same pattern was evident at Carrow Road. Again they went in front through Rush, again they dominated, again they were beaten. This is not the Liverpool of Shankly or Paisley. For once the mournful expression of their present manager Kenny Dalglish, seemed entirely appropriate. Predictably, he thought it 'an injustice that his team had been defeated. He blamed his defence, saying: 'There's been a consistent factor in the goals we've been giving away recently. But I think we've got solution.'

As this was Liverpool's fourth successive defeat (their worst run since 1983) it is surprising that the failing has not already been put right. But, as many managers have found out to their cost, knowing that something is wrong is not the same as being able to correct it.

Certainly Liverpool are not marking their opponents closely enough inside the penalty area. When Putney scored Norwich City's equalizer with a half-volley after 70 minutes, he was given so much space on the edge of the six-yard box he might have been out for an early morning stroll in the park.

Drinkell, whose delightful chip had created that goal, added the second having been allowed even more freedom. As he moved onto Gordon's pass at an acute angle inside the penalty area, Liverpool defenders backed away from him in anticipation of a cross. Instead, he decided to shoot and found the top corner of the net with a ferocious drive. There were two minutes left and suddenly Liverpool looked like any other team.

NORWICH CITY: B Gunn; K Brown, A Spearing, S Bruce (sub: W Biggins), M Phelan, I Butterworth, I Crook, K Drinkell, R Rosario, T Putney, D Gordon.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Gillespie, B Venson, J Wark, R Whelan, A Hansen P Walsh, C Johnston, I Rush, J Molby, S McMahon.

Referee: C Downey

# THE SUNDAY TIMES

## Dalglish takes stock

Norwich City ..... 2 Liverpool ..... 1

LIVERPOOL lost for the fourth time in succession, and again they lost on a day when Iran Rush scored. That once indestructible statistic looks very frail now. Kenny Dalglish emerged from the Liverpool dressing room to treat every question as though it was directed at his parentage. But the 'guv'nor' did disclose that three of those four defeats were Liverpool's own doing. Wimbledon's win at Anfield being the exception. And he knows what is wrong, but is not telling. For an hour Liverpool held sway at Carrow Road with typical, controleld - if not inspired play. Then they ill-advisedly stood off.

Norwich are robust and enthusiastic, with ball-skills embroidered on the edges. Putney, a workmanlied midfielder, hit their equaliser. With four minutes left, Drinkell struck an angled winner from Gordon's pass.

By now, Dalglish should have noted that neither Venison nor Whelan is commanding enough for a Liverpool full-back.

On the pulse side, in the Dalglish memory bank, should be Hansen, Walsh, the tenacious McMahon - and Rush. The Norwich terraces made the mistake of mocking mighty Rush after he had missed three half-chances.

He responded, whippet-like, with a beautiful strike from McMahon's through-ball. Liverpool, also, have lost too much of their own inbred sharpness. That championship looks dicey now.

Weather: rain. Ground: heavy.

Goals: Rush (36min) 0-1; Putney (70min) 1-1; Drinkell (86min) 2-1.

Norwich City: (4-4-2) Gunn; Brown, Bruce (sub: Biggins, 81min), Butterworth, Spearing; Gordon, Phelan, Crook, Putney; Drinkell, Rosario.

Liverpool (4-4-2): Grobbelaar; Venison, Gillespie, Hansen, Whelan; Johnston, McMahon, Molby, Wark; Walsh, Rush.

Referee: C Downey (Hounslow).