

Date: 3 May 1989  
 Opposition: Everton  
 Competition: League

Times		

3 MAY 1989

# THE TIMES

## Honour shared as mourning ends

Everton 0 Liverpool 0

The neighbours who had comforted Liverpool during the past 18 days last night ushered them back into the harsh competitive arena. At the end of the public mourning on Merseyside, there could be no room at Goodison Park for further condolences or consolation.

There was none for Liverpool. The destiny of the title is now out of their hands, because they are five points behind Arsenal with only one game in hand, but they and Everton captivated an audience of almost 46,000 spectators, as well as millions of television viewers, during their inevitably emotional return.

An air of eerie solemnity hung outside the stadium in the hours before kick-off. Under normal circumstances, such derby days traditionally overflow with jocular taunts and laughter: last night there were few smiles to be seen and little noise to be heard in the surrounding streets.

The atmosphere inside was equally subdued. The chants, usually flung from one end to the other, stuck in the throat even when the teams appeared. The sides were led out, side-by-side, by the respective chairmen attired in sombre suits, to thunderous applause.

The ensuing minute of silence was respected unanimously. Then it was as if one curtain had been pulled down to cover the city's sorrow and another raised to reveal again the face of football.

The ground may have been ringed with poignant messages. "The Kop thanks you all", read the writing on one prominent banner; "We never walked alone". But, apart from the visual reminders and the dark memories, it was as though there had never been an interruption to the League programme.

Indeed, Liverpool lined up with the same formation chosen for the fateful FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough. Everton also retained the side which competed for the Simod Cup on Sunday.

Initially, Everton were as vibrant in attack as they had been during the 4-3 defeat by Nottingham Forest at Wembley. They were appreciably more efficient in defence as well during an opening which was as spirited as any of the previous 139 contests. The level of commitment, fuelled by professional pride, was as high as ever.

Hansen, creating an individual record by appearing in his thirtieth derby, and Nicol, yet to receive his award as the Footballer of the Year officially, protected Liverpool's security. It was shaken on several occasions, but genuinely threatened only once during a first half played at typically blurring speed.

Steven, brought inside to accommodate Nevin on the flank, assumed his former wide role to slide an invitation into the path of Sharp, the hub of Everton's attacking wheel. With a deft side-step, he made room in which to shoot, but his shot was parried uncomfortably by Grobbelaar.

Liverpool were denied early on by their own eagerness. Too often, they strayed into off-side traps and the linesman's flag became a signal of a disrupted rhythm. When they did restrain themselves, the balance of the game changed increasingly convincingly in their favour.

Their principal weapon was Barnes, who consistently bemused McDonald. But the Everton defender's colleagues repaired the holes which were torn on their right side and Liverpool were restricted before the interval to one promising move which was again halted by the distant official.

Beardsley released Houghton, whose chip was measured for the gap between Aldridge and Watson. The pair collided and the rebound fell for McMahon and, even though he dragged his shot wide, his embarrassment was eased by the familiar sight of the linesman holding his flag aloft.

Liverpool raised their challenge in the second half. Whelan sliced narrowly wide before Southall illustrated the range of his uncanny reflexes. To have stopped Beardsley's drive was notable enough, but to lift himself off the turf and prevent Aldridge from tucking in the rebound was astonishing.

A dangerous cross from Nicol was subsequently deflected into the side netting by Van den Hauwe before Rush replaced Aldridge. As soon as he was introduced, he freed Beardsley but his attempt was wayward.

EVERTON: N Southall; N McDonald, P Van den Hauwe, K Ratcliffe, D Watson, P Bracewell, P Nevin, T Steven, G Sharp, A Cottee, K Sheedy (sub: S McCall).

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Ablett, S Staunton, S Nicol, R Whelan, A Hansen, P Beardsley, J Aldridge (sub: I Rush), R Houghton, J Barnes, S McMahon.

Referee: N Midgeley.