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## THE TIMES

Norwich resist the ravenous

Liverpool 0 Norwich City 0

The heady effects of John Aldridge's farewell party have dissipated. The Kop, intoxicated by the humiliation of Crystal Palace in midweek, were so enveloped in a red mist on Saturday that, uncharacteristically, they lost their sense of decency and generosity. They booed Norwich City off the Anfield pitch.

They could see, apparently, only opponents cowering in self-defence. In which case, their vision was impaired. Liverpool, who scored, on average, a goal every 10 minutes against Palace, were equally responsible for not maintaining their strike rate. With outrageous fortune, they even might have claimed another nine. Their attack is so broad and so varied, they threaten to annihilate every visitor, as Wigan Athletic may discover in the Littlewoods Cup tomorrow night. Liverpool can be expected to create numerous chances against anybody. One day, such as last Tuesday, they will convert all of them.

Usually, they accept most of them. On Saturday, they took none of them.

Beardsley and Hysen, in particular, contrived spectacular ways in which to miss goals which were not only open but from less than a few yards. "We rode our luck," Dave Stringer, the Norwich manager, said.

Although fate did accompany his side, it can be no coincidence that Liverpool failed to break them down at Anfield for the third successive year. "Touch wood when you say that," Stringer said, before shedding light on the reasons for the unlikely sequence of Norwich, who lost 6-2 there in 1986.

"You need a disciplined performance because they've got so many good players. You can be overawed by the place, the crowd, and the atmosphere, but if you sit back, you might as well go home. They will steamroller you." He instructed Norwich to show the other side of their game.

Held 4-4 by Southampton the previous week, they tempered their natural attacking instincts without letting go of their admirable principles. Even under the greatest stress, they never resorted to physical excesses or to wild and thoughtless clearances. In defence, in other words, they played like Liverpool themselves.

Butterworth and Linighan lost nothing in comparison with Hansen and Hysen, for instance, nor Crook and Townsend with McMahon and Whelan. Up front, Norwich were inevitably a less potent force, although Rosario was prominent in the air throughout the afternoon and he did strike the underside of the bar.

Kenny Dalglish denied that his team's hunger had been sated by the Palace feast. Collectively, that may have been so, but Rush remains unable to seize the morsels on which he once fed so ravenously. One miscue from close range was an embarrassing illustration of his diminished powers.

Yet Rush is about to renew acquaintances with Everton, his favourite opponents, and the prospect of increasing his number of goals in Merseyside derbies at the end of the week should sharpen his appetite particularly as Liverpool's neighbours are the new leaders of the first division.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; G Hysen, D Burrows, S Nicol, R Whelan, A Hansen, P Beardsley, G Gillespie, I Rush, J Barnes, S McMahon.

NORWICH CITY: B Gunn; T Sherwood, M Bowen, I Butterworth, A Linighan, A Townsend, D Gordon, R Fleck, R Rosario, I Crook, D Phillips.

Referee: R Milford.



## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Liverpool frustrated by no-nonsense Norwich

LIVERPOOL 0 (4-3-3): Grobbelaar; Gillespie, Hysen, Hansen, Burrows; Nicol, McMahon, Whelan; Beardsley, Rush, Barnes. NORWICH 0 (4-4-2): Gunn; Sherwood, Butterworth, Linighan, Bowen; Townsend, Gordon, Crook, Phillips; Rosario, Fleck.

Weather: overcast. Ground: perfect. Referee: R G Milford (Bristol).

APART from his reasoned sensitivity in the aftermath of Hillsborough, talking to Kenny Dalglish has never been akin to consulting the oracle. Yet after a determined Norwich outfit had dampened the euphoria of Tuesday, the Liverpool manager was surprisingly forthcoming, citing unfortunate early bounces of the ball, lack of overall luck and Norwich's unwillingness to create.

This may be so, but there are other pertinent factors. The 9-0 demolition of Palace was Liverpool's biggest victory since 1896 and anything after was always likely to prove an anti-climax. How could it be otherwise?

Norwich, it must be remembered, are no pushovers and possess an enviable record in the grandiose surrounds of Anfield and Old Trafford. Already they have won in Manchester and have now conceded just one goal in their last five meetings with Liverpool. They won in this daunting theatre only last December and returned anything but sacrificial lambs.

Dalglish emphasised there was no complacency about yesterday's task, but a certain lethargy at the outset almost cost them dear. Robert Rosario has just signed a new four-year contract for Norwich and is a towering handful for any defence. Aided by Robert Fleck's chunky presence he twanged the crossbar with a sharp volley and caused other moments of disquiet in Liverpool's normally unruffled rearguard.

There were other points of discord. At full throttle, an overwhelming assurance courses through the Liverpool team, from Grobbelaar's sometimes innovative handling, Hansen and Hysen's utter implacability in the face of adversity, to McMahon's turbot-charged commitment and Barnes and Beardsley's often breathtaking interchanges at speed. Norwich demonstrated that tenacity, tackling and concentration can be a valuable disruptive force.

Things are still not quite right either with Ian Rush, the quintessential goal scorer, despite his two strikes last week. With John Aldridge now removed to the Basque country, a greater onus now falls on the Welshman, but a feeling persists that his mercurial finishing power and blurring speed are dulled.

A high proportion of chances have gone begging already this season, and a swinging left foot volley yesterday again lacked the execution that would have brought victory.

Likewise, Beardsley. McMahon was strangely subdued alongside Whelan in a midfield where Ian Crook and Andy Townsend provided consistent effort and skill. Instant control, regular accurate passing and constant off-the-ball movement epitomise Liverpool and define their long pre-eminence. Passing and mobility were not to the usual level and suffered through the limitations imposed by an understandably defensive Norwich.

Naturally, there were chances, real ones, notably near the end when Rush screwed across goal, McMahon let the ball run and Hysen somehow contrived a mishit that Bowen scrambled off the line.

The last time Liverpool had headed the field so early in the championship programme, seven years ago, they claimed the title by an 11-point margin. The memory of the previous slow start is banished already after six games, and though these are only early days an air of real purpose still surrounds the team.