

Date: 1 January 1990
 Opposition: Nottingham Forest
 Competition: League

Times	Guardian	

1 January 1990

THE TIMES

Clough penalises Liverpool

Nottingham Forest 2 Liverpool 2

Liverpool's lead in what promises to be the most compulsive of championship chases was restricted to a slender margin by an enthralling Nottingham Forest come-back at the City Ground yesterday. The first day of the Nineties saw them just two points clear of Aston Villa who have a match in hand though at half-time it was heading for double that figure.

Two goals by Ian Rush in the opening 40 minutes looked enough to slam the door in the face of Brian Clough's eager beavers. But the plot for ITV's live New Year's Day offering was a both perverse and entertaining one.

In 10 early minutes of the second half Clough saw his 1,001st League game as a manager provide the rare sight of Liverpool surrendering what had seemed a winning lead.

A flick of the head by Hodge, as Crosby chipped in superbly from the left, suddenly undermined that apparent invincibility.

Untypically Liverpool had lost their composure and the effects of it emerged as Jemson was upended in a flurry of tackles, Burrows making contact a pace or so inside the area. In such situations Clough junior is the coolest of customers and he smashed the ball high above Grobbelaar's head.

The Liverpool goalkeeper was carrying an injury sustained, between the Rush goals, when Clough went round him to strike a cross shot against the upright.

"We have taken eight points from the last 12 and gone seven games without defeat. I'm not complaining," said Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool manager. "We played better than in recent victories at home."

Those armchair critics who complain at Liverpool's overdose of TV exposure can hardly deny that their games invariably provide good value. This one was hugely competitive, full of inventive attacking football and its scoreline was wide open to change right to the final moments.

Dalglish, not happy at losing the lead, did not dispute either the penalty award or Forest's right to their point.

Clough was presented with a silver salver and bottle of champagne before the kick-off to mark his 1,000 League games. A feature of them has been the introduction of young talent and here he had two such newcomers in Jemson and Orlygsson, the Icelandic international.

Forest's second half tended to overshadow Liverpool's contribution but viewers were treated to some vintage football.

One enduring quality Liverpool have regularly displayed has been the capacity to conjure special goals from routine situations.

This they did twice to supply Rush with his thirteenth and fourteenth goals of the season, and his seventh in eight games. The thirteenth minute opener was cleared up field from two Forest corners to Beardsley on the right and was in the net via Rush at what seemed the speed of light.

Their second, which seemed a decisive one at the time, was created by a triangle of play on the left. Beardsley to Barnes, another instant centre and shot and Forest were two down but not, it emerged, out cold.

Intelligence on the international grapevine, unconfirmed but believable, says that Liverpool will be allowed back into Europe with the other English clubs if the ban is lifted for next season and that their additional three-year penalty would not be enforced. Certainly there was a distinct European touch about the way they fashioned yesterday's goals.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST: S Sutton; B Laws, S Pearce, D Walker, S Chettle, S Hodge, G Crosby, G Parker, N Clough, N Jemson, T Orlygsson.

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

Referee: A Buksh.

the guardian

Forest fight back to gladden old warrior

Nottingham Forest began Brian Clough's second millenium yesterday with a performance which typified the style and substance of many of the old iconoclast's first thousand games as a manager.

Clough is the breaker of images, his teams challenge assumptions, and in an excellent match at the City Ground, Forest challenged the seasonal assumption that Liverpool will win the championship.

They did so, moreover, after Rush had given Liverpool a 2-0 half-time lead. So often in the past, as Eric Morecambe used to say, there has been no answer to that. But now Forest recovered to subject Liverpool to pressure of such intensity that after Hodge and Clough, with a penalty, had brought the scores level before the hour, Kenny Dalglish's team were happy to return home with the draw which leaves them two points ahead of Aston Villa and three in front of Arsenal at the top of the First Division.

For half the match Liverpool, while not playing with anything like their normal zest, still managed to achieve a distillation of the footballing habits which had enabled them to dominate the English game for the best part of two decades. But by the end their defence looked vulnerable, their midfield seedy, and while there was always the chance that Rush would steal a winning goal they ultimately owed it to Grobbelaar that they did not begin the Nineties with a defeat.

The way Nottingham Forest came back boded ill for Manchester United's chances in the FA Cup at the City Ground on Sunday. Not for the first time Brian Clough is getting young and relatively unknown players to perform beyond their own expectations.

The Forest player who caused Liverpool's defenders an increasing number of problems was Jemson, a signing from Preston, whose strength on the ball as he ran at Hysen and Hansen in the mud severely disconcerted two of Europe's most experienced centre-backs. With Orlygsson, an Icelandic, holding the ball up well on the right and the naturally right-footed Crosby a growing influence on the left, Forest would probably have won comfortably had they possessed more striking power.

At half-time it looked as though Liverpool's possession of this very quality was going to bring them an easy victory.

Indeed, the style with which Liverpool started the nineties bore more than a hint of the early eighties, because of the way Rush took his goals, and also those countless days in the seventies when their opponents, having enjoyed advantages of territory and possession, would find themselves falling behind without knowing why.

With rain pouring and the pitch becoming wetter and heavier, Forest were never going to find the conditions suited to their precise style but Liverpool began with a series of misplaced passes and when Barnes underhit a ball to Grobbelaar in the 11th minute, allowing Nigel Clough to whip the ball away before shooting against the outside of the near post, Forest looked optimistic.

That feeling last barely a minute. Breaking from a Forest corner, Liverpool attacked down the right with Pearce out of position. Beardsley, slipped past Chettle, Rush met his low cross in the old style, and Liverpool were in front. Liverpool then attempted to anaesthetise the football by keeping the ball and slowing the pace. Forest chased grey shadows and seven minutes before half-time found themselves further behind. Barnes robbed Orlygsson on the left and exchanged passes with Beardsley before cossing for Rush to repeat his earlier execution.

That seemed to be that, but Forest's resurgence was something more than a desperate assault. They probed at the weaknesses on Liverpool's flanks and teased the uncertainties in the middle of their defence.

Five minutes into the second half Crosby centred with his right foot and as the ball swung in towards the far post Hodge outjumped everybody to head past Grobbelaar. Nine minutes later Clough helped on another cross from Crosby and Jemson, staggering from one challenge went down under Burrow's tackle. Clough brought the scores level with the penalty.

Nottingham Forest: Sutton; Laws, Pearce, Walker, Chettle, Hodge, Crosby, Parker, Clough, Jemson, Orlygsson.

Liverpool: Grobbelaar; Hysen, Venison, Nicol, Whelan, Hansen, Beardsley, Burrows, Rush, Barnes, McMahon.

Referees: A Buksh (London).