

Date: 13 January 1993
 Opposition: Bolton Wanderers
 Competition: FA Cup

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THE TIMES

Liverpool humbled by Bolton in Cup

Liverpool 0, Bolton Wanderers 2.

BOLTON Wanderers caused one of the biggest upsets in the history of the FA Cup when they eliminated the holders, Liverpool, in a third-round replay at Anfield last night. The second division side left the Merseyside club with nothing but league respectability to play for this season and put the future of their manager, Graeme Souness, in doubt.

Liverpool can rarely have suffered such humiliation. In most of the last 30 years, when they have at times been the dominant force in European club football and the standard bearers of the English game, this result would have been greeted by gasps of disbelief. That last night's defeat was accepted in almost resigned silence by the Anfield faithful was a reflection of just how far down the ladder Liverpool have slipped.

Bolton, of the second division and 43 rungs below Graeme Souness' side in football's hierarchy, did not just beat Liverpool: for long spells they outplayed them, in the end almost toying dismissively with demoralised, disorganised opponents. Their reward will be a fourth-round tie against Wolverhampton Wanderers at Molineux.

Liverpool had no answer to the wing play of David Lee, no defence to the aerial prowess of John McGinlay and Andy Walker, who headed the decisive goals. They were reduced in the end to punting balls forward and hoping for the best. It was, at times, painful to watch.

The scale of Liverpool's problems had been revealed even before a ball was kicked. The side named by Souness hardly merited the term selection. Rather, it was the remnants of a squad torn apart by injury and disaffection.

Of the team which lifted the trophy by beating Sunderland in May, only two Jones and Thomas were left. Hooper was again preferred to Grobbelaar in goal, the late lamented Saunders and Houghton were kicking their heels with Aston Villa in Bristol, and the remaining six were left to limp their way into the stand, nursing a variety and seemingly never ending succession of injuries.

Of them, Burrows, Nicol, Molby and Wright had never been in with a chance of recovery, but the failure of either Ian Rush or Steve McManaman to recover from groin injuries was another cruel blow to Souness.

Liverpool's shortcomings were exposed with only three minutes gone as Bolton, who had led 2-0 in the first game at Burnden Park before being pegged back, conjured a memorable goal.

Marsh's lack of pace had been exposed continuously in that game, and now the Liverpool right back's worse fears were again realised as Lee skated past him with almost contemptuous ease. The cross, delivered on the run and with pace, found McGinlay unmarked ten yards out, and the Bolton striker, who had passed a late fitness test on a thigh injury, arced a magnificent header past Hooper's left hand. Lee, who has only just completed a transfer to Bolton after an extended loan spell from Southampton, continued to cause havoc, creating chances which McGinlay and Walker should have profited from. Souness switched his full backs in an attempt to stem the rising tide of Bolton's attacks, but to no avail.

When, seven minutes into the second half, Thomas had to be helped to the sidelines clutching his right ankle, it seemed impossible that things could get worse for Liverpool. They did 13 minutes from time. Green and Walker had just gone close, and Liverpool were found wanting again when McGinlay raced past Bjornebye on the right and sent in a measured cross which was headed in by Walker.

LIVERPOOL: M Hooper; M Marsh, R Jones, P Stewart, T Piechnik, S Bjornebye, M Walters, J Redknapp, R Rosenthal, J Barnes, M Thomas (sub: D Hutchison).

BOLTON WANDERERS: K Branagan; P Brown, D Burke, D Lee, M Seagraves, M Winstanley, S Green, A Kelly, A Walker, J McGinlay, M Patterson.

Referee: R Groves.

the guardian

Liverpool go wandering out

BOLTON, having let slip a two-goal lead in front of their home supporters, made absolutely no such mistake at Anfield last night, knocking the holders Liverpool out of the FA Cup in this extraordinary third-round replay. So within 24 hours both Everton and Liverpool made the earliest of cup exits.

McGinlay headed Bolton ahead after only three minutes, once again Liverpool's defences crumbling at almost the first decent push. Liverpool's response thereafter was remarkably muted and uncoordinated. There was the occasional shot and the inevitable penalty appeal but Bolton's resolve was never really shaken.

And so it was that, as Liverpool strained and fretted in the second half, Bolton broke away again to score through Walker with another header. This was a marvellous team display by the Second Division club.

The early goal and the vibrant running of Lee undermined Liverpool in the first half, and Walker's second goal came at the right moment.

Liverpool's manager Graeme Souness admitted: 'We were outplayed and outfought by the better team. They deserved to win, they were better in all departments. This club's history is based on passion. The vast majority tonight played as if they had never been told what passion and this football club is all about.'

Liverpool were never able to raise their game much above the ordinary, and Bolton truly won on merit. Seagraves, a former Liverpool player, and Winstanley could scarcely have believed that the second half was so easy.

Perhaps Bolton's victory does not quite rank with the 1959 defeat of Liverpool by Worcester City but it was a colossal shock nevertheless. At the final whistle some Liverpool players could barely raise the energy to get themselves off the pitch, notably Marsh who retreated shaking his head in disbelief. All around him Bolton players hugged one another with unconfined jubilation.

The beginning could hardly have been more dramatic. Lee had already made one promising dart down the left but pushed the ball a little too far ahead and lost control. The second time everything about his run was perfection, as was his cross.

Marsh, who had a quite horrid first half, came to meet the winger, recently signed from Southampton after a two-month loan period, but Lee frolicked past him with disarming ease and sped on to curve over the most delicious of hanging crosses. McGinlay, unchallenged, had time to pick his spot even before lifting off to glide a header beyond Hooper.

This was Burnden Park revisited and again Liverpool - this time without the injured Nicol, Rush and McManaman - found themselves chasing the game. McGinlay might have increased Bolton's lead before Liverpool managed their first serious strike at goal, Rosenthal pounding a low shot against Branagan's legs. Undeterred, Bolton took up the attack again. Liverpool's response as half-time approached was energetic but the loss of Thomas early in the second half compounded their problems. Though undoubtedly aware of the Kop's urgent appeals to attack, they found it no easier to dent Bolton's conviction.

Branagan saved well from Redknapp's fiercely struck low shot, and Hutchison shot wide from one of Liverpool's more coherent attacks. But Bolton continued to play steady, sensible football, attacking when they could and defending with studied care as Liverpool stretched for the equaliser.

Then came Bolton's second goal in the 78th minute, Walker heading in McGinlay's cross from the right. If Liverpool fans had not already realised their side were done for, they certainly did now.

The Bolton manager Bruce Rioch said afterwards: 'This was a very big game for Liverpool and I thought one or two of their players might have been a little bit on edge. David Lee motivated and stimulated us in the first half and that early goal gave us extra energy and adrenalin. I thought our fans, all 8 1/2 thousand of them, were magnificent.'

Liverpool: Hooper; Marsh, Jones, Stewart, Piechnik, Bjornebye, Walters, Redknapp, Rosenthal, Barnes, Thomas (Hutchison, 52min).

Bolton Wanderers: Branagan; Brown, Burke, Lee, Seagraves, Winstanley, Green, Kelly, Walker, McGinlay, Patterson.

Referee: R Groves (Weston-super-Mare).

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BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Souness blows his stack

A furious Graeme Souness threatened an Anfield clear-out in the wake of the FA Cup humiliation by lowly Bolton.

The Anfield boss responded angrily to the 2-0 defeat by the second division side, by effectively branding his players gutless and greedy.

The Anfield defeat and its aftermath have finally seen Liverpool's lacklustre season balloon into a full-blown crisis.

Souness accepts part of the blame, admitting he has made mistakes since taking over almost two years ago, but he refuses to quit, saying: "The only way I know how to respond is to roll up my sleeves and battle on."

But while he's prepared to tough it out and fight for the club, he cannot stomach the lack of drive and passion from his men.

"They don't see playing for Liverpool as the pinnacle of their careers. They are only interested in getting another move or another lump sum of money and that's totally unacceptable. A successful football career used to be about winning things but today it is about how much money you can end up with."

"You can have players with all the ability in the world but when they go out not wanting to run around and fight for the ball as much as other teams then you are going to lose. It is beyond me why, when facing a solid, workmanlike team like Bolton, we are not prepared to match them."

The Bolton humbling was the biggest upset the club has suffered in the FA Cup since Southern League Worcester City put them out in 1959.

And it is the first season since 1951 that both Merseyside giants have gone out in the third round, Everton having lost at home to Wimbledon.

The Bolton defeat effectively ended Liverpool's season in mid-January and Souness accepts that cannot be tolerated.

So despite 13 million pounds of spending already, he promised more changes and in the process pointed an accusing finger at his top stars.

"I'll have to fill the team full of people who want to play and fight for the cause. We don't have enough winners here and I'll have to change that. People here, even so-called stars, can say they are fully committed and passionate about this club but talk is cheap and we have a lot of good talkers here."

Asked if he had felt he had the backing of everyone at the club, Souness continued: "The only backing I have to be concerned about is that of the players because they are the only ones I have any influence on. I have made mistakes.

Every manager does, but now is not the time to analyse everything that I have done or not done. This is a far bigger job than I thought and I didn't need last night's result to tell me that. We will be having a meeting tomorrow when the players come in and we will talk. Our aim now has to be to finish as high as we can in the Premier League."

How the players will respond after Souness' outburst is not clear but his words of criticism will certainly sting.

The bookmakers believe they know what will happen, offering odds of 10-1 on Liverpool being relegated with a William Hill spokesman saying: "This is the first time we can remember being asked to quote a price on Liverpool going down." They offer odds of 6-4 about Graeme Souness no longer being the manager on the first day of next season while former Anfield idol Kevin Keegan, currently boss of runaway first division leaders Newcastle United, has been backed at 10-2 to succeed Souness sometime this year.

As if Souness did not have enough problems, Liverpool suffered another blow when midfielder Michael Thomas was ruled out for the rest of the season.

Thomas was carried off early in the second half of the Bolton match and the injury was diagnosed as a snapped Achilles tendon. It has been an unhappy season for injury-plagued Thomas, who joined Liverpool from Arsenal for 1.5 million pounds in December 1991.

While the vultures hover over Anfield, Bolton manager Bruce Rioch was giving his backing. Rioch, a former Merseyside favourite with Everton said: "I would never say anything detrimental about this club or its manager. What they need now is as much support as they have ever needed. I wish them well."

Mersey misery

Liverpool fan John McGinlay celebrated the greatest night of his life with a starring role as Second Division Bolton Wanderers knocked out the FA Cup holders Liverpool in their FA Cup third round replay at Anfield.

The astonishing victory handed Liverpool their biggest humiliation since they were knocked out of the 1959 competition by Southern League Worcester City.

McGinlay, who scored Bolton's opener in the 2-2 draw at Burnden Park, was on target again, putting Wanderers in front after just three minutes of the replay. And afterwards the 28-year-old Scottish striker said: "That was the greatest game I've ever played in. It made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck. I always used to love watching Liverpool and Kenny Dalglish was my idol but I had never set foot in the ground before tonight. To come here and score and win is just fantastic."

And McGinlay admitted that he had come close to missing the match because of a troublesome groin injury. He added: "I had a fitness test this morning but even after that there was still a little bit of doubt in my mind. But I was selfish because there was no way I was going to miss this game and I'm glad I didn't now. I said after the first game I didn't think it was over because we played a lot of good football but let our 2-0 lead slip with some silly mistakes. I felt Liverpool would

feel more under pressure because this was their last chance of winning something and we got a great start. We let it slip in the first match but I never felt we were going to do the same tonight. We have learned from our mistakes."

Man of the match David Lee, who set up McGinlay's opener and teased and tormented Liverpool all night, added: "We knew we were playing Liverpool but we also knew they weren't the Liverpool of old. We knew they had weaknesses especially in defence and we exploited them. After the first match was drawn we were all disappointed but tonight the players and the fans are all overwhelmed. Now we're aiming to put out Wolves in the next round."

Wanderers' manager Bruce Rioch joined in the celebrations adding: "That is one of the great nights. It is fantastic for me as a manager and it's extra special for the players. That is all about memories for them. Something they can look back on and enjoy. Many of the players hadn't played at Anfield before but we approached it with the right attitude. We thoroughly deserved to go through."

Liverpool boss Graeme Souness, who last May enjoyed the thrill of seeing his side lift the cup at Wembley, paid tribute to Bolton but berated his own side. He said:

"We were outplayed and outfought by a better team and they deserved to win. They were better than us in all departments. This club's history is based on and steeped in passion and the vast majority of my players tonight played as if they had never been told what passion and Liverpool Football Club is all about."