

Date: 17 April 1993  
 Opposition: Coventry City  
 Competition: League

Sunday Times	British Soccer Wk	

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## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Walters triple portion turns the tables

Liverpool 4 - Coventry 0.

REVENGE may be a dish best eaten cold but Liverpool dined happily on some rapid retribution against the club who handed them their worst defeat in the Premier League only last December.

Then Coventry had thrashed them 5-1, but that was four months ago at Highfield Road. Although this wasn't Liverpool's biggest win (that was 5-0 against Crystal Palace at Anfield in November) it provided an exciting reminder that, for nearly 20 years, Liverpool were by some distance the most consistently successful team in the history of English football.

Phil Neal was a member of that exclusive all-conquering club. He is Coventry's assistant manager now and in the dugout his feelings of embarrassment as his side were outplayed, outpowered and finally outclassed will have been modified by other feelings, of having been here before. Sometimes often enough to have earned a standing ovation at the end Liverpool conjured memories of the past with a few of those lovely long flowing movements which made them feared and famous and rich.

If Liverpool were ever in any serious danger of relegation, they are emphatically clear now. The rest of their season must be directed towards the summer and laying the foundations of a new reputation. This has undoubtedly been Liverpool's most insignificant campaign since those far-off days before Bill Shankly forced the club into the consciousness of football across the world.

This was not Coventry's biggest defeat of the season. They lost 5-0 to Manchester United at Old Trafford on December 28. For Coventry, though, despite their midtable position close to Liverpool's, inconsistency has always been a part of the picture. Despite 25 seasons in a row in the top flight, they have never really looked completely at home. But Liverpool for so long looked as though they owned the place that inconsistency is a capital offence.

Bobby Gould, who has led Coventry to some high moments this season, admitted that his team had been given a lesson. "Especially in defending. Good defending starts at the front. If you can keep the ball in your opponent's half, they're not going to score. Rush did that kind of defending today."

It was Mark Walters, though, who scored three goals his first Liverpool hat-trick.

He has hardly set the Mersey alight since Graeme Souness brought him from Rangers. Perhaps this will mark a turning point.

His first goal came after Barnes had linked with Burrows, who freed Hutchison down the left. Walters slid Hutchison's low cross over the line at the far post. Walters's second was a masterpiece of understatement: a floated chip over a stranded Jonathan Gould from 30 yards out. His hat-trick came from a penalty after Pearce, who came on for his skipper Borrows at half-time, brought down Stewart.

The final strike was as good as the second. A 35-yard piledriver from Burrows that left Gould rooted to the spot. Practically any other keeper would have stayed rooted to the spot, too. One for the memory bank.

LIVERPOOL 4

(4-4-2): James; Jones, Wright, Nicol, Burrows; Walters, Whelan, Hutchison, Barnes; Stewart (Rosenthal 65min), Rush.

COVENTRY 0

(4-4-2): Gould; Borrows (Pearce 45min), Atherton, Babb, Hurst; Williams, Rennie, Gynn, Ndlovu (Jenkinson 79min); Quinn, Wegerle.

Goals: Walters (17min) 1-0; Walters (33min) 2-0; Walters (pen 50min) 3-0; Burrows (75min) 4-0.

Weather: sunny. Ground: good.

Referee: A Ward (North London)

## BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Reds revenge

Mark Walters collected the match ball with a great hat-trick as Liverpool sank Coventry without trace at Anfield.

Much-travelled Walters produced marvellous finishing power to make a mockery of his haul of just six League goals this season.

In the 16th minute he met a cross from Don Hutchison on the volley to leave Jonathan Gould helpless. Then in the 33rd minute he spotted Gould no more than two yards off his line but beat him with an inch-perfect lob from 25 yards.

He completed his treble in the 50th minute with a confident spot-kick after Andy Pearce had brought down Paul Stewart. It was virtually Pearce's first challenge after replacing skipper Brian Borrows for the second half.

For Liverpool it was sweet revenge following a 5-1 hammering at Highfield Road last December.

Yet for half-an-hour there was little real hint of what was to become one of Liverpool's best performances of the season.

But suddenly gaps galore appeared as Coventry's back four fell apart. Walters did the main damage but Ian Rush pulled the defence apart and in the 75th minute John Barnes supplied the short pass that enabled David Burrows to make it 4-0 with a blistering shot from 30 yards.

Mick Quinn twice went close for Coventry but their best effort was from Leigh Jenkinson, a 79th minute substitute for Peter Ndlovu, who crashed a great shot against the bar from 30 yards.

Graeme Souness said: "We owed them one and gave them one. We have only played in fits and starts this season but I want to finish on a high and we certainly played good stuff today."

Coventry manager Bobby Gould, who had to take off skipper Brian Borrows with a thigh injury at half-time, said: "We have to look for reasons not excuses but we've had a tremendous turnover of personnel this year. "The lads know how to accept the plaudits when they play well and the brickbats when they don't."