

# FOOTBALL'S LOST DECADE

Contrary to what Sky might have you believe, football existed before 1992. In fact the 1980s saw cultural and political change that shaped the modern game. But while football wasn't cool, some of us still loved it. **JON HOWE** looks back with nostalgia at the decade that football forgot...

## A game you might have forgotten

April 17, 1982

Leeds United 1 Southampton 3

**The common factor in most relegation campaigns is that defining match where all false hope is dissipated and a life lived in denial is rudely interrupted by the reality check of Leeds United's dire plight.**

In 1981/82 that game was against Southampton; a comprehensive home defeat against a side who had evolved from perennial strugglers and who nobody had noticed were actually competing for Europe. Meanwhile, we had to finally admit Leeds were heading in the other direction.

But it had all started so well. Allan Clarke's team had struggled for goals all season but took the lead here after just 80 seconds. Having scored just five goals in the previous 15 games, Clarke changed his philosophy and fielded an attacking line-up featuring Arthur Graham, Peter Barnes, Terry Connor,

Frank Worthington and Derek Parlane. The absence of a genuine central midfielder

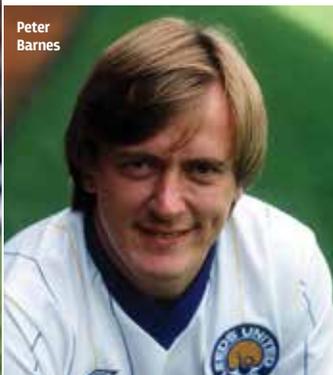
would come back to haunt Clarke later in the game, but after a quickfire opening few minutes the Leeds fans could dream...

From the kick-off a corner was won on the right-hand side which Barnes floated to the back post. Graham hooked the ball back across goal where the unmarked Frank Worthington emphatically rifled home a delicious volley from close range. A first home win since January looked on the cards, but Southampton soon wrestled back the initiative. In the 10th minute David Armstrong, who for years appeared to be the only bald footballer in the entire world, struck a sweet 25-yard half-volley passed a stunned John Lukic. Four minutes later that sinking feeling accelerated as a characteristic mistake by Kevin Hird resulted in Kevin Keegan rounding Lukic and rolling the ball into an empty net. By half-time it was all over as the livewire Keegan neatly dispatched his 27th goal of the season.

The body language of the two teams spoke volumes, with Leeds looking edgy and careless whilst Southampton were purposeful and energetic, with the veteran Alan Ball pulling the strings in midfield. The defeat left Leeds just one point above the relegation zone but with two of the teams below them, Birmingham and Stoke, still to visit Elland Road.



Terry Connor



Peter  
Barnes



Derek  
Parlane

Frank  
Worthington



Arthur  
Graham



## Anyone remember... Frank Worthington?

**Maverick, loose cannon, the least-convincing Elvis impersonator ever? Call him what you want but Frank Worthington managed to combine being one of the many, shall we say “colourful” characters in the game in the 1970s/’80s with an undeniably prolific goalscoring record wherever his many travels took him.**

Worthington’s lifestyle and appearance belied his dedication to the game as many English seasons were followed by playing for other clubs abroad during the summer, most notably Tampa Bay Rowdies, but his short spell at Leeds left a lasting impression. Despite being 34, Leeds were only the fifth of Worthington’s 11 professional clubs, but sadly the immediate goals return after his arrival from Birmingham City in March 1982 couldn’t save Leeds from relegation.

To his credit Worthington stayed after relegation to the second tier, but just 18 games and six goals into Leeds’ second-tier plight, Worthington’s nine-month, Cantona-esque Elland Road romance was over as he left for Sunderland.

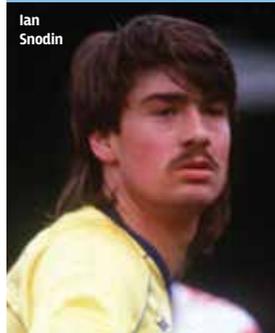
## Nothing happened in the 1980s, apart from... Dodgy hairstyles

**Long before serial offenders such as David James and Djibril Cisse “graced” the field, the arena of football has witnessed a catalogue of hair crimes. Ralph Coates and Bobby Charlton combers may have flapped elegantly in the 1970s, but few deny that the 1980s was the car crash decade in terms of ill-advised requests at hairdressers.**

The Chris Waddle mullet is the textbook example of the 1980s penchant for decisions of baffling freethinking. The “business at the front, party at the back” hairstyle extended to Elland Road where Ian Baird became a terrace icon and the Snodin brothers cranked the style dial up to 11 by adding moustaches and highlights.

Kevin Keegan’s bubble-perm had started the decade off in a cloud of Falcon hairspray. Big, square and in your face styles were surrendering to gravity by the 10th minute at grounds across the country. George Berry’s momentous Afro had gradually reduced from its 1970s heyday but it still held a godlike status until recent years when the likes of Marouane Fellaini resurrected it in a new context.

Throughout the turbulence of style-depravity however, one man, has carried off the same hairstyle from his 1979 debut right through to today; the rigid mid-length side-parting of John Lukic has transcended changing vogues for decades. Frankly, that’s to his credit.



Ian Snodin



Glynn Snodin