

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

November 8, 1980

Leeds United 0 Arsenal 5

While Leeds fans of the modern era have fresh memories of humiliating home defeats dished out by the football colossus of Blackpool, Watford, Nottingham Forest and Preston, such a public dishonouring on our own doorstep rarely occurred during the 1960s and '70s, even as Revie's great side began to break up and the club descended into that murky tunnel called "transition". That all changed, of course, when the clock ticked over into the 1980s.

The visit of Arsenal found Leeds slowly finding their feet after that legendary sniffer of all things loose in the penalty area, Allan Clarke, had taken over as manager. Leeds were struggling to find the net and Clarke shored up his defence before worrying

about being too expansive at the other end. It was a somewhat uncharacteristic stance for one of the club's greatest goalscorers, but one that few argued with.

Indeed, the three previous home games had seen Leeds resolutely stick to that plan, adopting attrition in securing successive 1-0 wins. It all came unstuck on this sorry afternoon, however, as a fizzing Arsenal outfit – aided in midfield by one Brian McDermott (right) enjoying



Leeds manager Allan Clarke with his assistant Martin Wilkinson.

his most productive season in an Arsenal shirt with 16 league appearances – picked at Leeds' failings and executed a stunning 5-0 win that left Elland Road dumbstruck.

Leeds were 2-0 down by half-time with young goalkeeper John Lukic feebly letting one shot roll through his legs and into the Kop-end net. It seemed to sum up the involuntary benevolence that allowed Arsenal to score goals at will as Gattin, Hollins (two), Sunderland and Talbot struck a series of hammer blows to the foundations of Fortress Elland Road. The empire was crumbling.

The defeat left Leeds demoralised and foundering in a precarious 19th place, and Clarke called his squad back in to Elland Road on the Sunday morning for a full inquest. Injury to Paul Madeley the previous day left only Eddie Gray and Trevor Cherry from the golden era squad Clarke had mixed with in his pomp. However, Clarke rallied his men and a resurgent second half of the season saw them finish ninth.



Eddie Gray





Anyone remember... Paul Madeley?

Okay, of course we remember Paul Madeley – but few associate him with Leeds United in the 1980s. This was largely because when he left the field injured in the 5-0 home defeat to Arsenal, nobody present expected that 726th appearance of his Leeds career to be his last. Madeley never recovered from that injury and eventually called time on his almost faultless career.

Madeley was the dependable and versatile soldier often thought to have been omitted from the classic Revie XI – though the statistics show he made 30-plus appearances in 14 consecutive seasons between 1966 and 1979. He was far more than the Red Adair plugger-of-gaps that he is often portrayed as and, Billy Bremner aside, was possibly as close to the skipper's "side before self" ethic as the Scot himself.

Madeley performed in various positions in virtually all of Leeds' major finals and indeed scored a vital away goal in the 1971 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup triumph over Juventus in Turin.

Nothing happened in the 1980s, apart from... **Liverpool being good**

Shergar, Kajagoogoo and Liverpool FC; all big in the 1980s, not heard much of them since. I'm being flippant of course... because Kajagoogoo enjoyed a successful reunion in 2003.

It is hard to believe that Liverpool FC once dominated the English game with the same certainty and command that Manchester United managed until recently. Their manager Bill Shankly started the ball rolling for the otherwise insignificant club in the 1960s, but Bob Paisley, promoted

from within, extended the "boot room" mentality and made Liverpool an impenetrable machine in the 1980s.

In nine years as manager, Paisley hauled in 21 trophies, including three European Cups.

In 1984 Joe Fagan was the next promoted from the boot room, and in his first season won the league, League Cup and the European Cup, beating AS Roma in their own stadium.

Fagan resigned after the 1985

Heysel Disaster, but then Kenny Dalglish took on the reigns and won three successive league titles, including the domestic double in 1985/86.

Liverpool's superiority was absolute. With their Kop holding a swaying mass of 28,000 and the likes of Dalglish (left), Hansen, Souness and Rush proving untouchable season after season, it felt like their dominance would never end. But then came Hillsborough and two years later Dalglish's shock resignation. Souness was next as manager and, well, you know the rest.

