

CLASSIC MATCH



In the spirit of LLL magazine, Jon Howe takes a retro look at some of our most memorable moments.



Leeds United 1 Liverpool 0

FA Carling Premiership Monday August 21, 1995, 7.45pm Elland Road
Attendance 35,852 Goal Yeboah (51) Referee David Elleray (Harrow-on-the-Hill)
Liverpool (5-3-2): James, Jones, Wright, Babb, Harkness, McManaman, Barnes, Redknapp, Matteo (Thomas), Rush, Collymore (Fowler).

There is only one place to start, isn't there? Yes, and I guess you're not talking about Lukic's fine saves and Palmer's commanding performance in midfield. This game was a typically tight contest with Liverpool, the sort of gripping encounter where normally we would match our Merseyside rivals, neck and neck, before they would ultimately find the killer blow and retreat home westwards over the M62 with the points.

Not today, though? No, this time we had the man that made the difference, and what a difference it was. Stand up Tony Yeboah, once again the matchwinner. Tonight Elland Road bore witness to one of the best goals it will ever see; a thunderous dipping volley from the Ghanaian, which was executed with such devastating aplomb that a collective gasp

was evident throughout the ground and the football world. Yeboah's finish wasn't the only remarkable aspect of the goal, either. Few in the ground will ever see again a shot controlled and struck with such a combination of detonation and refinement, but in addition, the shot was teed up for Big Tony by a Rod Wallace header. Yes, you read that correctly... a Rod Wallace header!

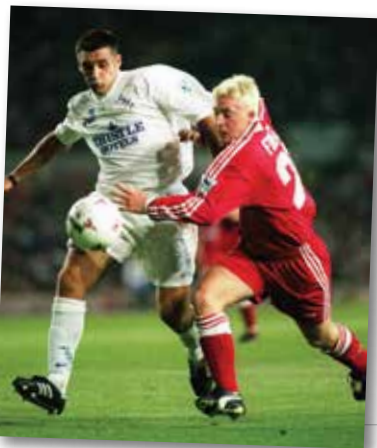
Let's start at the beginning...

The game was billed as a battle of the strikers. Liverpool's record signing Stan Collymore had announced himself with a fine debut goal last Saturday, while Yeboah carried on his goalscoring exploits of last season with a double salvo of accomplished

↑ Tony Yeboah's 51st minute goal was one to remember.

↓ John Pemberton tracking Robbie Fowler.

↗ Brian Dean and Steve McManaman.





finishes as Leeds beat West Ham away on the opening day. It was all set up for a fine, old-fashioned contest.

How did Leeds deal with Collymore's threat? Quite straightforwardly. John Pemberton employed, shall we say, an agricultural method of snuffing out Liverpool's dangerman. In only the fifth minute, as Collymore skipped through the right-hand side of the area, Pemberton scythed him down leaving little to the imagination. Somehow the ref failed to give a penalty, and though Collymore emerged from the crumpled heap Pemberton had left him in, only 15 minutes later he was subbed with an ankle injury and replaced by Robbie Fowler.

Was that the end of Liverpool's threat? Far from it. It was a very tight first half but Liverpool just edged it, sending their two wing-backs on rampaging runs forward from their five-man defence. After Yeboah's goal, the game opened up and Liverpool created the better chances. Lukic saved well from Fowler and was thankful that Rush couldn't reach McManaman's centre, when the Liverpool wizard's brilliant run carved us open. In the final minutes we were also grateful for John Barnes ever-expanding backside, as it deflected a certain Rob Jones goal onto the outside of the post. We had our chances too, though, with Deane and McAllister both being denied by fine James saves.

But it was all about Yeboah's goal? The second half had started quietly, but in

the 51st minute the game exploded into life. Dorigo's frankly aimless centre was nodded into the air by the diminutive Wallace and as it arced up nobody truly expected Yeboah to attempt what he did. It was a devilish ball to control never mind shoot on target from 30 yards, but in a flash it appeared he was going to undertake the impossible. Catching the ball on the instep of his right foot with that one-in-a-million "sweetness", Yeboah lashed the ball goalward. From my seat it looked to be heading over the bar but it suddenly dipped, and while James made a superhuman effort to touch it he was inches away as it crashed in off the underside of the bar. Goals sometimes lose that instant electrifying rush when they go in off the bar, like there is a momentary uncertainty as to whether it is in or not. But Yeboah's shot had a "Wow!" factor all of its own; undeniably brilliant.

How were the Leeds fans? Stunned. Elland Road vibrated with the hum of astonishment and the goal was still the only discussion point walking home afterwards.

Best Leeds player? Wins over Liverpool are rare and the whole side deserve credit for a battling performance, but Yeboah can add this to the many accolades he will doubtless receive for that goal.

In a nutshell? Have that!

MAGIC NUMBER

Per cent record after two games – and estimated mph of Yeboah's shot.



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