

# CLASSIC MATCH



## Swansea City 5 Leeds United 1

Football League Division One  
Saturday August 29, 1981, 3pm  
Vetch Field  
Attendance 23,489  
Goals Charles (5), Parlane (26),  
Latchford (46), Latchford (50),  
Latchford (55), Curtis (70)  
Referee S Bates (Bristol)

**Swansea (4-4-2):** Davies,  
Robinson, Hadziabdic, Rajkovic,  
Irwin, Mahoney, Curtis, James R,  
James L, Charles, Latchford.

In the spirit of LLL  
magazine, **JON HOWE**  
takes a retro look at  
some of our most  
memorable moments.

**Ah yes, the first day of the season... Sun, new signings and optimism?** Well, two out of three isn't bad. It was a baking hot day, we had Allan Clarke's record signing Peter Barnes and the returning Frank Gray making their debuts, but the optimism lasted precisely five minutes, and by the end of the game was pretty much a dirty word.

**How did the new signings do?** Barnes was completely anonymous – he was played up front with Derek Parlane but barely had a touch. Frank Gray must be wondering how "Sniffer" managed to persuade him back to Elland Road. A year ago Gray had just won the European Cup with Nottingham Forest, but today was a massive comedown from that and he was lead a merry dance by the effervescent Alan Curtis, who reveled in embarrassing his former club. On this evidence it's going to be a tough season.

**We started badly then?** The packed ground was bouncing and we had to stay strong in those early exchanges, but we conceded after five minutes. Curtis crossed from the left, Latchford dummied the ball and Jeremy Charles struck an untidy finish passed the stumbling Lukic. The roof came off the place, but, to be fair, we responded pretty well.

**I'm told it could have been a different story?** Yes, definitely. We built up some pressure, and on 26 minutes Hird fed Carl Harris on the right and his deep cross was met at the back post by the unmarked Parlane, who buried a diving header past Dai Davies. Five minutes later Harris crossed again and Arthur Graham rose brilliantly and thundered a header against the post with the keeper nowhere. If that had gone in we could have been sat here sipping Veuve Clicquot and toasting a possible assault on European qualification,

- ↑ Frank Gray
- ↗ Peter Barnes
- ↗ Carl Harris
- Paul Hart

# 3 TRAGIC NUMBER

Goals conceded to  
Latchford, points lost  
under the new system.



instead we're drinking cold tea and facing up to the reality of a relegation battle.

**We didn't start the second half well, either, presumably?** You could say that. Chuffed with our response to going a goal down we seemed to be still self-congratulating while Swansea set about humiliating us with an awesome second half performance. Just 46 seconds had elapsed when a long ball from Robbie James wasn't dealt with by Paul Hart and Bob Latchford hit a stunning left foot volley in to the top corner. Ten dizzying minutes later the burly striker had a hat-trick. On 50 minutes he stole in front of our dozing defence and slotted home at the near post from a Robinson cross, then on 55 minutes he headed home unchallenged from Leighton James right wing free-kick.

**That wasn't the end of the torture, was it?** No. Alan Curtis had been a nuisance all afternoon, and was clearly intent on showing Allan Clarke what a mistake he had made in cutting his Leeds career short less than a year ago. Under manager John Toshack, Curtis has rediscovered his top form and he was unplayable today. On 70 minutes he broke on the right and turned Trevor Cherry inside out, before making room and launching an unstoppable shot past Lukic into the top corner for the fifth goal. Curtis leapt with joy, like a five-year-old on his birthday, and sparked a minor pitch invasion. With 20 minutes left to play there was genuine concern as to what irreparable damage Swansea could inflict on our shattered confidence, but



fortunately, amid emotional exhaustion, the game petered out in timid fashion.

**How were the Leeds fans?** Packed into the terracing behind the goal they were understandably shell-shocked, but still vocal right to the sorry end. However, at 5-1 a few decided to launch missiles at John Lukic in front of them, and it just about summed up the disenchantment of this trip into the Valleys.

**Best Leeds player?** You mean "least bad" Leeds player, right? Carl Harris and Arthur Graham caused some problems, Eddie Gray had some nice touches in an unfamiliar central midfield role, but Brian Flynn probably shaded it. He worked tirelessly to stem the tide in the second half, and without him it could have been much worse.

**In a nutshell?** Let's start again next week, eh lads?



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