

Classic Match

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

Is that it then, are we down? Not mathematically no, but just about. West Brom are now safe and we need them to do us a massive favour by beating Stoke on Thursday night, Stoke now only need a draw to relegate us. However, given our fans have just smashed West Brom's ground to pieces and terrified the local population, I can't see the team being in an overly cooperative mood.

This wasn't the greatest night in our history, was it? I would say one of the very darkest, in all honesty. We have seen the club in gradual decline since Revie left in 1974 but we never thought it would come to this. You accept that the glorious era we were lucky enough to witness could not last forever, but to see a catalogue of mismanagement at all levels lead ultimately to relegation is almost unspeakable. Couple that with the ongoing crowd problems which culminated in horrifying scenes here, and all things told, this was pretty much rock bottom.

We were quite confident, though, weren't we? Yes. The 2-1 win against Brighton on Saturday was rightly greeted with jubilant scenes. We knew we weren't safe, but at last Allan Clarke's team had shown the fight necessary for the battle. Finally it looked like we had woken up from our delusions of grandeur and accepted we were in a dog-fight. We were no longer living on reputation and we weren't too good to go down. Alas, tonight, when we really needed that fighting spirit, there was nothing.

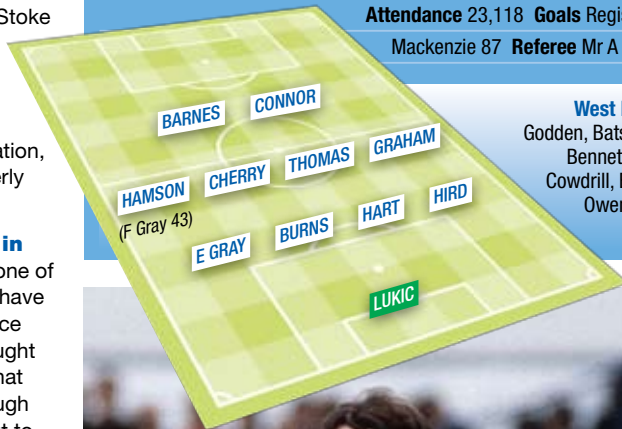
The table doesn't lie? Just 10 wins all season and a goal difference of minus-22 tells the story. Clearly, on the strength of that, we deserve to go down. We were unlucky in this game, though – Frank Worthington has scored nine goals since his timely arrival in March, but he was suspended tonight, and we had to play Peter Barnes up front. But even against his former club, Barnes continued his apparent (and expensive) crusade to prove he just cannot cut it in a White shirt. Furthermore Gary Hamson was taken off on a stretcher with a nasty looking injury just before half-time and

West Bromwich Albion 2 Leeds United 0

Football League Division One Tuesday May 18, 1982, 7.45pm Hawthorns

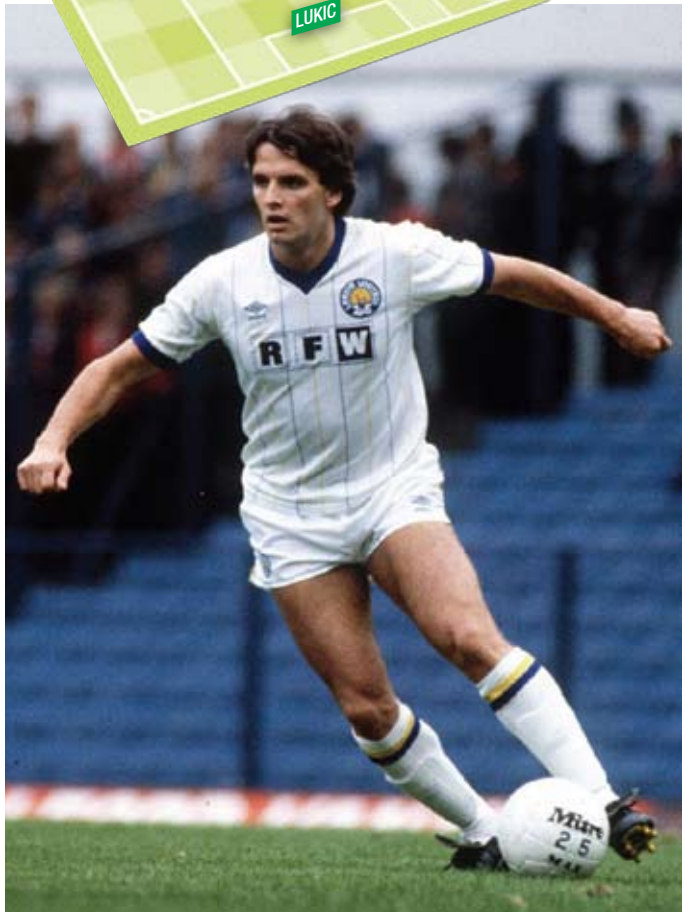
Attendance 23,118 Goals Regis 51,

Mackenzie 87 Referee Mr A Ward (London)



West Brom (4-4-2)

Godden, Batson, Statham, Bennett, Wile, Webb, Cowdrill, Brown, Regis, Owen, Mackenzie.



Above: **Frank Gray**
Top right: **Eddie Gray**
Right: **Terry Connor**
Far right: **Kenny Burns**

we never really recovered from that loss. Having said that, we all knew what was at stake, and there was no excuse for us going out with a whimper like we did. It was really, really poor and just summed up our fragile mentality that just seemed to accept impending doom.

The goals? I barely saw them in all the chaos. We were under siege from Albion throughout but somehow went in 0-0 at half-time. Regis fired one home just after the break and in truth it had been coming. By the time Mackenzie netted the clincher with three minutes left most of the Albion fans had left to ensure a safe journey home. Many Leeds fans had had enough by this stage and seemed hell bent on destruction.



How were the Leeds fans? Needless to say, we sold our official allocation easily, but we must have had over 6,000 fans in the ground. In the away enclosure it all turned sour not long after Regis had put Albion ahead. The fans at the front were rocking the safety fence back and forth for a good 10 minutes before it collapsed. Missiles were flying and the police stormed into the Leeds contingent with batons. Whether some fans were trying to get the game postponed I don't know, but it didn't work. It just dragged our name further into the mud, and I dread to think what happened outside afterwards that I didn't see. I made a hasty exit and vowed to close the door on this wretched season and our glorious 18-year stay in the top flight.

Best Leeds player? Terry Connor showed some passion, and he was the only player who stayed on the pitch at the end, visibly in tears, so I'll give it to him.

In a nutshell? It's been fun, and this was no way to end it.



72
73

8 *Fragic Number*

Years from Champions to relegation.