



# Classic Match

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

**From the Lion's Den we emerge with our rightful silver?** Absolutely, if you can't win the title at Elland Road, second best must be at the home of your closest rivals. This was a performance befitting of champions, as clearly we have threatened greatness but have now achieved it.

**Did we come for a draw?** Revie wouldn't admit it, but yes, our intentions were pretty clear. We needed only a point to secure our first ever league title and Liverpool needed a win to extend the battle into the final week of the season. For once I would concede that chasing a win was not a risk worth taking.

**Presumably we saw a pretty feisty opening?** As if it needed it, Billy stoked up the fires further by winning the toss and electing to let Liverpool attack their favourite Kop end in the first half, thus ensuring we endured a blistering onslaught right from the off. However, in a crackling white-hot atmosphere neither team settled early on. There were several ill-advised challenges during a madcap opening 15 minutes which saw Tommy Smith, Lawrence, Cooper, Sprake and

## Liverpool 0 Leeds United 0

Football League Division One Monday April 28, 1969, 7.45pm Anfield

Attendance 53,750 Referee Arthur Dimond (Harlow)



**Liverpool** (4-4-2) Lawrence, Lawler, Strong, Smith, Yeates, Hughes, Callaghan, Graham, Evans, St. John, Thompson

Jones all receiving treatment following separate incidents.

### They played into our hands, then?

The reality was that Liverpool lost their heads and played with no assurance, while we can submerge ourselves in an uncultured battle all night long, if that's how the game is presented to us. So,



much of the first half was spent with both teams kicking lumps out of each other, which was fine by us.

**There must have been some chances, though?** It took a full 30 minutes before there was a serious shot on goal when Callaghan tested Sprake from 35 yards. Soon after Bremner saw a deflected shot go just wide, but the best chances of the game fell to Liverpool youngster Alun Evans who snatched at two presentable chances in the penalty box but troubled Sprake with neither.

**So, not the best 0-0 draw?** No, but with so much at stake it was never going to be. Defences were on top, and as the game wore on Liverpool became more desperate and just took aimless pot shots at Sprake's goal to no effect. Our defence are now masters at the art of soaking up pressure, while Bremner and Madeley were immense in the middle of the park. But all Leeds fans know we are never more unified and determined than when up against it. We had to prove that we were worthy of the title here, and we did.

**So finally, we are Champions of England! It sounds great, doesn't it?** Eight years after Revie took over as manager, and following many near misses, this is what he promised us would happen. Maybe now we will receive some long-overdue recognition rather than being dismissed as brutal and calculating. Seven full internationals and last season's Footballer of the Year (Jack Charlton) would suggest some people rate us, not to mention the host of points and wins records we have broken this season.

**How were the Leeds fans?** Delirious, of course. The players celebrated in front of the pockets of fans at one end,



Above: **Paul Madeley**

Left: **Skipper Billy Bremner leading the team out in an earlier game.**

Below: **Terry Cooper**

but it's what happened next that left a lump in the throat.

**What, Paul Reaney crying and "Top Cat" Cooper lighting a cigar?**

No, that was in the dressing room later. Billy led the players from the Leeds fans across the pitch towards the Kop. The whole ground fell silent and everyone thought, "What the hell is he doing?". On the edge of the area he started clapping the Liverpool fans and in unison 27,000 partisan Reds packed into the famous Kop replied with an ovation that seemed to go on forever. Class from Billy. Class from the Kop. To be fair, I wouldn't have done the same, but then I sulk for two days after any defeat never mind when we've just lost the title. The players stood there for a full 20 minutes and having been held in contempt for so long who could begrudge them the unprecedented experience of popularity?

**Best Leeds player:** Whether up front, in midfield or at the back Madeley was monumental.

**In a nutshell?** Champions!



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## 2 Magic Number

Goals conceded in eight games to become champions