

# Classic Match

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

**How big was this?** Summing up the sheer scale of the task we achieved tonight is difficult, and I'm struggling to find the energy. I'm an exhausted wreck, emptied by nervous tension and, finally, the shattering release of jubilation.

**We weren't supposed to win this, were we?** Based on the first leg you had to be confident because we comfortably outplayed the Spanish giants at Elland Road, but arriving in the vast theatre that is the Nou Camp tonight and faced with nearly 110,000 supremely self-assured fans and their sea of banners and flags, you suddenly felt very small and insignificant; like a tadpole intruding on piranhas at feeding time. The names of World Cup finalists Cruyff and Neeskens, who had both underperformed at Elland Road, suddenly



## Barcelona 1 Leeds United 1

European Cup Semi-Final second leg Wednesday April 23, 1975, 7.45pm

Nou Camp, Barcelona **Attendance** 110,000

**Goals** Lorimer (7), Clares (69)

**Referee** Erich Linemayer (Austria)

**Barcelona** (4-3-3) Sadurni, Murinho, Gallego, Bianqueti, De La Cruz, Neeskens, Rexach, Heredia, Cruyff, Asensi (Rife), Clares.





Left: Barcelona legend Johan Cruyff and Leeds goalscorer Peter Lorimer.  
Right: Billy Bremner.  
Below: Trevor Cherry and Joe Jordan.

## 2 Magic Number

Second ever English side to reach the European Cup final



gained a chilling notoriety. Which makes the team's performance all the more incredible. Without Reaney, Giles and Eddie Gray the odds were against Leeds despite the 2-1 first-leg lead, but they faced this challenge, stared it straight in the eyes, and brought home the bacon.

### Just like us to silence the Nou Camp, too...

Only seven minutes were gone and with the fierce intensity of the crowd whistling in our ears, we did the unimaginable; muffled the howling wolf. Goalkeeper David Stewart punted a long clearance forward and just like he had for both goals in the first leg, Joe Jordan again towered above the hapless Barcelona defence, who hadn't conceded a goal in the whole competition before meeting us, and nodded into the path of Peter Lorimer. Charging in on goal "Hot Shot" thundered a rising drive into the top corner from 15 yards. The eerie stillness was almost disturbing, there was a momentary confusion before we realised what had happened. Then; dreamland.

**After that?** We barely had another shot, to be honest. But we had the priceless away goal to match Barcelona's at Elland Road, so just had to defend the two-goal cushion, which we did with varying degrees of comfort for the next 83 minutes. In the second half Barcelona became a lot more physical, with Jordan and Bremner both catching the sharp end of the Spaniards' frustrated aggression. But we were perfectly organised and managed to restrict them to only half-chances.

**Until the 69th minute...** Yeah. With the frenzied crowd baying for blood Barcelona finally got the breakthrough that you sensed would send our chances into orbit. A deep free-kick from Gallego was flicked on by Manuel Clares and his looping header beat the flailing Stewart.



The upturn in volume put a knot in your stomach and I was gripping my seat with squirming anguish. This was going to be a horribly long last 20 minutes.

### Gordon McQueen didn't exactly help with that, did he?

That's a bit unfair because he was immense in the rearguard action before the goal, but a minute later he tangled with the goalscorer Clares and rashly swiped out at him in retaliation to a simple pull of his shirt; hair-brained. He understandably saw a red card, and now, a man down with only a one-goal cushion and 19 minutes to play; it was beginning to look a bit like Rorke's Drift.

**But we won that?** Ah yes, for 4,000 Zulu warriors read over 100,000 manic Spaniards. Stewart saved from Heredia and Cruyff (twice) in the last few minutes, but we kept our shape, stayed focused and saw it out.

**How were the Leeds fans?** As cushions rained down on to the pitch from the Barcelona fans in the main stand at the final whistle amid a chorus of boos, you could spot the 1,500 Leeds fans separated into all four corners of the cavernous stadium. Deliberately split up to lessen their impact, their joy was unconfined, having just witnessed the single biggest achievement in their club's history.

**Best Leeds player?** Cherry did a magnificent man-marking job on the danger man Cruyff, but for a single-handed defence of the last garrison, without the aid of a bayonet, goalie David Stewart deserves all the plaudits.

**In a nutshell?** Surely nothing can stop us becoming European Champions now?

Follow Jon on Twitter @jonhowe1971