



Classic Match

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

“Shattering defeat after a titanic performance” – this sounds familiar...

Yes, after you sift through the painful wreckage of this epic loss, you do sort of feel like we've been here before.

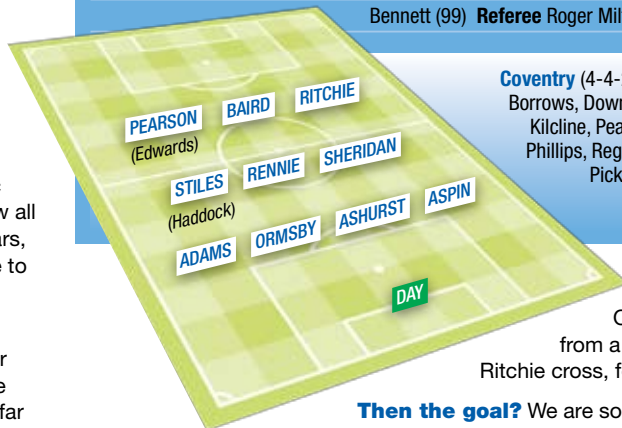
A great game, though, or is that a bit incidental now? In a few weeks I will possibly be able to appreciate what an enthralling and frenetic spectacle this was, a classic FA Cup semi if you like, but right now all I can see is our brave heroes – in tears, socks round their ankles, barely able to walk back to the dressing rooms.

How did we start, any nerves? No way. Coventry were billed as a far superior team in the build-up, but we set off like a steam train and looked far more composed. With 51,000 shoe-horned into every available space within Hillsborough, the atmosphere was crackling with an intensity that Leeds fed on in the first 20 minutes. We never let Coventry settle and amid the fiery passion, we also managed to string together some fine attacking moves. Pearson had a diving header saved by

Leeds United 2 Coventry City 3 (after extra-time)

FA Cup Semi-Final Sunday April 12, 1987, 12.15pm Hillsborough

Attendance 51,372 **Goals** Rennie (14), Gynn (68), Houchen (78), Edwards (83), Bennett (99) **Referee** Roger Milford (Bristol)



Coventry (4-4-2) Ogrizovic, Borrows, Downs, McGrath, Kilcline, Peake, Bennett, Phillips, Regis, Houchen, Pickering (Gynn)

Ogrizovic from a great Andy Ritchie cross, for example.

1 Tragic Number

Postponed wedding to re-arrange for Neil Aspin

Then the goal? We are so used to being underdogs that scoring in games like this barely comes into the equation, but on 14 minutes the unthinkable happened. Rennie lost his marker and met Micky Adams left-wing corner perfectly, stooping to bury a near-post header passed big Oggy. The sun was shining, our white kit looked extra-white and all was good in the world.



Coventry came back into it, though? Yes, the menacingly powerful Cyrille Regis missed three good efforts and the tricky Dave Bennett began to influence the game, but we seemed to hold the lead forever. I've never known the clock tick along so slowly – it was torture.

Enter Mr Gynn... Well, more pertinently, enter Mr Ormsby. The diminutive Gynn had been on the pitch only seven minutes when an aimless punt was played towards our dead-ball line. Ormsby was guiding it out but Bennett barged him off the ball and played it across the box. Gynn arrived to guide it home passed three defenders and Mervyn Day scrambling back to cover the empty net. Ten minutes later we saw a comedy episode where a series of miss-kicks and hopeless collisions led to Keith Houchen bearing in on goal, before rounding Day and sliding the ball home.

Thank you very much, and goodnight? It felt like that. For all our efforts, and for all the chances we had created, it just seemed so cruel and

Left: Keith Edwards celebrates his 83rd-minute equaliser with Ian Baird in hot pursuit.

Above: David Rennie and Coventry's Keith Houchen.

Below: Cyrille Regis getting a shot in.

needless. The whole afternoon had turned on 10 crazy minutes. There was still hope of course, but most Leeds fans were spent by this point; given up.

Enter Mr Edwards... Ah yes. With his second touch of the ball having arrived as an 82nd-minute substitute Keith Edwards, disillusioned by his lack of impact at Elland Road, chose the perfect occasion to demonstrate the predatory instincts we paid Sheffield United £125,000 for last summer. Ritchie worked like a Trojan to fashion a crossing opportunity on the right and chipped an inviting ball which split the Coventry defence. Edwards met it with a decisive nod of the head to send the Leeds fans wild. We couldn't believe we were actually back in the game from a point of seemingly no return.

But we lost? Dave Bennett tapped home a loose ball in the 99th minute after Day had saved again from Houchen. Just taking Coventry to extra-time seemed like an achievement, but we shouldn't sell ourselves short. The game was there to be won, but in extra-time we were knackered, simple as.

How were the Leeds fans? A trouble-free afternoon for our notorious fans, and amid many pre-match security concerns the magnificently vocal fans did as much as the players to win the club back some welcome self-respect.

Best Leeds player? Day kept us in the game, Sheridan was at his marauding best, but Ritchie created so much and was on the very top of his game.

In a nutshell? Leeds United are re-born so let's take this spirit into the Play-Offs.

Follow Jon on Twitter @jonhowe1971

