

CLASSIC MATCH



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

CHAPMAN WALLACE
SPEED McALLISTER BATTY STRACHAN
(Cantona) (Shutt)
DORIGO WHYTE FAIRCLOUGH NEWSOME
LUKIC

Sheffield United 2 Leeds United 3

Barclays League Division One
Sunday April 26, 1992, 12pm
Bramall Lane
Attendance 32,000

Goals Cork (28), Wallace (44),
Newsome (65), Chapman og
(68), Gayle og (77)

Referee George Courtney
(Spennymoor)

Sheffield United (4-4-2):
Rees, Pemberton, Barnes,
Gannon (Bryson), Gayle,
Beesley, Hodges, Rogers,
Cork (Whitehouse), Deane,
Bradshaw.

Okay, explain this game to me... That is very difficult, I have to say. It would be pointless to dissect the ins and outs of this performance and try to explain the elementary mistakes that littered the game. Just placate yourself with the fact that we won and are within a gnat's whisker of being crowned as League Champions.

It does sound better when you put it like that... Precisely. Sgt Wilko will be having kittens about some of the Keystone Kops buffoonery on display here, but the ultimate outcome is far more important and in a few months time we'll just be laughing about this game. In fact, I find it pretty funny already.

We seemed nervous and disjointed, though? True. The strong wind was a

disruptive factor but, as ever, Sheffield United – despite struggling at the wrong end of the table – seemed to save their best performance of the season for us. We've risen to the occasion countless times this season, but today we struggled and it was just about grinding out a result; somehow we did.

The goals? Not one of them was a thing of beauty. In fact, the Elephant Man earned more admiring glances than anything on show today. The Blades' opener had seemed inevitable as we absorbed a lot of pressure, and it came on 28 minutes. A floating Gannon corner was met by much fresh-air hacking as the ball failed to be cleared by a succession of defenders. Eventually it fell to veteran striker Alan Cork who stabbed it home. We responded

↑ Gordon Strachan leading his team out and celebrations after Jon Newsome's goal.

↓ John Lukic.





well to be fair and Dorigo nearly equalised when his free-kick was nearly fumbled into his own net by keeper Mel Rees.

We soon equalised, though? Yes, and crucially just before half-time. Strachan took a quick free-kick and sent Wallace through on goal, he caused mass panic and a series of ricochets ended with Wallace diverting the ball into an unguarded net. Talk about pinball wizardry.

So we assumed control after that? For a time, yes. After the break a deep Batty cross found Speed unmarked and he hit the post with McAllister sending the follow-up high over the bar. But soon enough we took the lead. McAllister sent a free-kick deep into the area, it caught the wind and deceived Rees, who had been injured in the melee of Wallace's equaliser and was clearly struggling. Jon Newsome sneaked in at the back post, stooping low to nod the ball into the empty net. In the away end time stood still as it wasn't immediately clear that we'd scored, then; pandemonium.

The farce didn't end there, though? It was only just beginning. We kept the lead for only a few minutes because another Gannon corner undid us. This time John Pemberton hooked the ball back into the box from the far post and Lee Chapman, stood on the line, instinctively stuck a leg out – but deflected the ball in.

But we didn't settle for the draw? Some of us would have, but when you know the prize at stake it would be rude not to go for it. However, the manner in which we scored the winner was more in keeping with Gerry Cottle's Circus than the very pinnacle of the English game. An aimless punt forward created yet more fluster and confusion in the Blades defence. Running towards his own goal, Brian Gayle teed the ball up perfectly with his knee and with his keeper rushing out to gather it and snuff out the danger, Gayle decided to head the ball clean over him and into, you've guessed it, the empty net.

How were the Leeds fans? Delirious, exhausted and bewildered. Nobody quite knew what was going to happen next, but Leeds navigated the last few minutes without trouble and on the final whistle you couldn't quite believe the enormity of what Leeds had done.

Best Leeds player? Does Brian Gayle qualify? Nobody really shone and defences weren't on top. Lukic made some crucial saves from Brian Deane, but Wallace was a pain for Sheffield United and they never truly dealt with him.

In a nutshell? Come on Liverpool, do us a favour?

↑ Jon Newsome stooping to head Leeds 2-1 in front.

↓ Rod Wallace had equalised just before half-time.



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Goals, points and cheers for Brian Gayle!

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