



**FRANK
McGHEE**

The Voice of Sport

MANCHESTER
United, beaten, battered, bewildered and buried beneath an avalanche of marvellous goals at Ipswich, are the luckiest team in the League.

They are lucky they don't have to live down this humiliation of being beaten by 16 goals—and though I am permitted the occasional exaggeration under my sports writer's licence I swear I am not guilty this time of any over-statement. It really could have been 16—0, not 6—0.

How did it happen—and why?

Two honest managers, Bobby Robson of Ipswich and Dave Sexton of Manchester United, attempted to provide some answers.

Blame

Robson said: "We were VERY good." He leaned heavily on the adjective. "But I have to say that how good we were must be balanced against how VERY poor United were. Their marking, covering and passing were all terrible."

Sexton said: "A bad day for us, a nice one for them. I blame myself largely."

He then went into a long, involved technical explanation about Martin Buchan, his captain, being detailed to stick close to Eric Gates of Ipswich.

When Gates dropped deep, Buchan followed him. This pulled Buchan out of defence and gave the main Ipswich strikers, Paul Mariner and Alan Brazil, enough time and room to have a holiday.

It would be simple, neat—and totally wrong to leave it at that.

For me, what happened

United are lucky they didn't get humiliated by a sixteen-goal beating

SIX OF THE VERY BEST



United keeper Gary Bailey gratefully grabs the third penalty kick he saved at Ipswich.

at Portman Road on Saturday was decided in heaven when a capricious, mischievous Somebody Up There decided he liked Ipswich and didn't fancy United. He sprinkled one side with stardust and what he showered on the opposition defies description in a family newspaper.

I have never seen United perform as dismally, ineptly and daffily—as one of a possible hundred examples illustrates.

Jimmy Nicholl, their right back, is normally a trustworthy player. The pass he hit in the second

minute of the match was perfect—except that he hit it straight at Ipswich captain Mick Mills, who hit it straight to Brazil, who hit it straight past United keeper Gary Bailey.

One down—and many more to come—as United players continued to feed the ball to Ipswich players, who developed the happy habit of passing the ball to each other and every so often hitting the back of the net with it.

You could start a dozen arguments about who was the Ipswich star—for me it was the Dutch-

man Frans Thijssen—and a hundred arguments about who was the worst United player. They were all awful.

The six goals—a Mariner hat-trick, two from Brazil and one from Thijssen—were so memorable they will warm me if we get any more cold days this winter.

Strength

Bailey saved three penalty kicks, one from Thijssen and two from Kevin Beattie, who once again looked as strong and threatening as a mugger in an alley.

United failed to create a single scoring chance. Nicholl and Steve Coppell prevented further goals with clearances from the line.

Buchan once conceded a free kick by picking up the ball because he thought the whistle had gone—and what one of the coolest brains and sharpest tongues in football called himself at the time, I would love to know. He would have to invent new invective.

There was more. Much more—including the pure, purring pleasure Ipswich provided—which, after all, was the most significant happening of



Paul Mariner (left) hails his hat-trick for Ipswich with a delighted Alan Brazil.

Pictures: MONTE FRESCO

one of the most enjoyable afternoons I have spent this season.

There was the topic afterwards of how much damage might, even must, have been done to United, their dreams of overhauling Liverpool surely shattered by such a stunning setback.

"We haven't got where we are by not being resilient," said Sexton stoutly. "We'll get over it. We've got to."

Said Robson: "The score surprised me a bit but the result didn't. I still don't think we can catch Liverpool. "United will just have

to forget this match, but they shouldn't forget the other 29 they have played. They have got to be a good side to have more points than us."

A good team? It would demand a great team to be even slightly better than Ipswich are at the moment.

THE MERSEYSIDE DERBY SECOND DIVISION

Nulty's case of woe

By CHRIS JAMES

Everton 1, Liverpool 2

EVERTON defender Geoff Nulty may today be ruled out for the rest of the season with knee ligaments damaged by Jimmy Case's tackle.

That's bad news for Everton, whose battle to stay in the First Division and the FA Cup could

soon be hit by suspension for Asa Hartford, Trevor Ross, Mick Lyons and Brian Kidd.

Meanwhile Liverpool boss Bob Paisley has issued a "Cool it" plea for future Mersey derbies after this rough-house

WALKER SETS HURST POSER

By TERRY SMITH Chelsea 1 Cardiff 0

CHELSEA manager Geoff Hurst knows he will be under pressure to give crowd-idol Clive Walker his place back in the derby clash at Fulham on Saturday. Walker had been one of four players axed after a dismal Chelsea run of just one win in five games.

The Shed howled for Walker's promotion from the substitute's bench as Chelsea totally failed to look like a team with promotion ambitions.

Winner

The crowd finally got their wish in the 72nd minute, and twelve minutes later Walker whacked home a magnificent winner to put Chelsea top.

Hurst said: "I know Clive's a good player and that was world-class finishing, but he has got to do it consistently."

SOCCER JUDGE

ANSWERS to Saturday's Soccer Judge questions: 1—Yes, because the match has not started. 2—Yes, although he must not touch the ball with his hands outside the penalty-area. 3—No. Obstruction is an indirect free-kick offence. A goal cannot be allowed. The correct decision is a goal-kick.

There's hope in the Valley

Charlton 4, Bristol R. 0 STRUGGLING Charlton turned it on for their smallest crowd of the season—4,838. "It's a ray of hope," said boss Andy Nelson. "The next few games will tell whether it is too late—the problem is dragging some other team below us."

Rovers boss Harold Jarman said: "I could have taken off any one of nine men."

Rovers folded once Lawrie Madden gave Charlton the lead in the 54th minute.

BOBBY REFUSES

Manchester City's transfer listed striker Bobby Shinton has turned down the chance of a move to Second Division Burnley for £200,000.



JOCK WALLACE

Jock raps Leicester

Leicester 0, Oldham 1 LEICESTER, desperately needing points to stay in the Second Division promotion race, failed miserably to turn golden chances into goals.

Martin Henderson, Alan Young and Bobbie Smith were all guilty, and new signing Geoff Scott had a nightmare.

Manager Jock Wallace said afterwards: "I've told the team what I think in no uncertain terms."

Oldham's goal, scored by Jim Scott in the 16th minute, was the result of a defensive blunder.

Orient are just golden

Orient 2, Cambridge 0 A TWO-GOAL second-half salvo by Ralph Coates and Joe Mayo sank Cambridge's hopes.

Orient manager Jimmy Bloomfield said: "Our goals were as good as you could wish to see. Both were crackers."

WATFORD GIVE CUP WARNING

By COLIN DIBALL: Newcastle 0, Watford 2

WATFORD manager Graham Taylor refused to get over-optimistic after his side had shattered Newcastle's unbeaten home record—and possibly dealt the death blow to their promotion ambitions.

Of next Saturday's FA Cup sixth round, Taylor said: "We have played like this on occasions before and never been able to carry it over to the next match."

"Arsenal will be a different proposition—but, on this form, we will give them a real game."

Watford were put on their way by a David Barton own goal half a minute before the interval and Ross Jenkins wrapped up the points with an 80th-minute header.

It would have been more if Luther Blissett and Malcolm Poskett had found their finishing touch.

I'm to blame, groans Gayle

Notts Co. 1, Fulham 1 HOWARD GAYLE, on loan from Liverpool, admitted: "I missed two easy chances when clean through and that's why Liverpool have lent me to Fulham to gain experience."

Teddy Maybank (49 mins.) put Fulham ahead and David Hunt equalised. Richard Money, Fulham's £500,000 rated defender, has asked for a transfer.

WARWICK POOLS

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY: £4,896.88.

Pool 1: £3,677.50 three winners each receive £1,225.83, 02, 27, 40 with one from 14, 17, 20, 39, 51.

Pool 2: £229.84, four winners each receive £57.46, 02, 39 with two from 14, 17, 27, 44.

Pool 3: £229.84, one winner,

10, 27, 40, 51. Pool 4: £229.84, seventy-two winners each receive £3.19, 20, 27 with two from 16, 19, 26, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 42, 45, 47, 48, 52, 55, 56, 60. Pool 5: £229.84, twenty-one winners each receive £10.94, any four from 01, 24, 25, 30, 32, 54, 59, 61. Pool 6: £300 (members' gift scheme), 150 winners.

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