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Leader

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1981.

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Historic draw at Dell

LIMERICK SURPRISE SAINTS

FROM JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY
AT THE DELL

Southampton, 1 Limerick United, 1
(Aggregate Southampton, 4 Limerick, 1)

LIMERICK UNITED walked proud at the Dell last night when they fashioned a sensational 1-1 draw against the £10 million valued Southampton in the second leg of the UEFA cup.

Although the Saints are now through to the second round on a 4-1 aggregate, it was unrated Limerick who stole all the honours. This was a performance of courage, stamina and skill and made one proud to be a Limerick man... the 200 supporters who made the trip to lead support will cherish it as a night to savour.

For all their talents the English first division side were made look very moderate and indeed would have been at the receiving end of a shock 2-1 scoreline had substitute Tony Morris not been dazzled by the flood lights as he attempted to connect with a Des Kennedy centre 90 seconds from full time.

This was no fluke result. Admittedly the Eoin Hand...

less Limerick were subjected to some severe pressure especially in the second half. They played with authority and composure and never resorted to kick and rush football.

In fact the quality of their play both at the back, midfield and up front was very often on par with what the Hampshire club had to offer.

The visitors might have had several close shaves, notably when the £750,000 Armstrong and midfield player Baker struck the cross bar and again when Pat Nolan and Johnny Walsh made desperate goal line clearances. But at the other end Southampton breathed a few signs of relief as Ward, Walsh and Storan dug deep into their territory and fired in shots which were marginally off target.

Held

Ward, who delighted the crowd, often had opponents tackling air and was a real thorn in the Southampton defence.

As at the first game he teased and tormented the Saints right flank and almost sent Limerick into a sensational 8th minute lead with as splendidly struck shot from an accute angle which went across the goal mouth and inches wide.

Southampton, held at home for the first time this season, had to survive many embarrassing moments as the Irish part timers threatened to dictate to them and the more the game progressed the more their supporters became irri-

tated with their often laborious build up and got behind the underdogs.

The fading talents of Keegan, Channon and Ball were not sufficient to ignite Southampton and the end result was victory for Limerick United whose heroic performance will long be remembered at the Dell.

The courage shown by Tony Meaney and company was graphically illustrated when they cancelled out Southampton's 65th minute lead goal within 180 seconds.

Many had expected United to capitulate when Keegan headed past Fitzpatrick but unlike the Markets Field game when their heads dropped, Limerick resurrected themselves almost immediately to send a wave of silence over the ground.

Tales

It was at that stage that Limerick began to really believe in themselves and showing tremendous qualities took the game to their opponents.

Southampton often caught on the break were almost humiliated two minutes from the end when Kennedy floated a perfect centre to unmarked Morris - a substitute for Hulmes - but this time the goal hero of the night failed to get sufficient power into his header and the keeper, Katalinic saved.

This was just the type of stuff that fairy tales are made of - Irish holding one of the princes of English soccer.

"Aren't we so pleased that this was the second leg and not the first," grinned Southampton boss, Lawrie McMenemy at the after match inquest.

He went on: to lavish praise on Limerick United who he said played with admirable pride, something they could



Tony Morris, who was back on form last night with a goal against Southampton.

learn from.

He regretted that only 12,500 fans turned up despite warnings from him that Limerick were a much better side than had been given credit for. Discard all thoughts that Southampton were comforted by a 3-0 lead from the first leg and were playing in second gear. McMenemy admitted that his instructions to his team were to go out and win by as many goals as possible.

"But our plans came unstuck against one of the best sides that we have played in

European competitions."

Each team showed only one change from the first leg. Nodwell coming in for the injured Hand, and Katalinic replacing Wells in goal for Southampton. There was a minutes silence for the late Bill Shankley, the former Liverpool manager.

The match was played in torrential rain but the pitch was like a billiard table and obviously suited Limerick who revelled under the conditions. There was marvellous reception for the visitors at the

beginning, but paled in comparison to the standing ovation accorded to them at the final whistle.

Imagination

Limerick, delighted with the result, did a lap of honour and had a special wave for the supporters who travelled by air and sea to give them encouragement. It was generally agreed that their overall performance was a great advertisement for League of Ireland football and was unquestionably one of the most magnificent displays given by an Irish side in a European competition.

Refusing to adopt defensive tactics Limerick played with a fluney and imagination that had Southampton surprised. The home side playing to instructions set out to demoralise Limerick as they went in search of an early lead. Limerick hearts fluttered in the second minute when Keegan cut inside Finucane and blasted wide and seconds later a very courageous Kevin Fitzpatrick must have stretched every bone in his body when dealing with a long range shot from Channon.

But with the threatened avalanche of scores failing to materialise stout hearted Limerick grew in confidence and showed that they too could attack when Tony Ward got in their first shot from an acute angle. One could sense the excitement each time that Ward gained possession and the sporting home crowd applauded his every effort. There was a let off for Limerick in the 11th minute with a Graham Baker header bouncing off the cross bar; Finucane and Nolan averted awkward situations and then Johnny Walsh who performed with distinction in pulling the strings in mid-field became the hero with a goal line clearance from an Armstrong header.

Pass

The impish Walsh shortly afterwards set off on a brilliant solo run beating both Ball and Golac and shaved the crossbar with a stinging shot.

Limerick were now in top gear. Hulmes laid off a splendid ball to Tony Ward, he in turn darted into the area, shook off a tackle by Agboola, and blasted inches wide.

Then came a 10 minute calm with each side testing each other. We had to wait until the 34th minute for the next goal-mouth incident, this time Fitzpatrick fisting away a typical Mick Channon pile driver.

A few minutes from the interval came suicidal back pass from Baker which Ward just failed to connect with and then a jinking run by a magnificent Storan, in which he beat three defenders ended with Kennedy ballooning over the bar. In a most sporting contest the only incidents to be recorded in the referees note book was an untimely tackle by Tony Meaney on Alan Ball.

There were shades of the Markets Field game as an obviously embarrassed Southampton turned on the power in the second half and Limerick troubles were added to when both Hulmes and Duggan limped off injured. The Limerick defence were subjected to much pressure as Keegan, the overlapping Golac and Channon were rampant on the right. They shot from every conceivable angle and Fitzpatrick had more to deal with in a five minute period than he would normally he would deal with in a month of Sundays.

But all their attacking powers Southampton were less then convincing when it came to finding the net and then the biggest disappointments were Steve Moran, David Armstrong and Alan Ball who hardly mustered a shot between them.



Johnny Walsh who had a fine game against Southampton last night

Fitzpatrick saved brilliantly from Golac and then Armstrong cut inside Nodwell to head off the crossbar. Within three minutes Pat Nolan kicked a Baker shot off the goal line and the question being asked was how long could Limerick survive.

Then in the 62nd minute came the moment we all dreaded. Channon went on a run down the right, beat Jimmy Nodwell and his in-swinging header by Keegan past Fitzpatrick for a goal which almost was an exact replica of Southampton's two at the Markets Field. One could sense the relief in their camp and the remainder of the game was thought to be a mere formality.

But brave Limerick had other ideas and within two minutes there was a wave of silence over the Dell as substitute Tony Morris had the audacity to creep inside the Southampton defence to head an expertly taken Tony Ward corner pass an unsighted Katalinic. The pressure was now on the home side to redeem themselves but a tiring Limerick marshalled their forces in a professional manner and contained everything that pressurised Southampton had to throw at them.

It speaks volumes for United capabilities that between the 70 and 80 minutes the powerful Southampton failed to get a direct hit at Fitzpatrick. The nearest they came to winning was six minutes from the end when,

from a Holmes cross Keegan headed wide, but then at the other end came the miss of the night when Tony Morris, blinded by the floodlight standing all alone failed to power into a Kennedy close range shot which was truly magnificent performance by the visitors who are not much respected in England.

Southampton: Katalinic, Golac, Holmes, G. Baker, Watson, Agboola, Keegan, Channon, Moran, Armstrong, Ball.

Limerick: Fitzpatrick, Nolan, Nodwell, Finucane, Storan, Meaney, Duggan, Hulmes, Kennedy, Ward, Walsh. Subs: Morris, Keegan, Hulmes, McDonnell for Limerick.

Referee: R. Nylund (N. way).

RUGBY:

JUNIOR AND

Presentation
RFC notes

MUNSTER TRIAL: