

Arrival of England striker was 'turning point'



Crucial breakthrough: Emile Heskey, second from right, celebrates scoring Liverpool's first goal with, from left, Darrin Murphy, El-Hadj Diouf, Vladimir Smicer and Harry Kewell

HESKEY MADE THE DIFFERENCE – GALL

KEVIN Gall insisted the arrival of Emile Heskey was a major turning point in the FA Cup battle at Hush Park yesterday.

Liverpool had struggled to impose themselves during a first half and Yeovil fans were beginning to sense an upset of Herculean proportions until Anfield boss Gerard Houllier announced his first substitution on 50 minutes.

Heskey's physical presence, pace and power immediately altered the complexion of the contest and he broke the deadlock 18 minutes after replacing French starlet Stéphane Pongolle.

"His coming on was most definitely the turning point," said Welsh under-21 striker Gall, pictured right.

"I thought he would play just behind the main striker and drift into wide positions. But he went in behind our defenders instead and that was where the damage was caused.

"We had done a good job in keeping them quiet up until then, but Heskey is a class act and it's difficult when a player of his ability comes on.

"He's an England international and you expect special things from him. He took his goal really well – it was such a cool finish." Having matched their

by **ANDY STOCKHAUSEN**

illustrious rivals for 45 minutes, Yeovil lost their way during the second half and eventually succumbed to Liverpool's pass and move tactics.

Gall admitted: "There was a 20 minute spell in the second half when we just couldn't get the ball off them.

"Their passing and movement were exceptional and we were getting tired trying to keep up with them. They retained the ball so well and we gave it away so often, that they were given a lift and our heads went down a little."

Yet Gall insists he and his teammates will benefit from the experience of playing one of Europe's fiercest teams.

He said: "We have all learned such a lot from this one game.

Playing against a Premiership team is so much different from the Third Division and we now know what we have to do if we want to improve as individuals and as a team.

"If we can carry our first half performance into the league games to come, we can definitely win promotion."

Glovers captain Terry Skiverton revealed the mood in the dressing room afterwards was somber. He explained: "It doesn't matter that it was Liverpool, we want to beat any team we play.

"The overriding feeling was one of disappointment because we were only 20 minutes away from a replay when they scored.

"We didn't seem to be able to get going in the second half and we gave the ball away too often. You can't expect to give a side like Liverpool the ball and not be punished."

Fellow defender Adam Lockwood was upbeat about Yeovil's performance and insisted: "We can push on from here and win promotion.

"Everything we talked about before the game went to plan in the first half and we were unfortunate not to score. We worked hard, passed the ball well and caused Liverpool all sorts of problems.

"I think we can take a lot from this game and from the Cup run as a whole. Although we lost, we played well and that will give us confidence for the rest of the season."

● Report – See Pages 25-29

