

# Liverpool lift pressure on Houllier



**Henry Winter**

AT HUSH PARK

YEOVIL TOWN 0  
LIVERPOOL 2

JUST as the fog and some noted giant-killers were rolling in around a worried Liverpool yesterday, conjuring up the mist of times when Len Shackleton's Sunderland were famously sent packing at the old Hush Park, the latest distinguished guests to Yeovil Town regained their nerve and survived.

Ballying around the impressive figure of Dietmar Hamann, Liverpool ended Yeovil's habitual knockout heroics for another year through second-half goals from Emile Heskey and Danny Murphy. Peering through the deteriorating light, ultimately there was little romance to behold, no celebration of a colourful addition woven into the tapestry of Cup upsets. Not quite.

Yeovil's players left their lawn of a pitch beaten but proud; proud that they had kept passing and building, kept taking the game to such renowned opponents, household names who earn £50,000 a week set against their £800. Proud, too, that Hush Park had laid on such a show; the fans were dressed to the nines and beyond with faces painted green, hair dyed and voices filling the air with songs and chants. Heskey has been called many things in his time but he has never been linked with Weymouth before.

Yeovil lost, but the Cup won. Inspired by the admirable Leo Johnson, Yeovil were deft in



Out of the mist: Yeovil's Andy Lindegaard tries to contain El-Hadji Diouf as Liverpool pressure mounts

possession and defiant at the back end, for 45 minutes, were far more watchable than Liverpool. The sprightly Darren Way was cluttered for trying a Cruyff turn. Colin Price, a chunky left-back who looked like he had his hair done for the occasion, outstruggled El-Hadji Diouf. No fear here.

Chances too. Gavin Williams unleashed a half-volley that Jerry Dudek somehow pushed away. The photographers, scrying an upset in the hazy air, flocked behind Dudek's goal. Sami Hyypia, momentarily panicking at all this pressure, belted the ball out of the ground halfway to Doozet, far

from the maddening crowd of 9,348, a record here.

This was the stuff of dreams for these hardy, West County souls; 66 positions separated the sides in league terms but there was nothing between them at half-time. When an opera singer then stroled on to serenade Hush Park with a reworked Jerusalem, including a tribute to "Yeovil's green and pleasant land", it appeared Town were hitting all the right notes.

"I understand why Yeovil are called the giant-killers," nodded Gérard Houllier. "We had to withstand their pressure. We knew we had to be extremely

committed. We kept strong." Liverpool's manager, a marvelously gracious figure despite all the unpleasant speculation about his tenure, sent on Heskey five minutes after the turnaround, so turning the game his way.

As hastily as young Florent Sinagra-Pengalla had run about, Heskey finally brought a forward focus for Liverpool; within seconds he drew a superb block from Chris Weale. Yeovil's keeper was then beaten by Vladimir Smicer's half-volley but rescued by the post. Liverpool were in the mood.

Williams briefly threatened

again, testing Dudek's reflexes, but Liverpool broke through in the 60th minute. Danny Murphy, a tireless contributor in Steven Gerrard's absence, laced a pass down the inside-right channel and Heskey shot firmly past Weale.

Seven minutes later Murphy again played the catalyst. His clipped pass sent the ball skidding to the receptive feet of Harry Kewell, who was caught by the otherwise excellent Hugo Rodriguez; Kewell exaggerated contact that was at best non-existent. Weale had no chance with Murphy's cool, low penalty. With Hamann running midfield, Liverpool were in charge. "You can see why Dietmar is called the 'Kaiser' in training," Houllier said.

"Liverpool came out in the second half and for 20 minutes showed that Premiership quality of not giving the ball away," said Yeovil's manager, Gary Johnson. "But I'm proud of my players; we didn't just turn up to watch Liverpool."

For Liverpool, yesterday provided a chance to hold their heads high as they negotiate the winds and the rain of a hitherto disappointing season. Today's AGM will be a more relaxed affair, particularly with news that the Anfield striker, Djibril Cisse, moves closer to signing.

"Cisse has not signed a pre-contract," insisted Houllier. "He wants to. At this stage, nothing is true about Djibril Cisse. That is not to say it won't be in the future." To which Johnson responded: "Can he do on loan here?" Yeovil at least had the last laugh off the pitch.

**Yeovil** (4-2-2) Wade Lockwood, Rodgers, Shelton, Pugh, Llanos, Tye, Terry, Salsburgh, St. George, Tyn, Johnson, Way, Cottrell, Galt, Williams, Belle, Barnhill, Cole, up.  
**Liverpool** (4-2-2) Taylor, Beardsley, Brown, Wright, MacKenzie, Dowd, La Touche, St. Marry, Smicer, Charney, O'Connell, Straker, Sola, Howard, Taylor, List, up, Taylor, MacKenzie, Wright, Murphy, Cole, Dowd, Beardsley, Straker, Dowd, La Touche, Kewell, St. Marry, Galt, up.

**Sarah Edworthy: Sport 8**