



Matches – 29 November 1913 - Leeds City 8 Notts Forest 0

Second Division – Elland Road - 14,000

Scorers: McLeod 4, Price 2, Hampson, Speirs

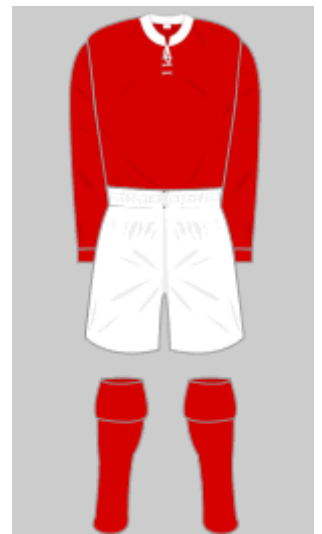
Leeds City: Hogg; Copeland, Affleck; Law, Hampson, Foley; Bainbridge, Speirs, McLeod, Price, Sharpe

Nottingham Forest: Hanna; Dudley, Gibson; Armstrong, Mercer, Needham; Firth, Bell, Jones, Derrick, Banks



The arrival of Herbert Chapman as manager of Leeds City in 1912 brought not only an immediate return to the Football League by virtue of coming top of the re-election poll, but also a distinct upturn in playing fortunes as he led them to a sixth place finish a year later. It was a renaissance that gave City's long suffering followers genuine hopes that Chapman could also deliver the promotion that they craved so passionately.

The signing of Jimmy Speirs in late 1912 from Bradford City brought intelligence, direction and class to the City forward line, helping centre-forward Billy McLeod to rediscover his most potent form. He ended the 1912/13 season with 27 goals from 38 matches. In the summer the attack was further enlivened by the arrival of amateur



winger and professional journalist Ivan Sharpe from Derby County.

It was a celebrated front five that included a Scottish international (Speirs), the holder of an Olympic gold medal (Sharpe) and a player pushing strongly for recognition by the selectors of the England team (McLeod). There had also been some improvement in defence with the arrival of John Hampson, signed by Chapman from his old club, Northampton Town.

Interest in City's progress was such that season ticket sales for 1913/14 were close to £2,000. The optimism looked well founded as the Peacocks prepared for their Elland Road clash on November 29 against lowly Nottingham Forest. The East Midlanders were bottom of the table and would still be there the following April. Going into the match, City had returned 16 points out of a possible 24 and were amongst the front runners for the title. Speirs had seven goals, McLeod 6 and Arthur Price 4 as the Citizens demonstrated deadly accuracy in front of goal.

They were on a five game unbeaten run since a home defeat to Hull City on 18 October. That had lifted them to fourth in the Second Division table, three points behind leaders Notts County but enjoying three games in hand on the table toppers.

All the signs pointed towards an easy City win and that was exactly the way it turned out, with the side achieving the club's best ever League victory.

All season, Speirs and Price had been operating at inside-left and right respectively, but for this game Chapman switched their positions. The only other change from the previous week's 2-2 draw at Blackpool saw young Simpson Bainbridge reinstated at outside-right after missing three games through injury; Fred Croot made way and Sharpe reverted to his favoured berth on the left wing.

Forest sprang a surprise of their own. Right-back Harry Jones was thrown in at the deep end in a switch to centre-forward with Walter Dudley restored at full-back after six weeks' injury absence. The gamble was a clear demonstration of Forest's weakness in front of goal; their top scorer that season was winger Jack Derrick who managed just eight. The Jones experiment was a failure; he had a couple of decent moments and bothered City keeper Tony Hogg with a fine drive in the second half, but never really looked like he could make a fist of the opportunity.

Price and Speirs, on the other hand, took to their new roles like ducks to water. The Leeds Mercury was particularly taken with the former's display, proclaiming, "Price was clever on the ball, and played with considerable directness of purpose. Whenever he saw an opportunity he dashed straight away for goal, but if he saw his way barred to his objective, he passed with promptness and decision. The play of the other forwards was characterised by the same methods, but Price was the most conspicuous man in this respect."

City were in devastating form, quickly crushing any defiance that Forest might have shown. The Mercury: "It was in the first half that the home team laid the foundations for their excellent victory. In just over half an hour they were three goals to the good, and the match, to all intents and purposes, was all over bar the shouting. They played against the wind, and even with this handicap they always did well. When the forwards had the ball they attacked with headlong impetuosity, and with no mean skill."



Arthur Price: "clever on the ball ... considerable directness of purpose"

In the opening exchanges Forest keeper Jack Hanna did well to block a powerful drive from Price, but he could do nothing as the alert McLeod pounced on the rebound to open the scoring. It was no more than City deserved for some enterprising forward play.

The early advantage was built on rapidly as Price converted his promising play into goals. He struck twice to make City's lead at the break emphatic. The home forwards were all over the Forest rearguard, never allowing them a minute's peace as they harassed mercilessly in an attempt to force errors out of their opponents. Nottingham's cause was not helped by the loss of left winger Banks through injury in that opening half.

The 3-0 half time advantage left Forest in a tenuous position and spirits in their dressing room were low with manager Bob Masters unable to find many words of encouragement. Their tormenters pressed on relentlessly after the break and continued to pick holes in a helpless defence. Any remote hopes of a comeback were almost immediately dispelled as Hampson headed a fourth goal from a corner by Sharpe, before McLeod nabbed his second to make it 5-0.

Forest did what they could to rally; the Mercury noted that "there were times when they played with

spirit, and occasionally their forwards exhibited good work in midfield, but they lacked the necessary dash to carry them successfully through the home defence.”

There was a brief moment of relief for the visitors as Mick Foley fluffed his lines when presented with the perfect opportunity to open his account for the season. Forest conceded a penalty and the Irishman was nominated to take it, but he could not convert the opportunity. The City supporters groaned their dismay, but their favourites were quickly back, pushing for more goals.

Jimmy Speirs grabbed a sixth and the humiliation deepened as McLeod really turned the screw, hitting two more goals to take his tally to four in the match, and ten for the season.

The final score was thus an emphatic 8-0, but it could have been an even more resounding victory. Apart from the missed penalty, McLeod ruined his chance of a fifth goal by handling the ball when he had only goalkeeper Hanna to beat.

The Mercury was gushing in its praise for the Peacocks. JRB wrote, "Let it be said at once that the City deserved every one of their goals, as throughout the game they worked hard and their forwards ... were great opportunists. The reason why the Forest were so heavily beaten was because they were up against a team whose men played clever football. The City forwards – especially McLeod and Price - were a brilliant lot, who displayed fire and resolution in all their attacks. They were supported by a trio of halves who did their work excellently, while Copeland and Affleck were a puissant pair of backs.”

“This score, which was a record for the City team, only marks the grand advance in form which the team have shown this season ... the hopes of their supporters will naturally dwell all the more lovingly on promotion prospects,” wrote the Yorkshire Evening Post. “Speirs changed places with Price as the inside man to the wonderment yet ultimate gratification of the club's numerous followers.”

It wasn't quite a club record: in 1905, City had beaten junior side Morley 11-0 in an FA Cup preliminary round game with Fred Hargraves grabbing four goals. David Wilson also managed four in the 6-1 hammering of Clapton Orient in March 1906. That had been the previous best in the League, equalled against Stockport County in December of the same year. McLeod had been on the score sheet that day, too, though his single goal contribution was eclipsed by John Lavery's hat trick and two from Bob Watson.

The City centre-forward was truly a master marksman. His record in the League with City now stood at 112 goals in 226 appearances, a country mile more than anyone else had managed for the club on both accounts. Such form took him close to international honours later in the campaign.

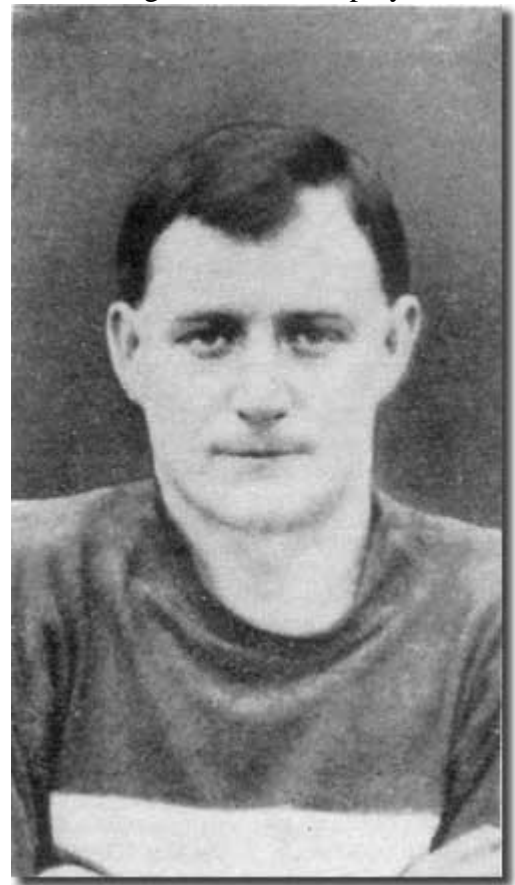
McLeod enjoyed an impressive season and his goalscoring exploits caught the attention of the England selectors. He was watched in the game against Barnsley on February 28, when he gave a decent display, opening the scoring in a 3-0 win. He notched a hat trick against Wolves on Valentine's Day and repeated the dose against Huddersfield on March 14.



The Leeds Mercury of December 1 1913 reports the weekend's slaughter of Forest

Such form led to his selection as non-playing reserve for the Football League XI against the Southern League on February 9. He was accorded the same honour when the League played their Scottish counterparts on March 21 and was called up as reserve for the England team that played Wales on March 16. Unfortunately, Harry Hampton of Aston Villa, Middlesbrough's George Elliott and Notts County's Jack Peart were all rated more highly at the time by the selectors and McLeod saw not a moment's playing action from the three games. He would never come close to representative honours again, but nevertheless, it was a great honour for both McLeod and Leeds.

The crushing defeat of Forest was witnessed by a crowd of 14,000 excited spectators, with gate receipts amounting to £370. The standing of the two clubs could not have been in greater contrast: Forest's plight at the foot of the table was truly desperate, with just 6 points taken from 15 games played; City had moved up to a top three position and were the division's top scorers with 33 goals from 13 matches. They were hotly fancied for the promotion the club had been desperately pursuing since their formation in 1904.



Billy McLeod: truly a master marksman