



Matches – 8 February 1967 – Valencia 0 Leeds United 2

Inter Cities Fairs Cup Third Round Second Leg – Campo de Mestalla – 48,000

Scorers: Giles 7, Lorimer 87

Valencia: Pesudo, Tatona, Tota, Paquito, Mestre, Roberto, Claramunt, Waldo, Ansola, Poli, Guillot

Leeds: Sprake, Madeley, Bell, Bremner, Charlton, Hunter, Giles, Lorimer, Belfitt, Gray, Hibbitt



Coincidences crop up regularly in big time football – Leeds United experienced an extraordinary example in the late 1950s: they were drawn at home to Cardiff City in the third round of the FA Cup three years running and lost 2-1 on each occasion.

So it came as no great shock when the draw for the Inter Cities Fairs Cup third round in 1966/67 paired United with Valencia of Spain in an exact repeat of the tussle at the same stage of the competition twelve months previously.



The Spaniards were a fast, powerful side, described in the Evening Post as “young and workmanlike”, and had been battling closely with Real Madrid at the top of the Spanish championship all season. Manager Edmundo Suarez, formerly a Spanish international centre-forward, commented before the tie, “We know United are a good side, but they will find us playing more businesslike football this season.”

The Yorkshire Evening Post gave a run down on the Spaniards following news of the draw. “A danger man is the 30-year-old Brazilian centre-forward Waldo, now leading scorer in the Spanish League with 12 goals. Waldo and Fernando Ansola, a superb header of a ball, make up a powerful two pronged attack, and backing up this twin spearhead are 20-year-old winger Jose Claramunt, who is at home on either flank, and Vicente Guillot, 25-year-old schemer. Outstanding player in the defence is 30-year-old goalkeeper Jose Pesudo, who has let in only nine goals in this season’s 10 matches.”



Valencia keeper Pesudo blocks a shot from Terry Cooper at Elland Road

When the two clubs met at Elland Road in February 1966, the football was eclipsed for the most part by testy confrontation. A memorable 1-0 victory in Spain saw the Whites through, but only after an acrimonious draw in West Yorkshire, with Jack Charlton and two Spaniards sent off.

When the draw was made for the 1967 tie there was speculation about a potential bloodbath. The

misgivings proved unfounded and there were just 15 fouls in the first leg at Elland Road on January 18, 11 of them against the Spaniards. There were, however, a couple of torrid incidents in the game.

Just before half time, keeper Pesudo was laid out after a frenetic United onslaught and five minutes' treatment was required before the referee could restart play. With the custodian refusing to get up, the Leeds crowd bayed with bad tempered scorn, convinced that he was playing for time. He was ultimately replaced by Abelardo; goalkeeper was the only position that was allowed a substitute under the UEFA regulations in force at the time.

The other clash was reported by Eric Stanger in the Yorkshire Post: "There was nearly a flare up early in the second half when in a fierce goalmouth tussle Cooper tried to hack the ball out of the new goalkeeper's hands. It took all the tact of a good referee and Collins, the Leeds captain, to calm Spanish tempers." The Spaniards exacted retribution when Paquito scythed Terry Cooper down.

By then, we had seen all the goals we were going to. Jimmy Greenhoff's scorcher from 15 yards gave United a 12th minute lead, but it was nullified by Valencia right winger Claramunt's effort after 39 minutes.

The Spaniards had proven themselves able opponents, as reported by Stanger: "Valencia unquestionably looked a better side last night than a year ago. They fought a brilliant tactical battle, their close ball control, superb team work and covering finally extracting the sting from a Leeds side which played with rare dash from the start until they almost ran themselves into the ground trying to pierce the prickly barrier of the Valencia defence."



Claramunt hits Valencia's equaliser at Elland Road

United could never exploit their early advantage and Don Revie conceded after the 1-1 draw that it would be difficult in Spain, adding, "You never can tell though with these boys. They surprise even me sometimes." The recently introduced away goals counting double rule meant that Leeds would need at least one score in Valencia to stand a chance of getting through.

The second leg, three weeks later, looked daunting, given United's injury crisis. England Under-23 right-back Paul Reaney was ruled out after a calf injury suffered days earlier at Everton and joined Jimmy Greenhoff, Mike O'Grady, Albert Johanneson, Terry Cooper, Alan Peacock and Rodney Johnson in the Elland Road treatment room.

Revie took a party of 13 players to Spain, omitting both Bobby Collins, in discussion with Bury about a prospective move, and Jim Storr, who had come on as sub at Everton but was also looking for a new club. The emphasis was on youth – seven players were 21 or less, including reserve keeper David Harvey, who turned 19 during the trip. Eddie Gray, Terry Hibbitt and Mick Bates were also 19, with the latter two having just 205 minutes of League football between them. Peter Lorimer (20), Rod Belfitt and Gary Sprake (both 21) completed the youth brigade. Remarkably, the only members of the party who had seen their 27th birthdays were Willie Bell and Jack Charlton. It was emphatic endorsement for Don Revie's youth programme, with Johnny Giles and Bell the only imports.

Bates was the player omitted, and versatile Paul Madeley deputised for Reaney at full-back with Rod Belfitt ploughing a lone furrow up front. United were familiar by now with the archetypal

waiting game in Europe, a prototype 4-5-1 with midfielders breaking at pace when the opportunity arose.

Midfield general Johnny Giles forced a breakthrough after seven minutes. The ball eluded Valencia left-back Tota near the halfway line and Giles was on it in an instant. He broke into space with magnificent control and, resisting challenges by Paquito, Mestre and Roberto, he veered at pace towards the area. He coolly drew out keeper Pesudo before firing home an unstoppable left footed drive. As Billy Bremner said afterwards, “They never saw him for dust on his way to his goal.”



Johnny Giles opens the scoring in Valencia

Giles had other reason to rejoice as his wife had been heavily pregnant with their second child: “I felt terrible at having to be away at a time like that and found it almost impossible to concentrate on the

match. Even just before the kick-off, when Don Revie was giving us our tactical instructions, I kept worrying about what was going on back home. Fortunately the suspense was lifted when we took the field, for it was then that Les Cocker handed me a telegram which read: 'We've had a little girl - Anne!' I felt so elated at that moment that I knew I would have a good game.”

It was the first time United had scored on their travels since Christmas Eve, and they nearly snatched a second goal moments later, but Belfitt was blocked as he made to shoot. The shock of the score provoked a forceful response and the Spaniards battered the Leeds rearguard with a will, though United always threatened on the break.

Phil Brown reported in the Evening Post that the goal “rocked the Valencia team, who had been playing commandingly and well. They came back at United with every trick and move in the book, all at speed on a lovely fast pitch, but United’s defence, brilliantly marshalled all through by Bremner, trumped all their aces. United, naturally, concentrated on protecting their lead ... Valencia’s almost frenzied, best half dozen efforts were met either by superlative saves by Sprake or by the ball whizzing narrowly wide.”



Valencia's Ansola gets his shot in despite the attentions of Hunter and Charlton

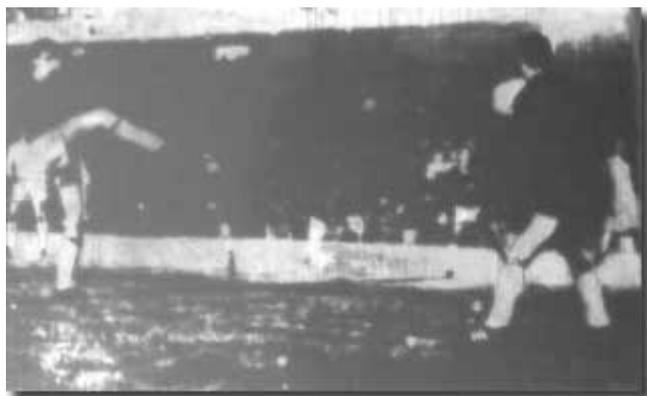
Jack Charlton: “To be fair to Valencia, this goal did not see them throw in the towel – instead, they fought like demons to demolish that lone goal lead. They mounted attack after attack, they surged forward and often had all eleven Leeds players back desperately in defence. But somehow, we kept these goal hungry Spaniards at bay. Gary Sprake pulled off magnificent saves. Billy Bremner – due to begin a two week suspension the following Monday - inspired the men around him with his ice cool brand of courage and skill ... For Waldo, the Brazilian inside-right who topped the Spanish League’s scoring chart, this was a night of sheer torture. He passed up chances with magnificent abandon. Once, when he had nothing to do but fire for goal, he managed to put the ball well wide; and within a few minutes of this astounding miss, he headed the ball inches over the bar.”

Despite a number of scares, Leeds looked capable throughout an exhilarating match of getting the result they required. Valencia grew hasty in their approach play and increasingly ragged. Given confidence by their lead and cool ability to retain possession, United played poised football, always in control of the game.

The Spanish forwards and midfielders were clearly frustrated; they carried the ball too far or played directionless passes. With Poli directing their play, Valencia tried everything they knew, but the English team made the clearer opportunities, even with so few men in advanced positions. The youngsters performed far beyond their years, as noted by Eric Stanger: “With only two men up for the most part Leeds were often able to make more running than Valencia. Belfitt, the reserve centre-forward, worked himself into the ground chasing up and down the middle while little Hibbitt on the left wing played as if a Fairs Cup occasion was no more awe inspiring than a Central League match.”

Three minutes from the end, United got the critical second goal that their display merited.

Jack Charlton: “Valencia became desperate to score even one goal. Roberto had his name taken for a foul on Willie Bell who became a victim again later when Guillot hacked him down; and young Eddie Gray was led to the touchline for treatment to a cut eye. But, even as he remained off the field, we slammed the final nail into Valencia’s coffin with a killer goal three minutes from time. Paul Madeley once more moved up into the attack, and saw his shot beaten out only for Johnny Giles to whip the ball straight away to Peter Lorimer, who lashed home a shot from close range.”



Peter Lorimer fires home the decisive second goal at Valencia

That was the killer goal and exhausted any remaining resistance. Valencia were devastated by the outcome, neutered by an English team at the peak of their powers; it was a thoroughly impressive exhibition of how to prosper in European football.

Phil Brown: “There was not a weak link in the United side. Belfitt worked like a fresh young horse at centre-forward and Gray and Lorimer showed the judgement of veterans. It was an incredible performance ... (Valencia) could make nothing of United’s defence ... Charlton ruled the middle relentlessly, air and ground ... He had two giants with him at full-back in Madeley and Bell, and another in Hunter as the withdrawn wing-half. The absent Reaney has never played better than Madeley did last night, and Reaney has played some grand games.”

Billy Bremner recalled later that he felt the match had been won during the preparation. Don Revie had been doggedly optimistic before the game: “The Boss really won it for us. He hammered it into us day after day and time after time that we would win – not that we might win or could win but that we would win. The result was we went on the field really believing that we were the better side and we proved it. I was under his orders for no pessimism, and as I went on telling the lads we would win, I began to believe it ma’sel. It was wonderful and always will be with me, even if I play until a’m a hundred. We were absolutely convinced we could win when we went out.”

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mouldy about the match in any event. It came off for us, and that's the main thing. But if they ever make me any prouder I'll burst. I don't know how they did it really. I didn't think a team, even a United team, could produce such a rate of work. And to win here with a forward line whose average age was hardly 20! It just shows that nothing is impossible in football."

A contented Johnny Giles, recalling one of the greatest nights of his life, remembered, "Afterwards, all the drinks were on me and, needless to say, few members of the Leeds squad were sober by the time we got to bed!"

An elated Leeds United party flew back to Yorkshire in high spirits having secured one of their greatest victories under the leadership of Don Revie. As chairman Harry Reynolds beamed, "This was our best win yet. A wonderfully good job of work all round with the team we had."

Vice chairman Alderman Percy Woodward added, "Frankly, I was so overcome with pride and joy that when the whistle went I was crying."



With Gary Sprake and Billy Bremner leading the way, United players celebrate victory in Valencia