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How To Win Trophies The Anfield Way

Liverpool recorded a remarkable treble of Worthington Cup, FA Cup and UEFA Cup wins. They didn't lose a cup tie all season. How have they done it?

- 1) **Michael Owen** The wonderkind won the FA Cup for them. You might think this was achieved by his immense footballing talents. But you'd be wrong. His success is simply down to his ability to drone on and on in dull monotonous to the opposition defenders. By the end of 90 minutes they're so sleepy and bored he can nip in and score a couple.
- 2) **Rubber Man** We're always being told that Steven Gerrard is still growing. More astonishing still is the fact that he actually grows during games. Just when the opposition think he can't reach a ball, he grows a bit more to get it. Having a rubber man as a midfielder is a unique asset to any team.
- 3) **Silver Machine** Liverpoolians' love of silverware is well established - and not just the stuff thieved from houses in leafy suburbs. Gerard Houllier managed to tap into this innate desire, telling the players to just hang in there and try to nick the cup from Arsenal.
- 4) **Bad Comedy** The threat of post match entertainment with Tarby, Cilla, Stan Boardman or Jimmy Corkhill reading poetry if they lose is all any sane human being needs to drive him to succeed.
- 5) **Hypnotis** Houllier is actually a top-notch hypnotist. Players are made to stare into those big, swivelling, blood-shot eyes as they rotate in cartoon-like spirals. They are told that if they lose Phil Thompson will eat them. Raw.
- 6) **Happy, Prosperous Fans** Going down to Cardiff gave the fans the chance to exploit a new market for imitation designer cologne, snide Tommy Hilfiger sweatshirts and "personally imported" Latvian ciggies. With pockets full of cash from a good day's trawling round the pubs, they were in a great mood to roar the team onto success.
- 7) **Brookie** So depressing has Brookside become at the moment, that the Mayor Of Liverpool personally pleaded with the team to lift a city in mourning for that bird's dad who shot her mate's bloke. The soap-loving Reds obliged.

Cup Final Dos and Don'ts

Do

- 1) Mercilessly boo the winners if they bring their children on the pitch, put their two-year-old inside the cup itself and generally parade their offspring to show everyone just how touchy-feely and fertile they are.
- 2) Mock the dignity that turns up to shake everyone's hands. Usually it's a minor Royal with a beard or some equally lazy rich woman in a big hat. Actual assault would be heroic but not necessary if you've got any rotten fruit or decomposing foodstuffs handy. You may wish to display your naked buttocks again at this point.
- 3) If seated nearby, peer into the TV commentary box and mouth "you're a f***ing a****hole" at whoever is present. If Ally McCoist has already had a couple this may not be necessary, as he may be doing it himself. Don't forget, buttocks pressed up against glass look great on TV and will make you popular with everyone. Except the police.

Don't

- 1) Get onto the stadium roof and try pulling it across by hand. It's a highly sophisticated piece of machinery, you know, and not some knackered sheet of PVC that's got stuck. However falling to your death from a great height would be great pre-match entertainment for the rest of us.
- 2) Bother singing 'Abide With Me'. No-one knows the words and even less care if you're feeling in good voice try starting a chorus of obscure thrash metal classics by Napalm Death or make up obscene lyrics about David Seaman instead. Displeasure may also be expressed simply by waving your naked buttocks in the air.
- 3) Run on the pitch. It's like a marsh out there and even your best knees-up-David-Pleat-style-running won't save you from sinking slowly to your death.



THE ABBEY VIEW



"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" This Dickensian quote perfectly sums up the start of our Premier Division campaign. In the last issue we trumpeted the arrival of the next generation, boasted how the squad had never been better and promised that this could be the year for promotion. The truth has been very different. Manager Bert Carolan warned of a slow start and his words of wisdom have proved very prophetic. One win from six games has left us adrift in midtable and out of both cups, with some work to do over the Summer months. Our record has been slightly misleading though, because two of those losses have come at the hands of Ballina Town who seem to be a class above the rest of the division so far.

We opened the season at Ballina in the Tuohy Cup. Following his pre-season pledge to give our new youngsters their opportunity to shine Bert handed debuts to four of the new recruits - Damien Syron, Ronan O'Mara, Jason Murray and Simon Rowland. With Kenny Canavan starting at left-back we fielded a very inexperienced side against a Ballina Town team reinforced by some Connacht League players. The loss was made more palatable by the fact that we unearthed a couple of quality players for the future. Damien Syron has been ever present since that day and Simon Rowland has made four starts and two substitute appearances, which bodes very well for the long term future.

We followed this loss with another couple against newly-promoted Ballinrobe Town and Lacken United. The away loss to Lacken was unfortunate because it was only by one goal and we did hit the post in the dying minutes. It was a huge relief to everybody at the club when we finally registered our first win of the season against Conn Rangers at Abbeytown. We trailed 1-0 after a second half free kick went in but an amazing three goals in three minutes salvaged a vital victory. Our talismanic striker Adrian Conway marked his return to the team with two goals and his partnership with Derek Greham should prove a handful for opposing defences. The win was marred by a bad injury to goalkeeper Johnny O'Hora and he was replaced by Paul Fiaherly. The injury not only cost us a goalie but also an outfield player, so it was twice as devastating. We then returned to Ballina Town for a league match and played our worst game of the season at the most inopportune time. A slick Ballina side took advantage of some careless play to coast to a 4-1 victory which was easier than we would have liked. There was nothing positive to take from the performance except that despite playing badly for most of the season we are still only five points away from a promotion place.

Our league campaign took a back seat last Sunday when we lost 0-1 to Ballinrobe Town at Abbeytown. It was the latest in a long line of poor performances this season. The only silver lining was that we may just have solved our goalkeeper worries. John Heffernan performed heroically in keeping the opposition at bay, and but for him the defeat could have been much more substantial. We host Glenisland this Sunday in the league and it is a must-win game for the club. Anything else is unthinkable.

Lookalikes



Sandy Westerweld

Herman Munster

Crossmolina 0-1 Ballinrobe Town

One win. Five defeats. Out of both cups within seven weeks. And only the league to to concentrate on over the Summer months. Crossmolina are as lost as St. Patrick's Day in May after a 1-0 defeat at home to Ballinrobe Town on Sunday in the League Cup. After being beaten previously this season by Ballinrobe downtrodden Crossmolina had ample warning about the quality of the newly promoted side. The late arrival of the referee afforded both teams extra time to acclimatise to the pitch and they seemed to be too psyched up as the match commenced at a tremendous tempo. After 6 minutes John Duggan rattled the Ballinrobe crossbar with a stinging 20 yard shot. The visitors replied by hitting the crossbar with an equally dangerous effort of their own minutes later. They continued to exert pressure on the home defence and only some decisive tackling by John Hegarty kept the lively visitors at bay. Eventually though they were rewarded when a 17th minute set piece was only half cleared by Crossmolina. The ball was delivered from the left hand side straight back into the home 18 yard box where Adrian Fahy controlled the ball on his knee before turning to score from 12 yards out. Crossmolina goalkeeper John Heffernan dominated the rest of the match with three spectacular saves which kept his team in the tie when they could have succumbed to a severe beating. The first save in the 30th minute came from a curling left wing shot destined for the top right corner of the goal. Heffernan backpedalled and somehow palmed the ball onto the bar before scrambling it to safety. This kept Crossmolina within reach of their opponents and allowed for a more positive half time discussion. Crossmolina had better possession after the break but a solid Ballinrobe defence, protected by a dogged midfield, didn't allow them to translate it into actual shots on goal. Indeed it was Heffernan who received the greater test with his defence leaving him exposed as a Ballinrobe striker charged forward with the ball. The netminder stood his ground and acrobatically tipped over a venomous 18 yard shot, much to the home side's relief. Crossmolina mounted a rare attack in the 70th minute, as their Cup hopes ebbed away, when Ronan O'Mara volleyed a shot at the Ballinrobe goalie from 12 yards out. Then it was Heffernan's turn to shine again when he thwarted Ballinrobe with another stupendous save in a one-on-one situation. With minutes remaining Steven Canavan glanced a header wide from Paul Flaherty's free kick and that was all she wrote for Crossmolina. Ballinrobe

Hey, Gianluca what about West Ham? Oops... Young Smiffy really needs to calm down... Let the transfer merry-go-round commence and welcome to all the unpronounceable names that are bound to follow... Good to see that Bradford at least went down fighting... Liverpool - The Yawn of a new era... Round and round Man City go, where they'll stop nobody knows... And the sad thing is that the fan would have played better than Nyarko... VFM! Gary Mac... Who says you need great teams for a great final?... Alexei Lalas... Newsflash: JP Angel scored Juan goal... Division One give us back Strachan, you can keep the team... Dublin, Shepherd's Bush - where to now for the Wonderful Wombles?... Speaking of which, have you seen Peter Crouch? BIG lad... Delighted for Canizares... Another cherry on top Mr. Venables, sir? Anything else my Lord?... Brum glum again

deserved to advance to the next round after creating more quality chances than their demoralised hosts in this rollicking cup tie. Referee Michael Walsh can also take some credit for the entertainment factor due to his good-natured, no-nonsense style of officiating which allowed the game to flow freely. Crossmolina - J Heffernan, J McGuinness, D Syron, J Hegarty, J Canavan, J Duggan, P Flaherty, S Canavan, R O'Mara (M Timlin 80), D Greham, S Rowland (D McNulty 70)

	P	W	D	L	Pt
Ballina Town	4	4	0	0	12
Ballinrobe Town	4	2	2	0	8
Lacken United	4	2	2	0	8
Killala	4	2	1	1	7
Glenhest Rovers	4	1	3	0	6
Glenisland United	4	1	1	1	4
Crossmolina	4	1	0	3	3
Straide & Foxford B4	4	0	3	1	3
Conn Rangers	4	0	2	2	2
Bangor Hibs	4	0	0	4	0

Bert's Brief

And so another season for Crossmolina AFC has started in a less than promising fashion. Hopes were high at the beginning of the campaign that this would be our year, the influx of new players and the return of a couple of oldies had generated a fair degree of optimism about the club. Shame then that with 4 league games gone we find ourselves at the wrong end of the table and at this early stage more concerned with avoiding the drop than with going up. The display against Ballina Town was the worst of the year and the fact was that we were comprehensively beaten. And yet things may not be as bad as they appear. There are certain issues to be addressed, most notably that of a replacement for the America-bound Johnny O'Hora (This will be good news for an obviously unhappy Paul Flaherty) We also appear to have a bit of a problem in terms of concentration and this is something that must be sorted out and if that means a change in personnel then so be it. If we look at the season so far we will see that we have been beaten by the three teams that are at or near the top of the division and I would contest that only in the Ballina games did we fail to compete: the old concentration element betraying us again. So let us not be as glum as our position would seem to demand. Remember that the season is a marathon not a sprint and that Crossmolina generally start badly. When I sit to write my next piece for the Green Scene or whatever

it is, the position will be much healthier. While I am on the subject of health, it should be said that at the beginning of the season I advised Simon that even if he is not scoring goals that he should at least compete and let defenders know that he is about. I saw that the message had sunk in completely against Ballina Town and wonder if at this stage I should be checking his kit bag for pick axe handles. Although considering he has trouble remembering his shinpads I'm probably safe enough. As for our Cup defeat against Ballinrobe last Sunday, we must all hail the joint founder who played in goal. There were a number of people lined up to play in the position and if any of them had turned up and put in the same performance there would be rave reviews from anyone watching. The fact was that John Heffernan had an excellent game in goal and will start there the next day. Can he keep it?

He said what???

"There is more chance of a parachuting Elvis than Kieran Connor analyses a substitution at Ballina Town. There was no goal. No Elvis either!"

Diary of a Mad Man

11:30 - The shrill blast of the referee's whistle heralds the commencement of 45 minutes of mayhem. The two teams will probe, hassle, joust and battle each other for the whole of the half. My first half workout will consist of retrieving a ball which has strayed into the neighbouring field if I am lucky. I am a substitute. Again! It is now midseason and I have seen action for a grand total of ten minutes, and that was when we led 3-0 at home in the Cup. I just don't understand it. I did all of the preseason training and I often scored more goals than some of the starters in the 5-a-side kickabouts. Yet on game days I kick clumps of grass on the sideline while they have the honour of representing the town. As a "rookie" I know my expectations should be limited but after playing an integral role in Kilmer's team last year I didn't expect to be reduced to this; glorified ballboy. I think the manager likes me so that's not the problem. We have often talked about pop music and politics and I was always careful not to insult his favourites in either. I often go out drinking with the rest of the lads so I know they aren't the problem. But for some unfathomable reason I can't seem to translate all these positives into an actual appearance, let alone a starting jersey. My God, Gerry McGuinness has played ten minutes less football than I have this season, and he hasn't played in years!

12:15 - It's 1-1 and I grab my best chance for a kick of the ball by joining the other subs for a half time kickabout. I always keep an ear open for the shout from the dugout that might indicate my introduction to the game. Usually it won't be forthcoming if it hasn't happened after the first few minutes. I imagine myself scoring the winning goal in the second half and plant a firm shot into the top corner of the goal. My celebrations are interrupted by the return of the two teams to the field.

12:25 - I return to the dugout to observe the second half. After five minutes our striker goes down injured. I immediately leap off the bench and begin to warm up in earnest. I hope the manager will notice and knowing that I am a striker will reward my enthusiasm. I notice how concerned everybody else is as they gaze at our prone forward but privately I hope that he is finished for the day. As my toe tipping routine reaches it's crescendo the manager turns gravely from the stricken player's side and signals for a substitution. Have my malevolent thoughts succeeded in curtailing the striker's involvement? To my dismay he chooses to insert another player who scored a fluky goal two weeks ago and who is about as mobile as Nephin. Why can't he see that the goal was a fluke? At times like this I question everything and everybody. I maintain a positive facade but inwardly I am screaming for a chance.

1:10 - Today I didn't get my chance. We drew 1-1. They drew 1-1. It's getting harder each Sunday to feel as if I am a part of the club. The cows who mess up the field seem to have more effect on this team than I do. I dutifully lug the pile of discarded jumpers and tracksuit bottoms back to the dressing rooms where I change back into my clothes. It would have been easier to leave them on in the first place. I bid the lads farewell until next Sunday. Next Sunday? Yes, I will return again next Sunday because you never know my luck. A few players might not turn up. The manager might be waiting to unleash my talents on next week's unsuspecting opponents and wouldn't I be the fool if I missed that opportunity. And what else would I do on a Sunday afternoon anyway - watch Knight Rider?

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