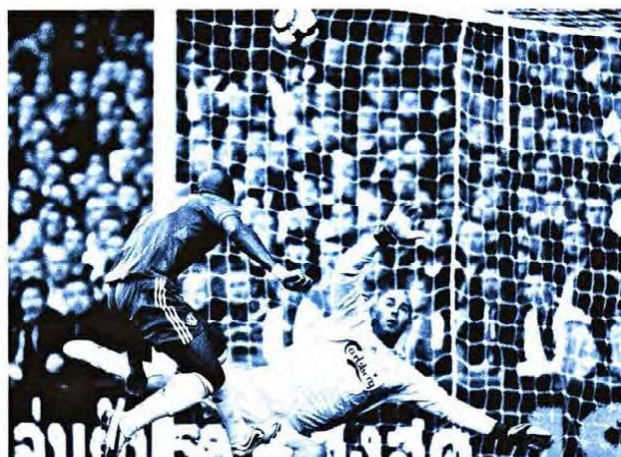


25 I can describe a football match

A How the media saw it

The decision by the Liverpool manager to leave key players **on the bench** and **gamble on** youth didn't **pay off** at Stamford Bridge yesterday. Chelsea **brushed aside** a Liverpool team that was way **below par**, and should have won more easily than the 2-1 score suggests. Lampard and Ballack gave Chelsea a 2-0 lead, and although Liverpool **hit back** in the second half, they were never really **in contention**. With Manchester United's game **rained off** last night, this win means that Chelsea **have gained ground on** the league leaders, but there is still **a long way to go**.



Glossary

on the bench

gamble on sth/sb

pay off

brush sb/sth aside

hit back

in contention (for sth)

rained off

gain ground (on sb)

a long way to go

A player who is **on the bench** for a match is a substitute.

take a risk with sth/sb, hoping you will be successful.

INF (of a plan or action) be successful and bring good results.

treat sb/sth as unimportant.

start to perform well against a team that has been in the lead.

having a chance of success; in a position to win sth.

If an event is **rained off**, it is postponed because of rain.

gradually get closer to sb you are competing with.

a lot more to do before you are successful.

spotlight Expressions with *par*

The team were below par today. = less good than usual or expected.

We're on a par with Arsenal. = about the same level/standard as Arsenal.

1 Circle the correct answer.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 The game was rained out off last night. | 4 The team was below under par today. |
| 2 The team is still in on contention. | 5 He brushed away aside my comments. |
| 3 We're gaining ground speed on the leaders. | 6 We're on par a par with the others. |

2 Complete the dialogues.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 Did they score first? ~ Yes, but we | back ten minutes later. |
| 2 Is he in the starting eleven? ~ No, he's on the | |
| 3 Do you think you'll win the title? ~ I don't know. There's still a long | to go. |
| 4 Did they play well? ~ No, I thought we were way below | |
| 5 Are they still playing tonight? ~ No, it's been rained | |
| 6 Why aren't Coles and Low playing? ~ The manager's gambling | the younger players. |

3 Rewrite the sentences using the word in capitals. Keep the meaning the same.

- We're about the same standard as Everton. PAR
- The coach treated the comments as unimportant. BRUSH
- We have a chance of winning the title. CONTENTION
- He's confident the strategy will work. PAY
- We're catching the league leaders. GROUND
- Is he going to risk Palmer tonight? GAMBLE

B How the fans saw it



Chelsea fans

'I thought we **eased off** and **let** them **off the hook** in the second half.'

'I'm disappointed we didn't **go all out for** a third goal.'

'A win's a win, and now we're **within striking distance of** Man United.'

Liverpool fans

'We had to **dig deep**, but we **fought back** well in the second half.'

'We **held our own** for half an hour, but we were always going to **come off worse** with that team.'

'We're **out of the running** for the league now. I think our manager's **lost the plot**.'

Glossary

let sb off the hook

go all out for sth

within striking distance (of sb/sth)

dig deep

fight back

hold your own (against sb)

come off worse

be in / out of the running (for sth)

lose the plot

INF allow sb to get out of a difficult situation.

make a big effort to achieve sth.

near enough to reach or attack sb/sth or to achieve sth.

use all your effort.

work hard to achieve or oppose sth, especially in a situation where you are losing.

compete equally against sb, especially sb stronger than you, in a competition or difficult situation.

lose a fight, competition, etc., or suffer more compared with others.

have some/no chance of being successful in sth.

INF no longer understand a situation or how to deal with it.

spotlight *ease off*

If a player or team **eases off**, it usually means they try less hard (as above). If something unpleasant or annoying **eases off**, it becomes less strong, e.g. *The rain is **easing off**. The pain **will ease off** soon.*

4 Are you pleased or unhappy with your team? Write P or U.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 We dug deep. | 5 We held our own. |
| 2 We let them off the hook. | 6 We fought back. |
| 3 We lost the plot. | 7 We came off worse. |
| 4 We're in the running. | 8 We're within striking distance. |

5 Complete the text.

The conditions were terrible at the start of the game and they had a much bigger side, so we (1) off worse in the early exchanges. But the guys (2) deep and once the rain (3) off I felt we pretty much (4) our own. In fact, in the second half, we were the ones going all (5) for the winning goal. Unfortunately it never came, and some people may say we let them off the (6) in the end. But I still thought it was a good performance, and if we win on Saturday we'll be within (7) distance of second place, so we're definitely still in the (8) for the title.