

# GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER

## Liverpool and Everton must move to secure their

**L** 1st December 2009, mark the 50th anniversary of the day Bill Shankly agreed to go to Anfield and transform Liverpool's footballing landscape.

And that's Liverpool the city. Not just Liverpool the club.

With Shankly creating a force of the future, Everton redoubled their efforts and the upshot was to establish the city as, in terms of league titles, the most decorated in English football history.

No other place comes close.

Twenty-seven championships have been celebrated on Merseyside, 20 in Manchester, 18 in London. As failure enveloped the community - the disintegration of the docks, steeping unemployment, social discontent, a dwindling population, political chaos - Anfield and Goodison Park remained hubs of achievement.

Twin towers of a city mauled by the ruthlessness of modernity, sanctuaries of satisfaction for a dissatisfied community.

Those edifices are crumbling, dusty artefacts of a bygone age.

Liverpool have not won the title in 19 years (soon to be 20), Everton in 22 (soon to be 23).

The citadels of Manchester and London now tower over a region that once had a stranglehold on success.

Everton and Liverpool meet again today and only the most ill-informed will look at it as a

friendly derby.

The idea of blue scarf entwined with red is as dated as a Jimmy Tarbuck gag.

Maybe the frustration is borne out of a bitterness that this is no longer a fixture that defines English football.

This afternoon, it is no more than nibbles before dinner at the Emirates.

In a stadium that has changed little since Eusebio's Portugal captivated the world in 1966.

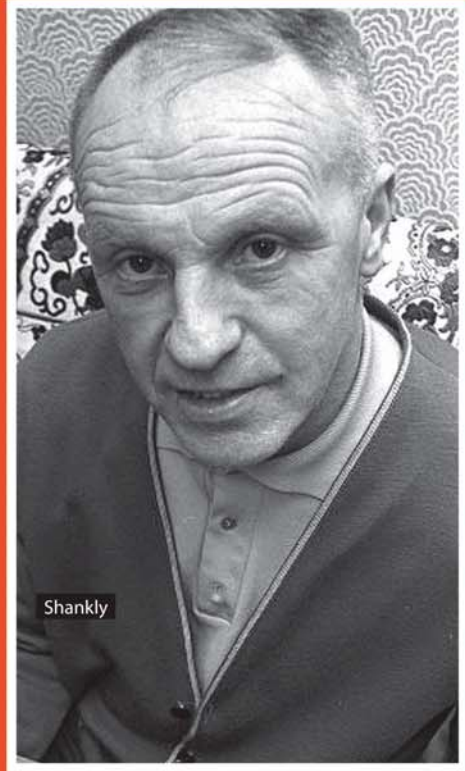
A stadium that will remain Everton's home for the foreseeable future - a lead weight to drag them to the bed of the Mersey.

Make no mistake, the Government's decision to block the controversial, Tesco-funded scheme for a new Everton home in Kirkby is a crushing blow.

A lot of Evertonians did not want to go there. And I suspect David Moyes did not want to go there. Bill Kenwright did not want to go there.

But it was a means to compete. To make some inroads into the staggering financial advantage the Arsenal and Uniteds hold. It has gone, meaning the club will continue to have to swim against the tide.

Maybe someone will buy Everton - founder members of the league, 107 seasons and the most games in the top



flight, the Sch loyal fanbase. Yours for 5 and the other stadium.

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## Liverpool can't win it, says Steven Gerrard: But 'Scouser' Fernando Torres

**S**teven Gerrard has admitted Liverpool are out of the title race — and that the Barclays Premier League's crown is Chelsea's to squander.

It is 19 years since Liverpool last lorded it over England and the Anfield faithful will have to wait at least another year, according to the England midfielder. The club's fans can, however, look forward to several more seasons of Fernando Torres leading the line.

As captain Gerrard attempted to put some positive spin on his side's faltering season, the Spain striker admitted he had become such a dyed-in-the-wool Scouser that he intends to play himself into the club's folklore.

Gerrard said: 'At the moment we're out of the title race, but we will keep trying to get back in it.'

'I think we have to be realistic. There is still a lot of football to be played and it is possible to turn it around. But I think Chelsea are looking really strong at the moment.'

'Our main target is to get back into the top four. We're coming off the back of a fantastic win at Everton and we want to continue that against Blackburn and try and go on a run of games where we can get closer to the teams above us.'

Liverpool are fifth in the table, a daunting 13 points behind leaders Chelsea and have failed to qualify for the Champions League group stages. Gerrard will lead his side out at Blackburn on Saturday desperate to capitalise on a convincing

Merseyside derby win — in scoreline at least.

The England midfielder, who played in an advanced position in the 2-0 triumph at Goodison, which Everton dominated, added on talkSport radio: 'I have total belief in my team-mates. We have certainly under-achieved this season. But after last season where we finished so close in second, we're virtually the same group of players. We've added a couple to that, obviously Glen Johnson who is a top player.'

'We've just underachieved this year, we haven't played to our capabilities. What we've learned so far this season is that if you do under-perform and don't match the teams around you chasing it, you will certainly fall behind as we have done.'

'There are some fantastic teams out there full of world-class players. There are six or seven top-class teams in the league at the moment, all fighting for the top four positions. The league is very difficult, we realise that.'

'But we certainly won't stop trying and we'll keep working hard to try and bring it back for all those Liverpool fans that are desperate for it as well.'

On the upside, Torres has disappointed suitors across Europe by admitting he already feels like a Scouser.

The Liverpool striker's stunning impact on English football has made him a £50million-plus target for a parade of top sides, reportedly headed by Manchester City, but he insists he is going no-

where.

The 25-year-old star admits he could not read fuel bills that dropped through his letter box to begin with and was forced to turn to club officials for help after receiving reminders and final demands.

Less than two-and-a-half years on, he claims he already feels steeped in the city's culture and history and that his grasp of English even extends to the local dialect.

'I really feel at home in Liverpool and it helps that I have learned the language,' he said. 'Have I picked up any Scouse? Deffo! I am picking up words all the time, because there are a lot of Scousers at the club. It was difficult to begin with, when I could not read letters from the bank or electricity or water bills.'

'I did not know whether I had paid or not, but then I would get another letter, asking for money. People at the club were very good, though, and helped me sort everything out. Now, I can more or less understand all the locals and if my daughter grows up speaking Scouse, as well as English, I will be proud.'

'From my first day as a Liverpool player, right up to today, I have always felt that Anfield is my home. I feel like I am from Liverpool. In my first month here, I went round all the important places in the city with my friends, all the tourist attractions, like John Lennon's house, the Beatles museum and the cathedrals.'

'The club gave me lots of books the first day, so I know all about the I am very proud to play for a c history.'

Torres is familiar with great r pool's past and wants to join t his Anfield days are over.

'I would like to be part of Liver day by winning trophies,' he said his recovery ahead of Saturday Park.

'I have plenty of years here, I'n I hope the trophies will come sc seen some of the best players i ing for Liverpool and now they 'For me, it is amazing to sco amazing to score in front of the people sing my name, it is the have on the pitch.'

'But I have only been here tw not won any trophies yet. I have goals, but I hope, in a few ya other book, explaining about tl won as a Liverpool player.'

'The people here are very diff dried. Over there, people don't h for players, but, here, even Ever in a really good way.'

'When I was at Atletico, the didn't like me, but Everton fans with me. I must say, I was surpr