

Manchester City (away) May 11th 1991

Our history as Sunderland supporters has been one of limited success and frequent failure. Some of those failures have been dismal, others have been predictable. The odd one has been magnificent - veritable Charges of the Light Brigade as we usually slipped a league downwards.



*Maine Road – when Sixer was a lad
www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk*

The finest was at Maine Road on May 11th 1991, in the dark and distant days before the Murdoch money transformed the game. It was a period of teams full of British players, managers who had done their time in the lower leagues, stadiums where you could still stand and where you could hand money over the turnstile rather than having to go through the procedure of buying a ticket weeks in advance.

In other words, the good old, bad old days.

We went to Maine Road on the final day of the season needing a win to have any chance of staying up. Even then, we had to rely on Luton Town losing to an already relegated Derby County, so the odds were stacked against us.

It didn't matter. When the chips are down, the support turns out and there were in excess of 15,000 Sunderland supporters to (hopefully) roar the Lads to a final season in the First Division before it became the Premier League. I remember cars and coaches all the way along the M62 and Hartshead Moor Services being a sea of red and white.

Of course, we blew it but not until after taking a 2-1 lead with a minute to go before half time. Both goals were headers, both from future BBC Newcastle pundits. Marco scored one of the best goals I have ever seen in front of the away end, rounding off a move that involved Colin Pascoe and John Kay and then, four minutes later, Benno directed in a mis-cued volley from Peter Davenport.



Courtesy www.ryehillfootball.co.uk

Unfortunately, Sunderland being Sunderland, we allowed Niall Quinn to equalise straight from the kick off and then lost the game in the last minute.

The abiding memory is the sheer wall of noise at Maine Road, a wall that the inhabitants of the sleek, corporate but soulless Eastlands Stadium will never, ever see repeated.

Football in the raw. I do miss it at times.

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