

Date: 21 September 2011  
 Opposition: Brighton and Hove Albion  
 Competition: Carling Cup

Times	Guardian	Mail
Telegraph	Independent	Mirror
Echo		



21 September  
2011

## THE TIMES

Bellamy puts big-money men in shade with dazzling second debut

Brighton & Hove Albion 1 Liverpool 2

Liverpool shopped for some expensive items in the summer transfer market but one of Kenny Dalglish's best bits of business may have been the re-signing of Craig Bellamy on a free transfer from Manchester City. The Wales forward's detractors would say that he does come at a cost: the emotional and medical effort required to control two problems always at risk of suddenly flaring up - his rampant ego and his right knee. Bellamy was the key to Liverpool's progression into the fourth round of the Carling Cup last night. He scored the first goal, created the second and linked superbly with his new teammates. He also hit the crossbar in the first half with a 35-yard free kick of splendid technique and audacity.

Despite an uncertain performance from Sebastian Coates, Bellamy's form and Steven Gerrard's return to action made this a good night for Liverpool, who dodged a third successive defeat by deservedly overcoming a talented team from the npower Championship. Sometimes the Carling Cup unearths fixtures such as this; truffles amid the mud. Ties where the tournament shrugs off its reputation as insignificant and two teams who genuinely care play in front of a full house. This was the highest-profile match of the six held at Brighton's new home and a 22,000 sell-out. The Amex Stadium cost [pounds sterling]96 million and was largely financed by their chairman, Tony Bloom. It is an elegant place, with blue hues and undulating stands that evoke the feel of a seaside town, and a sense of calm and spaciousness that feels at odds with the role of a place where thousands of people flock in order to sit next to each other and raise a racket for 90 minutes. They certainly did last night. It is baffling that it took more than a decade of legal wrangling to make the stadium a reality, in part because its Falmer location is a designated area of outstanding natural beauty. Next to a dual carriageway and a carbuncle of a university campus, the immediate setting is more like an area of exceptional man-made ugliness. Brighton's early form suggests that they are capable of emulating Norwich City by claiming successive promotions.

They have financial potential and the force of momentum. Not any old upward mobility, either. It is inflamed with righteousness, a belief that the pleasures of the present and the potential of the future are a just compensation for the privations of the past. Who could begrudge Brighton supporters their smart stadium and proximity to the Premier League after 15 years of ground-borrowing?

In one respect, it is sad that the Amex nestles so modestly amid the landscape. It deserves to be visible for hundreds of miles around as a symbol of hope for all clubs on life support. All those who are being kept alive, barely but defiantly, by the love of their fans - by the strength of a community that refuses to allow the actions of a few to destroy an institution that matters to so many.

This was a glamorous fixture for Brighton, although the loud early-season buzz that "Liverpool are Back with a capital B" is at risk of fading into a background hum after successive defeats by Stoke City and Sunday's 4-0 evisceration by their putative top-four rivals, Tottenham Hotspur. While Dalglish's transfer activity since taking charge in January has proved that he is at the vanguard of the modern game, given his readiness to spend copious amounts of a foreign owner's money, his attitude towards this competition is admirably old-school: in it to win it. As opposed to "in it to give our reserves something to do". As in the simple 3-1 win away to Exeter City in the previous round, Dalglish picked a potent line-up and started Luis Suarez. It was the Uruguay forward's seventh appearance of the season, but he also featured six times for his country during the Copa America last summer. It is hard to believe that the 24-year-old, despite his flamboyant start to this campaign, will not have his feet slowed by fatigue at some point in mid-season. He should have scored after 25 minutes last night. Set through on goal by Dirk Kuyt, he sent a zipping diagonal shot narrowly wide from the edge of the six-yard box. Six minutes later, he headed a free kick just past a post. Suarez's compatriot, Coates, made his first start in central defence; up front, Bellamy was awarded the first start of his second spell at the club. Bellamy's previous goal for Liverpool, in February 2007, came in another agreeable waterside city: Barcelona.

The 32-year-old struck in the seventh minute yesterday as Brighton crumpled as if intimidated by their opponents' pace and intensity. Supplied by Suarez on the left-hand side of the area, Bellamy advanced and angled the ball low into the far corner. Brighton had Craig Mackail-Smith to thank after 18 minutes as the striker cleared the ball off the line after Casper Ankergrren, the goalkeeper, flailed at a cross and Kuyt headed towards the unguarded net. The home side's best moments came on the flanks, courtesy of the menacing Will Buckley and Craig Noone, who once worked as a roofer on Gerrard's house. Ankergrren pushed an effort from Jay Spearing on to a post as Liverpool threatened a second, yet Brighton might have been level at the break but for a Martin Kelly's vital clearance that denied Matt Sparrow. Brighton were sharper in the second half and the game was now a contest, not a procession. The catalyst was a bizarre pass across his penalty area by Coates that was intercepted by Noone, who hit a post but boosted belief in an upset among his team-mates and the crowd. Fit again after his groin injury, Gerrard went on for the last 15 minutes, his first action since the 3-1 win over Manchester United on March 6. With nine minutes left, Bellamy centred for Maxi Rodriguez, who slipped the ball to the excellent Kuyt, who finished with precision. Jamie Carragher added fuel to fears that he is entering his footballing dotage by hauling down Vicente Rodriguez, a substitute, inside the area in the 89th minute. Ashley Barnes scored the penalty, but there was too little time left and Brighton's big night did not prove a glorious one.

Brighton & Hove Albion (4-3-3): C Ankergrren - I Calderon, G Greer, S Cook, R Vincelot -- A Navarro (Sub: A Barnes, 78min), L Bridcutt, M Sparrow (Sub: K LuaLua, 78) -- W Buckley (Sub: Vicente Rodriguez, 60), C Mackail-Smith, C Noone. Substitutes not used: P Brezovan, L Dunk, M Taricco, Y Kasim. Booked: Navarro, Sparrow, Vincelot. Liverpool (4-2-3-1): J M Reina -- M Kelly (Sub: J Flanagan, 86), S Coates, J Carragher, J Robinson -- J Spearing, Lucas Leiva -- D Kuyt, C Bellamy, M Rodriguez -- L Suarez (Sub: S Gerrard, 75). Substitutes not used: A Carroll, S Downing, D Wilson, Doni, J Shelvey. Booked: Spearing, Lucas. Referee: M Oliver.

Brighton & Hove Albion (4-3-3): C Ankergrren - I Calderon, G Greer, S Cook, R Vincelot -- A Navarro (Sub: A Barnes, 78min), L Bridcutt, M Sparrow (Sub: K LuaLua, 78) -- W Buckley (Sub: Vicente Rodriguez, 60), C Mackail-Smith, C Noone. Substitutes not used: P Brezovan, L Dunk, M Taricco, Y Kasim. Booked: Navarro, Sparrow, Vincelot. Liverpool (4-2-3-1): J M Reina -- M Kelly (Sub: J Flanagan, 86), S Coates, J Carragher, J Robinson -- J Spearing, Lucas Leiva -- D Kuyt, C Bellamy, M Rodriguez -- L Suarez (Sub: S Gerrard, 75). Substitutes not used: A Carroll, S Downing, D Wilson, Doni, J Shelvey. Booked: Spearing, Lucas. Referee: M Oliver.

## the guardian

Bellamy and Kuyt help Liverpool do just enough to overcome Albion Kenny Dalglish's signings since his second coming as Liverpool manager have not met with universal approval but the performance here of his cheapest summer recruit will have gone some way to convincing sceptics that the manager has secured at least one bargain. Craig Bellamy marked his first start since his own return to Anfield - on a free transfer from Manchester City - with an excellent display that did much to help Liverpool overcome a stylish Brighton team and reach the fourth round of the Carling Cup.

The Welshman scored one goal, played a key role in his team's second, which was scored by Dirk Kuyt, and added a thrust that Andy Carroll has yet to provide. His rapid and incisive interaction with Kuyt, Maxi Rodriguez and Luis Suarez gave Liverpool a dangerous dimension that differs to the static play that has tended to accompany the deployment of Carroll. Dalglish welcomed the extra option. "Craig was fantastic," Dalglish said. "When he came in we said he would make a contribution and it's not taken him long. He just loves playing football. He's really enthusiastic and fit. They all linked up well - Craig, Maxi, Dirk and Suarez - because he's a good, intelligent footballer, as they all are."

The linkage between that quartet initially beguiled Brighton. The home side seemed paralysed for most of the first half, partially by nerves but also by the zip and zest of the visitors. "We just weren't there for the first half an hour," the Brighton manager Gus Poyet said. "But you have to pay tribute to Liverpool, especially their four offensive players. They were moving around at their best. Sometimes it doesn't matter how good you are or what system you play, when you come up against quality like that you're going to suffer."

The suffering began immediately. By the time Bellamy shot Liverpool in front in the seventh minute a goal seemed due. It arrived with deadly simplicity. After neat interplay down the left, Suarez rewarded a clever Bellamy run with a deft through-ball and the Welshman swept the ball into the net with his left foot from six yards. Liverpool hogged the ball. The home side's centre-forward, Craig Mackail-Smith, cleared a Kuyt effort off his line in the 20th minute. Suarez shot badly wide after a through-ball from Bellamy. Three times before the break Liverpool struck the frame of the goal. Suarez skimmed the post with a header from a Bellamy free-kick. From another free-kick, 35 yards out, Bellamy struck a thunderous shot that clipped the crossbar. Two minutes before the interval Jay Spearing struck the base of the post. That, though, signalled the end of Liverpool's dominance as Brighton suddenly rallied. It seemed barely credible that the hosts would make it to the break with only a one-goal deficit, yet they almost went in on level terms as at the end of the first half, following their best move of the game, Craig Noone forced an awkward save from Pepe Reina.

"I won't tell you what I said but I was at my best," Poyet said of his half-time team-talk. It worked. His team were helped by Sebastian Coates, whose sloppy pass in the 47th minute presented the ball to Noone. The midfielder, who in a previous incarnation was a roofer working on Steven Gerrard's house, showcased his proficiency in his latest profession by firing a superb shot from 25 yards against the crossbar. Liverpool had to withstand fierce pressure, all applied with the methodical elegance that Poyet has cultivated in a side that are challenging for promotion to the Premier League. In the 81st minute, however, Liverpool scored on the counterattack. Bellamy was again influential, picking out Rodriguez. The Argentinian drew the last defender before nudging the ball to Kuyt, who steered it into the bottom corner. On the pitch to join in the celebrations was Gerrard, who had arrived as a substitute to make his first appearance after six months out with a groin injury. He was upstaged, however, by a Brighton substitute. Vicente came on after an hour and showed his class in the last minute when he skipped into the box and drew a wild tackle from Jamie Carragher. Ashley Barnes converted the penalty. "If we can get him fit for the pace and craziness of the English game, he will be an unbelievable player for us," said Poyet of the 30-year-old Spaniard. Suddenly it does not seem absurd for Liverpool fans to have similar thoughts about Bellamy.

Brighton 4-5-1  
 Ankergrren; Calderon, Greer, Cook, Vincelot \*; Noone, Bridcutt, Navarro \* (Barnes, 78), Sparrow \* (LuaLua, 78), Buckley (Vicente, 61); Mackail-Smith.  
 Subs not used  
 Brezovan, Dunk, Taricco, Kasim.  
 Liverpool 4-4-2  
 Reina; Kelly (Flanagan, 86), Coates, Carragher, Robinson; Maxi, Spearing \*, Lucas \*, Kuyt; Bellamy, Suarez (Gerrard, 75).  
 Subs not used  
 Doni, Wilson, Downing, Shelvey, Carroll.  
 Referee M Oliver.

Date: 21 September 2011  
 Opposition: Brighton and Hove Albion  
 Competition: Carling Cup

Times	Guardian	Mail
Telegraph	Independent	Mirror
Echo		



21 September  
2011

## The Mail

**BRIGHT SPARK BELLAMY GETS BALL ROLLING; Veteran strikes early as Kenny takes it seriously**

BRIGHTON..... 1  
 LIVERPOOL..... 2

LONG live the Carling Cup. Seven-time winners Liverpool may have knocked out lower league Brighton and Hove Albion, but Gus Poyet's side put up one hell of a fight.

This was an entertaining contest in the wonderful amphitheatre of Brighton's new home between two sides who were certainly taking the competition seriously. Brighton, third in the Championship after promotion last season, could have been forgiven for focusing their attention elsewhere but Poyet's side steadied themselves and impressed after Craig Bellamy's early goal until a second by Dirk Kuyt made it 2-0 with 10 minutes left. A last-minute penalty by Ashley Barnes raised hopes, but they ran out of time.

For Liverpool, fresh from Sunday's mauling at White Hart Lane, this provided the perfect opportunity to rebuild some confidence. Andy Carroll and Stewart Downing were named only on the bench, but there was a long overdue return to first-team action for Steven Gerrard, who made his first appearance since March 6 when he was introduced with 15 minutes remaining.

With no European football this season, Kenny Dalglish showed his commitment to this competition by fielding a strong side at League One Exeter City in the previous round. The Liverpool boss was rewarded with a 4-0 win at St James' Park -- and another long trip south.

But Dalglish's enthusiasm for the League Cup remains. He made seven changes from the side so comprehensively outplayed at Tottenham on Sunday, but three were enforced, with Charlie Adam and Martin Skrtel suspended after their red cards and Daniel Agger sidelined with a rib injury. This is a competition Liverpool are not taking lightly.

Brighton had already claimed one Premier League scalp at the American Express Community Stadium this season, Steve Bruce's Sunderland, and his side were far from overawed.

Winger Will Buckley soon swapped flanks with Craig Noone, the former roofer who once spent five weeks working on Steven Gerrard's home, and outran Martin Kelly down Brighton's left after 20 minutes. There was another incisive run just before half-time, and Sebastian Coates, making his full Liverpool debut, was lucky not to be penalised when he appeared to pull the winger back.

Brighton enjoyed more success down the left, but right-back Inigo Calderon charged forward on the overlap after half an hour and only a fine interception from Jamie Carragher prevented Noone taking a shot.

But it was Bellamy who provided the first whiff of danger when he sprinted downfield after four minutes, laying the ball back for Jay Spearing to shoot high and wide. And it was the Welshman who broke the deadlock four minutes later, darting on to a Suarez pass in the penalty area and firing a shot across Brighton goalkeeper Casper Ankergren that squeaked in at the far post.

He was certainly a busy man in the first half, aggravating the home fans by dragging his yellow boots as he trudged over to the corner flag to take a set piece, then providing a delightful inswinging freekick that Suarez could only head wide after 32 minutes.

Kuyt played in a more advanced role at the start of the second half as Liverpool's front two became more of a three, but it was Brighton -- who tried to give more support to Matt Sparrow and Craig Mackail-Smith -- who had the first shot at goal. Noone's powerful effort from the edge of the area sent Pepe Reina diving to his right, but the ball whistled past the post.

Noone and Buckley swapped flanks again and this time Sparrow was the beneficiary, only for Reina to gather his shot at the near post.

Noone, who spent three early years at Liverpool, enjoyed a lively night against his former club, with an energetic performance marred only by a poor attempt to win a penalty after a Jamie Carragher challenge in the 58th minute.

As Brighton pushed for an equaliser, they were undone by a second Liverpool goal. Inevitably, it owed much to Bellamy, who caught Brighton on the break and fed Suarez. The Uruguayan found Kuyt, who slotted the ball into the bottom left-hand corner.

Yet discipline once again got the better of Liverpool. Carragher brought down Vicente Rodriguez after Jay Spearing fell over while in possession in his own area and Barnes duly dispatched a powerful right-foot penalty.

**BRIGHTON (4-4-2):** Ankergren 7; Calderon 6, Greer 6, Cook 7, Vincelot 6; Buckley 8 (Vicente 60 6), Bridcutt 6, Navarro 6 (Barnes 78), Noone 8; Sparrow 6 (LuaLua 78), Mackail-Smith 6. Subs not used: Brezovan, Dunk, Taricco, Kasim. Booked: Navarro, Sparrow, Vincelot. Liverpool (4-4-2): Reina 6; Kelly 6 (Flanagan 86), Coates 6, Carragher 7, Robinson 6; Kuyt 7, Spearing 6, Lucas 6, Rodriguez 6; Bellamy 9 Suarez 7 (Gerrard 75 6). Subs not used: Carroll, Downing, Wilson, Doni, Shelvey, Flanagan.

Booked: Spearing, Lucas. Man of the match: Craig Bellamy. Referee: Michael Oliver.

### CHANGING FACES

Five changes for Brighton, while Liverpool swap seven after 4-0 defeat at Spurs.

## The Daily Telegraph

Gerrard returns to give Liverpool a lift on the Downs

Brighton 1 Barnes pen 90

Liverpool 2 Bellamy 7, Kuyt 81 Att: 22,374

This was a night of ups amid the Downs for Liverpool. Despite a late scare when Ashley Barnes scored, briefly sending waves of hope around Brighton's splendid new home nestling in the rolling Sussex countryside, Liverpool took a skip-full of positives back north from this deserved Carling Cup victory. It was not simply the goals of Craig Bellamy and Dirk Kuyt, the memory of some terrific first-half movement by their four attackers and some much needed experience for defenders like Jack Robinson, Martin Kelly and Sebastian Coates. It was the sight of the man Kenny Dalglish hailed as their "talisman" returning after six months out. Steven Gerrard was back and Liverpool looked lifted. Where else to find your rock than Brighton? Gerrard arrived after 74 minutes, soon taking a pass from Kuyt and trying to get Maxi away. Gerrard then broke forward himself, running into a cul-de-sac, believing himself unfairly obstructed and giving the referee, Michael Oliver, a mouthful. Gerrard was back.

He was never going to rampage between the boxes, but there was still the feel of a thoroughbred stretching his limbs after a long time away. Dalglish smiled when Gerrard's name was inevitably mentioned afterwards. "It makes our squad an awful lot stronger with Steven fit," the Liverpool manager said. "He's a real addition; it's getting the talisman back. It's fantastic for everyone connected to the football club to see him coming back in. We will manage the situation [Gerrard's groin] as diligently as we have." Dalglish will not push him. For all the recent disappointments, such as the defeat to Spurs, he has great faith in the quality of his squad. Even taking into account Brighton's awe-struck nature in the first half, some of Liverpool's attacking was mesmerising. "Suarez, Bellamy, Kuyt and Maxi all linked up well," Dalglish added. "They are intelligent footballers. Craig was fantastic. When he came in we said he would make a contribution. He just loves playing. He's fit, loves the club, and wants to do the best. There were a lot of positives. Jack Robinson getting a full game, Sebastian Coates getting a full game. Martin Kelly started. It was a good night for us."

For Brighton, too. The occasion showcased their packed stadium to a television audience, providing a reminder that new grounds can be both architecturally pleasing and capable of generating and retaining a great atmosphere. It also reminded the world of what can be achieved when good people refuse to let their beloved club perish. For Gus Poyet, their talented manager, this was a useful night, too. Brighton's focus is on the road to the Premier League, not Wembley, and most pressingly the Championship visit of Leeds United tomorrow.

He was delighted with his players' second-half performance, the way they began to believe against such vaunted visitors. "I'm very pleased with the response," Poyet said. "I'm very proud of the players. We're just promoted from League One and we play an unbelievable second half. The first time I can say this: I can go home happy when we lost." His players did him proud after the break. Craig Noone was superb, the man who put the tiles on Gerrard's house all but raising the roof with a fine strike that beat Pepe Reina but not the bar. Vicente, who so shone under Rafa Benitez at Valencia, looked immediately influential, even winning the penalty that gave Brighton brief hope.

"He'll be a playmaker," Poyet said. "He just needs to get used to the pace and the craziness of the game at times. He will be unbelievable for this club."

Such enterprise appeared unlikely during the first half dominated by Liverpool. Dalglish had shown due respect to one of the form teams of the Championship, starting Bellamy and Suarez, who combined beautifully within seven minutes. Suarez's pass was perfection, inviting Bellamy to run into one of the many gaps in Brighton's defence. The Welshman's finish was low, hard and unstoppable. Chances came and went. Kuyt had a header cleared off the line. Suarez's header hit a post. Bellamy's free-kick sped through the air, covering 30 yards in the blink of an eye, but thudding into the woodwork. Jay Spearing also struck the frame of the goal. The half closed with Romain Vincelot sending a free-kick into the Liverpool fans. Poyet turned away in disgust and marched down the tunnel, almost chilling the blood of a feathery mascot en route.

Poyet's fired-up mood soon suffused his players. Noone exploited poor defending by Coates and almost snapped Reina's bar.

Brighton were so committed to attack that they were inevitably vulnerable to the counter. Maxi soon sped through the middle, slipping the ball right to Kuyt, whose shot eluded Casper Ankergren and crept in.

Oliver ensured a late twist, the referee pointing to the spot when Carragher fouled Vicente. Barnes's runup was short, scarcely two steps, but he generated immense power, the ball flying past Reina. Brighton had their consolation. Liverpool march on.

**Brighton (4-4-2):** Ankergren; Calderon, Greer, Steve Cook, Vincelot; Navarro (Barnes 78), Sparrow (LuaLua 78), Bridcutt, Noone; Buckley (Vicente 60), Mackail-Smith. Subs: Brezovan (g), Dunk, Taricco, Kasim. Booked: Navarro, Sparrow, Vincelot. Liverpool (4-4-2): Reina; Kelly, Carragher, Coates, Robinson; Kuyt, Spearing, Lucas, Maxi; Bellamy, Suarez (Gerrard 75). Subs: Doni (g), Carroll, Downing, Wilson, Shelvey, Flanagan. Booked: Spearing, Lucas.

Referee: M Oliver (Northumberland).

Date: 21 September 2011  
 Opposition: Brighton and Hove Albion  
 Competition: Carling Cup

Times	Guardian	Mail
Telegraph	Independent	Mirror
Echo		



21 September  
2011

## THE INDEPENDENT

### Bellamy and Kuyt keep Liverpool in credit

It was not entirely convincing, but Liverpool indicated as they moved into the last 16 of the Carling Cup that they are most intent of all the big-name teams on winning the competition rather than treating it as a finishing school. Despite a spirited rally from their Championship opponents, goals from Craig Bellamy and Dirk Kuyt provided sufficient cushion to render Ashley Barnes' late penalty irrelevant.

Liverpool have won the League Cup in its various guises a record seven times, with Kenny Dalglish appearing in their four successive triumphs from 1981-84. It may be a much lesser priority now but the value of winning the three-handled pot should not be underestimated.

Roy Hodgson's difficulties at Liverpool deepened last season when League Two Northampton Town won at Anfield and, while Dalglish is in a very different position, his team selection made clear he did not want a repeat. With no European fixtures to worry about, he chose a strong side with the spine formed by Pepe Reina, Jamie Carragher, Lucas Leiva and Luis Suarez. Uruguayan defender Sebastian Coates made his debut, Bellamy his first start since returning to the club, and Steven Gerrard was on the bench six months after his last appearance. Craig Noone, the former Anfield schoolboy who worked on Gerrard's roof while playing in non-League, started for Brighton but Vicente Rodriguez was on the bench, alongside 38-year-old coach Mauricio Taricco.

Brighton have been to hell and back, or at least to the brink of the Conference, to Gillingham, and to Withdean, since they knocked Liverpool out of the FA Cup in successive seasons a quarter-century ago, and there was a celebratory air at kick-off.

That dimmed as the visitors took swift command through Bellamy's 10th goal for Liverpool, but first since 2007. Running on to a clever pass from Suarez he squeezed his shot past Casper Ankergrren from a tight angle.

Albion struggled to cope with a fluid Liverpool frontline in which Bellamy was highly influential playing behind Suarez, but interchanging with Dirk Kuyt. Liverpool had a string of other chances. Craig Mackail-Smith cleared off the line from Kuyt after Ankergrren failed to deal with a Lucas cross; Suarez shot wide when Kuyt sent him clear; Suarez headed wide from Bellamy's set-play; Bellamy lashed the bar with a stunning 40-yard free-kick; Ankergrren turned Jay Spearing's shot on to the post. Yet Albion could have been level at the break. In injury-time, Mackail-Smith released Noone but his shot was too close to Reina.

Maybe that injected confidence, more likely Gus Poyet gave his team a half-time rollicking, because they re-emerged with fresh conviction.

With Noone and Will Buckley running at them, Liverpool suddenly looked more like the team beaten 4-0 at White Hart Lane on Sunday. Noone, gifted the ball by Coates, hit the bar, then Matt Sparrow shot weakly at Reina when well-placed. Brighton continued to press but clear chances were elusive even after Vicente was introduced. Gerrard also came on and eased himself carefully through the last 15 minutes.

Bellamy remained the key figure and with nine minutes left he led a counter-attack which concluded with Kuyt scoring off the post from Maxi Rodriguez's pass. That should have killed Brighton off but Carragher brought down Vicente after a Spearing error and Barnes converted the spot-kick. Brighton pressed anew, but it was not to be.

Brighton & Hove Albion (4-3-3): Ankergrren; Calderon, Greer, Cook, Vincelot; Navarro (Barnes, 78), Sparrow (LuaLua, 78), Bridcutt, Noone; Buckley (Vicente, 60), Mackail-Smith. Substitutes not used Brezovan (gk), Dunk, Taricco, Kasim. Liverpool (4-4-2): Reina; Kelly (Flanagan, 86), Carragher, Coates, Robinson; Kuyt, Spearing, Lucas, Maxi; Bellamy, Suarez (Gerrard, 75). Substitutes not used Doni (gk), Carroll, Downing, Wilson, Shelvey, Flanagan. Referee M Oliver (Northumberland).

## DAILY MIRROR

### ROCKY REDS SAVED BY THE BELLAMY; BRIGHTON 1 LIVERPOOL 2

AFTER the shame of White Hart Lane came the end of the poor show. A glut of missed chances denied Kenny Dalglish the chance to recline in his deckchair and stick a knotted handkerchief on his head.

But as Craig Bellamy announced his second coming at Anfield by reopening his account, and Dirk Kuyt settled all arguments with a late breakaway, this was perfect therapy for Liverpool: no red cards, another step closer to Wembley. Historically, the Carling Cup has not been regarded as the holy grail on Merseyside. But with no European football this season, and successive league defeats at Stoke and Tottenham inflicting early damage on their hopes of a return to Champions League orbit, this could prove an important win for Bellamy's people.

It speaks volumes for Liverpool's profligacy that they were made to sweat by Albion substitute Ashley Barnes's penalty a minute from time. But Dalglish was happy to emerge unscathed again in a competition where Roy Hodgson was embarrassed by Northampton 12 months ago.

Sussex by the sea would not have been Dalglish's first-choice venue to seek redemption for nine-man Liverpool's humiliation at Spurs on Sunday.

One man's blue and white stripes is another man's Tesco bags, but King Kenny had every reason to tiptoe into the Amex with trepidation: the Kop's superiority complex was twice dented, in consecutive seasons, by Brighton in the FA Cup during his playing days.

Dalglish responded to annihilation in north London by restoring skipper Steven Gerrard to the bench, after a six-month injury lay-off, as a nuclear deterrent - and it took just seven minutes for his gunboat diplomacy to pay off.

Luis Suarez provided the ammunition for Bellamy, afforded generous space in the inside-left channel, and the most feared golfer on Merseyside did the rest with an angled shot into the far corner.

Give him a pitching wedge on a works outing in Spain and he is a basket case. But give him too much space against Championship defenders and Bellamy is still cock of the walk.

The nutter with the putter was eager to return the compliment, twice providing chances for Suarez to put the Seagulls to flight, only for the Uruguayan livewire to send them both narrowly wide.

Such was Liverpool's domination that Brighton's record signing Craig Mackail-Smith, the country's leading scorer in all four divisions last term, was required to smuggle Kuyt's header off the line.

In their shiny new home, Albion fans tried to raise the roof, but in a one-sided first half their communal evensong had the air of a singalong in an air-raid shelter. Liverpool should have been out of sight before the interval, Bellamy rattling the bar with a long-range free-kick and Jay Spearing shaving a post.

Yet Brighton, scoring high marks for artistic impression, notably through winger Will Buckley's pace, could have been level before the changeover when Pepe Reina parried Craig Noone's deflected shot but Matt Sparrow spooned over the rebound from point-blank range.

Brighton: Ankergrren 5, Calderon 7, Greer 6, Cook 6, Vincelot 6, Bridcutt 7, Navarro 6 (Barnes, 78), Sparrow 6 (LuaLua, 78), Noone 7, Mackail-Smith 5, Buckley 7 (Vicente, 61). LiVErPool: Reina 6, Carragher 7, Coates 6, Robinson 6, Kelly 6 (Flanagan, 86), Lucas 5, Spearing 6, Maxi 7, Kuyt 7, Bellamy 8, Suarez 7 (Gerrard, 76).

rEF: M Oliver

Date: 21 September 2011  
 Opposition: Brighton and Hove Albion  
 Competition: Carling Cup

Times	Guardian	Mail
Telegraph	Independent	Mirror
Echo		



21 September  
2011



Craig Bellamy cracker sets LFC on way to Carling Cup victory  
 LIVERPOOL FC haven't had much joy with free transfers in recent years.  
 Joe Cole, Philipp Degen and Andriy Voronin stand as glaring examples of how they can end up costing you a fortune.

But Craig Bellamy's match-winning display on the south coast last night suggests the fiery Welshman is set to buck the trend and take his place alongside cherished Bosman heroes like Markus Babbel and Gary McAllister.

During a summer when Liverpool spent big in order to kick-start their push for silverware it was ironic that a new signing who didn't cost a penny fired their season back on track after successive defeats to Stoke and Spurs.

It's been said Bellamy could start an argument in an empty room but no-one at the Amex Stadium was disputing the level of his contribution to this morale-boosting win.

Bellamy opened the scoring on his first start since his arrival from Manchester City with a tidy finish and then played a starring role in the second goal which was put away by Dirk Kuyt.

Ashley Barnes' late spot-kick gave Brighton hope but in truth the Reds should have long since cemented their spot in the last 16 of the Carling Cup.

Kenny Dalglish demanded a response after last Sunday's 4-0 mauling at White Hart Lane and his players delivered in impressive fashion.

They had to produce or they would have been dumped out by Gus Poyet's impressive Championship high-flyers who simply refused to admit they were beaten.

Dalglish made seven changes from the side at White Hart Lane and some of those names who were left out will be fearing for their place ahead of Saturday's league clash with Wolves at Anfield.

Bellamy and Kuyt emphatically staked a claim for the weekend and it's difficult to see how they can be overlooked.

It was a night full of positives for the manager as Steven Gerrard made his return to action after six months out with a groin injury.

The skipper came through the best part of 20 minutes unscathed and showed flashes of the kind of class Liverpool have sorely missed.

Jamie Carragher ceremoniously chucked the armband Gerrard's way when he came on and his entrance sparked a huge ovation from the away end.

There was plenty for those fans who made the long trip south to shout about with Liverpool dominating a one-sided first half.

A slow start on Sunday cost Liverpool dear but there was no repeat last night.

The Reds tore into the Seagulls from the off with Bellamy and Luis Suarez leading the charge.

Brighton simply couldn't handle their pace, movement and trickery and the pair combined brilliantly for the opening goal inside seven minutes.

Bellamy latched on to Suarez's incisive pass and from an acute angle he fired a left-footer past Casper Ankergrren which flew in off the post.

Such was the understanding between Bellamy and Suarez it was hard to believe this was the first time they had started a game together.

It was the Welshman's 10th goal for the Reds and his first since he famously scored against Barcelona in the Nou Camp back in February 2007.

The 32-year-old's first spell at Anfield proved to be only a year-long cameo. After being made to sit and watch the Champions League final in Athens the writing was on the wall for him.

He's returned to Anfield via West Ham, Manchester City and Cardiff City, and looks determined to grab his second chance.

Flying into tackles and using the ball intelligently, Bellamy set the tone and the Reds should have been out of sight at the break.

Kuyt saw his header hacked off the line after Ankergrren had flapped at a high ball. Then the Dutchman set Suarez clean through but his shot drifted narrowly wide.

Just past the half hour mark Suarez went even closer as he rose to meet Bellamy's free-kick and nodded against the post.

Bellamy was a hive of activity and a moment of individual brilliance almost doubled the Reds' tally.

When he stood over a free-kick 35 yards most expected a cross but he unleashed a blistering right-footer which dipped over the helpless Ankergrren and crashed back off the bar.

Jay Spearing also did his chances of more regular action no harm with a tireless display and he was just inches away from his first goal for the Reds with a low 25-yarder Ankergrren tipped on to the post.

Brighton bravely rallied with Scouser Craig Noone their outstanding performer.

Three years ago the former Burscough winger was tiling Gerrard's roof but he has since made the grade in the professional ranks.

The lifelong Reds fan was in the away end at White Hart Lane on Sunday to cheer on his heroes and he ensured this was an uncomfortable night for his boyhood club.

On the stroke of half-time Noone found himself bearing down on Reina but the keeper parried and Martin Kelly produced a goal-saving clearance.  
 Noone went even closer early in the second half after pouncing on Sebastian Coates' misplaced pass but the bar denied him an equaliser.  
 Coates didn't allow a few errors on his full debut to dent his confidence and produced one great tackle to thwart Craig Mackail-Smith.  
 Liverpool finally put the tie to bed with a classy counter attack nine minutes from time.

Bellamy's sweeping pass from the left set Rodriguez galloping through the middle and the Argentinian unselfishly teed up Kuyt who coolly beat Ankergrren.  
 The Dutchman, who was Liverpool's top scorer with 15 last season, is no longer a certain starter but played like someone with a point to prove.  
 Barnes halved the deficit at the death after Jamie Carragher upended Rodriguez Vicente but Liverpool march on towards Wembley.

## The Argus

Cup run ends - but Albion give Reds a scare

Albion went down battling on their big Carling Cup night against Liverpool.

Goals from Craig Bellamy and Dirk Kuyt saw the Reds through 2-1 in a fabulous third round tie at The Amex.

But Ashley Barnes converted a late penalty won by debutant Vicente to set up a storming finish.

Liverpool were ahead in only the seventh minute when Luis Suarez sent Bellamy away to expertly angle a low shot across Casper Ankergrren.

Suarez was the pick of a very impressive Reds outfit and angled a shot just wide after a deft Dirk Kuyt touch sent him through.

The Uruguayan also flicked a header off the outside of the post as the Albion woodwork was struck three times in the space of 12 minutes.

Bellamy thumped the underside of the bar with a terrific 35-yard free-kick and Jay Spearing saw his long-range drive kiss the outside the upright after Ankergrren got fingertips to it.

Albion offered little - but they could have been level just before the break when Craig Noone's shot was parried by Pepe Reina and Matt Sparrow was only just beaten to the loose ball right in front of goal.

It was the hosts' turn to strike the North Stand woodwork straight after half-time when Noone shot against the top of the bar after picking up a stray pass from debut-making Sebastian Coates.

Albion went on to cause the Premier Leaguers plenty of nervy moments and threw on Vicente, Kazenga LuaLua and Ashley Barnes in a bid to draw level.

But Liverpool struck again on an 81st-minute counter raid as Maxi Rodriguez supplied Kuyt to roll a shot low past Ankergrren and in off the far post.

Barnes replied on 89 minutes with a spot kick after Vicente won the ball and was fouled by Jamie Carragher.