

Date: 13 May 2012

Opposition: Swansea City

Competition:

Times	Mirror	Echo
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13 May 2012

## THE TIMES

Dalglish still defiant after another loss

Swansea City 1 Graham 86

Liverpool 0

Referee: M Halsey Attendance: 20,605

On a day when Swansea supporters dressed up as Elvis Presley, Kenny Dalglish was left all shook up but adamant that he will not be the next casualty in the blood-letting at Liverpool. Dalglish, the Liverpool manager, awoke yesterday morning to newspaper reports that Roberto Martinez is being headhunted for his job and a fourteenth defeat of the season was not the ideal way to end a campaign that had promised so much. He may have guided Liverpool to their first trophy in six years with the Carling Cup in February but the unpalatable fact remains that this was their joint lowest finish, of eighth, in the Barclays Premier League. Damian Comolli, the director of football, and the head of sports science, Peter Brukner, have already paid the price for a season of underachievement but Dalglish did not have the air of a man expecting to be dismissed as he considered the latest setback, Danny Graham's goal being enough to provide a fitting end to a marvellous season for Swansea. "I would expect the owners to have more dignity and integrity than to believe a story in the newspapers," Dalglish said. "We'll not run away from the points tally, we'll face up to reality.

"The performances have been excellent in a lot of cases but not the points tally, so we'll try our best to correct that." While Dalglish is preparing to meet John W Henry and Tom Werner in the coming days, Brendan Rodgers will be viewing the season as a triumph. The Swansea manager was irritated in the summer when a prominent bookmaker wrote off any chance of the club staying up.

But Swansea finished a comfortable 11 points above the dreaded dotted line and have beaten the likes of Manchester City, Arsenal and now Liverpool at the Liberty Stadium. Graham has been one of their many success stories since his [pounds sterling]3.5 million move from Watford and the winner was his 100th career goal. "For us to finish eleventh and play this way has been brilliant,"

Rodgers said. Andy Carroll had terrorised Chelsea in his previous two games but was quiet here, though he did create a chance out of nothing in the 56th minute with an acrobatic overhead kick that forced Michel Vorm into a stunning save.

Swansea City (4-3-3): M Vorm 7 -- A Rangel 7, S Caulker 7, A Williams 7, N Taylor 7 -- J Allen 6, G Sigurdsson 7 (sub: M Gower, 89min), L Britton 7 -- N Dyer 6 (sub: W Routledge, 79), D Graham 8, S Sinclair 7. Substitutes not used: A Tate, G Monk, L Moore, G Tremmel, G Edwards. Booked: Williams.

Liverpool (4-4-2): A Doni 7 -- M Kelly 6, J Carragher 6, D Agger 5, G Johnson 6 -- M Rodriguez 5 (sub: D Kuyt, 73), J Henderson 5, J Shelvey 5, S Downing 5 (sub: C Bellamy, 61 5) -- L Suarez 6, A Carroll 6. Substitutes not used: J Enrique, S Coates, J Spearing, R Sterling, B Jones. Booked: Carroll.

Season review

LIVED UP TO EXPECTATIONS?

Just a bit. They were the team everyone expected to be relegated, albeit gracefully. Instead Brendan Rodgers's side achieved mid-table status without succumbing to mediocrity. And don't expect the Swansalona tag to vanish -- Rodgers will shadow Spain as they prepare for the European Championship finals.

PLUS POINTS

Swansea have a manager who sticks to his principles. Even when the pundits laughed at the size of his players, Rodgers said he was happy with what he had. And he is shrewd when it comes to loan signings, with Gylfi Sigurdsson the surprise talent of 2012.

MINUSES

They did not quite crack the art of winning away and have struggled to back up prolonged spells of possession with goals. Dedication to style has sometimes come at the expense of grasping relatively simple points.

TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE SUMMER

The top clubs are eyeing Michel Vorm. Rodgers needs to convince the Dutch goalkeeper that a stint as a No 2 would be detrimental to his career.

OVERALL GRADE C+

Season review

LIVED UP TO EXPECTATIONS?

They exceeded them in the cups, but fell short of them in the league. At times, their football was of a high standard, but too often they were undermined by a lack of ruthlessness.

PLUS POINTS

Harmony has been restored and a trophy secured. In recent years both had been conspicuous by their absence. Luis Suarez continues to impress, while Andy Carroll belatedly showed signs of being the player who Liverpool thought they were getting when they paid [pounds sterling]35 million for him.

MINUSES

The Suarez race row was a low point that damaged Liverpool's reputation and sapped their energy. Other blows included Lucas Leiva's knee injury and defeat by Chelsea in the FA Cup Final.

TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE SUMMER

Where to begin? The most pressing priority is to resolve the stadium issue. Liverpool also need a new chief executive, director of football and director of communications. That's without even mentioning matters on the pitch, of which there are also many.

OVERALL GRADE C+

## the guardian

Graham strikes to give Swansea fairytale end to their campaign

One "King" is dead and another one had a moribund look about him last night. It was party time at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea City fans celebrating a memorable and unexpectedly successful first season in the Premier League by dressing as Elvis Presley. For Liverpool's "King", however, it all ended with five wins, three draws and 11 defeats from the last 19 league matches, after which Kenny Dalglish has to be on borrowed time as manager.

After a Sunday newspaper story suggesting he was about to be "kicked upstairs", Dalglish was asked: "Do you think you'll still be in charge in August?" He replied: "I expect the club's owners to have more integrity and dignity than that. Our performances have been excellent on a lot of occasions. We have to keep believing, keep going and maybe next year the luck will drop in for us."

Brendan Rodgers offers an interesting contrast. At 39 he is young, with his best years in front of him, which is clearly not the case with Dalglish, at 61. Swansea have finished 11th, Liverpool eighth. The difference between them is five points. The Swans had no big names at the start of the season but several of their players are getting there, notably the goalkeeper, Michel Vorm, who cost pounds 1.5m from Utrecht and is now coveted by Arsenal, among others. Then there is Danny Graham, the matchwinner here, for whom Rodgers paid Watford pounds 3.5m. Graham finished with 12 goals from 36 league appearances to Andy Carroll's four in 35.

Dalglish describes Liverpool's record this season as "not bad", claiming that they have been "unlucky" and pointing out that they are back in Europe. Not good would be nearer the mark and he should not need reminding that one of his distinguished predecessors, when asked about the merits of the Uefa Cup [the old equivalent of the Europa League] famously replied: "I don't know, we've never finished low enough to qualify."

Swansea were the more cohesive unit for most of the match and Gylfi Sigurdsson twice threatened to give them the lead. Doni, deputising for Pepe Reina, thwarted him and further distinguished himself in using his legs to keep out a goalbound shot from Nathan Dyer. Presumably, the end of season factor was behind Mark Halsey's decision not to send off Andy Carroll in added time at the end of the first half after a scuffle that saw him grab Ashley Williams by the throat. The referee opted to book both players.

For the most part Carroll charged around like a big red fire engine unable to locate the fire but he did provide a highlight for Match of the Day with an overhead kick, executed with his back to goal, which brought an equally stunning response from Vorm.

Stewart Downing's dire season was brought to an end after an hour, when he gave way to Craig Bellamy, and another substitution gave Dirk Kuyt a farewell appearance for Liverpool before moving on, probably back home to the Netherlands. Kuyt quickly supplied a centre from the right which deserved a better fate than Carroll's feeble shot, straight at Vorm.

Graham showed him how such things should be done with four minutes of normal time remaining, driving home the winner from near the penalty spot from a cross supplied by Angel Rangel. "A fairytale" was how Rogers described the Swan's season. Liverpool followers probably preferred another f-word.

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## The Mail

CALAMITIES, TANTRUMS AND MORE RED WOE

Swansea 1

Liverpool 0

PERHAPS it was fitting that Liverpool's season should finish like this, appropriate that their campaign should end with a string of Andy Carroll calamities and a tantrum from Kenny Dalglish.

Both men have been the subject of speculation this week, but for quite different reasons. Carroll is being tipped for a place in England's Euro 2012 squad, 16 months of mediocrity forgotten largely because he twice made a fool of John Terry in the past nine days.

If his name is among the 23 announced by Roy Hodgson on Wednesday, it will not be because of what happened yesterday. His ordeal started with a flicked header that went the wrong way, continued when Michel Vorm, the Swansea goalkeeper, dribbled past him, and became cringeworthy when he attempted a back-pass from 45 yards. Among all that, he was booked for a tussle with Ashley Williams and also came close to scoring an incredible opener when, with his back to goal and defenders all around, he attempted a bicycle kick. The save illustrated why Swansea might have to fight to keep the man they signed for [pounds sterling]1.5million last summer.

Dalglish said: 'Eventually our luck will turn but we need to wait until August to get this out of our system.' Whether Dalglish gets that time remains to be seen. The Fenway Sports Group purge has already accounted for three senior figures and even before Danny Graham's 86th-minute winner there were reports that Dalglish is to be replaced by Wigan's Roberto Martinez.

The fact his squad, assembled for [pounds sterling]115million, fell lower than cashstrapped Everton in the table won't help. 'We won't run away from the points tally,' Dalglish said. 'The performances have been excellent in a lot of cases but not the tally.'

Then his mood turned. Asked about the speculation, he snapped: 'I expect the owners to have more dignity and integrity than to believe a story in a newspaper.' Dalglish stormed out and in came Brendan Rodgers. Swansea have won plenty of admirers this season and were superb again yesterday. They had been written off in the summer, with one bookie saying there was more chance of Elvis being spotted in South Wales than Swansea staying up. Hundreds of Elvis impersonators turned up as they finished 11th.

'We have kept 14 clean sheets and we have beaten Arsenal, Manchester City and Liverpool in our first season,' Rodgers said. 'What a brilliant season.' SWANSEA CITY (4-2-3-1): Vorm 7; Rangel 7, Caulker 6, Williams 7, Taylor 6; Allen 7, Britton 8; Dyer 7 (Routledge 79min), Sigurdsson 7 (Gower 88), Sinclair 6; Graham 6. Subs not used: Tremmel, Tate, Monk, Moore, Edwards. Scorer: Graham 86.

Booked: Williams.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): Doni 7; Kelly 6, Carragher 7, Agger 6, Johnson 6; Downing 5 (Bellamy 60, 6), Henderson 6, Shelvey 6, Rodriguez 6 (Kuyt 73, 6); Suarez 6, Carroll 6. Subs not used: Jones, Enrique, Coates, Spearing, Sterling.

Booked: Carroll. Man of the match: Leon Britton. Referee: Mark Halsey 7.

Attendance: 20,605.

## The Daily Telegraph

Dalglish defiant as pressure grows

Swansea City 1

Graham 86

Liverpool 0

Att: 20,605

Kenny Dalglish has called for Liverpool owners John W Henry and Tom Werner to behave with "dignity and integrity" as he faced more questions over his future at Anfield.

After Liverpool's 14th defeat of the season the manager defended the performance of his team amid claims that a replacement is already being discussed. Danny Graham's 86th minute goal at the Liberty Stadium will not have helped his case.

It left Dalglish to reflect on an unacceptable eighth place finish in the Premier League, one position below bitter rivals Everton and Liverpool's lowest for 18 years.

It is understood that both Henry and Werner will be in the city this week to reflect on the club's season before meeting with Dalglish for a full debrief. Any decision on the future of the coaching team will be made after that.

Dalglish feels his side's Carling Cup success and the fact they reached the FA Cup final should be enough to earn him a stay of execution. "I would expect the owners to have more dignity and integrity than to believe a story in a newspaper," said Dalglish after suggestions that Wigan's former Swansea manager Roberto Martinez was being lined up for Anfield.

If anything, Dalglish's counterpart yesterday, Swansea's Brendan Rodgers, could be further up the list of possible candidates than the Spaniard should the owners decide on a change of direction.

Rodgers has done an impressive job in keeping Swansea in the top flight for another season at least and his team deserved something against Liverpool, too, despite surviving an exacting second half during which Dalglish's side might have had half a dozen goals.

Unfortunately for the Scot, increasingly agitated by his side's inability to score, a combination of wayward finishing and the performance of Michel Vorm left the game in the balance.

Vorm beat away Andy Carroll's bicycle kick in the 63rd minute and saved twice more from the striker as Liverpool put Swansea's back four under increasing pressure. It was that kind of day for the visitors, who eventually dropped their guard four minutes from time.

Angel Rangel crossed from the right and Graham beat Alexander Doni at his near post. Cue wild celebrations from the home fans but it was no laughing matter for Dalglish, who claimed his side deserved better even though they took 40 minutes to register their first attempt on goal.

"I think the second half performance deserved a point," he said. "The passing and movement at times has been excellent and the goalkeeper's save to stop Andy was fantastic.

"Maybe next year the luck will change for us. We won't run away from the points tally or hide, or say the points tally is satisfactory. We will face up to reality. The performances have been excellent in a lot of cases, but not the points tally. We will try our best to correct that."

For Swansea, it was a 14th clean sheet and 12th win of a remarkable season. "I thought we thoroughly deserved to win the game and yes, it was a wonderful way to finish a fairytale year," Rodgers said. "We had to be patient and move them about, but it was a joy to watch a group of guys who were told they wouldn't be able to pass it and succeed at this level."

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## THE INDEPENDENT

### Dalglish dismisses exit talk as Reds stumble over line

Kenny Dalglish scoffed at suggestions he will be pushed aside as Liverpool ended their season with a whimper.

Danny Graham increased the pressure on the under-fire Reds manager with an 86th-minute winner to complete a stunning debut Premier League season for Swansea.

Dalglish will face a crunch meeting with the club's American investors in the coming days to deliver his end-of-season report, but the Kop idol flatly rejected rumours he will lose the manager's job. A tetchy Dalglish said: "I expect the owners to have more dignity and integrity than to believe a newspaper story. We won't run away from the points tally or hide, or say the points tally is satisfactory to anyone who works for or supports Liverpool Football Club. We will face up to reality. The performances have been excellent in a lot of cases but not the points tally so we will try our best to correct that."

This miserable result left Liverpool behind Merseyside rivals Everton - for the first time since 2005 - in eighth place and sealed their worst top-flight finish since 1963.

Yet Dalglish's men deserved little more here than to slump to a 10th away loss of a disappointing season which has yielded just a Carling Cup triumph.

But the Scot insisted only a slice of fortune is required to lift the gloom clouds gathering around Anfield.

Dalglish added: "We deserved at least a point for our second-half performance. Maybe next year the luck will change for us."

Euro 2012 hopeful Andy Carroll had hoped to impress new England manager Roy Hodgson. But the [pounds sterling]35m striker cut a frustrated figure at the Liberty Stadium aside from one superb overhead kick which was expertly saved by Swansea goalkeeper Michel Vorm in the second period.

For 11th-placed Swansea, this was party time after overcoming all the odds to remain in the top flight for a second season.

And Graham added the gloss on a fine term with a close-range finish from Angel Rangel's right-wing cross past Alexander Doni.

Meanwhile, Steven Gerrard should hand England a major Euro 2012 fitness boost.

The Liverpool midfielder missed the defeat with a back injury but Hodgson, who names his squad on Wednesday, should be able to select him. When asked if Gerrard would be fit, Dalglish said: "Not my concern. But I wouldn't think he'll be a problem."

#### MATCH FACTS

Substitutes: Swansea Routledge (Dyer, 79), Gower (Sigurdsson, 88). Liverpool Bellamy (Downing, 60), Kuyt (Rodriguez, 73), Booked: Swansea Williams. Liverpool Carroll. Man of the match Britton. Match rating 7/10.

Possession: Swansea 44% Liverpool 56%.

Attempts on target: Swansea 8 Liverpool 9.

Referee M Clattenburg (Tyne & Wear).

Attendance 20,605.

## DAILY MIRROR

### CARRY ON KENNY We'll face reality, but my job is safe

SWANSEA 1 LIVERPOOL 0 SWANSEA: Vorm 8, Rangel 6, Williams 7?, Caulker 7, Taylor 7, Britton 9, Allen 7, Sigurdsson 6 (Gower 88), Dyer 7 (Routledge 78), Graham 8, Sinclair 6 Goal: Graham 86 LIVERPOOL: Doni 8, Kelly 6, Carragher 7, Agger 6, Johnson 6, Downing 6 (Bellamy 60, 7), Henderson 5, Shelvey 5, Maxi 6 (Kuyt 72, 6), Suarez 6, Carroll 6? REF: Mark Halsey ATT: 20,605

KENNY DALGLISH will deliver his end-of-season report to Liverpool's owners this week and claim: My job is safe.

The under-fire Reds boss suffered further misery when Danny Graham struck an 86th-minute winner to complete a stunning debut season for Swansea.

Dalglish now faces a crunch meeting with the club's American investors in the coming days, but the Kop idol rejects rumours he will be pushed aside.

Dalglish said: "I expect the owners to have more dignity and integrity than to believe a newspaper story.

"We won't run away from the points tally, we will face up to reality. The performances have been excellent in a lot of cases but not the points tally so we will try our best to correct that."

This miserable result left Liverpool behind Merseyside rivals Everton for the first time since 2005 - in eighth place - and sealed their worst top-flight finish since they were relegated in 1954.

Yet Dalglish's men deserved little more here than to slump to a 10th away loss of a disappointing season.

But the Scot insisted only a slice of fortune is required to lift the gloom clouds gathering around Anfield.

Dalglish added: "We deserved at least a point for our secondhalf performance.

"We've got to keep believing, and credit to the players they have kept believing.

"The passing and moving at times has been excellent. We just have to keep going and maybe next year the luck will change for us.

"Eventually it will drop for us, but we need to wait until August to get it out of our system."

Euro 2012 hopeful Andy Carroll had hoped to impress new England chief Roy Hodgson, but he cut a frustrated figure at the Liberty Stadium and could have been dismissed for raising his hands to Ashley Williams on the stroke of half-time.

For 11th-placed Swansea this was party-time, and they were cheered on by thousands of supporters wearing Elvis costumes, after overcoming the odds to remain in the top-flight.

Club-record signing Graham added the gloss on a fine term with his late strike and boss Brendan Rodgers said: "This season has been a fairytale and what a way to end it. It's a great reward to finish the season like that. The players could not have done any more this season."

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IT WAS a day when the only sense of satisfaction came from someone else's heartache.

As Liverpool's season limped towards a miserable conclusion at the Liberty Stadium, the celebrations began in the away end.

News of Manchester City's dramatic late fightback to clinch the title at their neighbours' expense prompted scenes of jubilation among the 2,000 fans packed behind Michel Vorm's goal.

Just seconds earlier Danny Graham's strike had put Kenny Dalglish's side on the brink of a 14th league defeat of 2011/12 but that pain was swiftly eased by events elsewhere.

Taking pleasure in their rivals' misery was all those supporters had to cling on to as Liverpool signed off with a whimper.

The thrashing of Chelsea had raised hopes that the Reds would at least go into the summer on a high but standards dropped alarmingly. Those who had shone in midweek, went back into their shells against Swansea City.

The faces were largely the same but the two performances were like chalk and cheese. It simply showcased the infuriating inconsistency which has dogged the Reds since August.

The history books will show that in Dalglish's first full season back in charge Liverpool ended up eighth – equalling the club's worst Premier League finish. The meagre haul of 52 points is their lowest in Premier League history.

Since the turn of the year, Liverpool won just five of their 19 remaining league games and for the first time since 2005 there's the unpalatable sight of Everton sitting above them in the final standings.

Yet no-one would swap seventh place and local pride for what's been achieved in the cups this season. Three Wembley trips and a first trophy for six years have provided compelling evidence that Liverpool have progressed.

But it's been a painfully bumpy ride hampered by the infuriating habits of missing penalties, hitting the woodwork and spurning chances.

Having ended up 17 points adrift of the fourth place principal owner John Henry targeted last summer, it's clear that this is a squad in urgent need of reinforcements.

Firstly, Fenway Sports Group need to put an end to all the speculation about Dalglish's position with a public show of support for him. Then they need to back up those words with hard cash and a show of ambition.

Make no mistake, breaking back into the Champions League will be even harder next season. Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham have had problems of their own over the past 10 months but Liverpool haven't been good enough to capitalise. For some yesterday was goodbye. A giant banner in the away end proclaimed 'Dirk Kuyt – Nice One La'.

The Dutchman remained tight-lipped about his future but he made a point of going over to the fans after the final whistle, clapping them and patting his badge. If as expected Kuyt does move on this summer after six years at Anfield he will be sorely missed. Having spent so long warming the bench and watching others struggle, his frustration at a lack of action this season is understandable. His career has to come above his love for the club.

Despite the manager's declaration that the out-of-contract Fabio Aurelio will be the only player departing, this was also likely to be Maxi Rodriguez's last appearance for the Reds.

There was a carnival atmosphere inside the Liberty Stadium as Swansea celebrated their survival.

Hundreds of fans heeded the call from boss Brendan Rodgers to dress up as Elvis Presley following claims from bookies earlier in the campaign that there was more chance of spotting the King of Rock and Roll than Swansea staying in the Premier League.

For 45 minutes too many in red gave a poor impersonation of top flight footballers. Possession was repeatedly tossed away and they had Alexander Doni to thank for staying on level terms.

Jonjo Shelvey was caught dallying in possession early on and Joe Allen picked his pocket before racing through on goal. His shot narrowly missed the far post and the onrushing Graham.

Dalglish's side continued to create their own problems with Andy Carroll bizarrely deciding to hit a 45-yard backpass in the direction of Doni.

The Brazilian keeper naively picked it up and the Swans were handed an indirect free-kick close to the penalty spot. Gylfi Sigurdsson touched it off to Scott Sinclair whose piledriver was bravely blocked by Jamie Carragher.

Doni got his chance after Pepe Reina was ruled out due to illness and the other change to the team which hammered Chelsea 4-1 was also enforce With Martin Skrtel sidelined by a minor knock, Martin Kelly came in at right-back with Glen Johnson switching flanks.

Kelly had his hands full trying to contain the lively Sinclair, while in the middle pint-sized playmaker Leon Britton kept the Swans on the front foot.

The Reds were second best in all departments and midway through the first half Rodriguez was called upon to hack Sigurdsson's shot off the line.

Starved of service, Luis Suarez and Carroll remained on the periphery and the visitors' frustration increased.

Just past the half hour mark Sigurdsson's curling free-kick was brilliantly tipped past the post by Doni and then the shot-stopper denied Neil Taylor.

Vorm had been virtually a spectator but he was finally called into action to claim Carroll's tame header from Kelly's cross.

Nathan Dyer should have broken the deadlock when he burst clear but he failed to beat Doni.

Liverpool improved in the second half but they could hardly have got any worse. Carroll came to life and dispatched an acrobatic overhead kick which Vorm did well to parry to safety.

However, Suarez endured a wretched afternoon and the Uruguayan cut a forlorn figure as everything he tried failed to come off.

The equally ineffective Stewart Downing made way for Craig Bellamy and Kuyt came on for Rodriguez.

With 15 minutes to go Daniel Agger should have done better when he nodded Suarez's corner straight at the keeper. Then Kuyt cleverly picked out Carroll in the box but the striker fired too close to Vorm.

Swansea responded and Steven Caulker headed wastefully over before the breakthrough finally arrived four minutes from time. Angel Rangel and Sinclair combined on the right and Graham coolly converted from close range.

A league campaign of glaring under-achievement is complete. A big summer lies ahead because another like this one won't be tolerated.

SWANSEA (4-1-4-1): Vorm, Rangel, Caulker, Williams, Taylor, Britton, Dyer (Routledge 79), Allen, Sigurdsson (Gower 89), Sinclair, Graham. Not used: Tate, Monk, Moore, Tremmel, Edwards.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): Doni, Kelly, Carragher, Agger, Johnson, Downing (Bellamy 61), Shelvey, Henderson, Rodriguez (Kuyt 73), Carroll, Suarez. Not used: Jones, Enrique, Coates, Spearing, Sterling.

GOALS: Graham 86.

CARDS: Booked – Swansea's Williams and Liverpool's Carroll.

REFEREE: Mark Halsey.

ATTENDANCE: 20,605



Stylish end to a wonderful year

Swansea City 1 Liverpool 0

SWANSEA City brought the curtain down on their Premier League adventure by doing what they have done all season — poking giants in the eye.

Brendan Rodgers's men have spent the last nine months defying the doubters and making the pundits look like mugs.

And their sensational year ended on a suitably spectacular note yesterday as Swansea added Liverpool to the list of scalps taken since they reached the top flight.

The Reds might not be at their best right now, but they remain one of the grandest names on the football planet.

Swansea are a club who have spent all but three seasons in their 100-year history outside the top division.

For them to lower Liverpool's famous colours means they will have to find another ten minutes on the end-of-season highlights DVD.

The philosophy, the mix of poise in possession and hunger off the ball, which has earned them a quite superb 11th-placed finish was all in evidence as they reached 47 points for the season.

Danny Graham was the matchwinner, Swansea's leading scorer netting his 14th of the campaign just as the final whistle began to loom.

But Graham shared the glory with every one of his colleagues, for this season has been a story of how a hard-working, courageous bunch of players found a way to compete with the best clubs in the land.

Normally at this time of year, only the edges of the Liberty's black and white seats are in use.

Because much more often than not in recent times, Swansea have been fighting for something significant on the final day of their season.

In Landore, tension usually reigns in May.

Not this time. Yesterday Swansea's supporters could sit back, relax and chuckle at Elvis costumes.

It was party time in the sunshine before kick-off, with the noise levels as high as they have ever been at this stadium as the teams emerged.

Swansea rose to the occasion, outpacing and outplaying Liverpool in a first period where they were a little unfortunate not to edge in front.

Joe Allen set the tone early on, robbing Jonjo Shelvey 30 yards from goal and then driving into the penalty area.

Danny Graham was there in support, but Allen's cross-shot was just too far in front of the striker and rolled a yard wide of the post.

Liverpool were looking rattled, particularly when Andy Carroll played a long-range back pass and back-up keeper Alexander Doni picked the ball up.

Gylfi Sigurdsson back-heeled the resulting indirect free-kick to Scott Sinclair, but his shot was blocked by the Liverpool chargers.

Kenny Dalglish's front players were hardly featuring, Maxi Rodriguez dragging one

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long-ranger wide before Carroll followed suit.  
Swansea were much more cohesive going forward, and there was another scare for Liverpool when Allen played a clever corner to Sigurdsson and his first-time shot was hacked out from under the crossbar.  
The Icelander threatened again with a free-kick which Doni stooped low to push away.  
When the corner which followed was only half-cleared, the outstanding Leon Britton lined up a 20-yard volley.  
A goal for the little man would have brought the house down, but his effort skewed wide.  
Swansea came again, Nathan Dyer sliding in Neil Taylor, who cut in on his weaker right foot and shot too close to Doni.  
Liverpool's first half-chance of the game came on 42 minutes when Sigurdsson's loose ball was picked off by Stewart Downing.  
The winger fed Carroll, but the big man could only hammer a shot over the top.  
Swansea's best move yet came just before the turnaround, Allen and Sigurdsson combining to send Dyer through on goal.  
His drive was crisp enough but flew too close to Doni, who beat the ball to safety.  
Liverpool might have found themselves a man down when Carroll reacted to Ashley Williams's foul by raising his hands and throwing the Swansea captain to the ground.  
Mark Halsey, a referee known for his leniency, chose to book both players when he might easily have waved red in Carroll's direction.  
Having left a mark on Williams, the £35 million man almost made an impression on the game when he muscled on to Martin Kelly's long throw and unleashed a spectacular overhead kick.  
Michel Vorm had been almost redundant until this point, but Swansea's player of the year leapt to his right to make a very fine save.  
Liverpool were now showing more purpose, although Swansea kept on pushing for the opener.  
Angel Rangel's surge down the right meant an opening for Dyer, but he delayed his shot and in a flash Dalglish's defence recovered.  
Williams tried to get in on the act, the central defender advancing all the way to the Liverpool box and playing a neat lay-off to Sinclair.  
Not for the first time the final touch let Swansea down as Sinclair sliced his left-footed shot into the crowd.  
Sigurdsson's dead balls continued to trouble Liverpool, Rangel poking wide from one corner before Steven Caulker headed over from another.  
Swansea were trying everything to unlock Liverpool, but the thin red line stood firm.  
Craig Bellamy and Dirk Kuyt arrived from the bench to pep up the visitors' frontline, and there was more work for Vorm when Daniel Agger met Luis Suarez's corner with a firm header.  
If that save was fairly routine, Vorm had to be sharp a minute later to smother Carroll's snapshot.  
Liverpool were looking the more likely as the clock began to tick down on this remarkable season, with Caulker putting his body on the line to block Suarez's thumping drive.  
Then, when Swansea's race looked close to being run, came one last glorious twist at the end of this fabulous campaign.  
Sinclair was bright at the start of the move, the former Chelsea man cutting in from the left and then spreading the ball wide to Rangel on the opposite flank.  
Swansea's right-back steadied himself before picking a precise ball to Graham, who swept home stylishly from 15 yards.  
What a climax.  
What a season.