

Date: 7 April 2013

Opposition: West Ham United

Competition: League

BBC	Times	Telegraph	Standard
	Guardian	Mirror	Echo
	Independent	Mail	Post

7 April 2013

THE TIMES

Allardyce and Rodgers bemoan their misfortunes

Liverpool 0

West Ham United 0

Referee A Taylor Attendance 45,007

Like many of those with whom he had rubbed shoulders at Aintree three days earlier, Sam Allardyce left Liverpool bemoaning his failure to get a winner. The West Ham United manager even had a hard luck story to go with his disappointment, although it was one that was disputed by Brendan Rodgers, who felt that if fate had conspired against any team, it was his own.

While Allardyce pointed to Lucas Leiva's goalline clearance from Jack Collinson as the game's defining moment, Rodgers lamented a disallowed effort from Daniel Sturridge that he felt should have stood, after the teams served up a goalless draw of limited quality and insufficient excitement.

"We should have won it," Allardyce said. "They had the most possession but we had the better chances in the game and though I'm delighted with the point and the clean sheet we are disappointed not to have won it."

"We are very frustrated that we didn't get the three points that I thought we were more than deserving of," Rodgers said. Although polar opposites in their opinion of what would have been a fair outcome, it was easy to see merit in both managers' arguments.

Liverpool were the dominant force for most of the game but were unable to turn their possession into clear-cut opportunities, while West Ham enjoyed the better chances as their game plan of sitting deep and hitting their opponents on the break almost paid off.

A point apiece, then, was just. Neither had done enough to win and neither deserved to lose, so it was stalemate in its truest -- and most soul-sapping -- sense. Defenders flourished, notably James Collins, who fared better than most against Luis Suarez, and Daniel Agger, while forwards laboured. As a result, those who had paid to watch did so mainly in silence. Old Trafford is far from the only stadium where the atmosphere isn't what it used to be.

There was no question that Liverpool's frustration was the greater as they failed to get the better of a West Ham side whose determination not to lose was made apparent when they began wasting time midway through the first half.

At one stage, Allardyce's players trooped to the side of the pitch for an impromptu drinks break after Carlton Cole had taken a knock. Sports scientists will no doubt claim such actions are to be encouraged but this was Anfield, not Andalusia, and the limited exertions of the participants did little to suggest that fluid replacement was a necessity. If the aim, though, was to disrupt and distract, it certainly had the desired effect.

Both sides had opportunities to score before the interval and, with Mohamed Diame blazing over for West Ham after an impressive run, and a mistake from Lucas allowing Cole a strike at goal that Agger blocked bravely.

For their part, Liverpool were frustrated when Jussi Jaaskelainen saved smartly from both Suarez and Sturridge but their attack was struggling to find their usual fluency.

Suarez shot narrowly wide from an acute angle after the break and Steven Gerrard had a shot cleared off the line by James Tomkins before both teams had penalty claims turned down by Anthony Taylor, the referee. West Ham's seemed the more convincing appeal as Jose Enrique appeared to fell Tomkins only for play to be waved on. "We should have had a penalty," Allardyce said.

Liverpool's claim was less credible as Tomkins seemed to get a nick on the ball before bringing Gerrard down.

In between those incidents, Liverpool had a genuine reason to feel aggrieved when Sturridge had a goal disallowed for offside when he had been level.

"It was one of those games where you need to score early on to open it up or need that wee bit of luck to get the goal," Rodgers said. "When we did score it was deemed offside, but when you see it again Daniel Sturridge was clearly onside and that is what we needed."

Lucas's heroics on his own goalline ensured that Liverpool at least took a point and denied West Ham what would have been their first victory at Anfield since 1963. That elusive win will have to wait but it is unlikely to be too much longer before their Premier League status is confirmed. "I would like another three points, but we are looking up rather than down," Allardyce said.

RATINGS

Liverpool (4-2-3-1): J M Reina 6 -- G Johnson 5, J Carragher 7, D Agger 8, J Enrique 5 -- S Gerrard 6, Lucas Leiva 6 -- S Downing 5 (sub: D Sturridge, 25 6), J Henderson 6 (sub: O Assaidi, 71), P Coutinho 7 -- L Suarez 7. Substitutes not used: B Jones, S Coates, Suso, J Shelvey, M Skrtel.

West Ham United (4-4-1-1): J Jaaskelainen 6 -- G Demel 6, J Collins 8, J Tomkins 7 (sub: E Pogatzetz, 84), J O'Brien 6 -- R Vaz Te 5 (sub: J Collinson, 63 6), G O'Neill 6, M Diame 5, M Jarvis 6 -- K Nolan 5 (sub: M Taylor, 63 5) -- C Cole 5. Substitutes not used: S Henderson, M Maiga, M Chamakh, D Potts. Booked: O'Brien.

the guardian

Both clubs miss 'main man' Carroll as Liverpool are frustrated by stubborn defence

The stalemate left two clubs crying out for Andy Carroll, though only one manager could admit it. While Brendan Rodgers insists a player with Carroll's attributes is ill-suited to his Liverpool team, Sam Allardyce openly pondered what might have been for West Ham had the centre-forward been eligible to play. Quite possibly their first win at Anfield in 50 years.

Both Allardyce and Rodgers claimed their side merited victory on an afternoon of familiar torment for Liverpool but deep satisfaction for the visitors as they edged closer to Premier League safety. Both managers had a point.

Liverpool controlled the play and peppered the West Ham goal in the second half, albeit without forcing Jussi Jaaskelainen into saves above the routine.

The visitors spent most of the contest on the defensive and reliant on the outstanding James Tomkins and James Collins, yet they created the clearer chances from open play. With five minutes remaining the substitute Jack Collison was denied on the goalline by the knee of Lucas Leiva from a Gary O'Neil corner. Anfield howled in frustration as Luis Suarez sent a corner straight out of play during five minutes of stoppage time and Glen Johnson ran into another blind alley in the area. The soundtrack encapsulated Liverpool's afternoon. Allardyce, despite savouring a well-executed gameplan and hard-earned point, rued the fact that Carroll could not be on the end of that O'Neil set piece.

"We should have won it," said the West Ham manager, who had lost on his eight previous visits to Anfield. "They had the most possession but we had better chances. The problem is that we don't score. We had five players out including Andy Carroll, and he is our main striker."

"But that was the best we have defended away from home all season. James Collins and James Tomkins nullified their front three, which was a big ask, and when you look at the chances Liverpool had they were few and far between. Jussi never had to pull off any heroics."

The contest was preceded by a minute's silence for the victims of Hillsborough ahead of the 24th anniversary of the disaster on 15 April, a tribute impeccably observed by both sets of supporters. Liverpool started brightly, with Philippe Coutinho continuing where he left off in the win at Aston Villa and forcing Jaaskelainen into an early save but while they often had the right ideas, the execution of the final ball did not compare.

"We're very frustrated that we never got the three points," said Rodgers, who lost Stewart Downing to illness midway through the first half. "Our commitment and concentration was outstanding but we just couldn't get the goal that could have led to two or three more."

West Ham should have opened the scoring when Mohamed Diame weaved his way into the area from a corner. The powerful midfielder evaded five half-hearted challenges to leave himself with a clear sight of Jose Reina's goal but blazed over from close range. Carlton Cole should also have found the target when Kevin Nolan dispossessed Lucas on the edge of the Liverpool box. The forward had Reina's full goal to aim for but managed to find Daniel Agger's midriff instead with a sliced effort.

Liverpool were a far greater threat in the second half. Guy Demel diverted Steven Gerrard's low cross over his own goal from a yard out, with Daniel Sturridge primed to pounce, Tomkins made a superb goalline block and Suarez grazed the far post with a shot through the legs of Jaaskelainen. Sturridge did have the ball in the net when he turned Jordan Henderson's scuffed drive into the corner but was adjudged offside. Replays suggested otherwise.

The referee, Anthony Taylor, riled Anfield when he ruled that Coutinho had fallen too easily when grabbed on the shoulder, while clean through, by Demel. Tomkins was guilty of a similar collapse following a touch inside the Liverpool area from Jose Enrique. The West Ham centre-half also sparked penalty screams from the Kop when Gerrard attempted to cut inside his challenge, although the referee correctly called that Tomkins had just connected with the ball. West Ham were relieved, and they had earned it.

Man of the match James Tomkins
(West Ham United)

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The Mail

Sam smiling as Reds don't stay the trip

FOR Aintree on Saturday, read Anfield on Sunday. A weekend of sporting shocks on Merseyside began with a 66-1 winner of the Grand National and ended with Liverpool once again failing to live up to the tag of 'a good thing'.

West Ham do not enjoy visiting the red side of Stanley Park. They are without a win here since Martin Peters and Geoff Hurst scored in September 1963, and few were able to foresee anything other than another comfortable Liverpool victory. Liverpool, however, have had a frustrating habit of faltering at the least opportune moment and so it proved again. If Auroras Encore bounded up Aintree's straight to muted applause 24 hours earlier, so West Ham left the field yesterday to the sound of almost silence after securing a 0-0 draw.

Though Sam Allardyce's side rode their luck -- Daniel Sturridge had what appeared to be a legitimate goal disallowed for offside -- they battled ferociously, defended stoically and came close to winning when Jack Collison's late header was cleared off the line by Lucas.

'We should have won it,' argued Allardyce, whose previous eight visits to Anfield had ended in defeat. 'They had the most possession but we had better chances in the game. I am disappointed not to have won but it was still a very big point.

'When you carve out the best chances you are disappointed not to have won. We had the clear-cut chances and should have had a penalty when Jose Enrique kicked Jack Collison in the box. The problem is that we don't score.

'We created chances. But we made life very difficult for ourselves in terms of having to keep defending as well as we did without taking any opportunities.

The defence earned us a point but the finishing needs to pick up before we start winning games. I would like another three points but we are looking up rather than down.' If West Ham keep defending like this, though, they will have no problems keeping their heads above water. Liverpool might have dominated possession and had the game's brightest player in Philippe Coutinho but with James Tomkins and James Collins excelling, they were kept at arm's length.

Collins, in particular, was outstanding. Confronted by the perpetual threat of Luis Suarez, he played the Uruguayan as well as any defender has this season, never once getting ruffled. He was strong, his tackles were immaculately timed and Suarez, for once, had no answers.

The day started with Liverpool retaining the slenderest hopes of qualifying for Europe but their play lacked the necessary pace and intensity during the first 45 minutes to really cause their well-drilled visitors a problem.

Though Coutinho made Jussi Jaaskelainen work with their first attack, his right foot shot bringing a plunging save from the big Finn, the only other time Liverpool hit the target came in the 27th minute through a Suarez effort after he deftly exchanged passes with Coutinho.

West Ham had chances of their own. Mo Diame twice went close -- once after skipping through four challenges -- and Carlton Cole, who had seized upon a mistake by Lucas, was denied by a lunging block from Daniel Agger with the Kop goal in his sights.

Liverpool raised the tempo after the break but the closest they came to finding a way through came when a Suarez drive whistled along the goalline but somehow missed the target; Sturridge, meanwhile, was disappointed to see a linesman's flag deny him a goal.

'We're very frustrated that we didn't get the three points,' said Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers. 'We were more than deserving of it. We kept pushing from the first minute. The intent was very good.

'You have to give credit to West Ham. They defended well with their blocks and the commitment to get their bodies on the line was admirable. It was one of those games where you need to score early to open it up or need that bit of luck to get the goal.'

The Daily Telegraph

West Ham show Rodgers value of courage and power

Liverpool 0

West Ham United 0

Att: 45,007

Beatlemania was in full swing the last time West Ham won at Anfield. In the 50 years since, they have tended to be little more than a sacrificial offering to the Kop.

It was testimony to the reversal of one of the game's most enduring trends that Sam Allardyce felt disappointed to have claimed only a point.

Bearing that prominent wound above his right eye, he is the first West Ham manager in a while not to leave this stadium scarred, battered and bruised by the experience.

Allardyce's style of play remains a matter of debate at Upton Park, but this was the most resilient West Ham side seen on Merseyside in the past five decades.

Robust defending, mental toughness and physical courage are qualities too often overlooked in pursuit of footballing beauty, but there are occasions, especially when away teams go to venues such as this one, when the aspiration to play the pretty stuff is overdone anyway.

In James Collins, James Tomkins and Mohamed Diame, West Ham found performances any side at any level would admire on their travels.

The centre-backs ensured Luis Suarez had arguably his least effective game since signing for Liverpool. They also kept Philippe Coutinho and Daniel Sturridge suitably nullified. It was a stretch to suggest West Ham should have won, but Allardyce was correct to say they were as close as Liverpool to taking all three points.

Liverpool had Lucas's knee - in the right place to block Jack Collison's 86th-minute header - to thank for making sure they still have more to play for than consolidating seventh place between now and the end of the season.

West Ham should not go down - this point effectively means one more win will guarantee their Premier League status next season.

In midfield, Diame was particularly good for 45 minutes. He was of interest to Liverpool a year ago, while Kenny Dalglish was still in charge. Observing his athleticism, power and capacity to make the vital interceptions in front of his box while covering the turf to support his side's attack, one wondered if he remains the type that Brendan Rodgers should consider this summer.

Rodgers's obsession with breaking down teams through guile rather than brawn is admirable, but when, in pursuit of late winners, panic sets in, territorial dominance can give way to haphazardness.

Allardyce's contention that his side should have won might have been based on a frantic finale when Rodgers's decision to gamble everything to make the breakthrough - he did similar against West Bromwich Albion here earlier in the season -- meant his team looked more vulnerable to the counter-attack, with their less mobile midfield unable to cover ground to stop scurrying attackers. "We should have won it. They had the most possession but we had the better chances," Allardyce said. "Our consistent, quality defending enabled us to keep clean set. I don't remember Jussi [Jaaskelainen] having to pull out any heroics." Rodgers felt that Liverpool did enough to win, but this had more in common with their home performances of last season. It is a recurring theme that when Liverpool do not score early, they do not have the patience and belief - on or off the pitch - to prevent a stalemate.

"We have to give credit to West Ham because they defended very well," Rodgers said. "We needed to score early on to open it up. When we did score in the second half it was given offside, but if you look again Daniel Sturridge was onside." That decision, after Sturridge deflected a Jordan Henderson shot past Jaaskelainen, did not seem so contentious at the time.

Equally, West Ham could point to Jose Enrique's late challenge on Tomkins as penalty material, as was Tomkins' late wave of a boot to stop a rampaging Gerrard.

It amounted to a fair draw, the lingering image of which was an exhausted Tomkins, cramp-ridden, reluctantly leaving proceedings early.

This is a new West Ham, all right. On this particular day, you would imagine the Upton Park faithful are grateful for that.

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Brendan Rodgers cannot wait for season of disappointment to end as frustration reigns at Anfield

They were clearing away at Aintree as, like a man going back to his wife after a one-night stand, Merseyside returned to its chief sporting love. This, however, lacked the romance and uncertainty of a 66-1 outsider owned by Britain's most famous and cantankerous show-jumper charging across the Melling Road, though you would have got relatively long odds on West Ham United holding Liverpool to a draw.

It is 50 years since they last won at Anfield and, although they were captained by Bobby Moore that day in September 1963, West Ham are not known in these parts for their defensive solidity.

Yet they produced defending that Moore would have recognised. Few have handled the threat of Luis Suarez better than the hulking figure of James Collins for whom this was an afternoon of grit and skill.

But for the thickness of Lucas Leiva's thigh, Sam Allardyce's tactics of soaking up Liverpool's pressure would have paid the highest possible dividend. Jack Collison met Gary O'Neil's corner with a header that struck the Brazilian as he stood by the post. Allardyce threw his hands to a head that now bore four stitches after a collision with a marble worktop in his kitchen. The hoodoo had not been broken but he would go home happy.

"We should have won it," the West Ham manager said. "We had the better chances and I know they had more possession but we didn't succumb to their pressure. This is a very big and well-deserved point for us because some of the teams below us have been picking up back-to-back wins. Most fans would have turned up here expecting Liverpool to walk away with this.

"Up to our game at Stoke, which we won 1-0, our away form has been dreadful and you can see why - we don't score. The defence has earned us a point but the finishing side needs to get an awful lot better."

Brendan Rodgers might have felt the same. Liverpool's dominance was relentless. But one by one the opportunities flashed by. James Tomkins cleared off the line after a move involving Liverpool's three most creative players - Suarez, Philippe Coutinho and Steven Gerrard - and finished by the Liverpool captain.

Daniel Sturridge deflected Jordan Henderson's shot into the net but was, to Rodgers' surprise, ruled to have been standing in an offside position. Both Gerrard and Suarez sent balls hissing across the face of Jussi Jaaskelainen's goal but Allardyce argued that his keeper was not required to produce heroics.

"It was a game where you had to score early on to open it up or you needed that wee bit of luck," Rodgers said. "Our form at Anfield is getting better all the time but we need to keep moving forward, get to the summer, and then make a better start to next season than we did to this one."

West Ham's chances were few but good. Mohamed Diame slalomed past two defenders, rode a challenge and sent his shot screeching into the Kop, who applauded. Had Carlton Cole scored after Lucas had sloppily lost possession on the edge of the box, their emotions would have been less generous but Daniel Agger's block was the equal of anything produced by Collins, Tomkins or Guy Demel.

At the start, it felt like a game of county cricket. There were some interesting touches, the sun was shining but nothing seemed to matter very much. By the end Anfield was eaten up with frustration. They were angry at West Ham's time-wasting even when it involved a genuinely injured player in Tomkins, who was helped off the pitch with cramp.

At the whistle, there was an acceptance that Liverpool will probably not make the fifth place required to guarantee European football and, had Tottenham not scored a late equaliser against Everton, that prospect might have disappeared completely.

The season is dribbling away much as it did in Kenny Dalglish's last few matches, although Dalglish had won them the League Cup and there was the prospect of an FA Cup final to come. Rodgers said only that Liverpool would try to finish as high as they could. When he was young that used to be first.

Bookings: West Ham O'Brien.

Man of the match Collins.

Match rating 6/10.

Possession: Liverpool 65%. West Ham 35%.

Attempts on target: Liverpool 8. West Ham 0.

Referee A Taylor (Greater Manchester).

Attendance 45,007.



SUAREZ FAILS TO LAST THE COURSE; No grandstand finish on Merseyside..again

LIVERPOOL 0 WEST HAM 0

WE should know by now, there is no such thing as a dead cert on Merseyside when Grand National weekend comes around.

As if to painfully emphasise that point, Liverpool produced quite possibly their most frustrating performance of the season in handing West Ham a point the statistics suggested was all but impossible given their form here.

The London club have won just once at Anfield since the war and that was in 1963.

They hadn't even scored in their last four visits, and Hammers manager Sam Allardyce entered this contest with eight straight defeats at the famous old stadium.

Yet their performance belied not only that unenviable record, but also their near season-long status as relegation candidates, given away form better than only Reading in the whole division. West Ham were the Auroras Encore of the Premier League this weekend.

They may even have won on another day, had not Liverpool midfielder Lucas shown acrobatic instinct to clear substitute Jack Collison's powerful header from the line four minutes from time at the end of a puzzling game.

It was puzzling because Liverpool again raised questions about their inconsistency, given their decent form at Aston Villa in the previous match, and indeed over the past two months.

Puzzling too, because the visitors showed a desire that has been singularly missing on their travels this season.

Perhaps the biggest mystery though, was what happened to Luis Suarez on an afternoon that should have confirmed his status as the best striker in English football right now.

Maybe the season is finally catching up with the South American, but he looked lethargic, and distracted by the admittedly brutal attentions of his marker James Collins, who produced a man-of-thematch show of real strength.

Without their talisman on top form, Liverpool looked a little pedestrian up front, only youngster Philippe Coutinho unveiling the sort of instinctive sharpness that has characterised so much of the Reds' play in recent weeks.

He produced a deft reverse pass for Suarez to shoot, which produced one fine save from Jussi Jaaskelainen in the visiting goal before the break, and before that inspired another superb stop from the keeper.

Another shot from the Brazilian after the break flashed just and his passing around the penalty area seemed the only real source of a home goal in the face of West Ham's resolute, and bruising, defending.

Mind you, Reds boss Brendan Rodgers did have a point when he said afterwards his side were denied a goal when substitute Daniel Sturridge, on early for bug victim Stewart Downing, touched home a mishit shot from Jordan Henderson, only for it to be incorrectly ruled out for offside.

There was a hint of a penalty shout too, when Steven Gerrard went over under James Tomkins' weary challenge on 69 minutes.

But equally, West Ham should have had a spotkick when Luis Enrique seemed to foul the same defender at a 63rd-minute corner.

While Liverpool came close through two shots from Suarez cleverly conjured from an acute angle as he temporarily slipped his shackles, it was the visitors who probably had the best of the opportunities. Lucas' goal-line clearance aside, Daniel Agger showed courage to block a Carlton Cole shot with his face, while Mohamed Diame produced the best moment of the afternoon with a fine run, that took him past four Reds defenders, before he blazed over.

In the end it was a stalemate that neither confirms West Ham's safety nor elevates Liverpool towards a European place, so a frustrating afternoon for both sides.

Yet the east London club will feel it was a hard-earned point that creeps them ever closer to the magical safety mark of 40 points, and it will be a massive shock now should they fail to reach it.

As for Liverpool, this game illustrated the two frustrating sides of their nature.

They have such quality going forward, and it would be easy enough to write this one off as a bad day at the office for Suarez and Gerrard.

But the underlying fear remains that Rodgers' men have still to develop the ability to deliver under pressure.

LIVERPOOL: Reina 6, Johnson 4, Carragher 6, Agger 6, Enrique 5, Gerrard 6, Lucas 5, Downing 4 (Sturridge 25, 5), Henderson 5 (Assaidi 71, 4), Coutinho 7, Suarez 5. WEST HAM: Jaaskelainen 7, Demel 7, Collins 8, Tomkins 7 (Pogatetz 83), O'Brien 6?, O'Neil 7, Vaz Te 6 (Collison 71, 6), Diame 6, Nolan 5 (Taylor 62, 6), Jarvis 5, Cole 6. ATTENDANCE: 45,007 REFEREE: Anthony Taylor

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HAMRUN-INSaturday Soton (a) Apr 17 Man Utd (h) Apr 20 Wigan (h)Apr 27 Man

City (a) May 4 Newcastle (h) May 12 Everton (a) May 19 Reading (h) M a)h) a)(h))

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LIVERPOOL'S fading hopes of securing European football next season were dented further after they were held to a goalless draw by a stubborn West Ham United at Anfield.

On a frustrating afternoon for Brendan Rodgers' side, the hosts failed to break down Sam Allardyce's well-drilled outfit, a result which leaves them well adrift of the Premier League's top five with games running out.

Rodgers named a side unchanged from the won which had won at Aston Villa last weekend, with Daniel Sturridge again forced to settle for a place on the bench. West Ham, of course, were without striker Andy Carroll, ineligible to play against his parent club due to Premier League regulations. Carlton Cole replaced the on-loan England man.

It was the home side who had the game's first chance, on seven minutes, as Philippe Coutinho drew a save from Jussi Jaaskelainen with a low strike from the edge of the area, after enterprising play from Daniel Agger.

The Reds were happy to dominate possession, with West Ham rarely venturing forward. Ricardo Vaz Te headed their first half-chance wide on 18 minutes, whilst Mohamed Diame lashed an effort into the Kop moments later.

Luis Suarez, who started the game slowly, drilled wide after a trademark nutmeg on James Collins, as Rodgers was forced into an early change, replacing a limping Stewart Downing with Sturridge.

Jaaskelainen kept out Suarez's angled strike after a fine one-two with Coutinho on 27 minutes, but it took a bold block from Agger to stop Cole's fierce effort after Lucas had lost possession on the edge of his own box soon after, in what was a bitty first half.

The beginning of the second period followed a similar pattern, though Liverpool might have found themselves ahead on 52 minutes. Gerrard, taking advantage of a lucky break, got to the byline down the right, but Guy Demel scrambled his cross away from under his own crossbar.

Gerrard went even closer moments later, his sidefoot effort blocked en route to the bottom corner by James Tomkins after Suarez's flamboyant cross had deflected into his path. Suarez then flashed a strike across goal after skinning Tomkins on the right.

Sturridge had the ball in the net after 65 minutes, diverting Jordan Henderson's shot home, only to be denied by an offside flag. Replays suggested the call to be an erroneous one, with Joey O'Brien at least level with Sturridge when Henderson's shot was struck.

Coutinho, quiet until then, drilled a strike just off target having cut in from the left, whilst Suarez, enduring a poor afternoon, chipped wide.

Gerrard might have had a penalty as he tumbled under Tomkins' challenge, but referee Anthony Taylor, who had ignored earlier appeals from Tomkins at the other end, was unmoved.

Sturridge brought a save from Jaaskelainen with 13 minutes left, striking low from the edge of the box, whilst Agger drove wide from distance five minutes later, with Jaaskelainen getting a touch to the Dane's effort.

Liverpool were indebted to Lucas for clearing Jack Collison's header off the line with five minutes to go, but it is they who will most feel the frustrations of this draw.

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Reina, Johnson, Carragher, Agger, Jose Enrique, Lucas, Henderson (Assaidi 71), Gerrard, Coutinho, Downing (Sturridge 25), Suarez
 Substitutes: Jones, Coates, Skrtel, Suso, Shelvey

Cards:

Goals:

WEST HAM UNITED (4-4-1-1): Jaaskelainen, Demel, Collins, Tomkins (Pogatetz 84), O'Brien, O'Neil, Diame, Jarvis, Vaz Te (Collison 63), Nolan (Taylor 63), Cole
 Substitutes: Henderson, Maiga, Chamakh, Potts

Cards: O'Brien

Goals:

Attendance: 45,007

Referee: Anthony Taylor



Brendan Rodgers' side have some growing up to do by next season

WHEN Brendan Rodgers talked about growing pains this is no doubt what he had in mind. But as the Liverpool FC manager reflected on his first-season in charge at Anfield, he was hoping to have finally seen the back of them.

After Liverpool's spurt against Aston Villa seven days earlier came this latest result which shrinks their hopes of qualifying for Europe even further.

The gap to Everton remains three points but with time running out, Arsenal and Chelsea gained further ground with wins over the weekend.

Rodgers' side have been graceful and free-flowing in recent months to put themselves back in the frame for another season on the continent but against West Ham United yesterday afternoon, the ball was caught under their feet.

Liverpool dominated the game and should have won but lacked the quality and spark in the final third to seal the deal.

Fortune was not their friend either as Daniel Sturridge's goal was wrongly ruled out for offside, Steven Gerrard was denied a penalty and centre-back James Tomkins put his body on the line to prevent the captain scoring.

But, then, this was no bad luck tale and Rodgers was indebted to Lucas Leiva's goal-line clearance and the courage of Jamie Carragher and Daniel Agger throughout.

A third 0-0 draw of the season – and against a side fighting for survival – reflects badly on Liverpool but much of what they did at Anfield was positive; they just couldn't score.

Visiting manager Sam Allardyce was right to highlight how well his side had defended and the chances that had fallen to Jack Collison, Carlton Cole and Mohamed Diame. But he was wrong to say they had the best opportunities and to suggest his side deserved a first win on this ground since 1963.

Either way, such a result provides ready-made ammunition for those who remain unconvinced by Rodgers and, specifically, his decision to offload Andy Carroll to the Hammers on loan. Carroll, as part of the agreement, did not feature yesterday but how some Liverpool fans will have hoped he had been available to them because when Rodgers looked for impetus off the bench he saw Ousamma Assaidi as his best option. The winger's impact was minimal, Liverpool ran out of ideas late on and the crowd left early.

But it is far too simplistic to say Carroll would have made any difference yesterday. Had the referee's assistant made the right call and allowed Sturridge's goal – and had Gerrard not been denied by Tomkins' heroics – then Liverpool would have got the goals they deserved and talk of Carroll would have been but a whisper. Rodgers was right to believe that one goal would have led to a flurry at Anfield yesterday but a combination of factors conspired to keep the scoresheet blank. And how often have Liverpool been without the spark of ingenuity and flair that Luis Suarez has served up so often?

Liverpool have looked to address their over-reliance on him but there is little use in denying that he has been what has given them edge this year.

The brilliant Uruguayan did not get the rub of the green yesterday or the bounce of the ball – or indeed much luck at all as the intricacies of his play became muddled at the vital moments.

West Ham defender James Collins did ever so well to break up much of what Suarez tried and probably did as good a job on the Liverpool striker as anyone has this season. That said, had Jussi Jaaskelainen not been equal to a couple of Suarez's efforts at either end of the game then there might have been another match-winner from the 26-year-old.

Allardyce talked of his goalkeeper not having to produce heroics but he forgot about the saves he did have to make. From Philippe Coutinho and Sturridge – an early replacement for the unwell Stewart Downing – as well as when he was beaten by Suarez's drilled shot from near the by-line, only for it to whizz inches past the post – or when his keeper was indebted to Tomkins' bravery.

But what the West Ham manager did recall were the chances that fell to his team. Their lack of adventure rarely looked like earning them anything more than a point but Lucas' knee stopped them taking the lead late on while the outstanding Agger blocked Carlton Cole's shot after Liverpool gave away possession on the edge of their own area. The Danish defender also intercepted Matt Jarvis' cross, coming between the ball and a simple tap in for Ricardo Vaz Te whilst Diame blazed over after muscling his way into the Liverpool box.

But, Liverpool should have won the game.

Gerrard will have expected to have done better after firing over from Suarez's pass and the skipper could only admire Guy Demel's clearance from his dangerous cross into the six yard area. It was frustrating and Rodgers must now hope that come next season, Liverpool are all grown up.

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Reina, Johnson, Carragher, Agger, Jose Enrique, Lucas, Henderson (Assaidi 71), Gerrard, Coutinho, Downing (Sturridge 25), Suarez
 Substitutes: Jones, Coates, Skrtel, Suso, Shelvey

Cards: None Goals: None

WEST HAM UNITED (4-4-1-1): Jaaskelainen, Demel, Collins, Tomkins (Pogatetz 84), O'Brien, O'Neil, Diame, Jarvis, Vaz Te (Collison 63), Nolan (Taylor 63), Cole
 Substitutes: Henderson, Maiga, Chamakh, Potts

Cards: O'Brien Goals: None

Attendance: 45,007

Date: 7 April 2013

Opposition: West Ham United

Competition: League

BBC	Times	Telegraph	Standard
	Guardian	Mirror	Echo
	Independent	Mail	Post

7 April 2013

London Evening Standard

West Ham survive Liverpool barrage to take home a point

Just as Aintree closed, Merseyside returned to its chief sporting love.

This, however, lacked the romance and uncertainty of a 66-1 outsider owned by Britain's most famous and cantankerous show-jumper charging across the Melling Road, though you would have got relatively long odds on West Ham United holding Liverpool to a draw.

It is 50 years since they last won at Anfield and, although they were captained by Bobby Moore that day in September 1963, West Ham are not known in these parts for their defensive solidity.

Yet they produced defending that Moore would have recognised. Few have handled the threat of Luis Suarez better than the hulking figure of James Collins for whom this was an afternoon of grit and skill.

But for the thickness of Lucas Leiva's thigh, Sam Allardyce's tactics of soaking up Liverpool's pressure would have paid the highest possible dividend. Jack Collison met Gary O'Neil's corner with a header that struck the Brazilian as he stood by the post. Allardyce threw his hands to a head that now bore four stitches after a collision with a marble worktop in his kitchen. The hoodoo had not been broken but he would go home happy.

"We should have won it," the West Ham manager said. "We had the better chances and I know they had more possession but we didn't succumb to their pressure. This is a very big and well-deserved point for us because some of the teams below us have been picking up back-to-back wins. Most fans would have turned up here expecting Liverpool to walk away with this.

"Up to our game at Stoke, which we won 1-0, our away form has been dreadful and you can see why – we don't score. The defence has earned us a point but the finishing side needs to get an awful lot better."

Brendan Rodgers might have felt the same. Liverpool's dominance was relentless. But one by one the opportunities flashed by. James Tomkins cleared off the line after a move involving Liverpool's three most creative players – Suarez, Philippe Coutinho and Steven Gerrard – and finished by the Liverpool captain.

Daniel Sturridge deflected Jordan Henderson's shot into the net but was, to Rodgers' surprise, ruled to have been standing in an offside position. Both Gerrard and Suarez sent balls hissing across the face of Jussi Jaaskelainen's goal but Allardyce argued that his keeper was not required to produce heroics.

"It was a game where you had to score early on to open it up or you needed that wee bit of luck," Rodgers said. "Our form at Anfield is getting better all the time but we need to keep moving forward, get to the summer, and then make a better start to next season than we did to this one."

West Ham's chances were few but good. Mohamed Diame slalomed past two defenders, rode a challenge and sent his shot screeching into the Kop, who applauded. Had Carlton Cole scored after Lucas had sloppily lost possession on the edge of the box, their emotions would have been less generous but Daniel Agger's block was the equal of anything produced by Collins, Tomkins or Guy Demel.

At the start, it felt like a game of county cricket. There were some interesting touches, the sun was shining but nothing seemed to matter very much. By the end Anfield was eaten up with frustration. They were angry at West Ham's time-wasting even when it involved a genuinely injured player in Tomkins, who was helped off the pitch with cramp.

At the whistle, there was an acceptance that Liverpool will probably not make the fifth place required to guarantee European football and, had Tottenham not scored a late equaliser against Everton, that prospect might have disappeared completely.

The season is dribbling away much as it did in Kenny Dalglish's last few matches, although Dalglish had won them the League Cup and there was the prospect of an FA Cup final to come. Rodgers said only that Liverpool would try to finish as high as they could. When he was young that used to be first.

BBC

Liverpool and West Ham fought out a largely disappointing goalless draw which damages the home team's European ambitions but eased relegation concerns for their opponents.

The Hammers were denied their first win at Anfield for 50 years when Lucas Leiva damaged Jack Collison's late header off the line.

Luis Suarez was marshalled expertly by West Ham defender James Collins, although the Uruguay forward did force an injury-time save from Jussi Jaaskelainen at the goalkeeper's near post with a low shot.

The draw leaves Liverpool in seventh, three points behind local rivals Everton having played an extra match, while West Ham are now seven points clear of the relegation zone.

It also brings the east London side to within a point of the 38-point target manager Sam Allardyce has set before he signs a new contract with the Upton Park club.

The central-defensive pairing of Collins and James Tomkins were crucial to securing their side's clean sheet, as Allardyce earned a first point in his last nine games against the Reds.

The match had been preceded by a minute's silence in the last game at Anfield before the 24th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster on 15 April.

When the action got under way, Liverpool had the majority of possession and looked the more threatening going forward, without creating any clear-cut chances.

And it was the visitors who went close to taking the lead when midfielder Mohamed Diame, showing sparks of his quality, beat four Liverpool defenders inside the box before hammering a strike over the bar.

Liverpool's frustrations increased when Daniel Sturridge, who replaced Stewart Downing midway through the first half, saw his shot on the turn saved at the far post on the stroke of half-time.

After the break, the Merseysiders increased the pressure but the visitors held firm, Tomkins blocking a goal-bound Steven Gerrard effort just in front of the line.

The home side did have the ball in the net when Sturridge turned in Jordan Henderson's shot only for the goal to be disallowed for offside.

West Ham thought they should have had a penalty for a Jose Enrique tackle on Tomkins, who then might have conceded a spot-kick himself for a challenge on Gerrard.

As Liverpool continued to struggle to find a way through the visitors, West Ham almost stole the three points late on but Lucas cleared Collison's header off the goal-line.

Liverpool boss Brendan Rodgers:

"The effort the players put in was very good. We just needed a bit of luck to go our way. I'm disappointed Daniel Sturridge's goal was disallowed for offside as I thought it was onside.

"You have to give West Ham credit as they defended very well. I never for one moment thought they were going to win it. They got in some great blocks and are an honest group of players that put their bodies on the line but only one team tried to win it and that was us, but we couldn't put the ball in the back of the net."

West Ham manager Sam Allardyce:

"I am content, even though we should have won the game. We nullified Liverpool's strengths and created the better chances to score. I'm delighted. It's only our finishing that has cost us the three points.

"Jose Enrique kicked James Tomkins when we should have had a penalty but I am satisfied with the performance and result. We know we've created better chances than Liverpool, even though they had more possession.

"James Collins and James Tomkins were outstanding. It's a big point. We are ever closer to the magic 40."

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7 April 2013



90:00+5:01 Full time The referee blows his whistle to end the game.
90:00+3:16 Gary O'Neil challenges Oussama Assaidi unfairly and gives away a free kick. Leiva Lucas takes the free kick.
90:00+1:51 Luis Suarez takes a shot. Save by Jussi Jaaskelainen. Corner from left by-line taken by Luis Suarez.
90:00+0:59 Free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on Matthew Jarvis by Oussama Assaidi. Direct free kick taken by Matthew Taylor.
90:00+0:34 Unfair challenge on Leiva Lucas by Carlton Cole results in a free kick. Steven Gerrard restarts play with the free kick.
88:09 Oussama Assaidi crosses the ball, clearance made by James Collins.
87:16 Matthew Taylor produces a cross.
84:37 Inswinging corner taken right-footed by Gary O'Neil from the left by-line, Jack Collison takes a shot. Leiva Lucas manages to make a clearance.
85:36 Oussama Assaidi has an effort at goal from outside the penalty area missing to the wide left of the goal.
84:37 Corner taken right-footed by Gary O'Neil from the left by-line, Jack Collison takes a shot. Jose Reina makes a brilliant save.
84:11 Booking The referee shows Joey O'Brien a yellow card.
83:53 Oussama Assaidi produces a cross.
82:45 Outswinging corner taken by Luis Suarez from the right by-line, clearance made by Jack Collison.
82:45 Substitution West Ham makes a substitution, with Emanuel Pogatzetz coming on for James Tomkins.
82:45 Effort from 30 yards by Daniel Agger. Save made by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
78:40 A cross is delivered by Matthew Jarvis, Sanchez Jose Enrique makes a clearance.
77:34 Jack Collison is adjudged to have handled the ball. Free kick taken by Leiva Lucas.
77:16 Daniel Sturridge takes a shot. Jussi Jaaskelainen makes a save.
75:52 Mohamed Diame delivers the ball, Jose Reina makes a comfortable save.
75:20 Matthew Taylor takes a shot. Blocked by Jamie Carragher.
73:35 Steven Gerrard produces a right-footed shot from just outside the penalty area that goes harmlessly over the target.
70:47 Matthew Jarvis concedes a free kick for a foul on Jamie Carragher. Free kick taken by Jose Reina.
69:10 Substitution Oussama Assaidi replaces Jordan Henderson.
69:10 Corner taken by Philippe Coutinho from the right by-line to the near post, Effort from deep inside the area by Daniel Sturridge misses to the right of the goal.
67:46 Philippe Coutinho takes a shot. Blocked by James Collins. Corner taken right-footed by Steven Gerrard, clearance made by James Collins. Effort from outside the box by Luis Suarez goes wide right of the target.
67:22 Matthew Taylor takes a shot. Glen Johnson gets a block in.
66:38 Foul by Steven Gerrard on Gary O'Neil, free kick awarded. Direct free kick taken by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
65:57 Philippe Coutinho takes the inswinging corner, clearance made by Joey O'Brien.
65:06 Daniel Sturridge is caught offside. Jussi Jaaskelainen takes the free kick.
63:22 Matthew Taylor sends in a cross, Headed effort from deep inside the area by Mohamed Diame misses to the right of the goal.
61:24 Free kick crossed right-footed by Gary O'Neil from left wing.
61:24 Substitution Ricardo Vaz Te goes off and Jack Collison comes on.
61:24 Substitution Matthew Taylor joins the action as a substitute, replacing Kevin Nolan.
61:24 Foul by Jordan Henderson on Joey O'Brien, free kick awarded.
60:21 Luis Suarez produces a drilled right-footed shot from deep inside the penalty area which goes wide of the left-hand post.
59:47 Luis Suarez produces a cross.
58:14 The ball is swung over by Matthew Jarvis.
55:58 Philippe Coutinho is ruled offside. Free kick taken by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
54:48 Steven Gerrard takes a shot. James Tomkins gets a block in.
52:23 The ball is crossed by Steven Gerrard, James Collins makes a clearance. Philippe Coutinho decides to take the corner short.
50:58 A cross is delivered by Carlton Cole, clearance made by Daniel Agger.
50:22 Free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on James Tomkins by Leiva Lucas. James Collins takes the free kick.
49:20 Gary O'Neil fouled by Jamie Carragher, the ref awards a free kick. Direct free kick taken by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
48:51 Daniel Agger takes a shot. Blocked by James Collins. Short corner taken by Luis Suarez from the right by-line.
46:18 Centre by Jamie Carragher, clearance made by Joey O'Brien. Outswinging corner taken by Steven Gerrard from the right by-line, clearance by Joey O'Brien.
45:39 The ball is swung over by Daniel Sturridge, clearance made by James Tomkins.
45:01 The referee gets the second half underway.
45:00+1:09 Half time The referee calls an end to the first half.
45:00+0:38 Luis Suarez takes the inswinging corner, Daniel Sturridge takes a shot. Save made by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
44:42 Jordan Henderson takes a shot. Blocked by James Tomkins. Inswinging corner taken right-footed by Philippe Coutinho, Kevin Nolan manages to make a clearance.
43:04 A cross is delivered by Joey O'Brien, Header from close in by Kevin Nolan misses to the left of the target.
41:42 The ball is delivered by Matthew Jarvis, Headed effort from close range by Carlton Cole goes wide left of the goal.
40:06 Foul by Leiva Lucas on Ricardo Vaz Te, free kick awarded. Direct free kick taken by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
39:50 Short corner taken by Steven Gerrard from the right by-line.
37:01 Pass corner from left by-line taken by Steven Gerrard to short.
31:42 Carlton Cole takes a shot. Blocked by Daniel Agger.
31:29 Kevin Nolan gives away a free kick for an unfair challenge on Steven Gerrard.

Jamie Carragher takes the direct free kick.
28:01 Daniel Sturridge challenges Joey O'Brien unfairly and gives away a free kick. James Collins takes the free kick.
28:01 Unfair challenge on Joey O'Brien by Daniel Sturridge results in a free kick. Gary O'Neil takes the free kick.
26:43 Luis Suarez takes a shot. Save made by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
25:46 Philippe Coutinho is flagged offside by the assistant referee. Indirect free kick taken by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
24:23 Substitution Daniel Sturridge comes on in place of Stewart Downing.
24:23 Shot by Mohamed Diame from deep inside the six-yard box clear the bar.
23:35 Outswinging corner taken right-footed by Gary O'Neil from the right by-line to the near post, clearance by Jamie Carragher.
23:10 Stewart Downing takes a shot. Jussi Jaaskelainen makes a save.
22:02 Long range shot from Luis Suarez misses to the left of the target.
21:34 Matthew Jarvis produces a cross, save by Jose Reina.
18:32 Effort on goal by Mohamed Diame from long range goes harmlessly over the bar.
17:09 Mohamed Diame crosses the ball, Ricardo Vaz Te has a headed effort at goal from deep inside the area missing to the right of the target.
9:41 Effort from 25 yards by Philippe Coutinho. Blocked by James Collins.
9:07 Kevin Nolan crosses the ball.
7:56 Steven Gerrard produces a right-footed shot from just outside the box that goes wide left of the target.
6:39 Philippe Coutinho takes the chance to get an effort at goal. Save made by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
3:41 Philippe Coutinho is ruled offside. Free kick taken by Jussi Jaaskelainen.
1:27 Foul by Leiva Lucas on Gary O'Neil, free kick awarded. Gary O'Neil delivers the ball from the free kick right-footed from right channel, save by Jose Reina.
0:00 The ref blows the whistle to start the match.