

Date: 26 January 2016
 Opposition: Stoke City
 Competition: League Cup

Times	Telegraph	Echo
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26 January 2016

THE TIMES

Mignolet save takes Liverpool back to Wembley

Liverpool prevailed on penalties to reach the Capital One Cup final, where they will face either Everton or Manchester City on February 28 at Wembley. "Anfield South Awaits", as the banner in the Kop read. But it was a tough, tense night before they were able to make what was once a familiar journey.

There were successful Stoke City penalties from Jonathan Walters, Glenn Whelan, Ibrahim Afellay and Xherdan Shaqiri, and for Liverpool from Adam Lallana, Christian Benteke, Roberto Firmino and James Milner to take it to sudden death. But Simon Mignolet proved the hero, following up an earlier save from Peter Crouch with one from Marc Muniesa, for Joe Allen to win the tie.

Stoke's pressure had paid off at the end of an anodyne first half, Marko Arnautovic giving them a lead on the night they just about deserved, whatever Liverpool's legitimate complaints about offside. Stoke were far the more purposeful before the break. Trailing by Jordon Ibe's goal at the Britannia Stadium, Stoke had decided to mix height and high-class harrying, in the shapes of Crouch and Walters, with the more delicate skills of Bojan.

Mark Hughes's side were more direct, more aerial. Operation Crouch was soon under way. Glen Johnson launched a long throw towards the former Liverpool striker, who began a physical duel with Mamadou Sakho by leaving the defender rubbing his nose and shaking his head. Jack Butland then drilled a monstrous long kick downfield, picking out Crouch. Sakho needed Kolo Toure 's help at times. Returning to the line-up and returning to his old stamping ground, Crouch kept showing for the ball, flicking it on, occasionally bringing it down and linking with Bojan and Arnautovic. Stoke were up for this, their mood reflected by their fans' loud, defiant rendition of Delilah as the home supporters sang You'll Never Walk Alone. Walters was also in the thick of it, looking to close Alberto Moreno down and open up Liverpool's defence. Two of Walters's clever breaks almost brought reward in front of the Kop. Making a diagonal run, Walters cut in from right to left, but his shot was deflected by the tracking Moreno into the Kop. Stoke players immediately surrounded Simon Mignolet as they awaited the inswinging corner, looking to prey on Liverpool's vulnerability at setpieces. Fortunately for Mignolet, the ball failed to beat the first man, much to Hughes's frustration. Walters was on the move again, timing his run to beat offside, controlling Erik Pieters's ball but shooting wide as Sakho challenged. Liverpool were warned. Their captain, Jordan Henderson, had spoken of the pain of bowing out at this stage of the competition to Chelsea last season. Liverpool needed a strong midfielder to soothe some nerves, to take the game to Stoke, and Emre Can accepted the challenge.

Three times in the middle of the first half, Can stormed towards Butland's goal. The Germany player first embarked on a long run, holding off Stoke's swarm of tacklers, driving from left to right before the visiting team managed to force him down a cul-de-sac. Can then somehow spirited the ball around Whelan, bringing a huge roar of approval for a rare moment of quality in the first half. Can then powered upfield again, sending a shot just wide of Butland's left upright. It was scrappy, nervy and tense, a semi-final. Wembley was at stake. A few challenges were mistimed. Marc Muniesa, replacing the injured Ryan Shawcross, slid in and took out James Milner. As Jonathan Moss jogged across, Lucas caught up with him and had a quiet word. Moss was already reaching for the yellow card. Whelan then flattened Moreno.

As the half closed, Stoke fans briefly became vexed with Moss, and chanted "we always get **** refs" yet it was a poor decision by the officials, Moss and his assistant Lee Betts, that gifted them the lead on the night. The move was a fine one, Bojan and Walters involved in the build-up before Bojan darted down the inside-right channel and rolled the ball behind Sakho to Arnautovic. Toure was caught out by Arnautovic's run, allowing the Austrian the time to steer the ball left-foot past Mignolet. Jon Flanagan was running in, his hand aloft, appealing for offside. Toure screamed for the goal to be overruled. So did the Kop. Betts kept his flag down. Moss signalled a goal. The Kop always salute visiting goalkeepers and Butland was giving a particularly respectful reception as he took up his place for the start of the second half. The England goalkeeper did well to repel with his left foot a low shot from Roberto Firmino as the half opened. Yet Liverpool still lacked a cutting edge, and belief. Henderson had been disappointing and was removed for Christian Benteke just before the hour mark.

Yet still the force stayed with Stoke. Attacking their fans in the Anfield Road End, Walters had a shot blocked by Sakho. Back came Liverpool, Benteke threading a pass behind Arnautovic for Flanagan, overlapping in keeping with his "Cafu" nickname. The young right back's cross was intercepted low by Butland.

With Benteke on, Liverpool looked to put in more crosses. From one Moreno delivery, Benteke briefly threatened and the ball fell for Flanagan, but Stoke surrounded him. Flanagan caught Ibrahim Afellay as the game moved towards extra time. He now had Lucas alongside him, after Toure was removed for Joe Allen. The Welshman's first act was to bring down Afellay as Stoke broke. Hughes' side sought to prevent the additional period. Walters charged forward, Charlie Adam bent a corner towards the near-post and then lifted one to the far-post where Crouch was penalised for climbing. When Moss signalled for the end of normal time, Klopp gathered his players in a huddle and delivered a very animated talk, full of hand movements. Stoke's Johnson and Muniesa required treatment and Liverpool started extra time the stronger. Firmino's snap-shot was immediately saved by Butland.

Liverpool then lost Adam to a calf injury but his replacement, Marco van Ginkel, almost scored on the cusp of half-time in extra time. Crouch flicked play on and Van Ginkel chested the ball down, burst through but hit the post. Van Ginkel again went close in the second period but Mignolet saved. And the goalkeeper was to prove an even bigger hero before long.

the guardian

Joe Allen fires Liverpool to Wembley in shootout win over Stoke City Joe Allen took the acclaim from his Liverpool team-mates as coolly as his decisive penalty, Lucas Leiva celebrated manically in front of 4,400 despairing Stoke Cityfans and Simon Mignolet wallowed in the Kop's applause long after Jürgen Klopp's latest chorus-line salute ended. Three months into the job and Klopp has steered Liverpool to Wembley but their record 12th League Cup final appearance owed everything to the unsung, the unappreciated and the maligned in his ranks. History shows Liverpool do not require German guidance on how to win a penalty shootout and their latest, their 11th success in 13 lotteries, was built on the reflexes of their often-criticised goalkeeper and the composure of Lucas and Allen in sudden death. The former Liverpool striker Peter Crouch and Emre Can missed a penalty apiece before Mignolet threw himself to the left to save the defender Marc Muniesa's effort, Stoke's seventh, leaving Allen to seal victory with a nerveless finish. Liverpool had no designated taker by that stage.

It was cruel in the extreme on Stoke, who played with the confidence, composure and intelligence that had deserted them in the first leg at the Britannia Stadium and levelled the contest through Marko Arnautovic's controversial goal on the stroke of half-time. The visitors were the better team until tiring in the pursuit of a decisive second goal but Allen's role as conqueror was fitting.

Liverpool reached Wembley the way their journey in the Capital One Cup had begun against Carlisle United; requiring penalties to save them from a witless, careless performance that only improved once the Wales midfielder replaced Kolo Touré in the 85th minute. Allen injected accuracy into Liverpool's passing that was sorely lacking and took a booking for the team when scything down Ibrahim Afellay as Stoke threatened to break away late on. An away win at that stage would not have surprised an anxious Anfield but, as at Norwich City on Saturday, Klopp's team edged it despite themselves. It is not the worst habit a manager can have. Mark Hughes had urged Stoke to make history and secure a first League Cup final appearance since 1972 but they had to rewrite history, and cope without the injured Ryan Shawcross, to do so. Liverpool had never lost a League Cup semi-final at Anfield or a cup tie against Stoke and their manager never suffered defeat in a semi-final with Borussia Dortmund. The records and a 1-0 first-leg lead should have encouraged Liverpool yet they were cagey, apprehensive in contrast to the visitors' assured, clear approach. There was no subtlety in the Stoke manager's gameplan. His intentions were clear the moment the teamsheet landed and Peter Crouch's name was in the starting line-up while Xherdan Shaqiri sat on the bench. In fairness Liverpool had invited a direct game, or a "heading festival" as Klopp predicted before kick-off, through their persistent weaknesses when defending set pieces. Stoke provided Crouch with few opportunities to punish that flaw from open play but his aerial battle against Mamadou Sakho proved crucial in dragging the France defender out of position for Stoke's breakthrough.

The semi-final started at a frantic pace and to the backdrop of a vibrant atmosphere, with Anfield applauding en masse – Klopp and the travelling supporters included – in memory of Owen McVeigh, a 11-year-old Liverpool fan who recently lost his fight with leukaemia.

An intense, scrappy cup tie saw both sides struggle with their passing and first touch. The captains, Jordan Henderson and Glenn Whelan, were telling team-mates to keep cool heads when they were responsible for misplaced passes and Hughes was out of his seat with only five minutes gone to berate the Stoke defence for sitting too deep. Irritation on the touchline remained a feature of the first half from both managers. The occasion got to Stoke in the first leg, an error-strewn performance undermining home advantage at the Britannia, but so too did Liverpool. Klopp's injury-hit team never allowed Stoke to settle and forced mistakes in a relentless display. They attempted the same at Anfield but without the same result as the long ball limited Liverpool's pressing in the final third. It also created the first clear opening of the night when Erik Pieters's clearance caught the home defence square and sent Jonathan Walters through on goal. As in the final act of the first leg, the boyhood Evertonian dragged a shot wide of Mignolet's far post. A 25-yard drive from Emre Can was the sum total of Liverpool's threat in the first half and Stoke's confident display was rewarded, wrongly, in stoppage time. Crouch won possession deep in the Liverpool half and Alberto Moreno was nowhere to be seen when Walters released Bojan Krkic down the right. Bojan played a perfectly weighted pass behind the recovering Sakho and, despite Arnautovic being offside in the centre, Lee Betts' flag stayed down as the unmarked forward scored from close range.

Liverpool's tempo improved after the interval and Roberto Firmino struck the outside of Jack Butland's post while Sakho made two vital blocks to deny Walters. Stoke's Marco van Ginkel, on for the injured substitute Charlie Adam, hit the same spot as Firmino in extra time but chances were limited for both sides during the 120 minutes. Adam's injury, depriving Hughes of the opportunity to replace the tiring Crouch with Joselu, had a big impact on the visitors' performance, although not as big as Mignolet, Allen and co in the shootout that took Liverpool to Wembley.

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The Mail

KLOPP TAKEN to the wire; 'Offside' goal from Arnautovic sends tie into extra time

JURGEN Klopp no doubt came to Liverpool for intense cup nights like this. He was probably thinking more Real Madrid and the Champions League than Stoke City and the Capital One Cup. Still, his Liverpool rebuild has to start by laying a first stone -- and Wembley remains a fine destination.

He was still in limbo, however, at 9.30 last night as this semi-final ticked into extra time. A first-half goal from Marko Arnautovic -- who looked to be offside -- had levelled the aggregate scores, leaving Liverpool with a tremendous scrap on their hands. There were furious late appeals for handball, and a frenetic pace despite the aching limbs, but still Liverpool could not find a way through. If anything, there were long periods when Stoke looked the likelier to score. A second goal would ultimately have left Liverpool requiring two -- and they barely looked capable of half that for much of the match. The second half was as furious as the first was stultifying. It began with Liverpool at last bursting into life and winning a corner, which Peter Crouch failed to clear. The ball recycled, a shot from Roberto Firmino hit the near post, although referee Jonathan Moss gave the credit to the outstretched leg of Jack Butland and awarded a corner.

After that, it was all Stoke. The aerial bombardment that had been promised when the team was first named at last arrived and Crouch made the most of it with knockdowns, forcing untidy scrambles and general pandemonium in the Liverpool back line. Just as Stoke manager Mark Hughes no doubt ordered during half-time. Simon Mignolet, now tested, was less than convincing, punting one frantic clearance straight to an opponent before a Jonathan Walters shot was gamely charged down by Kolo Toure, the ball cannoning off him like an old-fashioned superball off a wall.

Another hopeful cross brought out the worst in the Liverpool back four, a comedy of hesitation ending with it pitching in the six-yard box as hulking red shirts danced around it. Perhaps wishing to fight fire with fire, Klopp brought on his own big man in Christian Benteke -- that the man making way was his captain Jordan Henderson underlined his dwindling form. With Dele Alli emerging as a star of the season at Tottenham and the European Championship looming in the summer, it really is no time to lose form. With a target on the field at last, Liverpool played Stoke at their own game. James Milner swung in a corner and Mamadou Sakho headed it wide at the far post. Klopp, perched as ever on the edge of his technical area, hunkered down for a long night. On Saturday it was his glasses, last night it was his watch strap. He wouldn't stop fiddling with it. He is having a bit of bother with the accessories, is Klopp. And the defence, of course. The defence has been something of a nightmare. Hence the starting XI selected by Stoke.

Crouch, Arnautovic and Walters. Plenty of height, plenty of muscle. Hughes had obviously honed in on Liverpool's weakness, not that it would have taken much in the way of research. The problem being that Stoke are not really set up to play that way any more. Hughes has refined them, smoothed those raw edges.

Everyone thinks the direct style is easy, and compared to tiki-taka it probably is. That doesn't mean Stoke can transform into Dave Bassett's Wimbledon overnight -- not convincingly anyway. In the first half, they did their best to supply Crouch in a way that would expose Liverpool's much-discussed weakness in the air, but they were plainly out of practice. Crouch won most of what they played up to him but Liverpool mopped up the second balls without too much fuss.

Indeed it was Walters, not Crouch, who provided the early threat for Stoke, and Arnautovic who got the vital goal before half-time -- and most of the danger came with the ball on the floor. In the 14th minute, Walters escaped his marker and had the first shot of the game, deflected over. It was a half-chance, no more.

Soon after, though, he should have put Stoke ahead. Marc Muniesa played a long punt upfield -- half hopeful clearance, half the most direct form of counter-attack -- and Walters turned Kolo Toure perfectly, charging through one on one against Mignolet. He drew the goalkeeper but his low shot travelled wide of the far post. Hughes whirled to face his assistants on the bench in boiling fury.

Yet Liverpool's resistance was barely visible. They worked hard, scurrying around to close down Stoke high up the field, but Butland did not have a save to make in the first half. Liverpool's ineffectuality was summed up by one run from Emre Can, which began on the left, continued with him cutting inside and sprinting the width of the penalty area before turning and heading towards goal, this time on the right. At which point, under pressure, he ran the ball out, to derision from the away end. Can came closer with a shot from range following a quick free-kick and a pass from Alberto Moreno in the 34th minute, but it was meagre stuff, even by Liverpool's inconsistent standards this season. And then, in the final minute of the first half, Stoke cracked the tie wide open.

It was Bojan Krkic doing the damage down the right. He got in behind his full-back and whipped in a near post cross for Arnautovic to convert. Liverpool claimed offside, and may have had a case, but the extent of their ambition and success was so poor it was hard to have much sympathy.

Stoke had made all the running in the game, albeit without great quality, and Arnautovic's was the first shot on target. At least it made a game of it, the scores level on aggregate. The neutrals, at least, will have been grateful for small mercies.

57 YEARS since Stoke last won at Anfield -- a 4-3 victory in March 1959 in the old Second Division. In their 36 visits in that time, they drew five and lost 31.

The Daily Telegraph

Allen keeps his cool to clinch final place in shoot-out drama

Liverpool 0 Stoke City 1 Arnautovic 45 aet; agg: 1-1. Liverpool win 6-5 on pens Att: 43,091

There had been 13 penalties and the time was close to 10.30pm when Joe Allen, an unlikely new hero for the Jurgen Klopp era, stepped up to dispatch the decisive spot kick in a Capital One Cup semi-final shootout that keeps alive his manager's hopes of a trophy in his first season. It was not the great semi-final performance that Klopp might have hoped for to sweep his team to Wembley and, in fact, in the mayhem of the celebrations that followed, it was easy to overlook the fact that Mark Hughes's team won the game but lost the tie. Not since 1959 had a Stoke side come to Anfield and been victorious, and one more goal would have seen them through, but they could not find the quality to deliver.

Klopp goes back to Wembley for the first time since his Borussia Dortmund team lost that momentous all-German Champions League final to Bayern Munich in 2013. Asked about that experience in the aftermath of last night's game he was still complaining about the fact that Munich's Brazilian defender, Dante, had not been sent off. Klopp did not watch the penalties, citing the complaints of fans behind him and pain from an old cruciate ligament injury for him taking a seat behind his coaching staff who stood on the touchline to watch the shoot-out. What about the prospect of an all-Merseyside final? "It would be the biggest thing, a cool thing," he said, "but only if we win the game, right?" Despite periods when they found themselves on top, Hughes's side were hanging on by the end of the 120 minutes and that exhaustion seemed to bear out in the penalty shoot-out. Peter Crouch, who had led the line tirelessly all night, in just his fifth start of the season, had his penalty - Stoke's second - saved, only to be rescued immediately by Jack Butland saving from Emre Can.

Then, with the shoot-out into sudden death, Simon Mignolet also saved from Marc Muniesa and Allen, a second-half substitute, stepped up to beat Butland. The scorer of the all-important equaliser against Arsenal this month, Allen looked like a very competent mid-fielder in the latter stages of the game, although, overall, this was not a cup tie of any great quality, with the late human drama of penalty kicks giving it an edge that the match itself lacked.

That all-Merseyside cup final, the first since 1989, hangs on Everton's second leg against Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium tonight. It was 27 years ago that Ian Rush won the FA Cup final for Liverpool against Everton in extra time and while they have met in an FA Cup semi-final at Wembley since then, they are very closely matched this time around. The game's only goal was scored in time added on at the end of the first half and although well worked by Stoke, the goalscorer, Marko Arnautovic, was well offside - "double offside" according to Klopp - when he met a cross from the right from Bojan Krkic. While neither side were able to dominate the tie, it was notable that Liverpool created very few chances and, with Crouch restored to the attack, Stoke always looked dangerous.

Leading the tie through Jordan Ibe's first-leg winner, Klopp started with Roberto Firmino as the unorthodox centre-forward in a 4-3-3 formation but switched in the second half to a 4-4-2 with the Brazilian in support of Christian Benteke, a second-half substitute. Liverpool came strong at the end of 90 minutes, and then towards the end of extra time, but Stoke created the best chance in that final period. That was when substitute Mario van Ginkel, on loan from Chelsea, ran on to Crouch's flick in the area and hit a post. Otherwise, there were very few chances of note for either side, and later it was more his team's defiance in the face of Stoke's aerial threat that Klopp praised.

Hughes's team selection showed he had paid attention to Liverpool's recent defensive weaknesses: a recall for Crouch, who has become the peripheral figure in the bold new era of Barcelona academy graduates and mercurial wingers.

It will be 10 years next month since Crouch scored the only goal in a fifth-round FA Cup tie against Manchester United at Anfield. Until the final moments of the half, Stoke, chasing a one-goal deficit from the first leg, struggled to create chances. Jonathan Walters broke through onto a long ball from Erik Pieters but ran his shot wide of the post. The breakthrough came at the end of the first half. Lost out on the left wing and marked by the Liverpool right-back Jon Flanagan, Arnautovic had done very little before he helped to win the ball in midfield on a Stoke breakaway. The ball went out right to Bojan, and his cross in behind the retreating Liverpool defence was clipped in at the near post by Arnautovic. He was offside when the ball was played, even Hughes admitted, but he finished well. After half-time, the pitch of the game changed and it felt more like a cup tie in its final stages. The home crowd sensed more purpose about their side and a period of pressure ended with Firmino hitting a post.

Klopp responded by bringing on Benteke before the hour, in place of Jordan Henderson. Hughes brought on Charlie Adam for Bojan with 20 minutes remaining, raising to three the quota of former Liverpool players in the away side. In extra time, Adam injured a calf and had to be replaced by Van Ginkel and the Scotsman will be out for some time, Hughes said later.

Liverpool ended extra time defending a series of dead balls from Stoke that might have decided the game had the home side not been quite so determined. That seemed to give Klopp the greatest satisfaction, and he said he did not mind who he faced on Feb 28 at Wembley, although he will know by now that if it is Everton that game will take on a whole new dimension.

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THE INDEPENDENT

Mignolet and Allen the heroes as Liverpool make it to Wembley
 Simon Mignolet secured Liverpool's passage to Wembley for next month's Capital One Cup final with two penalty shootout saves before Joe Allen struck the decisive spot-kick to eliminate Stoke City. With the game going to extra-time and penalties following Marco Arnautovic's contentious first-half goal - the Austrian was clearly offside when released by Bojan Krkic - Liverpool booked their 12th League Cup final appearance after Mignolet saved from Peter Crouch and Marc Muniesa. Following a season that has seen him subjected to persistent criticism, the Belgian goalkeeper was cheered off the Anfield pitch after his match-winning heroics. Earlier, Stoke ended their 57-year wait for victory against Liverpool at Anfield thanks to Arnautovic's controversial first-half winner. His goal, deep into first-half stoppage time levelled the score on aggregate. But with neither side able to score in the second half, the two teams were forced to play out an additional 30 minutes in an effort to settle the tie.

Jordan Ibe's goal in the first leg at the Britannia Stadium had given Liverpool the 1-0 advantage which forced Stoke manager Mark Hughes to go for broke in this return fixture at Anfield. The Welshman's game-plan was obvious once the team sheets had confirmed the presence of Crouch up front for Stoke, with the former Liverpool and England forward supported by the attacking threat of Jonathan Walters, Bojan and Arnautovic.

Liverpool's frailty when defending set-pieces - indeed any aerial ball - had forced Jurgen Klopp to admit that he had held "intensive" talks with his players in order to eradicate the problems that have led to panic whenever the ball has approached Mignolet's penalty area. Liverpool tend not to lose at home to Stoke and such was the confidence of the Kop that one banner proclaimed, "Anfield South Awaits".

When Liverpool won four successive League Cups in the 1980s, Wembley was every inch Anfield South due to the regularity of the club's trips there to major finals, but Klopp's team went into this game with trophies in thin supply in recent years. Two unsuccessful semi-finals last season, with defeats against Chelsea in this competition and Aston Villa in the FA Cup, only served to increase the frustration of a club that has become desperate to recreate the magic of their glory days. Stoke have proven their ability to beat the best this season, with Manchester City, Chelsea and Manchester United all falling victim to Hughes's team at the Britannia, but their form has been less convincing away from home. So it was perhaps unsurprising that they struggled to test Liverpool during a scrappy first half, with Crouch nullified by Kolo Tour[c] and Mamadou Sakho. Stoke seemed caught between two stools. They had the towering Crouch to torment Liverpool in the air, but the ball barely left the ground, so determined were Bojan and Arnautovic to make a difference with flair rather than punts upfield. Chances were few and far between. Walters saw an early shot from 20 yards deflected behind by Milner, before the Republic of Ireland forward, born across the Mersey on the Wirral, flashed a left-footed effort wide of Mignolet's far post after running onto an Erik Pieters pass.

Liverpool were happy to sit back and contain Stoke. But the two chances which came their way before half-time fell to midfielder Emre Can - the first a drag-back and shot from 20 yards which flew high and wide before the German fizzed a right-footed strike inches wide from 25 yards.

Stoke made the breakthrough in first-half stoppage time, though, with a goal that should not have been allowed as Arnautovic appeared to be at least a yard offside when he was released by Bojan.

Hughes's team had at least sensed the chance to catch Liverpool off guard, breaking with a swift counter-attack as the home side waited for referee Jon Moss to blow the whistle for half-time. But when Walters fed Bojan on the right, Arnautovic had already raced ahead of Tour[c] and Sakho into the penalty area. The Austrian failed to halt his run and the assistant referee's flag should have been raised as soon as Bojan played the ball, but the flag did not move and, as Liverpool's bewildered defenders appealed for offside, Arnautovic guided a right-foot strike past Mignolet in front of the Kop.

It was a key error by the linesman, but it gave Liverpool something to rail against in the second half and they began with a sense of injustice, desperately attempting to cancel out Stoke's lead. Roberto Firmino struck the foot of the post with a right-foot volley on 48 minutes, but as the volume inched higher inside Anfield, it was the visitors who grew in stature.

And but for two crucial defensive blocks by Sakho - both from Walters - Stoke would have deservedly doubled their lead inside the opening 15 minutes.

Hughes's players were more at ease on the ball, more willing to create and Liverpool began to pound long balls forward in an effort to find the goal which would take them to Wembley. Then came the moment when Christian Benteke, on as a substitute, somehow failed to connect with Alberto Moreno's cross, six yards from goal. The ball appeared perfectly weighted for the Belgian to power into the net, but he ducked at the vital moment, leaving Jon Flanagan to stumble on the ball. It was chaotic and shambolic at the same time, and somehow summed up Liverpool's performance.

Stoke dominated the half an hour of extra-time. Substitute Marco van Ginkel struck the post on 104 minutes and then forced a fine save from Mignolet 10 minutes later after Crouch had gone close with a back-heeled flick. Yet Stoke's chances were not converted and Liverpool made them pay in the most heartbreaking fashion in the penalty shootout

DAILY MIRROR

KLOPP'S SI OF RELIEF; Shoot-out heroics from Mignolet and Allen sink Stoke and give Jurgen his first Wembley final

WHO knew German infallibility at penalties stretched as far as the manager? Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool are in the Capital One Cup final courtesy of a dramatic penalty shoot-out after a Marko Arnautovic goal on the stroke of half-time had forced the two-legged tie into extra time.

Both sides must have fancied their chances in the shoot-out - Liverpool had won 10 of their previous 12, including that rather famous one in Istanbul 11 years ago, while Stoke had won their previous five.

But in the end it was Liverpool who ran out winners thanks to an unlikely hero - Simon Mignolet.

The Belgian keeper has had his critics this season but his brilliant save from Marc Muniesa gave Joe Allen the chance to settle it and he did exactly that with Liverpool's sixth successful penalty out of seven.

Stoke were determined to feast on Liverpool's defensive frailties, right from the off and sticking 6ft 7in striker Peter Crouch up front was enough to give Klopp nightmares.

This Liverpool defence ships goals and caused Klopp to call a crisis meeting after their 5-4 win at Norwich on Saturday.

The rest of us loved it but Klopp has described some of their defending as "crazy." Sorry, Jurgen. But it didn't get any less crazy against Stoke.

Jon Walters' energy and runs dragged Liverpool's defence all over the place.

Bojan was clever and strong as he dropped deep and Liverpool struggled to cope with his passing which cut the home side open.

But it was a first half short on clear-cut chances, big on midfield congestion.

Stoke went closest as Walters' shot was deflected over the bar and then he could have put the visitors ahead after 23 minutes.

Walters raced clear, his pace outstripping Mamadou Sakho, but the Stoke striker dragged his shot wide of the far post. The warning was not needed. In first-half injury time, Stoke took the lead with a controversial goal as TV replays showed Arnautovic was clearly offside.

The visitors launched a counterattack which capitalised on trademark sloppiness in the Liverpool back-line.

Sakho got the wrong side of his man and Jon Flanagan did not track back.

Bojan's perfectly weighted low cross was perfect for Arnautovic and, with no offside flag, the Stoke striker prodded the ball into the bottom corner with a cool finish.

From a dull first half, suddenly it was game on.

Stoke boss Hughes punched the air on the touchline as Klopp turned away in disgust.

The goal changed everything as Liverpool lost their nerve.

Stoke grew in confidence and Arnautovic, clearly in the mood, began to dominate the second half.

At the opposite end of the scale, Sakho was going from the sublime to the ridiculous. One minute making heroic blocks, the next allowing the ball to bounce all over the penalty box.

Sakho did make one terrific block in the 62nd minute when Stoke caused havoc.

The ball fell to Arnautovic and his shot was destined for the bottom corner until the Liverpool defender threw himself in the way.

The only way of stopping Arnautovic's onslaught was when he hobbled off clutching his back and that almost signalled a change in momentum as Liverpool pinned Stoke further and further back.

Marco van Ginkel, on loan from Chelsea, went agonisingly close to doubling Stoke's lead in the last minute of the first half of extra time but his closerange shot found the foot of Simon Mignolet's post.

The Kop feared the worst when it got to penalties but their heroes kept their nerve, only Emre Can missing from the spot.

And it was Allen who despatched the final kick, but Mignolet must take his share of the credit for stopping two Stoke spot-kicks.

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Klopp and silverware makes sense and unlikely heroes are still heroes
Unlikely heroes are still heroes Liverpool's Capital One Cup journey began with an unlikely hero, with Adam Bogdan's heroics ensuring the Reds made their way past Carlisle United in the third round back in September. It will, in all likelihood, remain the sole high point in the Hungarian's Reds career. They were booed that night, and could have been so again here after an insipid night's work. But Simon Mignolet and Joe Allen had other ideas. Mignolet introduced himself to Liverpool fans with a penalty save against Stoke on his debut back in 2013. And while his stock is no longer anywhere near as high as it was that night, his denial of first Peter Crouch and then Marc Muniesa here means he departed Anfield a hero. So too, Allen. Unlucky not to start, the Welshman showed courage and composure when he came on in midfield, and held his nerve superbly with Liverpool's seventh penalty. For a man who has never truly had acceptance at Anfield, this was a great moment. His case to start more games is getting stronger by the week. "We could be heroes, just for one day..." - I forget who it was who said that...

Klopp and silverware, you know it makes sense

A penny for Brendan Rodgers' thoughts as this madcap night unfolded. This was the kind of performance Liverpool had produced too often during the Ulsterman's reign at Anfield – notably in a semi final against Aston Villa last season - and yet it secured his successor a chance of silverware within five months of taking charge. Anfield South will be in operation again at the end of February. Jurgen Klopp has the chance to make himself an instant Reds hero – that's if he isn't already. The German, unlike so many of his players, knows how to win things. He knows what it takes, he knows what it means. He has the temperament for big games, big occasions. He belongs on that stage. Liverpool will need their manager's experience and know-how at Wembley, make no mistake. Because on this evidence the team doesn't have nearly enough.

Result was what was required– but is this team better than average?

If the hope was that the drama and emotion of victory at Norwich would give Liverpool's season a shot in the arm, then it was to prove misguided here. If anything, Saturday's exploits looked to weigh heavily on Jurgen Klopp's Reds, who were a mile off the pace for large parts of this encounter. Anfield tried to get rocking, but events on the pitch meant it was difficult. Too many in red – including Jordan Henderson and James Milner, captain and vice-captain respectively – failed to get their games going. Adam Lallana, the hero of Carrow Road, was similarly sluggish. The movement was poor and the passing, generally, was awful; either too hard, too soft or misdirected. Stoke were without their captain and best defender, but looked comfortable. At Anfield. In a semi-final. Jack Butland, until the shootout, had precious little to do. The result was what everyone wanted, but the performance level wasn't good enough, and it does little to dispel the notion that this is a very average Liverpool team, no matter the outcome. Norwich was supposed to galvanise. If this win doesn't, then there's nothing down for the Reds

A heading festival – but no invitation for the Reds

On Monday, Jurgen Klopp praised Mark Hughes for "perhaps the biggest change in a team's style in the last 10 years."

And on Tuesday, the Stoke boss showed that there is still a fair bit left over from the Tony Pulis era at the Britannia.

"A heading festival," was what Klopp said he was expecting having seen the Potters' team sheet. Jon Walters and Peter Crouch both started, doubtless seeking to exploit Liverpool's weakness in the air, and the collective nervousness at set-pieces. The cheers which greeted Mamadou Sakho meeting Ibrahim Afellay's first corner of the night with a firm header laid that nervousness bare. No wonder Klopp described dead balls as a "self-fulfilling prophecy" after the Norwich game. In open play, Crouch won the majority of the balls played up to him, allowing Bojan, Walters and the dangerous Marko Arnautovic to work off a reliable target. Liverpool, with Roberto Firmino as their attacking focal point, had no such luxury. Crouch created two chances for Marco Van Ginkel in extra time, either of which could have put the Reds out. There aren't many like him around, but Liverpool need to find a way to deal with aerial threats quickly. Because the whole world knows how to hurt them now.

Brad Smith is knocking on Moreno's door, and loudly

He didn't play for Liverpool at the start of this season, but Brad Smith could be starting games for them pretty soon if Alberto Moreno doesn't show swift signs of improvement. After his nightmare at Norwich, there were plenty who would have given the Spaniard the night off here. Klopp, though, has more faith than many of his side's supporters. Misplaced faith? That would be a harsh thing to say, but this was another night in which the bad outweighed the good for the former Sevilla man. The only mark in his favour was that he was far from alone in that. But it was he who was sucked in by a clever player and an old trick for Stoke's goal, with Bojan using the space he rashly vacated to set up (the offside) Marko Arnautovic. It wasn't the only time it happened. Jamie Carragher, summarising for Sky Sports, was brutal at half time. "He was all over the place, and he has been all season," said the Reds legend. One can only imagine the kind of dialogue those two would have if they were playing alongside one another.

The good parts of Moreno's game – his recovery speed in particular – earn him plenty of praise, but there are way too many gaps. His positional play is poor, his use of the ball erratic, his decision-making weak. In short, he makes too many errors, and doesn't seem to be learning from them. By the time extra time came around, he was allowing himself to become distracted by the antics of Jon Walters. Not helpful, when your side need clear heads. It says plenty about his composure that he was at least eighth on the list of penalty takers. It will be no surprise if against West Ham on Saturday, Smith starts. The big question is how long before he's doing so on a regular basis.



Sheer heartbreak for courageous Potters

DENIS, Jackie, TC, Jimmy, 'Sir' Gordon and Co. had assembled a dozen-or-so spare chairs on that pedestal they have rightly occupied for the past 44 years. Even Pej, that arch critic of the modern-day player, had slowly extended one of his legs to nudge a vacant seat out into the open, probably for fellow left back Erik Pieters. Sadly, those chairs must go back, for a little while longer, as last night's heroic defeat still leaves that exalted plinth occupied only by Messrs Smith, Marsh, Conroy, Greenhoff, Banks and the rest of their 1972 cup-winning colleagues. But how close we came to toasting the courageous achievements of a Stoke side bursting every sinew to upset the nation's expectations. More than 4,500 Stokies saluted their players like rarely before after seeing them lose so agonisingly in a penalty shootout which twice saw them one save away from reaching Wembley. Jon Walters and Glenn Whelan scored from the penalty spot, either side of Peter Crouch missing for Stoke and Emre Can for Liverpool, to leave it 2-2. Ibrahim Afellay made it 3-2 to Stoke, Roberto Firmino 3-3, then Xherdan Shaqiri sent the keeper the wrong way to leave James Milner having to score for 4-4. Into sudden death we went as Marco van Ginkel and Lucas both netted for 5-5 before Marc Muniesa's spot kick was touched round his left post by Simon Mignolet. Joe Allen stepped up to with the chance to send Liverpool into the final, kept his nerve and duly booked their passage to Wembley.

What drama after Marko Arnautovic's 10th goal for club and country this season had levelled the tie on aggregate in the dying embers of the first half of normal time, but there was far more delirium to come before the Capital One Cup final was certain of its first participant. Crouch, 35 this coming Saturday, was recalled against his old club for only his fifth start of the season, while Marc Muniesa was in for the injured Ryan Shawcross for what was only his seventh start of the campaign. Anfield under the lights was every bit as resplendent and raucous as in generations gone by with Wembley the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. There was little chance for Stoke to nurse through any early nerves as the home side, responding first to the atmosphere, tore around the pitch to try and unsettle the opposition as successfully as they had in the first leg. Glenn Whelan's long diagonal to the recalled Arnautovic, meanwhile, was an early indication of Stoke's willingness to be more direct than usual. Stoke appeared to draw some overdue confidence from their first pop at goal when Arnautovic slipped in Jon Walters for a shot deflected over and into the Kop with almost 15 on the clock. Bojan, playing with zip in his game, added to that confidence with a couple of dribbles as the visitors promised to grow into the game and the tough task of redressing their first-leg failings. Stoke's growing belief was such that it wasn't too big a surprise to see them create – and squander – the first real chance in the 22nd minute when a great ball over the top by Erik Pieters sent Walters scurrying clear. Kolo Toure recovered enough ground to close in on Walters just as he clipped his shot on the run past Simon Mignolet, across his goal and past the far post as the Kop stood open-mouthed behind the goal.

Liverpool's fragmented play and anti-climactic attacking was doing nothing to sustain the Kop's voice, but everything to trigger a few pointed gestures from their animated manager as the game reached the half-hour mark with Stoke still alive and kicking. Which was probably why Liverpool were happy to try their luck from distance when Emre Can sent Jack Butland flying to his left to ensure the German's long-ranger did no damage. Stoke's most dangerous set piece of the first half then saw Pieters deliver towards a crowded box for Bojan to head on and well beyond Crouch's greedy intentions at the far post.

Jurgen Klopp registered his growing disquiet on the touchline while another German, Philipp Wollscheid, continued to look rather calmer at the heart of the visiting defence as the half threatened to end even and scoreless. But then in stoppage time came the breakthrough Stoke were craving. Their final attack of the half featured fine interplay between Walters and Bojan to leave the latter scampering right of goal before crossing low for the unmarked Arnautovic to tuck deftly away in front of a bemused Kop. A bemusement made all the greater once word got round that Arnautovic was actually half-a-yard offside.

The second half began with a bang for Liverpool as Roberto Firmino struck the base of Butland's left-hand post from a half-cleared corner, while James Milner went to ground seeking a penalty from a Walters challenge even though there was no foul and it was outside the area. Stoke's nerve was being tested amid a right royal roar and some of their defending starting to look a little fraught.

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Yet there were two chances for Walters to double City's lead, but Mignolet was off his line to prevent the first and Mamadou Sakho brilliantly blocked the second shortly afterwards.

Liverpool's old frailties had certainly resurfaced in front of their increasingly tetchy goalkeeper by the time Christian Benteke replaced Jordan Henderson shortly before the hour mark.

Sakho denied Walters with another block, this time left of Mignolet's goal, as Stoke's willingness to lob into the box for the lighthouse that was Crouch continued to disconcert the home side.

Sakho was suddenly occupying centre stage after roaming upfield for a free-kick and heading wide at the far post under admirable pressure from the excellent Wollscheid.

Charlie Adam's introduction for the impressive Bojan meant three ex-Liverpool players were now trying to silence a crowd whose tune they once danced to.

An air of anxiety inevitably descended over the final minutes of normal time, plus four of added time, and it was felt most by the home contingent as City pressured from a free-kick and two corners for that elusive second goal.

Extra time began with a reminder of Liverpool's largely latent talents as Benteke controlled for Firmino to drive goalwards and force Butland to save cleanly to his left.

Liverpool were spraying it around with worrying fluency against some visibly tiring Stoke legs, while the evident tension almost exploded into the open when Lucas downed the inexhaustible Crouch right in front of both benches.

The first period of extra time was drawing to a close when the Kop was heart-in-mouth for a second time on the night as Crouch flicked on for sub Marco van Ginkel to sneak clear right of goal and strike Mignolet's near post.

Crouch soldiered on into the second 15 minutes of extra time, steeling himself for one final hurrah in this relentless tie, and it was the former England man guiding the ball down for van Ginkel to fire into the ground and force Mignolet into an awkward save in front of Stoke's baying fans.

Both sides maintained a worthy tempo – some players fancying themselves the hero, others fearful of the night's fateful mistake – as Moreno's fizzing drive was manfully blocked by at least one Stoke defender typifying his side's efforts from start to finish on such a memorable if unsuccessful night.

TEAMS

Stoke BUTLAND 8 JOHNSON 8 PIETERS 8 WOLLSCHIED 9 MUNIESA 8 WHELAN 8 AFELLAY 8 WALTERS 8 BOJAN 8 ARNAUTOVIC 8 CROUCH 8 SUBS ADAM (for Bojan,71) 7 SHAQIRI (for Arnautovic,77) 7 VAN GINKEL (for Adam,98) 7 Subs (not used): Haugaard, Bardsley, Joselu, Wilson.

Liverpool: Mignolet, Flanagan (Ibe,106), Moreno, Toure (Allen,85), Sakho, Lucas, Milner, Henderson (Benteke,58), Can, Lallana, Firmino. Subs (not used): Ward, Lovren, Smith, Teixeira.

Referee: J Moss (W Yorks) 7

Att: 43,091.

Cards (yellow): Liverpool – Flanagan (foul,87), Allen (foul,90). Stoke – Muniesa (foul,25).

Cards (red): Liverpool – none. Stoke – none.

Entertainment: 8



Liverpool won a penalty shootout against Stoke City at Anfield to reach the Capital One Cup final as manager Jurgen Klopp ensured his first season in charge will bring a trip to Wembley.

Marko Arnautovic scored for Stoke to claw back Liverpool's one-goal advantage from the first leg - but it was agony for Mark Hughes' side when it came to spot-kicks.

Much-criticised Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet was Liverpool's hero with saves from Peter Crouch and Marc Muniesa, allowing substitute Joe Allen to step forward to secure a meeting with either Manchester City or neighbours Everton at Wembley on 28 February.

A tight encounter was sent to penalties by Arnautovic's goal, seemingly scored from an offside position, in first-half stoppage time.

Jon Walters, Glenn Whelan, Ibrahim Affelay, Xherdan Shaqiri and Marco van Ginkel were all on target for Stoke, while Adam Lallana, Christian Benteke, Roberto Firmino, James Milner and Lucas were successful for Liverpool - before Allen settled matters to send Anfield wild in celebration.

Klopp eyes early glory

Jurgen Klopp has endured mixed fortunes since his appointment as Liverpool manager in early October - but now he has the chance to smooth an inevitable period of transition with success.

Some may not regard the League Cup as the biggest domestic prize, but it gives the charismatic German the opportunity to cement his reputation with silverware and also give the Reds their first trophy since they won this competition under Kenny Dalglish against Cardiff City in 2012.

He would also be following the example of Jose Mourinho at Chelsea and Manuel Pellegrini at Manchester City, who each won this trophy during their first season as a manager in England.

Klopp is no stranger to Wembley having led Borussia Dortmund to Champions League final at the stadium in 2013, though they were defeated by Bundesliga rivals Bayern Munich.

Villain Mignolet turns hero

Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet has often been the villain of the piece in a season of uncertain form - but here he was the hero with vital penalty saves from Crouch and Muniesa.

The Belgian's Achilles heel is his decision-making, and there were some raised eyebrows when he was given a new five-year contract earlier this month.

Mignolet rewarded the faith of Klopp, who has been steadfast in his support of the keeper, with the most significant interventions here and will hope to build on this dramatic revival of his fortunes.

Stoke so near yet so far

A banner fluttering in the Anfield Road End among the massed ranks of Stoke fans called on their players to summon "The Spirit Of 72" - when they secured their first and last major trophy with a League Cup final win over Chelsea at Wembley. And for spells after Arnautovic's goal, it looked like they would get the chance to join the ranks of heroes such as Gordon Banks and George Eastham as they took the fight to Liverpool with this semi-final second leg delicately poised.

Hughes must have been almost as exhausted as his players at the painful conclusion, contesting every decision and urging his men on for 120 minutes. Sadly for the Potters and their thousands of fans, it was not to be - but the mature performance they gave in winning at Anfield, their first victory here since 1959, was another indicator of their growing maturity despite the disappointment of defeat.

Man of the match - Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool)

What the managers said

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp:

"It was great, the atmosphere was special. It was a good game for my side against a difficult side to play.

"They changed their style today. It was keeper Jack Butland to Peter Crouch so it was difficult to defend. We had a few problems, but they didn't have too many opportunities.

"Their goal was double offside but, in the end, we had luck in the penalty shootout. Over the whole 120 minutes, the players, crowd and Liverpool deserved it.

"Wembley is a cool place to play football... but we go there to win. It's not much fun to lose."

Stoke manager Mark Hughes:

"I thought we were by far the better team. We were behind in the tie and I'm proud of what the players produced.

"Nobody gave us a chance - why they would do that I don't know. We've proved for a couple of years that we're a good team. I think Liverpool were delighted to go to penalties and then it's a lottery.

"We got a win on paper - goodness knows how long it's been since we won here - but the objective was to get to a Wembley final which we didn't."

The stats you need to know

In eight previous League Cup semi-final first-leg victories, only once have Liverpool not progressed to the final.

Stoke have played Liverpool seven times in the League Cup, drawing one and losing six.

Before Tuesday, Liverpool had never lost a League Cup semi-final leg at Anfield.



Match ends, Liverpool 0(6), Stoke City 1(5). Penalties over

129' Penalty Shootout ends, Liverpool 0(6), Stoke City 1(5).

128' Goal! Liverpool 0(6), Stoke City 1(5). Joe Allen (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the top right corner.

128' Penalty saved! Marc Muniesa (Stoke City fails to capitalise on this great opportunity, left footed shot saved in the bottom right corner.

127' Goal! Liverpool 0(5), Stoke City 1(5). Lucas Leiva (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the top right corner.

126' Goal! Liverpool 0(4), Stoke City 1(5). Marco Van Ginkel (Stoke City converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom right corner.

126' Goal! Liverpool 0(4), Stoke City 1(4). James Milner (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom right corner.

125' Goal! Liverpool 0(3), Stoke City 1(4). Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City converts the penalty with a left footed shot to the bottom left corner.

125' Goal! Liverpool 0(3), Stoke City 1(3). Roberto Firmino (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom right corner.

124' Goal! Liverpool 0(2), Stoke City 1(3). Ibrahim Affelay (Stoke City converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the top left corner.

124' Goal! Liverpool 0(2), Stoke City 1(2). Christian Benteke (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom left corner.

123' Goal! Liverpool 0(1), Stoke City 1(2). Glenn Whelan (Stoke City converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom right corner.

123' Penalty missed! Still Liverpool 0(1), Stoke City 1(1). Emre Can (Liverpool hits the left post with a right footed shot.

122' Penalty saved! Peter Crouch (Stoke City fails to capitalise on this great opportunity, right footed shot saved in the bottom left corner.

121' Goal! Liverpool 0(1), Stoke City 1(1). Adam Lallana (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the high centre of the goal.

121' Goal! Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1(1). Jonathan Walters (Stoke City converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the top right corner.

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Penalties in progress Penalty Shootout begins Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 120'+1' Second Half Extra Time ends, Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 120' Foul by Joe Allen (Liverpool).
 120' Glenn Whelan (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 120' Attempt blocked. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
 119' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Philipp Wollscheid.
 115' Attempt missed. Jordan Ibe (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is too high. Assisted by Joe Allen.
 114' Attempt saved. Marco Van Ginkel (Stoke City right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Peter Crouch with a headed pass.
 114' Attempt blocked. Peter Crouch (Stoke City left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Erik Pieters.
 107' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 107' Foul by Glenn Whelan (Stoke City.
 107' Foul by Joe Allen (Liverpool).
 107' Philipp Wollscheid (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 107' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 107' Foul by Peter Crouch (Stoke City).
 Second Half Extra Time begins Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 105' Substitution, Liverpool. Jordan Ibe replaces Jon Flanagan.
 105'+2' First Half Extra Time ends, Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 105'+1' Offside, Liverpool. Alberto Moreno tries a through ball, but Christian Benteke is caught offside.
 104' Marco Van Ginkel (Stoke City hits the right post with a right footed shot from the centre of the box. Assisted by Peter Crouch with a headed pass.
 103' Jon Flanagan (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 103' Foul by Peter Crouch (Stoke City).
 102' Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool).
 102' Peter Crouch (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 98' Delay over. They are ready to continue.
 98' Substitution, Stoke City. Marco Van Ginkel replaces Charlie Adam because of an injury.
 97' Delay in match Charlie Adam (Stoke City because of an injury).
 97' Foul by Jon Flanagan (Liverpool).
 97' Glenn Whelan (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 96' Foul by Jon Flanagan (Liverpool).
 96' Glenn Whelan (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 94' Foul by Joe Allen (Liverpool).
 94' Charlie Adam (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 94' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
 94' Foul by Erik Pieters (Stoke City).
 93' Attempt missed. Peter Crouch (Stoke City header from the centre of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Charlie Adam with a cross following a corner.
 92' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Lucas Leiva.
 91' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Christian Benteke.
 90'+5' Second Half ends, Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 90'+4' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 90'+4' Foul by Peter Crouch (Stoke City).
 90'+3' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Adam Lallana.
 90'+3' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Adam Lallana.
 90'+2' Joe Allen (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
 90'+2' Foul by Joe Allen (Liverpool).
 90'+2' Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City wins a free kick on the right wing.
 90'+1' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Jonathan Walters.
 90' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 90' Erik Pieters (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 89' Offside, Liverpool. Jon Flanagan tries a through ball, but Adam Lallana is caught offside.
 88' Delay over. They are ready to continue.
 87' Delay in match Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City because of an injury).
 87' Jon Flanagan (Liverpool is shown the yellow card).
 86' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 86' Foul by Erik Pieters (Stoke City).
 85' Substitution, Liverpool. Joe Allen replaces Kolo Touré.
 83' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by James Milner.
 82' Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 82' Foul by Charlie Adam (Stoke City).
 80' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Marc Muniesa.
 78' Substitution, Stoke City. Xherdan Shaqiri replaces Marko Arnautovic.
 77' Attempt missed. Glen Johnson (Stoke City right footed shot from more than 35 yards misses to the left.
 74' Foul by Philipp Wollscheid (Stoke City).
 74' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 74' Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 74' Foul by Jon Flanagan (Liverpool).
 72' Offside, Stoke City. Jack Butland tries a through ball, but Jonathan Walters is caught offside.
 72' Erik Pieters (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 72' Foul by Christian Benteke (Liverpool).
 71' Substitution, Stoke City. Charlie Adam replaces Bojan.
 69' Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 69' Foul by Jon Flanagan (Liverpool).
 68' Attempt missed. Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the left. Assisted by James Milner with a cross following a set piece situation.

67' Foul by Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City).
 67' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
 66' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Glenn Whelan.
 65' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ibrahim Afellay.
 64' Attempt missed. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Mamadou Sakho.
 62' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Mamadou Sakho.
 62' Attempt blocked. Jonathan Walters (Stoke City left footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Philipp Wollscheid.
 61' Hand ball by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 59' Foul by Jonathan Walters (Stoke City).
 59' Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 58' Substitution, Liverpool. Christian Benteke replaces Jordan Henderson.
 58' Attempt missed. Glen Johnson (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is too high following a corner.
 57' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Simon Mignolet.
 56' Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 56' Foul by James Milner (Liverpool).
 55' Attempt missed. Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Ibrahim Afellay.
 55' Attempt blocked. Jonathan Walters (Stoke City right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Bojan.
 54' Attempt blocked. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
 53' Hand ball by Peter Crouch (Stoke City).
 50' Philipp Wollscheid (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 50' Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool).
 48' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Jack Butland.
 48' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.
 47' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ibrahim Afellay.
 46' Foul by Jonathan Walters (Stoke City).
 46' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 45'+2' First Half ends, Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1.
 45'+1' Goal! Liverpool 0, Stoke City 1. Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Bojan.
 45' Attempt missed. Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left following a set piece situation.
 44' Glen Johnson (Stoke City wins a free kick on the right wing.
 44' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 43' Offside, Liverpool. Emre Can tries a through ball, but Roberto Firmino is caught offside.
 42' Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the left following a set piece situation.
 41' Foul by Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City).
 41' Jon Flanagan (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
 37' Foul by Glenn Whelan (Stoke City).
 37' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 36' Attempt missed. Bojan (Stoke City header from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Erik Pieters with a cross following a set piece situation.
 35' Peter Crouch (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 35' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).
 34' Attempt missed. Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Peter Crouch.
 34' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
 33' Foul by Bojan (Stoke City).
 33' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 29' Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 29' Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool).
 26' Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 26' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).
 25' Marc Muniesa (Stoke City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
 25' Foul by Marc Muniesa (Stoke City).
 25' James Milner (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 24' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Lucas Leiva.
 22' Attempt missed. Jonathan Walters (Stoke City left footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Erik Pieters with a through ball.
 21' Foul by Glen Johnson (Stoke City).
 21' James Milner (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 17' Bojan (Stoke City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 17' Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).
 17' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
 14' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Alberto Moreno.
 14' Attempt blocked. Jonathan Walters (Stoke City left footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Marko Arnautovic.
 9' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Philipp Wollscheid.
 9' Foul by Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City).
 9' Jon Flanagan (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 4' Foul by Glenn Whelan (Stoke City).
 4' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 First Half begins.
 Lineups are announced and players are warming up. 0