

Date: 21 January 2017
 Opposition: Swansea City
 Competition: League

Mail	Sunday Times	Sun Telegraph	Telegraph
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THE TIMES

Klopp pays for failing to seal signings this month
 Liverpool 2 Firmino 55, 69 Swansea City 3 Llorente 48, 52, Sigurdsson 74
 Referee: K Friend Attendance: 53,169
 Jurgen Klopp's avowed aim at Liverpool remains turning doubters into believers. So far this year he has succeeded primarily in transforming romantics into realists. Everything that has ever been levelled against Klopp and his team -- the lack of strength in depth, the flimsy rearguard, poor game management -- was highlighted on one inglorious afternoon that ended with the victor and the vanquished peering anxiously over their shoulder.

Swansea City, imbued with confidence and clarity by Paul Clement, clambered off the foot of the Premier League table and will regard that nervous sensation as progress. Liverpool cannot. They are close to everything, but at the same time close to nothing. Cementing a top-four finish will now become Klopp's priority and while that was the target at the start of the season, it still represents a downscaling of ambition after the victory over Manchester City on New Year's Eve. Since then, the failure to muster a win in the league in 2017 means that Liverpool have taken two points from nine and momentum has spluttered and stalled. Just as the pace and trickery of Sadio Mane has clearly added a new dimension, so his absence at the Africa Cup of Nations with Senegal was always going to pose a problem and Klopp appears no nearer to fathoming a convincing solution. He tried a midfield diamond in the 1-1 draw with Manchester United and pushed Adam Lallana forward against Swansea on Saturday, but the dynamism and those swarming attacks from which Liverpool threatened to plunder at will have not been replicated.

Injuries -- Philippe Coutinho, Jordan Henderson, Nathaniel Clyne and Joel Matip are all trying to find optimum fitness -- have further compounded matters and the vexed issue of whether Liverpool should have been more active in the transfer market is raised as a consequence. The debate is complex.

"I understand it is absolutely normal, people ask whether we should have brought players in," said Klopp, his bitter disappointment in no way soothed by this being a first defeat at home in more than a year.

"It is not that we don't want to bring players in; we do. But the thing is, the players we want because we think they help us, the clubs don't sell. It is not about money in this situation, it is the winter transfer window.

"It is not as if there are 20 players out there who could make this team stronger, who are running around and are available.

"We are not the only side who can decide the outcome of that though, eh? The other club [the selling club] makes the decision, too."

Liverpool have tried to recruit a wide player with the flexibility to play on either flank and were rebuffed by Borussia Dortmund for Christian Pulisic, and Bayer Leverkusen, through to the last 16 of the Champions League, refused to countenance offloading Julian Brandt.

Wolfsburg's Julian Draxler was allowed to move but opted to accept the more lucrative financial package on offer from Paris Saint-Germain rather than pitch up on Merseyside this month. Liverpool's wage policy, one the manager buys into, is hardly parsimonious, yet those willing to push the boat right out might be less likely to veer off course. Last January, Shakhtar Donetsk's Alex Teixeira was targeted but Liverpool felt the PS38 million asking price inflated. Chinese side Jiangsu Suning obliged instead. The irony is obvious given how Klopp is someone who usually favours going for broke. Roberto Firmino had responded to two goals from Fernando Llorente with a brace of his own to stifle Swansea, his second coming as Divock Origi stood on the touchline, stripped and waiting to come on. Having restored parity, though, there was no thought to wait and reappraise the substitution, trusting the side that now had Swansea on the back foot with more than 20 minutes remaining. Klopp went full throttle. Origi replaced Emre Can, who is admittedly struggling, but the hole that was left in midfield was soon exposed when the visitors countered and scored through Gylfi Sigurdsson to claim a first-ever league success at Anfield.

The winning goal was a lesson in how not to defend: Swansea winning second balls, Tom Carroll slaloming into the area before centre back Ragnar Klavan inadvertently teed up Sigurdsson. The visiting team joined Burnley and Bournemouth as the only teams to have beaten Liverpool in the league this season. Liverpool can regroup and, when Klopp wakes on February 1, it could all look different. They host Southampton in the EFL Cup semi-final second leg on Wednesday, trailing only 1-0, so he could be planning for a final, his side will be in the FA Cup fifth round if they beat Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday and could also just have beaten Premier League leaders Chelsea on January 31.

There was a split-second delay on Saturday after the shrill of the final whistle before the visiting Swansea supporters, as if struggling to believe what had happened, erupted in celebration. Some Liverpool fans, though, will tell you that they saw it coming.

RATINGS Liverpool (4-3-3): S Mignolet 6 -- N Clyne 5, D Lovren 5, R Klavan 5, J Milner 6 -- J Henderson 6, E Can 5 (sub: D Origi 70min, 5), G Wijnaldum 6 (sub: J Matip 90) -- A Lallana 6, R Firmino 8, P Coutinho 6 (sub: D Sturridge 56, 5).
 Substitutes not used: L Karius, L Leiva, A Moreno, B Woodburn. Booked: Klavan
 Swansea City (4-5-1): L Fabianski 7 -- K Naughton 7, F Fernandez 7, A Mawson 7, M Olsson 7 (sub: A Rangel 79) -- W Routledge 7, L Fer 7 (sub: J Fulton 90), J Cork 7, T Carroll 8, G Sigurdsson 7 -- F Llorente 8 (sub: B Baston 85). Substitutes not used: J Amat, K Nordfeldt, N Dyer, O McBurnie. Booked: Fer.



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The Mail

Klopp can't get no satisfaction in bid for new signings
 LIVERPOOL 2
 SWANSEA 3

JURGEN KLOPP may be a fan of heavy metal, but it is perhaps the Rolling Stones song I Can't Get No Satisfaction that should have been the soundtrack to a frustrating transfer window for Liverpool. Stuttering Liverpool have so far failed to sign any recruits in this window, after a first half of the season that had kindled real hope of a first title since 1990.

For an exasperated Klopp, the reasons are clear. 'It is not that we don't want to bring players in,' the Liverpool manager said after this shock defeat by Swansea. 'We do, but the thing is, the players we want because we think they help us, their clubs don't sell. It is not about money.' Klopp will no doubt have a centre half at the top of his shopping list after defensive mistakes led to two of Swansea's three goals. The Liverpool manager said that although money is available, he will not spend it on the wrong man.

'If the right decision is not possible in signing the right player, then you must not make the wrong transfer,' Klopp said.

'It is not as if there are 20 players out there who could make this team stronger, who are running around and available.' The situation at Anfield on Saturday could have been different. The visitors, who started the day bottom of the table, showed unfamiliar resolve in the first half under new boss Paul Clement, and were 2-0 up when Fernando Llorente hit a brace within seven minutes of the restart. Roberto Firmino woke a slumbering Kop with an almost immediate response and when the same man drew the scores level with a stunning half-volley there appeared to be only one likely winner.

It was not to be. Swansea broke, Ragnar Klavan intervened but his sliding tackle presented Gylfi Sigurdsson with a chance to win it and the cool Icelander did just that. Clement, who has worked at Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, was left to reflect on the unpredictable nature of the Premier League compared to its continental counterparts.

'You don't tend to get so many shock or surprise results,' he said. 'That is what makes this league so exciting and special. Anyone can go anywhere and win, lose or draw. I know what you mean when you say that might not be the case in other leagues. But I am a coach who believes you have a better chance of getting a result if you have good players and you have to work at it on the training field.' Clement had satisfaction. At the moment, Klopp can't get any.

SUPER STAT: Liverpool were first PL team to score 50 goals this season; Swansea were the first to concede 50 (both are now on 51).

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Mignolet 6; Clyne 6, Lovren 5, Klavan 5, Milner 6.5; Henderson 6, Can 6 (Origo 70min, 6), Wijnaldum 6.5 (Matip 90); Lallana 6, Firmino 7, Coutinho 6 (Sturridge 57, 6). Subs not used: Karius, Moreno, Lucas, Woodburn.

Booked: Klavan. **Scorer:** Firmino 55, 69. **SWANSEA (4-4-1-1):** Fabianski 6.5; Naughton 6.5, Fernandez 7, Mawson 7, Olsson 6.5 (Rangel 79); Routledge 6, Fer 6.5 (Fulton 90), Cork 7, Carroll 7; Sigurdsson 7; Llorente 8.5 (Baston 85).

Subs not used: Amat, Dyer, Nordfeldt, McBurnie. **Booked:** Fer.

Scorers: Llorente 48, 52, Sigurdsson 74.

Referee: Kevin Friend 7. **Man of the match:** Fernando Llorente.

The Daily Telegraph

Klopp shaken by Kop's title chase jitters

The problem with Liverpool is they were too good at the start of the season. Rewind to last summer, and reasonable aspirations were set to challenge for fourth.

While Liverpool's squad improved, so, too, did everyone else's - all comfortably outpacing the frugal Jurgen Klopp.

Then, Klopp's side started doing eye-catching stuff, such as winning away at Arsenal and Chelsea, outplaying Tottenham Hotspur and battering mediocre opposition at Anfield. Naturally, the stargazing began and Klopp is not a manager inclined to warn supporters to give up astronomy.

There was a shift when Liverpool went top last November. The enthusiasm surrounding an Anfield title challenge was balanced with fear. Klopp referenced it on Friday, recognising how often the failed bids of 2009 and 2014 impacted on the psyche of supporters. It is rather like Liverpool have developed a phobia to title bids.

Fatalism pitched its tent and the nadir came with this defeat against Swansea in a stadium in the midst of an early-afternoon slumber (message to Anfield hierarchy: accepting early kick-offs diminishes home advantage).

Few connected to Liverpool believe they can catch Chelsea now and the prophets of doom arguing it is days and opponents like this that have been the club's undoing sounded wiser than they would have wished on Saturday evening. Klopp is now fully acquainted with the considerable load of three decades of baggage and faces a challenge to ensure it does not distract him as it did many of his predecessors.

He signed for seven more years last July with the intention of improving layer upon layer with careful planning and an uncompromisingly studious approach to transfers. To him, it is not just about being much better over the course of this campaign but planning for next year, too. Wherever Liverpool finish in May, their points tally will be startlingly higher. They already have 14 more points than this time last season, which is the truest barometer rather than their current changeable position.

For those in a hurry there is a counter-argument that Liverpool should have done more to seize this moment, regardless of how unlikely it seemed in August; gamble on a player who could make the difference in the next six months. Recruit someone to prevent debilitating defeats such as this one to Swansea.

"You do that in January and you end up spending PS35 million on Andy Carroll," say the pragmatists.

"Or, maybe you spend PS22 million on Luis Suarez," argue those living the "here and now" mantra.

"I understand it is absolutely normal, people ask whether we should have brought players in. The situation is yes, on the one side pretty simple, but on the other hand it is pretty difficult," said Klopp.

"It is not that we don't want to bring players in. We do. But the thing is, the players we want because we think they can help us, the clubs don't sell. It is not about money in this situation, it is the winter transfer window.

"Clubs are saying 'no, we have half a year to go, we cannot find another player like this, we prefer to take money in the summer, than a few pounds more in the winter than whatever'. You see the situation [needing replacements at this stage], it's tight, it's close, we know that, but if the right decision is not possible in signing the right player, then you cannot make the wrong transfer. It is not as if there are 20 players out there who could make this team stronger, who are running around and are available. That is the situation."

The problem is not simply Liverpool's failure to sign more players, but those that Klopp presumed would offer more when needed - such as Daniel Sturridge, Divock Origi and Emre Can - have not contributed enough.

While Liverpool's form is in decline, Swansea's Paul Clement is proof of how quickly sound management and a couple of new additions can swell belief. Swansea defended well and accepted the gifts on offer, but the organisation and application of the Welsh side set it apart from that which Clement inherited.

Fernando Llorente's two goals at the start of the second half were expertly taken, and Gylfi Sigurdsson has looked a class act throughout a troubled campaign. He ensured the Liverpool fightback led by Roberto Firmino amounted to nothing. Not many would leave the comfort of sitting alongside Carlo Ancelotti at Bayern Munich to take on a club in Swansea's precarious position, but Clement has plenty to prove after his peculiar dismissal by Derby County last season.

"I felt good in the role of head coach before and when I went back to Bayern I had a brilliant experience but I knew inside me I wanted to be a head coach," said Clement.

"There is big satisfaction coming here and winning. We had a really good week in training, both on the pitch and in the video room, and to come to a team which has such a fantastic record here and to put in that kind of performance is a really nice feeling."

For Swansea, there is renewed hope of survival; for Liverpool, the next 10 days will help determine if another season of promise can go the distance.

New year, new wobble Liverpool on the slide Goals per game To Dec 31 Since Jan
 1 2.42 1.67 2.00 1.11 Scored Conceded Scored Conceded 20.3% 13.9% Shot conversion Shots per game 17.4 3.1 16.7 3.7 Shots Faced Shots Faced

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THE INDEPENDENT

Klopp left frustrated by transfer window inactivity

Will Ferrell was dropped off in the parking bay marked with a VIP sign outside Anfield's new main stand on Saturday morning; there as a guest of Tom Werner, Liverpool's chairman whose background is in the entertainment industry.

Ferrell is a Chelsea fan who once regretted a comment made on stage at a GQ magazine event about JosA[c] Mourinho's defensive tactics when soon after, Mourinho was sacked. "I feel horribly guilty because I feel like I had a hand in getting him fired," he wrote on social media. It is imaginable that Ferrell, in Ron Burgundy mode at least, would have judged that Liverpool did anything but stay classy in their miserable defeat to Swansea City; their management of the game lurching between the staid and the chaotic. Liverpool's domination of the ball in the first half was nearly absolute but Swansea's defensive game plan worked better, reducing Liverpool to half chances from slung crosses; the pattern proving once again that possession statistics can be misleading because Liverpool were not really in control of what was happening. Then in the second half, Liverpool were all over the place, even in their recovery from two-nil down following Fernando Llorente's goals. By seeking to smother Swansea at two-two they were already playing like it was injury time despite there being 20 minutes to go. Gaps were left in defence and when Gylfi Sigurdsson's winner came on minute 75, Liverpool's players might as well have walked off the pitch there and then because Anfield was flattened. There is probably no chance of Ferrell's allegiances switching after watching this mess. Assessing Jurgen Klopp's words afterwards, indeed, it seems as though Ferrell might be the closest Liverpoolcome to making a new signing before the January transfer window closes. It is ironic when you consider Jordan Henderson's injury problems since the turn of the year and Emre Can's unsuccessful attempts to cover for him. Maybe Klopp's team could do with a new Anchorman. Klopp has consistently said that the focus of Liverpool's recruitment plans has been around the issue of squad balance rather than financial frugality. And yet, if Liverpool aren't careful, the monies retained from this month's inactivity might end up being placed on an improved contract for Sadio ManA[c] when he returns from international duty with Senegal, should his agent choose to make the point that his client's value has increased without him even being there. Finding a way to replace ManA[c]'s pace from the options within Liverpool's current squad has proven to be impossible. ManA[c]'s absence has had a negative domino effect on the team when you consider Klopp's solution has been to take Adam Lallana out of a role where he was previously thriving, swapping him on Saturday with a midfielder so evidently low on confidence as Can. Klopp was asked whether Liverpool could have done more to find new players to stop all of this happening. He and everyone else involved in transfer processes at Liverpool have, after all, known about ManA[c]'s unavailability since the moment they signed him last summer.

"I understand it is absolutely normal people ask whether we should have brought players in. The situation is yes, on the one side pretty simple, but on the other hand it is pretty difficult," he reasoned.

"It is not that we don't want to bring players in. We do. But the thing is, the players we want because we think they help us, the clubs don't sell. It is not about money in this situation, it is the winter transfer window.

"Clubs are saying 'no we have half a year to go, we cannot find another player like this; we prefer to take money in the summer, [rather] than a few pound more in the winter than whatever'. So it is pretty easy.

"You see the situation (needing replacements at this stage), it's tight, it's close, we know that, but if the right decision is not possible in signing the right player, then you cannot make the wrong transfer.

"It is not as if there are 20 players out there who could make this team stronger, who are running around and are available. That is the situation.

"That is why I say we know the situation, we are prepared to move, but for the right player. We are not the only side who can decide the outcome of that. The other club (the selling club) makes the decision too."

Is it too easy for Klopp and Liverpool to fall back on the idea that the market is not working for them, though? Liverpool have not performed anywhere near their best since the start of November, back when everyone was telling them how wonderful they were. This was a period when the club felt comfortable announcing the appointment of Michael Edwards as sporting director, a role he'd pretty much been doing on the quiet for 18 months anyway.

Perhaps there are more questions to answer, questions that can't be answered in full publicly but certainly internally if they wish to go there. Basic questions like: did Liverpool's promising early run of form cause decision makers to overlook what might happen when ManA[c] was not there? Was it ever considered that the squad is too small to cope -- that deals could have been in place for January 1? Or even, is the new sporting director struggling now that everyone in football knows what his responsibilities are? Is he finding it harder driving a bargain in what, in fairness, is a more difficult period to negotiate in? Has he flapped his first official test?

There are issues Klopp should ponder as well. If Liverpool lose to Southampton at Anfield in the second leg of the League Cup semi-final on Wednesday night his record across December and January this season and last will be identical, only this year he does not have the excuse of it being his first Premier League winter. There is a potential for it to read: P 13, W 5, D 4, L 4, and that, really, is in keeping

with any manager in charge of a mid-table team. What could he have done to prevent Liverpool's very average results? Is his attitude towards January too Wengerian, too reluctant? On Saturday, in fact, Klopp made a very puzzling decision by withdrawing Roberto Firmino from the centre of his forward line and repositioning him on the right, despite the Brazilian being on a hat-trick. He had also been Liverpool's best player. And that decision, as Burgundy would put it, should be viewed like him. It was "...kind of a big deal."



WINDOW CHOPPING; Despite a shock defeat that has probably cost Reds a shot at the title, Klopp defiantly holds out against pressure to spend in the January sales

LIVERPOOL 2

Firmino 55, 69

SWANSEA CITY 3

Llorente 48, 52 Sigurdsson 74

IF the title run-in began this weekend - as Jurgen Klopp said on Friday - it ended too for Liverpoolafter this shock.

The question now is not whether the Reds can be champions, but rather, why they will not, and chief among the reasons offered by a disbelieving support was the lack of signings in the January window.

Make no mistake, this was something approaching a miracle from bottom club Swansea, yet it always somehow seemed possible given the Reds' struggles against sides who defend deep and in numbers in recent weeks.

Those calling for new faces to freshen up a squad missing key figures like Sadio Mane, the returning but still tentative Philippe Coutinho and the political pawn Joel Matip, suggest the problem lies with excessive Anfield caution in the winter window.

Yet a pained Klopp, struggling to hide his disappointment after such a devastating defeat, explained that as much as he would have liked to call in the cavalry, the January window doesn't lend itself to that sort of business. "I understand it is absolutely normal, people ask whether we should have brought players in - but it is not that want to bring players in. We explained. "Yes, on the one side simple, but on the other hand is pretty difficult.

"The thing is, the players we want because we think they help us, the clubs don't sell. It not about money in this situation, it is the winter transfer window.

"Clubs are saying, 'No, we have a year to go, we cannot find player like this, we prefer to money in the summer, than pounds more in the winter'.

"If the right decision is not possible in signing the right player, then cannot make the wrong transfer. not as if there are 20 players who make this team stronger, running around and are available.

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"We are not the only side who can decide the outcome of that, the selling club makes the decision too."

Liverpool missed Mane's pace and unpredictability badly in the first half, and after the break when Fernando Llorente scored two fine striker's goals, they missed Matip even more, with Klopp explaining clearance from FIFA for him to play came too late for his inclusion.

The Liverpool boss has a point. Few players can hit the Premier League ground running, because it is littered with physical landmines that are not present in other leagues. Any player who will make a significant difference in the title race at this stage is not recruited easily. Those landmines can explode at any time, which is another aspect of English football that is alien to other countries, fo ain ad and Swansea were a spectacular case point.

It is easy for fans to moan about Liverpool's failings - and defensively there were far too many - but we delight in how any team can beat any other in the Premier League, so we shouldn't be too surprised when it happens. It is a fact that Swans boss Paul Clement knows more than most.

After spells as assistant manager at Paris Saint-Germain, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, he admits to seeing little like the English competitiveness.

"It's a fair point, and a question I would get asked when I was in France, Spain and Germany - you don't tend to get so many shock or surprise results. That is what makes this league so exciting and special," said Clement.

"For the neutrals, players, the coach, everyone involved, there is not an easy game. anyone can go anywhere and win, lose or draw. That might not be the case in other leagues.

"But I am a coach who believes you have a better chance of getting a result if you have good players and you have to work at it on the training field.

"You have to practice and be organised otherwise you would have no chance coming to a place like this and getting a result."

Swansea were all of those, and for their spirit alone after seeing a twogoal lead pegged back by sublime Roberto Firmino goals, deserved their winner when Gylfi Sigurdsson capitalised on another Liverpool error.

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The day when the Reds threw it all away... there's no joy in writing it but that might just be it

You don't want to read this, there's no joy in writing it. But that might just be it. It's not the 10-point gap which will open up when Chelsea beat Hull at Stamford Bridge tomorrow. Those sort of things have been bridged before.

But 'when' is the important word in the prediction above. With Liverpool we still aren't always convinced we'll always get a 'when'.

Today had to be the day 'when' Liverpool played first, beat the Premier League's bottom side and collected three points. Gap to the top cut to four points, restored to second place, over to you Chelsea et al. But Swansea to their credit played like a team who want to stay in this Premier League, Liverpool didn't play like a team who believed they could win it. After so much hard work to get into a challenging spot, the Reds rather sleep-walked their way into throwing it away. A proud year-long unbeaten record at fortress Anfield not so much lost as surrendered.

You can't blame the early kick-off, the cold, the African Cup of Nations, FIFA or anybody else. The pain here was all self-inflicted, all so unnecessary.

There will be pledges of defiance and a will to fight on. Quite rightly so and the minimum necessary. But today felt like a heavy, heavy blow. Familiar failings emerge just at the wrong time it's not as if we haven't had enough warnings over the years. Swansea goal one, a corner causing chaos. Swansea goal two, a crossed ball again finding weaknesses in the Liverpool defence. Fernando Llorente going where all too many have gone before him. No Joel Matip today of course, released from the bench only in injury time, after being released by FIFA only at 9.30pm on Friday night. After 17 games unbeaten at Anfield, the Reds conceded three in a game here for only the second time under Jurgen Klopp, after Arsenal last January. There was no blame to the goalkeeper on either and Ragnar Klavan will probably count himself unlucky in how his challenge landed perfectly into the stride of Gylfi Sigurdsson for the winner. But this was a day when the Liverpool backline was as effective as an Emre Can overhead kick in front of the Kop. Yes, that bad.

Swansea made their own luck and deserved their win, make no mistake about that. New boss Paul Clement was more adventurous than many and had clearly told his team to keep the ball when they had it and try to make the most of it while they had it, retreating into a solid block when they were out of possession. It worked well and his team should be congratulated for it.

Firmino goes it alone

"Bobby Firmino....Bobby Firmino". The 'Bobby' tag hasn't always found favour with some Liverpool fans for their Brazilian forward but no-one was complaining here as Roberto Firmino's name rang out from the Kop. His eighth and ninth of the season had given Liverpool hope when there seemed none. His mate was back of course – but Firmino did this business on his own. And he was back in the right place, central where he does most of his best work. Firmino was perhaps Liverpool's best first half performer, moving wide and putting in some decent balls.

No-one though was there to pick them up. And that's the dilemma for Klopp. In his method, Firmino is at his best through the middle. But that leaves Daniel Sturridge nestling on the bench and the Reds lacking a natural, quality finisher.

Coutinho and Lallana score goals of course but it is not what comes totally natural – see Coutinho's decision to pass when he could have shot early in the second half, Lallana trying to dance through in front of the Kop when a good shot was surely the percentage play. Firmino left Milner to do the crossing as he gave Liverpool hope with his eighth of the season and picked up Wijnaldum's pull-back with a half-volley which was past Fabianski in a flash. He looked like he might just be able to do it on his own for a while but failings elsewhere proved costly.

Liverpool's problems were nothing to do with him.

Coutinho back but is it too late?

After failing to start Liverpool's last eight Premier League games, Philippe Coutinho returned to the fray. A bitterly cold day at Anfield didn't scream Samba football at you but there were enough touches in his 56 minutes on the pitch to remind us what a boost his return to full fitness will be. That is still lacking and was undoubtedly a factor in why he made way for Daniel Sturridge with the Reds having just reduced their two goal deficit. His lovely early turn in midfield allowed him bundles of space to send Nathaniel Clyne away on the right.

The timing of his pass was perfect when Lallana looped around him to burst clear but final delivery from the latter was lacking. He's never far from a sublime moment either. A delightful swing with the outside of his right foot put Milner behind the defence to threaten. Plenty didn't work too and he beat himself as he worked out how to drift past Kyle Naughton on the byline.

Liverpool will need lots more from Coutinho – including a significant increase on that current goals tally of six. For now, it's just good to have him back.

What damage has been done while he's been away is still to be calculated.

Oh, Mane Mane...

"I messaged him to say: 'I am happy for you but on the other side I could really kick you in the lower back!' Jurgen Klopp's midweek message to Sadio Mane was no doubt tongue in cheek. But it also carried an undeniable truth – in his absence Liverpool are incapable currently of replacing the Senegal winger.

While his two goals in Gabon have helped his nation progress in the Africa Cup of Nations, his club side are showing obvious signs of distress without him.

Mane's direct running and goal threat was all too absent in a first half where Liverpool tried to pass their way round and through to no great effect – certainly making zero impact on Lukasz Fabianski's gloves. Shots on target – zero. A front three of Lallana, Firmino and Coutinho is full of craft and guile but doesn't possess the sheer pace to get a defence completely out of its comfort zone. Mane does that for fun and he's top scorer too of course, his nine all in the Premier League too. With Sheyi Ojo not quite ready to step up fully to first team level, the squad looks light, at least one player short of where Jurgen Klopp would feel comfortable with his options. It looks as if the transfer window is not going to provide that extra body unless the club is stirred into action by what unfolded at Anfield today. There may be many reasons for that lack of January deals of course but whatever they are, Liverpool may have reason to regret them.



Swans move out of relegation zone as they stun Liverpool in Anfield epic

SWANSEA City gave their Premier League survival hopes a massive boost as Paul Clement's side stunned Anfield with a 3-2 victory to dent Liverpool's title aspirations. After a goalless first 45 minutes Fernando Llorente's double early in the second half looked to have set the Welsh club on their way to a first win under their new head coach. Roberto Firmino replied with a double of his own to level matters but Gylfi Sigurdsson capitalised on a piece of good fortune in the penalty area to claim the winner. The win moved Swansea out of the relegation zone and, although they could yet fall back into the bottom three if other scores go against them this weekend, this performance and result will provide a huge surge of confidence and belief that they can extend their top-flight stay for at least another year. This was their first ever league win at Anfield, and it was built on a battling but organised display - exemplified by Tom Carroll's superb midfield performance - and the finishing quality of Llorente and Sigurdsson. Clement had demanded his side find the way to prolong the improvements shown early on against Arsenal, and his players delivered here to secure an unexpected but incredibly important three points. And, having spoken of the memorable results he had enjoyed here as an assistant with both Chelsea and Real Madrid, Clement now has one all of his own to savour and relish.

The Swans boss handed starts to new signings Martin Olsson and Carroll, but there was no Swansea debut for Luciano Narsingh, as his calf injury kept him sidelined. As had been the case against Arsenal, Swansea showed far greater organisation and trust in their structure during an opening half where they saw little of the ball yet Lukasz Fabianski did not have a save to make.

He should have been worked in just the sixth minute though, a wonderful delivery from Jordan Henderson found Emre Can unmarked, but the midfielder headed wastefully wide. Swansea were happy to concede the wide areas as Clement asked them to remain compact and pack bodies in the central areas and it was largely successful. Liverpool initially threatened more through rapid counter-attacking, one of which ended with Firmino rounding Alfie Mawson, and picking out Adam Lallana, with the former Southampton man sending an acrobatic overhead kick over the bar. Swansea were not seeing much ball as they soaked up prolonged periods of Liverpool possession, but one foray forward so nearly ended with the visitors taking the lead. Carroll and Olsson linked well down the left to find Sigurdsson. The Icelandic international's lovely pass fed Carroll in on goal and his attempted cross flicked off Dejan Lovren and struck the post. The action was soon back down the other end. Philippe Coutinho nicked possession off Kyle Naughton and fed Firmino, only for Mawson to make a tremendous block as the forward got ready to shoot. Swansea and Clement would have gone down the tunnel at half-time content with their work, and they could not have imagined a better start to the second half as two goals in four minutes silenced Anfield.

Sigurdsson's corner found Federico Fernandez's head and the ball fell at the feet of Wayne Routledge, the winger controlled and Llorente stole in to poke home his first away goal for the club. The travelling support were jubilant and it soon got even better as the two new men set-up an excellent second goal for Swansea. Olsson exchanged passes with Carroll before the midfielder overlapped the full-back to send in a wickedly inviting cross for Llorente to power home a header. However, this famous old ground was not silent for long as the Reds pulled one back just three minutes later. James Milner was given the space to pick out a cross and Firmino got up at the far post to head beyond Fabianski.

Liverpool were revived and attacked with renewed vigour and energy, with substitute Daniel Sturridge firing wide and Dejan Lovren heading over. Swansea had an opportunity of their own, Mawson heading a Sigurdsson corner across the face of goal, and it was a miss that looked as though it would prove costly when Liverpool levelled thanks to Firmino's second. Georginio Wijnaldum evaded Fernandez and Firmino pulled down his cross to finish on the half volley. All the momentum was with the hosts, but Swansea hung in there and were rewarded with a break-out goal. Leroy Fer found the excellent Carroll, who jinked his way into the Liverpool area. Ragnar Klavin made a block tackle, but could only divert the ball into the path of Sigurdsson, who swept the ball past Simon Mignolet. Fabianski made an excellent save from Divock Origi during a frenzied series of Liverpool attacks but Swansea hung on for a priceless victory.

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 Opposition: Swansea City
 Competition: League

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21 January 2017



Liverpool title hopes suffer blow as Swans win

If Liverpool are not careful, they could be out of the Premier League title race, the League Cup and the FA Cup by a week on Tuesday. Somehow, they were defeated here having clawed the game back from two goals down and losing at home -- especially in this fashion -- to a team fighting relegation as Swansea City are, is not the type of thing Premier League champions tend to do.

This was a disastrous result for Jurgen Klopp and brilliant one for Paul Clement, one that lifts Swansea off the bottom of the table and out of the relegation zone, even if it is temporarily depending on results elsewhere later in the afternoon.

In another world, Clement, indeed, might have been sitting here in Anfield's new dugouts as Liverpool's assistant manager. When Fenway Sports Group recruited Klopp, it was between the German and Carlo Ancelotti for the job, the final decision swinging Klopp's way because he blew John W Henry, Tom Werner and Michael Gordon away with his appetite for the role during interview in Manhattan.

Clement has followed Ancelotti around Europe, employed by clubs where the challenge has been different to the one he now faces. The day began with John Toshack, the legendary Swansea manager, questioning Clement's suitability. "The new manager, they talk a lot about him being at Bayern Munich, Real Madrid and Chelsea or whatever, but the managerial experience is nine months at Derby so we are still a little bit uncertain," Toshack said.

Clement's immediate task is to find a way for Swansea to stop conceding goals. Four flew past them against Arsenal last Saturday and their defensive record before this weekend was the worst in the league. To park a bus, as many managers have tried at Anfield this season, it is more complicated than suggesting that way forward and cracking on. It takes weeks of preparation to set a team up that way, for an understanding to develop between players and their responsibilities. Clement, then -- quite simply -- decided not to commit players in attack very often. Llorente -- the 6ft 5in focal point -- was not really a centre forward at all in the first half because he was so deep, allowing Liverpool's defenders and midfielders to fiddle about with the ball all they wanted.

Emre Can has many qualities and would be effective for some managers and some teams. He is fortunate, though, there is no Opta stat for dwelling in possession and slowing the game down when it needs to be much faster. Liverpool's cause was not helped either in the early stages by the quality of Jordan Henderson's passing, which enabled Swansea's midfielders to make frequent interceptions and stopped Liverpool gaining any momentum.

Can and Henderson were not alone in their wastefulness. A sequence for you to think about: Dejan Lovren passed to Ragnar Klavan. Klavan passed to Lovren. Lovren to Henderson. Henderson to Emre Can. Can back to Klavan. And Klavan into Georginio Wijnaldum. Liverpool, under no pressure whatsoever, had reached the half way line. It had taken 90 seconds.

Swansea could have been ahead before they were. Lax marking allowed Llorente to feed Tom Carroll on his second debut for Swansea having signed from Tottenham in a permanent deal after a loan spell last season. In front of the Kop, Carroll's deflected shot had beaten Simon Mignolet only to hit the outside of his near post.

Lukasz Fabianski had not been forced into a save by the time Swansea's lead had opened up to two. From Liverpool's point of view, Llorente's first goal was avoidable because they failed to react in the two phases following Wayne Routledge's corner. For Llorente's second, though, there is only so much you can do when a giant has a run on you. From Carroll's superb cross, Llorente - the subject of interest from Chelsea - powered in a header.

Firmino had been Liverpool's best player, largely because of his ceaseless running and clever movement despite the limited service coming his way. If anyone had the confidence to get them back in it, it was him. By the 70th minute, Liverpool were level. Firmino's first was a header, his second a consequence of tight footwork and a brilliant half-volley.

From there, it felt like Liverpool would win. In defence, though, they panicked, with Klavan messing up his clearance. One player you don't want the ball to fall to in such situations is Gylfi Sigurdsson. The Icelander needed one touch. Somehow Liverpool had lost. Somehow, Swansea had won.

Teams

Liverpool (4-3-2-1): Mignolet; Clyne, Lovren, Klavan, Milner; Wijnaldum (Matip 90), Henderson, Can (Origi 70); Lallana, Coutinho (Sturridge 56); Firmino. Subs not used: Karius, Moreno, Lucas, Woodburn

Swansea City (4-5-1): Fabianski; Naughton, FernA ndez, Mawson, Olsson (Rangel 79); Routledge, Fer (Fulton 90), Cork, Carroll, Sigurdsson, Llorente (Baston 85). Subs not used: Nordfelt, Dyer, McBurnie, Amat.

Attendance: 53,169

The Sunday Telegraph

Buoyant Swansea expose Liverpool's defensive frailties

Liverpool 2 Firmino 55, 69 Swansea City 3 Llorente 48, 52, Sigurdsson 74 Jurgen Klopp said he had never seen a side so transformed as Swansea since the arrival of Paul Clement. His opponent could make a similar remark about Liverpool since the turn of the year. The home team's loss of swagger finally caught up with them as they were beaten 3-2 in an astonishing yet often ridiculous game, with all the goals coming in the second half. This was Liverpool's first home defeat of the season, but for their Premier League challenge it is potentially crippling. Klopp is not one to disguise pain. He will not make title concessions in January, but said he wanted his players to suffer, accept the harm that has been done and respond to an opportunity missed. Should Chelsea win the next Premier League fixture here in 10 days, Liverpool will be reduced to also-ran status less than a month after celebrating their most impressive first half of any Premier League campaign. That is a measure of the competition this year, but also of the avoidable mistakes of a side who have not yet matured.

Take a look at the calibre of teams they have dropped points against. Burnley, Bournemouth, Sunderland, West Ham and now Swansea. Liverpool have been good enough against the title challengers, but been found wanting against those whose ambitions are staying in the division.

Swansea's win was improbable, but the defensive deficiencies it exposed were not surprising and, most worryingly, neither was the erratic nature of Liverpool's display, which only located a pulse when they went two down.

Klopp could scarcely believe the reaction to hauling Swansea back to 2-2. Roberto Firmino's double looked like it might lead to a famous Anfield finale, but instead it was Gylfi Sigurdsson, pouncing on more inept home defending, who struck the winner after 74 minutes. But for all Liverpool's mistakes, this was an afternoon to shift the main focus to the work of Clement, who nullified Liverpool's threat in the first half before seeing his side rush to a two-goal lead in the second.

If Liverpool toiled in Arctic temperatures, the real sense of chill will be felt in Swansea's relegation rivals as the repercussions of this result and performance are digested. "The mindset has always been that anything is possible," said Clement. "Our main objective is not look on the table or think how many points we need. Just deliver some performances. Against Arsenal we delivered a 35-minute performance." and we were unlucky. Today we played a 90-minute performance." In a parallel world, Clement could have been in the home dugout alongside Carlo Ancelotti, back in those days when his erstwhile mentor was in contention for the job that Klopp eventually took. Clement must have enjoyed the sights of this stadium. He had two debutants, Martin Olsson and Tom Carroll, who slotted in effortlessly at fullback and in midfield, respectively. But it was striker Fernando Llorente, who has looked unfit and uninterested for much of his career in Wales, who defined the game. The Spaniard finally resembles the player of the pedigree that once made him perennially linked with Anfield and is now prompting interest from Chelsea. He scored twice in four minutes, the first a toe-poke after dire Liverpool defending from a set-piece on 48 minutes, but the second a bullet header from the outstanding Carroll's cross. "If you get the right service to him, he is a goalscorer," said his manager. "Am I afraid to lose him? I want to keep him and the reason is because of what he showed today." The only problem at that stage was it woke up Anfield. Until then Liverpool were playing what could best be described as presumptuous football in a lethargic stadium.

Klopp's players dominated the ball, and occasionally created chances, but there was an air of expectation utterly ill-suited to Liverpool's position - as if it was a case of waiting for the inevitable victory rather than putting in the application to make it happen. Emre Can and Adam Lallana squandered early opportunities to make the misplaced assumptions of victory valid, the latter attempting an overhead kick from close range after the best move of the first half. More often the home side squandered the final pass, their recent frustration against deep defending teams again apparent. They miss Sadio Mane, but in the past few weeks it was Philippe Coutinho's injury that was sapping (the Brazilian started his first league since November here).

Before that Lallana's absence took its toll. It is starting to look suspiciously like Liverpool cannot function at the required level to compete for the title if Klopp's first choice eleven is not on the pitch. They have not yet won in the Premier League in 2017, a year which started with Chelsea feeling their breath. Klopp was asked how damaging this loss will be.

"Damaging is a harsh word. If it has influence, it has to be like this," he said. "I said a few times it has to feel really bad and that is what it does. Now we have to show a reaction. "We showed when on track we are a strong side we can create chances and score goals but the defending around all three goals today was not 100 per cent. It is very disappointing."

In the short term, at least, Liverpool must focus on securing a top-four position before they can entertain conversations about catching Antonio Conte. Liverpool (4-3-3) Mignolet 5; Clyne 5, Lovren 5, Klavan 4, Milner 6; Can 3 (Origi 70), Henderson 6, Wijnaldum 6 (Matip 90); Coutinho 7 (Sturridge 57), Firmino 8, Lallana 7. Subs Karius (g), Moreno, Lucas, Woodburn. Booked Klavan. Swansea City (4-5-1) Fabianski 6; Olsson 6 (Rangel 79), Mawson 6, Fernandez 6, Naughton 7; Carroll 8, Fer 8 (Fulton 90), Cork 7, Sigurdsson 8, Routledge 7; Llorente 9 (Borja Baston 85). Subs Amat, Dyer, Nordfeldt (g), McBurnie. Booked Fer.

Referee K Friend (Leicestershire).

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Swansea pounce to stun Liverpool

LIVERPOOL 2

Firmino 55, 69

SWANSEA 3

Llorente 48, 52, Sigurdsson 74 3

JURGEN KLOPP has always said that the road to winning the Premier League title would be long and, at times, bumpy. But he probably did not see this particular pothole. Swansea had never won in the League at Anfield and Liverpool were unbeaten in 17 games at home before two goals just after half-time by Fernando Llorente set the Welsh side on their way to a famous victory. Though the shock of going behind raised Liverpool from their lethargy, Roberto Firmino levelling the score with two fine goals, Gylfi Sigurdsson stunned Anfield and the Liverpool manager with the winner 15 minutes from time.

For the first time, Klopp began to feel the wrath of a disappointed home crowd and, though the frustration did not disintegrate into boos at the final whistle, the slow tempo of Liverpool's passing and movement in a dour first half and their calamitous defending in the second revived just the odd memory of life under Brendan Rodgers, Klopp's predecessor.

Nothing, though, should detract from a masterly away performance by Swansea, who had barely 30% possession, nor from the obvious tactical organisation and spirit that the new manager, Paul Clement, has managed to instil into the Premier League's whipping boys in a mere fortnight.

Taking a leaf out of Plymouth Argyle's book, Swansea defended in numbers during the first half, reducing Anfield to near silence, before picking their moments to exploit the hesitancy in Liverpool's central defence, first from a set-piece and then from a textbook cross from Tom Carroll on the run and a powerful header by Llorente.

Clement's delight would have come from a near perfect execution of a training-ground plan and the never-say-die spirit within a team already consigned to the Championship by most pundits, but particularly from the performances of two of his new recruits. Carroll and Martin Olsson looked as if they had been playing together for years rather than being introduced in midweek. Carroll, who had not played 90 minutes for more than a month, covered every blade of the Anfield turf and had a hand in two of the goals.

"I'm a coach who believes in executing the basics well and getting players to know their job," said Clement. "Anything is possible."

Klopp's frustration was evident, with much of his ire being reserved for his defenders who, not for the first time this season, lacked conviction and composure, notably in failing to win the first header for a corner for the opening goal by Llorente and in the panic caused by Carroll's twinkletoe foray into the penalty area which left Sigurdsson free to score the winner. "The defending around all three goals was not good enough," said the Liverpool manager. "This was a big opportunity for us to get three points and we gave them the opportunity to win the game."

Overturning a 1-0 deficit in the semi-final of the League Cup against Southampton on Wednesday would be an obvious way to erase the memory of this inexplicable lapse. But Liverpool's dynamism, their speed on the break and incisive movement, has been missing since the new year, the result of a plethora of fixtures perhaps. Philippe Coutinho, who made his first Premier League start for more than six weeks, cannot return to full form quickly enough. But only when James Milner decided to stop the sideways passing and get the ball in the box, in a rather old-fashioned English way, did Liverpool exert some pressure on the excellent Swansea central pairing of Federico Fernandez and Alfie Mawson. Firmino punished a momentary misjudgment by Olsson to haul Liverpool back in the game with a header, at the end of a spell of three goals in eight minutes, and fashioned a superb equaliser, taking a cross from Georginio Wijnaldum on his chest before swivelling to volley past Lukasz Fabianski with 20 minutes remaining.

Having got back on level terms, the momentum was all with the home team. Swansea, though, had one more trick up their sleeve, leaving Liverpool nursing a deflating loss and Klopp with a very small margin of error for the rest of the season.

Star man: Tom Carroll (Swansea) Yellow cards: Liverpool: Klavan Swansea: Fer Referee: K Friend Attendance: 53,169 Liverpool: Mignolet 6, Clyne 5, Lovren 6, Klavan 5, Milner 6, Can 6 (Orig 71min, 6), Henderson 5, Wijnaldum 6 (Matip 90+4min, 6, Lallana 7, Coutinho 6 (Sturridge 56min, 6), Firmino 7 Substitutes: Karius, Moreno, Lucas, Woodburn Swansea: Fabianski 7, Naughton 6, Fernandez 7, Mawson 7, Olsson 7 (Rangel 79min, 6), Cork 6, Fer 6 (Fulton 90+4min, 6), Routledge 7, Sigurdsson 7, Carroll 9, Llorente 8 (Baston 85min, 6) Substitutes: Amat, Dyer, Nordfeldt, McBurnie

The Observer

Gylfi Sigurdsson and Swansea stun Liverpool in five-goal thriller

The race to the finish line has started already according to Jürgen Klopp and by those punishing standards Liverpool have faltered badly. Swansea City belied their league position, their form and their history here to rise off the foot of the Premier League with an accomplished display that reverberated all the way to the top.

A cold, flat and goalless first half gave way to a remarkable second when Fernando Llorente gave Paul Clement's team a two-goal lead only for Roberto Firmino to lead a comeback and level matters. Liverpool sensed another statement victory in their pursuit of the title but another defensive lapse enabled Gylfi Sigurdsson to seal Swansea's first league win here. A first home league defeat for more than a year left Klopp and his players feeling bad and the hangover will be even worse should Chelsea open up a 10-point gap with victory over Hull City on Sunday.

Klopp claimed Clement had instigated the fastest improvement in a relegation-threatened team he had ever seen despite last Sunday's 4-0 reverse against Arsenal. It proved to be no exaggeration. "The mindset in the group is that anything is possible," said his Swansea counterpart.

"Our main objective is not to look at the table or talk about how many wins or points we need but to just focus on delivering some performances. Against Arsenal we delivered a 35-minute performance. We suffered two big blows that put us on the back foot, two own goals that were very unlucky, but today we gave a 90-minute performance. We defended well, we took our opportunities at set-pieces and were dangerous on the counterattack."

Klopp lamented Liverpool's failure to take a first-half lead but not the merits of Swansea's victory. Maybe it was the early kick-off or the freezing temperatures but the hosts were subdued until falling two goals behind. Philippe Coutinho initially offered his customary range of inspired passing on his first home appearance since damaging ankle ligaments in November but even he was running the ball out of play by the end of an unusually slow, cumbersome opening by Liverpool's standards.

Emre Can and Adam Lallana squandered decent openings before the break while Swansea almost profited from their first attack, with new signing Tom Carroll striking a post via a deflection off Dejan Lovren. Carroll and Martin Olsson impressed on their Swansea debuts having arrived at the club in midweek.

Liverpool came out early for the second half but did not switch on. Lovren needlessly conceded a corner with a miscued header and from Sigurdsson's delivery Liverpool lost every subsequent challenge. Federico Fernández beat Ragnar Klavan and Lovren in the air to head goalwards. The ball rolled off Llorente's shins on to Wayne Routledge with his back to goal and after he controlled the centre-forward stabbed the loose ball beyond Simon Mignolet from close range.

"Llorente is completely alone in our six-yard box," said Klopp. "It should not be difficult to miss him."

His side were two goals in arrears before they could rouse themselves. Swansea's new signings were at the heart of an outstanding strike as Olsson broke and released Carroll down the left. The midfielder swept a perfect first-time cross towards the penalty spot and there was Llorente, towering above three defenders, to steer a textbook header beyond Mignolet's grasp. Swansea were in dreamland, only now the hosts awoke from their slumbers.

The visitors had the cushion of a two-goal lead for three minutes before Firmino converted a convincing header of his own. Jordan Henderson sprayed a cross-field ball to James Milner on the left and he returned a deep cross towards the Brazilian who, with Olsson failing to clear, beat Lukasz Fabianski with an unstoppable header. Olsson claimed he was nudged in the back by Firmino and may have had a point, but the referee, Kevin Friend, was unmoved.

Liverpool, team and crowd, were finally stirred and they clawed back the deficit courtesy of a sublime finish from the Brazil international. Georginio Wijnaldum created the equaliser with a fine piece of control to kill Milner's high ball and cross from the left but it was all about Firmino. Two defenders were in close attention yet powerless to prevent the forward taking the ball on his chest and sweeping a first-time finish inside Fabianski's right post.

The stage was set for the home side to complete the fightback. Time, momentum and Swansea's understandable nervousness was on Liverpool's side but so, too, was weak defending and it was the visitors who struck for a third time. Leroy Fer and Llorente combined for Carroll to attack the Liverpool rearguard. He evaded two nondescript challenges and over-ran the ball into the path of Klavan, who could only divert it across the penalty area towards Sigurdsson. The Iceland international made no mistake as he sent the ball back across Mignolet's goal. Liverpool fought back, Lallana striking the bar and wasting the rebound, but to no avail.

Klopp insisted damaging was too harsh a word to describe the impact of this result on his team's title chances. Harsh but fair.

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21 January 2017



Swansea lifted themselves off the bottom of the Premier League table and dealt a huge blow to Liverpool's title hopes with a thrilling win at Anfield.

Gylfi Sigurdsson scored from close range with 16 minutes left to give Paul Clement his first win as Swans boss and the club their first away league victory over the Reds.

Roberto Firmino had struck twice to draw the hosts level after Fernando Llorente's two goals in four minutes after the break.

The defeat leaves Liverpool seven points behind leaders Chelsea, who now have a game in hand, at home against Hull on Sunday.

The Tigers are one of three teams, along with Sunderland and Crystal Palace, leapfrogged by Swansea, who move up to 17th after only their second win in eight league games.

In the wake of last weekend's demoralising 4-0 defeat by Arsenal, Clement said Swansea would be "naive" to ignore the possibility of Premier League relegation this season.

On the evidence of their performance at Anfield, it would be equally naive of anyone to write them off.

In the space of seven days they have gone from a side who collapsed at the first setback to one capable of rallying under extreme pressure.

Their first-half defensive display - which saw them restrict Liverpool to a couple of half-chances - belied their status as the club with the division's most porous defence.

Their second-half performance was clinical, epitomised by Llorente's two strikes - a close-range finish following Federico Fernandez's header from a corner, followed by a header from Tom Carroll's cross - and Sigurdsson's decisive, well-placed finish. These were their only three efforts on target.

It was also gutsy. They had to dig very deep against a side who, before Saturday, were unbeaten in the league in over a year at home and who had scored 26 goals in their previous nine league games.

Liverpool stumble again

In the programme for this match, Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp described October's encounter with Swansea in Wales - a 2-1 win sealed by a late James Milner penalty - as "one of the toughest we have had all season."

The German may feel the need to revise that after Saturday's game.

Despite having Philippe Coutinho back in the side - and ending the game with Divock Origi and Daniel Sturridge on the pitch - the Reds were short of attacking invention and strength in the absence of Sadio Mane, who is at the Africa Cup of Nations with Senegal.

Their failure to move the ball quickly enough in the first half meant they did not properly test Swansea's packed defence.

And while Firmino scored his first goals in six games - the first a header from Milner's cross, the second a fierce finish after he had chested down Georginio Wijnaldum's delivery - a total of five shots on target and an Adam Lallana deflected effort against the bar is scant product from nearly 75% possession.

With this result coming after successive away draws at Sunderland and Manchester United, the Reds are in danger of allowing a title challenge to slip away before February has even begun.

Their next game, at home to the league leaders, is now surely a must win.

Man of the match - Fernando Llorente (Swansea)

What the managers said...

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp: "It's hard to accept. In the first half we created four or five chances which we didn't take.

"The start of the second half we were poor and then we played brilliantly and scored two. Then we were a bit passive and one player was alone in our box, which is completely senseless.

"The most disappointing moment was the third goal and I can't explain it as we had so many chances to challenge.

"It's really difficult to accept at this moment. It is fair Swansea won, no - but was it deserved, yes."

Liverpool 2-3 Swansea: Jurgen Klopp criticises Reds' defensive 'switch-off'

Swansea manager Paul Clement: "We frustrated Liverpool and defended really well. We showed great togetherness and it was a massive team effort.

"At half-time I told the players we would get at least one chance, but to get three was unbelievable.

"It's very important for the confidence of the side that we can come to a big team and get a result. We need to work hard on the training pitch and make sure we get another result in 10 days' time."

Clement 'very proud' of Swans effort

Reds first to 50 goals - the stats you need to know

Liverpool's unbeaten Premier League run at Anfield has ended after 17 matches (11 wins, six draws).

Firmino has scored three goals in his past two Premier League games against Swansea.

Llorente has now scored eight Premier League goals but his first two away from home.

Liverpool conceded three goals at Anfield in a league game for only the second time under Klopp.

The Reds are the first Premier League team score 50 goals this season, while Swansea are the first to concede 50 (both now on 51).

Swansea have won back-to-back away league games in the same season for the first time since May 2015.

What next?

Liverpool will attempt to overturn a 1-0 deficit when they host Southampton in the EFL Cup semi-final second leg on Wednesday (kick-off 20:00 GMT). The Reds then welcome Wolves to Anfield in the FA Cup fourth round on 28 January (12:30), before another home game - the big one in the Premier League against Chelsea - at 20:00 on 31 January.

Swansea's involvement in the FA Cup ended in the last round so their next game is at home against Southampton in the Premier League on 31 January (19:45).

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Match ends, Liverpool 2, Swansea City 3.
 90'+7' Second Half ends, Liverpool 2, Swansea City 3.
 90'+4' Substitution, Liverpool. Joel Matip replaces Georginio Wijnaldum.
 90'+4' Substitution, Swansea City. Jay Fulton replaces Leroy Fer because of an injury.
 90'+4' Offside, Liverpool. Dejan Lovren tries a through ball, but Divock Origi is caught offside.
 90'+4' Delay over. They are ready to continue.
 90'+3' Delay in match Leroy Fer (Swansea City because of an injury.
 90'+1' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 90'+1' Foul by Tom Carroll (Swansea City.
 90' Leroy Fer (Swansea City is shown the yellow card.
 90' Leroy Fer (Swansea City has gone down, but that's a dive.
 89' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Divock Origi with a headed pass.
 88' Attempt missed. Gylfi Sigurdsson (Swansea City right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right from a direct free kick.
 87' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool.
 87' Leroy Fer (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 86' Attempt missed. Adam Lallana (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Daniel Sturridge.
 85' Substitution, Swansea City. Borja Bastón replaces Fernando Llorente.
 85' Foul by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool.
 85' Gylfi Sigurdsson (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 85' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right.
 81' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Lukasz Fabianski.
 81' Attempt saved. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by James Milner.
 79' Substitution, Swansea City. Angel Rangel replaces Martin Olsson.
 77' Attempt saved. Divock Origi (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Dejan Lovren with a headed pass.
 77' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alfie Mawson.
 77' Attempt blocked. Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
 76' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Gylfi Sigurdsson.
 74' Goal! Liverpool 2, Swansea City 3. Gylfi Sigurdsson (Swansea City left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner.
 73' Attempt blocked. James Milner (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Dejan Lovren.
 73' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 73' Foul by Wayne Routledge (Swansea City.
 70' Substitution, Liverpool. Divock Origi replaces Emre Can.
 69' Goal! Liverpool 2, Swansea City 2. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum with a cross.
 68' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Kyle Naughton.
 67' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.
 67' Jack Cork (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 66' Attempt missed. Alfie Mawson (Swansea City header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Gylfi Sigurdsson with a cross following a corner.
 65' Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by James Milner.
 62' Delay over. They are ready to continue.
 61' Delay in match Fernando Llorente (Swansea City because of an injury.
 58' Attempt saved. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Nathaniel Clyne.
 57' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 57' Foul by Leroy Fer (Swansea City.
 57' Substitution, Liverpool. Daniel Sturridge replaces Philippe Coutinho.
 56' Foul by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool.
 56' Wayne Routledge (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 55' Goal! Liverpool 1, Swansea City 2. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool header from the centre of the box to the centre of the goal. Assisted by James Milner with a cross.
 52' Goal! Liverpool 0, Swansea City 2. Fernando Llorente (Swansea City header from the centre of the box to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Tom Carroll with a cross.
 48' Goal! Liverpool 0, Swansea City 1. Fernando Llorente (Swansea City right footed shot from very close range to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Wayne Routledge following a corner.
 47' Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.
 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, Swansea City 0.
 45'+2' First Half ends, Liverpool 0, Swansea City 0.
 45'+1' Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 45'+1' Foul by Fernando Llorente (Swansea City.
 44' Offside, Swansea City. Tom Carroll tries a through ball, but Wayne Routledge is caught offside.
 41' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
 39' Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right.
 36' Ragnar Klavan (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
 36' Foul by Ragnar Klavan (Liverpool.
 36' Martin Olsson (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 35' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 35' Foul by Tom Carroll (Swansea City.
 33' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alfie Mawson.
 33' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of

the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.
 28' Foul by James Milner (Liverpool.
 28' Leroy Fer (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 25' Offside, Liverpool. Adam Lallana tries a through ball, but Philippe Coutinho is caught offside.
 21' Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 21' Foul by Leroy Fer (Swansea City.
 20' Attempt blocked. Federico Fernández (Swansea City header from the left side of the six yard box is blocked. Assisted by Gylfi Sigurdsson with a cross.
 19' Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.
 17' Attempt missed. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a cross.
 14' Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box misses to the left. Assisted by James Milner with a cross following a corner.
 13' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Federico Fernández.
 9' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Jordan Henderson with a cross.
 4' Foul by James Milner (Liverpool.
 4' Leroy Fer (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 First Half begins.
 Lineups are announced and players are warming up. Lineups are announced and players are warming up.