

Date: 23 August 2017

Opposition: TSG 1899 Hoffenheim

Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	BBC
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23 August 2017

## THE TIMES

Sensational Firmino helps Liverpool to rejoin elite

Liverpool 4 Can 10, 21, Salah 18, Firmino 63

Hoffenheim 2 Uth 28, Wagner 79 Liverpool win 6-3 on agg

At 9.36pm last night, Liverpool tweeted a photograph of the European Cup with the message "It's good to be back". Liverpool returned in style to the competition that the Kop loves to remind everyone they have won five times. In reaching the group stage of the Champions League, Liverpool played with pace and panache, with Emre Can good, Sadio Mane very good and Roberto Firmino sensational against his old team. Hoffenheim were poor, particularly defensively, but even such infirmity cannot take away from the excellence of Liverpool and especially Firmino. After scoring, the Brazilian lowered his shorts and swaggered towards the fans in celebration. The No 9 started up top but moved wide, dropped deep, a pimpnel in scarlet. Hoffenheim sought him here, they sought him there, and they What See page guide to who and England's clubs can today's League rarely got close. Firmino was quick, elusive, predatory and the prospect of him running at Arsenal's centre backs here on Sunday will have the visiting supporters shuddering as they venture up the M6. Nacho Monreal and Shkodran Mustafi will need to find another gear somehow. Jurgen Klopp is building a side of irrepressible qualities going forward. They most recently experienced the Champions League in 2014, under Brendan Rodgers, and few teams will want to visit an impassioned Anfield and face Liverpool in this sort of form. They still require a top-class centre back to stiffen the defence but this was a night for celebrating among fans, not carping. Liverpool are in two draws today, one during their sleep, and one when they will be wide awake. Few will have set their alarms for the 4.15am Carabao Cup draw from Beijing. But the second is the one, the craved moment at the more civilised time of 5pm -- cocktail hour in Monaco. Uefa last night confirmed that Liverpool have been placed in pot three with Napoli, Tottenham Hotspur, Basle, Olympiacos, Anderlecht, Roma and Besiktas. The worst-case scenario for Klopp's side is to be drawn against Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain and the tricky trip to Leipzig. Bayern Munich, Barcelona (interesting now? for a full Liverpool other face in Champions draw given the Philippe Coutinho saga) and the emotion-fest of a visit to Celtic would also offer serious challenges. Whatever the assignment, Liverpool will travel hopefully. Already leading 2-1 from the first leg, Klopp's side stormed into a three-goal lead within 21 minutes here. Poor Havard Nordtveit, Hoffenheim's hapless No 6, was promptly removed to prevent further humiliation. Mane kept backheeling the ball past the right-sided of Hoffenheim's three-man central defence.

Firmino kept dribbling past him. Once of West Ham United's first team, and Arsenal's reserves, Nordtveit did not enjoy his return to these shores and trudged to the bench to be replaced by Mark Uth.

Hoffenheim's -- and Nordtveit's -- pain began after ten minutes. Nothing was going to silence their voluble, blue-shirted fans, who had marched to the ground in numbers, but their team was suffering, flailing in the face of Liverpool's quick-moving 4-3-3. Firmino was playing through the middle but frequently moving left, linking with Mane while Mohamed Salah attacked from the right. Emre Can was foraging forward effectively from midfield while Georginio Wijnaldum was also pushing on. The exciting youngster, Trent Alexander-Arnold, provided another outlet with his runs down the right. Joel Matip joined some attacks. Even Alberto Moreno earned some applause. Thoughts of the Coutinho situation were forgotten as Anfield basked in the beauty of their attacking play.

The goals began to flow. Firmino played the ball in quickly to Mane, who backheeled the ball behind Nordtveit for Can. The Germany midfielder's shot took a deflection off Nordtveit -- who else? -- and sped into the goal at the Anfield Road End. The old ground, with its magnificent new stand, shook with joy and noise, the volume from the Kop rising higher after 18 minutes. Moreno, advancing towards Hoffenheim's area, released Firmino, who dribbled in from the left, eluding Pavel Kaderabek. Firmino calmly rolled the ball across to Wijnaldum, whose shot hit the post, fell free and Salah was quickest to the rebound.

Scarcely 140 seconds later, Liverpool were three goals to the good, and this was the best of the first-half collection. After taking the ball from Simon Mignolet, Moreno launched the move, drilling the ball towards the halfway line where Kevin Vogt, Hoffenheim's captain, thought he was tight enough to Firmino. The Brazilian's response was magical, instantly transferring the ball back to Wijnaldum, turning away from Vogt, spinning left and flying down the flank, awaiting a return. Wijnaldum was not pausing, driving the ball first time past Nordtveit towards Mane. He steered the ball into the box and, with another backheel, sent the ball past the sliding Nordtveit to the overlapping Firmino, whose cross was met on the volley, elegantly and emphatically by Can. Nordtveit sloped away, Uth ran on and scored within four minutes. A reminder of the occasional problems in Liverpool's defence surfaced again when Hoffenheim seized on a poor clearance and Sandro Wagner passed to Uth, who beat Mignolet. Liverpool restored their three-goal lead after 63 minutes. Jordan Henderson strode through and selflessly squared the ball to Firmino, who made no mistake in front a jubilant Kop before his sartorial celebration. Klopp began making changes, sending on Joe Gomez for Alexander-Arnold and then James Milner for Can, who departed to a standing ovation as the Kop signalled its desire for him to stay amid reported interest from Juventus and his failure to sign a new contract. Whatever his reported issues about his positioning by Klopp, Can is unlikely to receive elsewhere the sort of love shown by Liverpool fans last night.

With 11 minutes remaining, Hoffenheim grabbed a second, royally received by their fans, and another reminder of Liverpool's need for a commanding centre back as Wagner headed in Andrej Kramaric's cross. Mane was withdrawn, as Klopp prepared for Arsenal. Shortly after, Liverpool tweeted that picture of the trophy they love most: back in the UCL to misquote the Beatles.

Liverpool (4-3-3) S Mignolet 6 -- T Alexander-Arnold 6 (sub: J Gomez 65min, 6), J Matip 5, D Lovren 5, A Moreno 5 -- E Can 7 (sub: J Milner 70, 6), J Henderson 7, G Wijnaldum 7 -- M Salah 7, R Firmino 8, S Mane 8 (sub: R Klavan 87). Substitutes not used L Karius, A Robertson, D Solanke, D Sturridge. Booked Henderson. Hoffenheim (3-4-2-1) O Baumann 7 -- H Nordtveit 4 (sub: M Uth 24, 7), K Vogt 4, B Hubner 5 -- P Kaderabek 5 (sub: J Toljan 64, 6), D Geiger 6, K Demirbay 6, S Zuber 6 -- A Kramaric 6, S Gnabry 7 (sub: A Szalai 56, 6) -- S Wagner 6. Substitutes not used G Kobel, E Bicakcic, L Rupp, E Polanski. Booked Geiger, Kaderabek, Vogt, Hubner. Referee Daniele Orsato (Ita).

## the guardian

Liverpool return to group stages after early flurry sinks Hoffenheim

Julian Nagelsmann, Hoffenheim's bright young thing of a coach, proclaimed he was not in awe of Anfield but his team were overawed, overrun and overwhelmed by the attacking prowess of Liverpool. Jürgen Klopp's side released 15 months of frustration to seize their second shot at the [Champions League](#) in emphatic style. A mesmerising display from Roberto Firmino, Sadio Mané and Mohamed Salah ensured the likes of Barcelona will not be Liverpool's competitors only in the transfer market this season. They dismantled the European debutants in an early onslaught that yielded two goals for Emre Can and one for Salah before Firmino capped an outstanding contribution with Liverpool's fourth. Hoffenheim refused to wilt even with the tie quickly beyond them and defenders running around like "headless chickens", to quote their honest and overly-ambitious coach. Consolations from Mark Uth and Sandro Wagner diminished Liverpool's comfort levels but, after missing the chance to rejoin the European elite when losing the [Europa League final to Sevilla in May 2016](#), this time Klopp's team seized the opportunity to shape their entire season for the better.

For only the second time since they acquired Liverpool in 2010 Fenway Sports Group preside over a club in the Champions League group stages. The extra revenue will be welcomed, naturally, but the price of qualification had no monetary value at Anfield on Wednesday. After an arduous campaign to reach the play-offs and a pre-season overshadowed by Barcelona's relentless pursuit of Philippe Coutinho, plus their own dead-ends in the transfer market, a return to the European elite marks a significant step forward for [Liverpool](#) under Klopp. His emotional reaction after the final whistle was as much a release as a celebration. Positive pressure, Klopp had called [Liverpool's 2-1 advantage](#) entering the second leg of the play-off, and his team thrived on it. The teams served up another breathless encounter but unlike in Germany the opening exchanges flowed one way. Liverpool's way. After 21 minutes of attacking excellence they had Hoffenheim beaten and secured the Premier League five places in this season's Champions League. By the 24th minute Nagelsmann had no alternative but to tear up a game-plan that played to his opponent's strengths and go for broke, sacrificing the hapless Havard Nordtveit and introducing another striker with Liverpool running riot. Mané, Firmino and Salah were irrepressible and destroyed their opponents at will. Liverpool were on the front foot from the first whistle. In fairness to Alberto Moreno, roundly criticised for his performance in Germany, he repaid Klopp's show of faith in keeping the same starting line-up by helping set a relentless tempo. Salah and Mané had both gone close when Firmino, having created the Senegal striker's first chance with a superb diagonal ball behind Nordtveit, repeated the trick behind the former West Ham United defender. Mané's run was checked by Kevin Vogt and so he responded with a backheel into the path of the over-lapping Can. The Germany international's shot was heading across goal before a deflection off a covering defender left goalkeeper Oliver Baumann wrong-footed and beaten. Firmino was unplayable and helped double the home side's advantage on the night when, dancing in from the left, he picked out Georginio Wijnaldum with a low cross that the midfielder side-footed against a post. Salah, unmarked and onside, converted the rebound from close range. The third arrived within two minutes and will live long in the memory as an outstanding team goal. Firmino, yet again, was at its heart. The Brazil international was involved at the start of the move when he laid off Moreno's pass into Wijnaldum inside his own half. Wijnaldum's first time ball released Mané down the left who, spotting Firmino's remarkable run, delivered another backheel into the path of his overlapping team-mate. Firmino chipped an inch-perfect cross to the back post for Can to volley home from close range. "That's football!" screamed Klopp on the sidelines. A stunning team goal.

His hopes and defence in tatters, Nagelsmann had to act and introduced Uth for the frequently exposed Nordtveit. In fairness Hoffenheim responded well to the change in shape and it was a sign of their improvement that Klopp had become exasperated before Uth, scorer of his team's consolation in the first leg, struck again. Serge Gnabry produced an awful finish when played through by Andrej Kramaric, clipping the ball over Simon Mignolet but also yards wide of the far post. It was left to Uth to show his team-mates how to finish. Wagner released his fellow forward clear on the right and Uth beat Mignolet with a precise low shot into the far corner.

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Anfield was not in danger of witnessing another remarkable European comeback, however. Liverpool maintained control and the ability to hurt Hoffenheim after the restart. Wijnaldum, released by Salah, fired over from only six yards out and Mané tested Baumann with a blistering shot from the angle before Firmino was presented with the goal he merited.

Jordan Henderson made the fourth by hunting down an under-cooked pass by Kerem Demirbay and beating Vogt in the tackle and racing through on goal but selflessly squaring for Firmino to finish beyond Baumann, before Wagner reduced the deficit with a towering header from Andrej Kramaric's cross.

## The Mail

CAN THE MAN FOR REDS; German's clinical double fires Klopp into group stage

LIVERPOOL Can 10, 21 Salah 19, Firmino 63 4 HOFFENHEIM Uth 28, Wagner 79 2 (Liverpool win 6-3 on aggregate)

ONLY four games into Liverpool's season, we know them already. Enthralling to watch going forwards but characterised by uncertainty at the back, Jurgen Klopp's team are irresistible and vulnerable all at the same time. How far it can take them in terms of winning trophies is open to question. But in terms of a spectacle, the hot ticket is Anfield and last night it was impossible to take your eyes off Liverpool. Three goals up inside 21 minutes against a team whose coach said he had come without fear, Liverpool embarrassed Julian Nagelsmann's optimism through goals from Emre Can (two) and Mo Salah. With Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane on point, Liverpool flowed forwards like lava. Almost inevitably, though, there were moments of promise for Hoffenheim and Liverpool's chances of a clean sheet disappeared shortly before the half-hour when substitute Mark Uth scored from an angle. LIVERPOOL were not in danger, not with such a lead. But although Firmino's 63rd-minute goal was the least their attacking efforts deserved in second half, it was not a surprise when Adam Szalai headed Hoffenheim towards respectability with 10 minutes left.

If games in the Champions League group stage can be cagey and tepid, then it appears qualifiers are the antidote. Last week in Germany, the first leg of this tie was haphazard -- a missed penalty, spurned opportunities and then a bad goal conceded by Liverpool at the death just to keep the whole thing alive.

And then there was this. There were 16 goal attempts in the first half at Anfield last night and the only surprise was that just four of them went in. Hoffenheim were largely dreadful -- disorganised, chaotic and skittish at the back. Yet they could have scored three times. Liverpool, meanwhile, were terrific with the ball and seemingly capable of scoring every time they advanced within 30 yards of the Germans' goal. But what of the home team's defending? Well, we know the answer already and we have known it for a long time.

Too often too deep and almost always too square, playing a ball between the static members of Klopp's back line is as easy as rolling a coin into a slot machine. It is an enduring problem and one that will kill Liverpool if they do not fix it. But here, at least, Klopp's team had the security of two away goals from last week and, within 21 minutes, three more goals at the away end.

Liverpool could and should have scored in the second minute. Trent Alexander-Arnold's free-kick looped up off the defensive wall and Salah headed over when it looked easier to score. That set the tone. Mane was played clear two minutes later and his toe-poked shot -- eyes looking the other way -- came back off goalkeeper Oliver Baumann's shin. Then Alberto Moreno crossed low from the left and Salah's shot was blocked. It was a lively start and, for once, it proved portentous. Liverpool did not slacken off. Instead, they scored. Firmino's pass from deep played in Mane and, when he checked inside and released Can back heel, the midfielder scored via a deflection off centre half Kevin Vogt. Lucky? Yes. But also fully deserved. HOFFENHEIM could not cope and, over the next 10 minutes, Liverpool threatened to overwhelm them. Such the nature of Liverpool's play when they are their game that they can cnp ov is pool on the d thi t do this to any team, never mind one so defensively poor. Salah was next to score in the 11th minute and he really could not miss this one. Firmino's intelligent low cross picked out Mane, who had dropped off his marker, and when the first-time shot came back off a post, Salah was there to slam it into the net. As Hoffenheim heads dropped, Liverpool put their foot down. A superb ball inside the right back from Georginio Wijnaldum released Mane down the left and, when Firmino arrived on the back of a 50-yard gallop, a backheel from his colleague allowed him to cross to the far post for Can to volley home. That was a fantastic goal. There will be few better here this season and it sent Klopp into raptures. Nagelsmann reacted to impending embarrassment by throwing on first-leg scorer Uth and it worked for Hoffenheim. Minutes after Serge Gnabry had wasted a clear opportunity down the left, the substitute eased into acres of space down the right to score across Simon Mignolet. Liverpool gave the ball away twice in the run-up to that goal and, as such, could have few complaints. With such a handsome lead, Liverpool eased through the second half. Wijnaldum was twice denied and Mane came close, before Firmino seized on a defensive calamity to score in front of the Kop. Vogt decided not to challenge Jordan Henderson for a 50-50 in his own half and, when the Liverpool captain squared to Firmino on his right, the Brazilian could not miss from 12 yards. There was still time for Szalai to head a routine cross past Mignolet near the end and it may be this that Klopp remembers ahead of Liverpool's meeting with Arsenal here on Sunday in the Premier League.

Klopp will hope for more security, while the neutrals would probably settle for half as much entertainment.

## The Daily Telegraph

Front three fire thrill-a-minute Liverpool but concerns linger

Liverpool 4 Can 10, 21, Salah 19, Firmino 63 TSG 1899 Hoffenheim 2 Uth 28, Wagner 79 Liverpoolwin 6-3 on agg

"That's football," Jurgen Klopp turned and screamed as Liverpool scored the third of their goals in knocking out Hoffenheim to reach the group stages of the Champions League. And that release was felt throughout the stadium. Even then, on the way to an entertaining 6-3 aggregate victory in this play-off, there were still a few nervous moments and, combined with the goals and Liverpool's outstanding attacking play, last night summed up where they are at right now. But they are in the draw for the Champions League, which is made today.

They are back where they believe they belong and it is set to be a white-knuckle ride of a European adventure. Goals will be scored; goals will also be conceded. Europe will fear Liverpool's attacking prowess - their outrageously rapid front three of Roberto Firmino, Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah, and that is even without factoring in Philippe Coutinho, Adam Lallana or Daniel Sturridge - but they will relish coming up against a defence which looks maddeningly callow and vulnerable.

For all the talk of Coutinho and his desire to leave for Barcelona, how Liverpool cry out for a commanding centre-half. They have to make another play for Virgil Van Dijk, or a player of his ilk, while another they bought from Southampton, Dejan Lovren, had what can be described as an iffy evening at best. Klopp's "football" comment was a clear reference to a jibe made by the Hoffenheim midfielder Kerem Demirbay who, on the eve of this second leg and with his team trailing 2-1 after last week's home defeat, declared his side "definitely play the better football".

It was evidently a red rag to the Red Men and, certainly, to their manager who had mentally stored it before it flooded out when Emre Can volleyed home the second of his two goals after a rampant, fluid counter-attack.

That was, indeed, football and there were many such moments from Liverpool like that but also a few from Hoffenheim. Julian Nagelsmann, their young coach, spoke about the "awe" of coming to Anfield and he meant it as a motivation - not for his players to be overawed. In truth, they were too brave, too reckless in an opening 20 minutes in which they played such a high defensive line that they were pretty much all in Liverpool's half. It was gegen-gegenpressing. And Liverpool's attacking triumvirate licked their lips. Winning home and away and scoring half a dozen goals meant that there could be no doubt Liverpool deserved to progress and maintain a proud record against German opposition: 15 matches now in Europe without defeat. The Premier League also has five teams in the group stages of this competition for the first time, with Liverpool there for only the second time in eight years.

Even before Liverpool went ahead, Mane should have scored as he was superbly picked out by Firmino, with an angled pass, and then used his pace to take him clear for a clipped shot which was blocked by goalkeeper Oliver Baumann with an outstretched leg. The same Liverpool players then combined with, this time, Mane checking, from Firmino's pass, and finding the overlapping Can with a smart back-heel. The midfielder shaped to arc his shot around Baumann but it deflected off Havard Nordtveit to wrong-foot the goalkeeper and nestle in the net. Nordtveit, the former West Ham United midfielder, was part of a Hoffenheim defence that, frankly, appeared hapless and it was quickly unpicked again as Firmino, down the left, simply pulled the ball back to Georginio Wijnaldum, who carefully side-footed a shot that cannoned back off a post. Salah was the quickest to react and he sent the rebound past Baumann.

Hoffenheim posed an attacking threat, through the pacy former Arsenal winger Serge Gnabry, but that meant little as they were shredded again. Once more it involved Mane and Firmino with the latter down the left again to stand up an inviting chipped cross that was met by Can, who gleefully volleyed home to spark Klopp's reaction.

Was it over? It seemed so but Nagelsmann had to do something and rejigged with the goalscorer from the first leg, Mark Uth, coming on. He scored.

Sandro Wagner broke forward and slipped the ball wide to Uth who slid an accurate low shot back across goalkeeper Simon Mignolet and into the net. Even before that, Gnabry had got in behind Trent Alexander-Arnold but lifted his chip across goal and wide when he surely had to score.

It meant it was strangely nervy and, despite Liverpool's lead, the next goal felt crucial. They spurned chances - Can, for his hat-trick, and Firmino - and then into the second half Wijnaldum was suddenly central to everything as he was twice denied by Baumann, who also thwarted Mane

There would be more goals, though, and, crucially, Liverpool claimed the first when Jordan Henderson's desire to win the ball, and Hoffenheim captain Kevin Vogt's lack of determination, meant Henderson barrelled through before selflessly squaring for Firmino.

Game over? Yes, but there was a final reminder of Liverpool's vulnerability when Andrej Kramaric's cross was met by Wagner, as Lovren floundered, and he headed past Mignolet. Liverpool had played football. Fine football. But they also need to defend better.

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## THE INDEPENDENT

Liverpool return to Europe's top table after sinking Hoffenheim

Liverpool will not forage amongst the wastes from the Thursday night buffet that is the Europa League and instead, Jurgen Klopp's team will take their place at the continent's top football table once again.

Progression to the Champions League group stages was sealed inside the opening 21 minutes thanks largely to haste and skill of Sadio ManA[c], who did not score in the period but assisted with two of Liverpool's three goals.

It always seems to be ifs with Liverpool but if they keep their front three fit this season, if they keep Philippe Coutinho from the tentacles of Barcelona and he ends up supplying the passes for ManA[c] and if Liverpool simply let in fewer soft goals, their chances of winning silverware will increase dramatically. They are big ifs.

Perhaps only a misery would be critical when Liverpool are so explosive going forward but Hoffenheim's goals here were the type you'd now routinely expect Liverpool to concede: one where their two centre backs end up facing their own 'keeper, another a free header inside the box from a cross.

This had been a different type of test for Liverpool, one where the context behind the tie would not necessarily result in the mood inside Anfield bristling and being at its most belligerent, when there is a sense something needs to be overturned; those occasions when the power of the stadium is too much for even the most celebrated opponents.

Liverpool held a lead going into this second leg having scored twice in Germany last week. Considering Liverpool had never been eliminated from Europe after winning a first leg away from home on 33 occasions, considering too Liverpool had played German teams 18 times at Anfield and had never lost, they were expected to win here against a capable side in Hoffenheim -- one, indeed, with only 90 minutes of European football behind them in their entire history.

Hoffenheim had to score a minimum of two goals to have any chance of progressing and there were early signs that this factor would open space as a consequence. Hoffenheim's coach Julius Nagelsmann is younger than James Milner and his approach was a bold one that on another night, could have contributed towards three goals for his team inside the opening half hour. Instead, because of Serge Gnabry's hurried finishing, Hoffenheim would only score once during that phase, critically conceding three.

This was a portrait of Liverpool in the period 2012-2017: so exhilarating in attack, you fall in love with them all over again; then so brittle defensively, you doubt whether they have the foundations to win anything.

Emre Can registered Liverpool's goal number one and number three and each build-up involved the speed and mind of ManA[c], who raced away from his markers twice before releasing a team-mate with a back heel. In between, Mohamed Salah poked in the rebound after Georginio Wijnaldum's side footed effort had struck a post.

In reality, the Champions League is not a competition that has glorious stories painted by the very youngest managers. In appearance alone, 30-year-old Nagelsmann could pass for a slightly mature university student. He surely must have known of the risks when choosing a high defensive line against a Klopp attack with such pace but at least he had the common sense to admit his decision was the wrong one and make a change. For that he was rewarded because within minutes of replacing Havard Nordveit and switching from a back three to a back four, substitute Mark Uth had fired past Simon Mignolet in front of the Kop to make it 3-1.

Klopp's was illustrating his every trait inside and out of the technical area, celebrating with the crowd in the good moments and screaming at his players in the bad. Jordan Henderson, his captain, was the recipient of a barrage of abuse when Uth's shot flew in but accordingly, he received praise from the Liverpool manager after pressing high to dispossess Kevin Vogt and secure the victory on the hour mark by passing to Firmino, leaving the Brazilian staring at an empty net. From there, he could not miss. Though Sandro Wanger's late header reminded of their frailties, Liverpool were through.

Liverpool (4-3-3): Mignolet; Alexander-Arnold (Gomez 65), Matip, Lovren, Moreno; Can (Milner 70), Henderson, Wijnaldum; Salah, Firmino, Mane (Klavan 90). Subs: Karius, Sturridge, Robertson, Solanke.

Hoffenheim (3-4-3): Baumann; Nordveit (Uth 34), Vogt, Hubner; Kaderabek (Tolkan 64), Geiger, Demirbay, St. Zuber; Kramaric, Wagner, Gnabry (Szalai 57). Subs: Kobel, Bicakcic, Rupp, Polanski.

Referee: Daniele Orsato (Italy)

## DAILY MIRROR

HANDLE THE STRAIN? OF COURSE WE CAN

IF there was any pressure here, then it came only in the pumping heart Jurgen Klopp thumped repeatedly in front of the Kop at the end of this incredible game. It showed just how much reaching the Champions League group stage for only the second time in eight seasons means to the Liverpool boss - and to a club denied a place at Europe's top table for so long.

It was billed as a game that could make or break their season, and shape their immediate future. Yet the Reds were magnificent in dismissing the very real challenge of a decent Hoffenheim side.

And it was the statement Klopp had promised, especially when set in the context of yet more unwelcome noise from Barcelona, with the subject of Philippe Coutinho again placed on the agenda hours before kick off.

Inside 10 devastating first-half minutes, Klopp's brilliant team blew away the Germans with a show of attacking strength that made the Kop wonder if they even need Coutinho, given the magnificence of Sadio Mane - and posted notice for the rest of this competition.

Two goals from the impressive Emre Can and another from the lightning feet of Mohamed Salah gave the home side an unassailable lead. Even a traditional defensive wobble could not distract them, with the majestic Roberto Firmino adding a fourth. Clearly it will rarely be dull at Anfield this season.

The whirlwind that is Klopp on the touchline has been transfused directly into the bloodstream of his team, and was pumping through veins from the off.

Even before Can's opener, Liverpool could have been three up such was their surgical incision into the soft underbelly of the Hoffenheim defence.

The pace and strength of Mane, combined with the movement and artistry of Firmino is a thing of beauty when it dovetails so perfectly as it did here.

Firmino set things rolling early and one exquisite ball found Mane, whose backheel was even more audacious and allowed Can to direct his shot into the net via a deflection off the unfortunate Havard Nordtveit.

That was the cue for a Liverpool masterclass over the next 10 minutes as Mane and Firmino in particular were rampant, ably supported by Can, who seemed to enjoy being encouraged further forward by Klopp.

He punished the Germans again on 18 minutes by feeding Firmino, whose cross was turned onto a post by Georginio Wijnaldum and the rebound knocked in by Salah.

It seemed Liverpool would score from every attack and did just that in breathtaking style from their next foray. Wijnaldum found Mane who produced another backheel, and Firmino crossed brilliantly for Can to fire in the third. Can could have had a hat-trick before the break, and Firmino and Salah might have added more.

The Germans briefly threatened to make a game of it. They scored through sub Mark Uth after a lapse of concentration from Dejan Lovren, a talented defender but prone to such mistakes.

Keeper Simon Mignolet would have been disappointed with his angles too, but atoned with a great save from the same player soon after, and another late on.

The visitors had chances and with Sandro Wagner's header late on, it would have been some tie had former Arsenal man Serge Gnabry not been so wasteful.

The Reds made them pay and effectively killed the game soon after the break when Jordan Henderson won the ball and kept his composure to set up Firmino for a simple finish.

Yes, there will be questions about Liverpool's defending at times, but that would be churlish after this display of attacking verve. With or without Coutinho, the Kop had better buckle in, because it is going to be some ride this season.

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'That's Football' but Champions League riches must be spent on defence  
 Klopp's heavy metal football made an almighty racket ... going forward  
 Liverpool are back where they belong.

Their painful three-year absence from Europe's elite was ended on a night to savour at Anfield. At the final whistle Jurgen Klopp headed towards a euphoric Kop before unleashing one of his customary fist pumps. Mission well and truly accomplished. When the stakes were high, when everything the Reds had grafted for throughout last season was on the line, they delivered. No nerve-shredding drama. No putting supporters through the wringer this time. It turned into a glorious procession as a shell-shocked Hoffenheim had no answer to the attacking brilliance they were hit with. Julian Nagelsmann, who had dismissed the significance of home advantage, may have insisted he wasn't in "awe" of Anfield but he will be now. Just like Villarreal the last time this place hosted European football 15 months ago, Hoffenheim were made to resemble rabbits caught in the headlights. Anfield comes alive on nights like this. And that energy from the stands transmitted to the players during a thrilling demolition job.

This was Klopp's 'heavy metal football' as the Reds made an almighty racket. The tie was effectively over after a devastating opening 20-minute burst when Emre Can struck twice and Mohamed Salah slotted home.

Mark Uth pulled one back but Roberto Firmino restored the Reds' four-goal cushion on aggregate in the second half before Sandro Wagner's late consolation. It was a night when Sadio Mane strengthened his status as the darling of the Kop with an exhilarating display. At a time when Philippe Coutinho's attempts to force a move to Barcelona could have derailed the Reds, he has stepped up and filled the void. Mane tormented Hoffenheim's backline before departing to a thunderous ovation late on. The tireless Firmino was equally impressive and Liverpool have a front three capable of doing some serious damage against any team in Europe. Klopp's midfield also functioned better than at any point in the opening stages of this season as Gini Wijnaldum got his mojo back and captain Jordan Henderson raised the bar. However, the nagging concern with deadline day approaching next week is the frailty defensively which still hasn't been addressed in this window.

Both Hoffenheim goals were horribly soft and the need for a dominant centre-back like Virgil van Dijk is glaring. The riches Liverpool's presence in the group stage will yield needs to be spent. They can't always rely on their firepower to paper over the cracks at the other end. The burning question before kick-off was whether the Reds would stick or twist having established a narrow lead on their visit to the Rhein-Neckar-Arena eight days earlier.

The answer was emphatic as Hoffenheim were blown away by a breathtaking show of force. This was a throwback to the early months of last season.

The Bundesliga outfit had no answer to the pace and movement of the electric front three of Mane, Salah and Firmino. Salah nodded over after Trent Alexander-Arnold's deflected free-kick dropped into his path before Mane was thwarted by the outstretched boot of Oliver Baumann. With Can playing with a swagger and stamping his authority on the contest in the middle of the park and Gini Wijnaldum much improved alongside him, the Reds were completely dominant. They struck three times in the space of 11 manic first-half minutes.

Firmino's perfectly weighted pass picked out Mane, whose back-heel put it on a plate for Can. The German international swept it past Baumann via a deflection off Havard Nordtveit. Roared on by the Kop, Liverpool hunted in packs and forced Hoffenheim to cough up possession cheaply. When Wijnaldum found himself in trouble, Alberto Moreno rocked up and nicked the ball away from Dennis Geiger. Soon it was 2-0 as Firmino popped up on the left and crossed for the unmarked Wijnaldum, who slammed his shot against the upright. Salah was on hand to convert the rebound from close range. Klopp's celebrations were relatively restrained but there was no stopping him after Liverpool bagged a third of majestic quality. Wijnaldum's pass sent the unstoppable Mane scampering away down the left flank. The pacey winger's back-heel picked out Firmino, who dinked it across the face of goal for Can to volley home. Klopp raced off down the touchline, his face contorted with elation. He pointed at what he had just witnessed and turned to the fans behind him in the Main Stand before screaming: "That's football!"

From a position of total control, the Reds got sloppy and gave Hoffenheim a glimmer of hope. Spectacular going forward, Liverpool remain a real worry at times defensively. There's a lack of leadership and organisation back there.

Serge Gnabry wasted a glorious chance to reduce the deficit before Hoffenheim finally struck just before the half hour mark. Once again Dejan Lovren, who struggled badly in the first leg, was at fault as his careless error left the Reds exposed and Uth drilled low beyond Simon Mignolet.

It remained ridiculously open and Liverpool should have had five before the break. Firmino was unable to tuck away Salah's cut back after a delightful touch from Alexander-Arnold. Pavel Kaderabek was then lucky to stay on the field after planting his studs down Mane's Achilles. As the Senegalese winger gingerly picked himself up, he reacted to the applause from the stands by raising his arms and calling for supporters to pump up the volume. His adoring public duly obliged. Can, who only scored five times in the whole of last season, could have completed a first-half hat-trick, but curled narrowly wide after Mane had caused more mayhem. Mignolet more than played his part in the tie with the string of saves he

made in Germany and he was alert to deny Uth on the stroke of half-time. The second half was much less frenetic. Liverpool were more compact and Hoffenheim barely had a sniff. The more desperate Nagelsmann's side grew, the more space there was on the counter for the hosts to exploit. Baumann kept the score down as Wijnaldum and Mane went close but the German keeper was finally beaten again just past the hour.

It was testament to Henderson's commitment and desire as he snapped into a 50-50 with Kevin Vogt and surged through. As Baumann approached, the Reds skipper unselfishly squared for Firmino to convert in front of the Kop. Liverpool were home and dry. Joe Gomez and James Milner came on for Alexander-Arnold and Can, who both departed to standing ovations. The Reds blotted their copybook somewhat late on with another bout of careless defending. Andrej Kramaric crossed from the left and Wagner got above Lovren to nod into the bottom corner. It mattered little on this occasion but tougher tests than Hoffenheim lie ahead. Liverpool will take their place in Pot Three for Thursday's group stage draw in Monaco. An adventure which Kopites hope will take them to some of the continent's iconic footballing cathedrals is underway. Klopp has delivered.

#### MATCH FACTS

Liverpool: Mignolet, Alexander-Arnold (Gomez 64), Lovren, Matip, Moreno, Henderson, Can (Milner 70), Wijnaldum, Mane (Klavan 87), Firmino, Salah  
 Not used: Karius, Robertson, Solanke, Sturridge.

Hoffenheim: Baumann, Kaderabek (Toljan 64), Nordtveit (Uth 24), Vogt, Hubner, Zuber, Geiger, Demirbay, Kramaric, Wagner, Gnabry (Szalai 56).

Not used: Kobel, Bicakcic, Rupp, Polanski.

Referee: Daniele Orsato (Italy)

Goals: Can 10, Salah 18, Can 21, Uth 28, Firmino 63, Wagner 79.

Bookings: Henderson, Geiger, Kaderabek, Vogt, Hubner.

Man of the match Sadio Mane. A stunning display from a world class talent.

## RHEIN-NECKAR-ZEITUNG

### Liverpool war für Hoffenheim eine Nummer zu groß

Liverpool. Wenn ein Fußballtrainer schon nach 24 Minuten ohne Verletzungssorgen einen vierten Stürmer für einen Abwehrspieler einwechselt, ist das kein gutes Zeichen. Als am Mittwochabend Julian Nagelsmann, der Trainer der TSG 1899 Hoffenheim, Mark Uth zu diesem Zeitpunkt für den überforderten Havard Nordtveit auf den Rasen der Anfield Road in Liverpool schickte, schien das ein Akt der Verzweiflung.

Hoffenheim lag schon nach 21 Minuten mit 0:3 gegen den FC Liverpool zurück, und addiert man das mit 1:2 verlorene Hinspiel dazu, sogar mit 1:5. Am Ende verlor die TSG dieses Playoff-Rückspiel mit 2:4 (1:3), der Traum von der Champions League-Gruppenphase ist ausgeträumt. Liverpool war zu stark. Als Trost und Belohnung für den vierten Platz in der Bundesligasaison bleibt die Teilnahme an der Europa League.

Für Hoffenheim war in vielen Situationen alles eine Nummer zu groß: Das Stadion, der Gegner, die Aufgabe. Dabei hatte Nagelsmann am Vorabend des großen Spiels erklärt: "Ehrfurcht haben wir nicht, Vorfreude ist das richtige Wort. Wir müssen uns hier nicht verstecken." Das war die Ankündigung, aber auf dem Rasen wirkten seine Spieler beeindruckt von der Atmosphäre und dem entschlossenen Gegner. Mutig war Nagelsmann, der Nadiem Amiri nicht mit nach Nordengland genommen hatte, aber Dennis Geiger im zentralen Mittelfeld das Vertrauen von Beginn an schenkte. An dem erst 19 Jahre jungen Geiger lag es nicht, dass die TSG in der Anfangsphase von der Mannschaft des deutschen Trainers Jürgen Klopp nach Belieben ausgespielt wurde. Die TSG wirkte tatsächlich wie ein staunendes Jugendteam, das sich in der Gewichtsklasse verirrt hat. Die Liverpooler spielten ihre Klasse in der Offensive gnadenlos aus; die hatte ja bereits vor dem Anpfiff wie eine Drohung bei der angestrebten Aufholjagd gewirkt.

Schon im Hinspiel hatte die rechte Verteidigungsseite der Hoffenheimer den blitzschnellen Linksaußen Sadio Mane nicht in der Griff bekommen; vor acht Tagen verteidigten Ermin Bicakcic rechts in der Dreierkette und Pavel Kaderabek ganz rechts. Gestern spielte Nordtveit für Bicakcic, aber nur 24 Minuten. Dann wurde der Norweger von Nagelsmann erlöst. Immer wieder fanden die energischen "Reds" den Raum auf ihrer linken Angriffsseite, wo der spielfreudige Mane und der überragende ehemalige Hoffenheimer Roberto Firmino die Tore des deutsche Nationalspielers Emre Can zum 1:0 und 3:0 (11., 21.) sowie das 2:0 von Mohamed Salah (18.) raffiniert, aber ohne große Gegenwehr des Gegners, vorbereiteten. Nagelsmann muss sich fragen lassen, warum er in beiden Spielen gegen den rasenden Mane in Bicakcic und Nordtveit Spieler in der rechten Dreierkette aufgeboten hatte, deren erste Stärke eher nicht das Sprintduell ist. Nach 21 Minuten schien sich ein Debakel für die Europapokalnovizen anzudeuten, aber der TSG gelang durch den eingewechselten Mark Uth schnell das 1:3 (28.), was den Engländern ein wenig die Wucht nahm. Dennoch blieb TSG-Torwart Oliver Baumann bester Spieler seiner Elf und immer wieder gefordert. Doch der gute Baumann musste nach einem bitteren Fehler von Kerem Demirbay ein weiteres Mal den Ball aus dem Netz holen: Roberto Firmino krönte seine starke Leistung gegen seine ehemaligen Kollegen mit dem 4:1 (64.) und wurde von den Fans mit Sprechchören gefeiert. Immerhin gelang Sandro Wagner nach Flanke von Andrej Kramaric das 2:4 (79.). Außer Baumann erreichte kein Spieler der Hoffenheimer beim ersten Europapokal-Auswärtsspiel des Klubs Normalform. So bleibt es also dabei: In Liverpool können deutsche Mannschaften nicht gewinnen. Auch die TSG 1899 Hoffenheim musste an der Anfield Road ihre Grenzen erkennen. Die Hoffenheimer Fans ließen sich die gute Stimmung aber

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nicht vermiesen und sangen: "Europapokal, Europapokal." Am Freitag wird in Monaco die Europa League-Gruppenphase ausgelost.

FC Liverpool: Mignolet - Alexander-Arnold (65. Gomez), Joel Matip, Lovren, Moreno - Henderson - Can (70. Milner), Wijnaldum - Salah, Firmino, Mane (88. Klavan).

TSG 1899 Hoffenheim: Baumann - Nordtveit (24. Uth), Vogt, Hübner - Geiger, Demirbay - Kaderabek (64. Toljan), Zuber - Kramaric, Wagner, Gnabry (56. Szalai).  
Schiedsrichter: Orsato (Italien); Tore: 1:0 Can (10.), 2:0 Salah (18.), 3:0 Can (21.), 3:1 Uth (28.), 4:1 Firmino (63.), 4:2 Wagner (79.); Zuschauer: 54.000.



Liverpool produced a stunning attacking display against play-off opponents Hoffenheim to ensure five English sides will compete in the Champions League group stage for the first time.

Leading 2-1 from the first leg, the Reds virtually wrapped up the tie with three goals in the opening 20 minutes.

Emre Can's deflected shot put them ahead before Mohamed Salah reacted quickest to slot in a rebound off the post.

Can stroked in Roberto Firmino's cross at the back post just 143 seconds later before Hoffenheim substitute Mark Uth, introduced after 24 minutes in a tactical reshuffle, pulled one back.

Former Hoffenheim forward Firmino put the tie beyond doubt after the break, sliding the ball into the bottom corner after Jordan Henderson dispossessed opposing captain Kevin Vogt before unselfishly squaring.

The German side, who finished fourth in the Bundesliga last season, did not lose their spirit and pulled another back when Sandro Wagner headed in Andrej Kramaric's left-wing cross.

The Reds, along with Chelsea, Tottenham, Manchester City and Manchester United will discover their group-stage opponents when the Champions League draw is made on Thursday (17:00 BST).

Liverpool put themselves in a strong position to reach the Champions League group stage - for only the second time in eight seasons - after holding off a late Hoffenheim rally in last week's first leg.

Hoffenheim's 30-year-old manager Julian Nagelsmann insisted before the return leg that his team were "not in awe" of playing at Anfield. Their performance in the opening 20 minutes suggested otherwise.

The Reds - again missing Barcelona target Philippe Coutinho through illness - attacked from the whistle, unnerving the visitors with the energy and movement of forward trio Firmino, Sadio Mane and Salah.

That promising start gave optimism to the home fans and any lingering nerves around Anfield were quickly settled within 10 minutes when Can - with a slice of luck - put them ahead.

Liverpool continued to surge forward and, following a couple of warning signs from the visitors on the counter, left Hoffenheim needing to score three times when Salah calmly converted his first Reds goal at Anfield by pouncing on Georginio Wijnaldum's effort off the post.

Still Jurgen Klopp's men refused to sit back and, within three minutes, added the third.

Firmino started the move inside his own half, playing the ball up to Mane before racing down the left flank to collect the return ball and dink to Can at the far post.

That sparked manic celebrations from Klopp, who repeatedly punched the air in delight as he closed in on his own return to the Champions League.

The German, who led Borussia Dortmund to the 2013 final, demanded his side continue to attack after the break, Firmino sealing victory with a richly deserved goal.

However, the ease with which Wagner rose to head in Hoffenheim's second, highlighting the defensive vulnerability that continues to dog Liverpool, may have given Klopp cause for concern in an otherwise superb night.

Real? Barca? Dortmund? British sides focus on draw

After completing the job against Hoffenheim, Liverpool can now start thinking about which of Europe's top sides they might face in the group stage.

None of the English teams can be drawn against each other as sides from the same country are kept separate, although one of them could be drawn against Scottish champions Celtic.

Liverpool, placed in pot three, could be drawn against holders Real Madrid or Italian champions Juventus from pot one, while pot two contains five-time European champions Barcelona, big-spending French side Paris St-Germain and Klopp's old charges Borussia Dortmund.

England has only provided two Champions League semi-finalists in the past five campaigns and a poor showing in continental competitions this season could see the Premier League lose its fourth spot in the leading club competition to Italy.

With co-efficient points awarded for reaching the group stage, Liverpool's passage will help boost England's European ambitions as well as their own.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp:

"We wanted a fast start and we have fulfilled our dream. It was fantastic.

"Playing Hoffenheim was the most difficult draw, alongside Napoli - we had two unbelievably hard games. We learned from the first game and adapted to a little change when they changed from five at the back to four at the back."

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson:

"It has been a brilliant night - the atmosphere was brilliant all night and we were brilliant at the start and set the tempo.

"We let in a couple of goals so we have still got things to work on but overall we're delighted to get back into the Champions League where Liverpool belong.

"Now we have got to do ourselves justice and win some games there.

"We're in there and we've proved we can play against big teams. We're happy to play against whoever we're drawn against."

Man of the match - Sadio Mane (Liverpool)

Rampant Reds enjoying Europe - the stats

Liverpool have returned to the Champions League group stages for the first time since the 2014-15 campaign.

The Reds have never been eliminated from Europe having won a first leg away from home.

Liverpool have scored three or more goals in consecutive European home games for the first time since March 1997.

The Reds have now won six successive European games at Anfield against German opposition.

Jurgen Klopp has overseen seven European games as Liverpool manager at Anfield, with the Reds winning each of the past six - their best run since November 2010.

Emre Can scored twice in a game for the first time in his professional career.

Sadio Mane has been directly involved in 15 goals in his 17 appearances at Anfield for Liverpool, scoring 10 goals and providing five assists.

Mark Uth's strike was the first goal Simon Mignolet had conceded at Anfield in 313 minutes.

What's next?

Back to the Premier League for Liverpool - and it is a big one.

The Reds, who are unbeaten in their first two games after drawing at Watford and beating Crystal Palace, host Arsenal at Anfield on Sunday (16:00 BST).

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Match ends, Liverpool 4, 1899 Hoffenheim 2.

90'+3' Second Half ends, Liverpool 4, 1899 Hoffenheim 2.

90'+2' Corner, 1899 Hoffenheim. Conceded by Joseph Gomez.

90' Benjamin Hübner (1899 Hoffenheim is shown the yellow card.

90' Foul by Benjamin Hübner (1899 Hoffenheim.

90' Mohamed Salah (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

88' Substitution, Liverpool. Ragnar Klavan replaces Sadio Mané.

87' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum.

83' Attempt missed. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Dejan Lovren.

83' Foul by Benjamin Hübner (1899 Hoffenheim.

83' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

79' Goal! Liverpool 4, 1899 Hoffenheim 2. Sandro Wagner (1899 Hoffenheim header from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Andrej Kramaric with a cross.

78' Attempt saved. Kerem Demirbay (1899 Hoffenheim left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Sandro Wagner.

77' Offside, 1899 Hoffenheim. Benjamin Hübner tries a through ball, but Mark Uth is caught offside.

75' Hand ball by Mark Uth (1899 Hoffenheim.

74' Foul by Dennis Geiger (1899 Hoffenheim.

74' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

74' Attempt blocked. Mark Uth (1899 Hoffenheim left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

71' Delay over. They are ready to continue.

70' Delay in match Kerem Demirbay (1899 Hoffenheim because of an injury.

70' Substitution, Liverpool. James Milner replaces Emre Can.

66' Attempt blocked. Jeremy Toljan (1899 Hoffenheim right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

65' Substitution, Liverpool. Joseph Gomez replaces Trent Alexander-Arnold because of an injury.

64' Substitution, 1899 Hoffenheim. Jeremy Toljan replaces Pavel Kaderábek.

63' Goal! Liverpool 4, 1899 Hoffenheim 1. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

63' Foul by Mohamed Salah (Liverpool.

63' Steven Zuber (1899 Hoffenheim wins a free kick in the defensive half.

60' Attempt missed. Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool right footed shot from a difficult angle on the right misses to the right.

60' Attempt saved. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Trent Alexander-Arnold.

58' Foul by Ádám Szalai (1899 Hoffenheim.

58' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

58' Offside, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson tries a through ball, but Emre Can is caught offside.

58' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Oliver Baumann.

58' Attempt saved. Sadio Mané (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the top left corner. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum.

56' Substitution, 1899 Hoffenheim. Ádám Szalai replaces Serge Gnabry.

56' Attempt missed. Mark Uth (1899 Hoffenheim left footed shot from the right side of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Serge Gnabry.

54' Attempt missed. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Mohamed Salah.

52' Attempt missed. Joel Matip (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the left. Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross following a corner.

52' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Pavel Kaderábek.

51' Kevin Vogt (1899 Hoffenheim is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

51' Foul by Kevin Vogt (1899 Hoffenheim.

51' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

50' Offside, 1899 Hoffenheim. Benjamin Hübner tries a through ball, but Andrej Kramaric is caught offside.

50' Offside, Liverpool. Roberto Firmino tries a through ball, but Mohamed Salah is caught offside.

49' Sandro Wagner (1899 Hoffenheim wins a free kick in the defensive half.

49' Foul by Joel Matip (Liverpool.

47' Corner, 1899 Hoffenheim. Conceded by Trent Alexander-Arnold.

Second Half begins Liverpool 3, 1899 Hoffenheim 1.

45'+2' First Half ends, Liverpool 3, 1899 Hoffenheim 1.

45'+1' Jordan Henderson (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

45'+1' Kerem Demirbay (1899 Hoffenheim wins a free kick on the right wing.

45'+1' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool.

44' Corner, 1899 Hoffenheim. Conceded by Simon Mignolet.

44' Attempt missed. Mark Uth (1899 Hoffenheim right footed shot from the right side of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Andrej Kramaric.

43' Offside, 1899 Hoffenheim. Benjamin Hübner tries a through ball, but Mark Uth is caught offside.

42' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

41' Attempt missed. Serge Gnabry (1899 Hoffenheim right footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Mark Uth.

39' Corner, 1899 Hoffenheim. Conceded by Joel Matip.

37' Pavel Kaderábek (1899 Hoffenheim is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

37' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

37' Foul by Pavel Kaderábek (1899 Hoffenheim.

36' Attempt saved. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum.

36' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Mohamed Salah.

35' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Steven Zuber.

33' Dangerous play by Mark Uth (1899 Hoffenheim.

33' Joel Matip (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

31' Offside, 1899 Hoffenheim. Steven Zuber tries a through ball, but Serge Gnabry is caught offside.

30' Dennis Geiger (1899 Hoffenheim is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

28' Goal! Liverpool 3, 1899 Hoffenheim 1. Mark Uth (1899 Hoffenheim right footed shot from the right side of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Sandro Wagner.

25' Attempt missed. Serge Gnabry (1899 Hoffenheim left footed shot from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Andrej Kramaric with a through ball.

24' Substitution, 1899 Hoffenheim. Mark Uth replaces Håvard Nordtveit.

21' Goal! Liverpool 3, 1899 Hoffenheim 0. Emre Can (Liverpool left footed shot from very close range to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a cross.

18' Goal! Liverpool 2, 1899 Hoffenheim 0. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the centre of the goal.

18' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool hits the right post with a right footed shot from the centre of the box. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

17' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

17' Foul by Sandro Wagner (1899 Hoffenheim.

15' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

15' Foul by Dennis Geiger (1899 Hoffenheim.

14' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

14' Foul by Kerem Demirbay (1899 Hoffenheim.

10' Goal! Liverpool 1, 1899 Hoffenheim 0. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

8' Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

8' Foul by Steven Zuber (1899 Hoffenheim.

8' Attempt blocked. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.

7' Offside, 1899 Hoffenheim. Pavel Kaderábek tries a through ball, but Serge Gnabry is caught offside.

5' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Kevin Vogt.

4' Attempt blocked. Emre Can (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

4' Attempt saved. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a through ball.

3' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is too high following a set piece situation.

3' Attempt blocked. Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

2' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

2' Foul by Pavel Kaderábek (1899 Hoffenheim.

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.