

Date: 5 January 2017

Opposition: Everton

Competition: FA Cup

Express

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Virgil van Dijk scores winner on his debut to knock out rivals
The big Dutch defender made a dream debut following his record-breaking £75m move from Southampton by heading the winner on his debut – and in a Merseyside derby.

Just as a thunderous FA Cup third round tie looked to be heading to a replay, Van Dijk rose above Jordan Pickford to head home Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner inswinging corner in front of the Kop five minutes from time.

James Milner had put Jurgen Klopp's side ahead with a first half penalty after Mason Holgate had pulled back Adam Lallana.

But Gylfi Sigurdsson's 67th minute breakaway goal looked as if it would Everton a second chance back at Goodison.

Van Dijk however ensured [Liverpool](#) go through to the fourth round with a goal that should guarantee him a folklore status after just 90 minutes for his new club. The build-up to the game had been overshadowed by comings and goings at both clubs.

Liverpool gave a debut to their record £75m signing Virgil Van Dijk, Barcelona continued to negotiate a deal for Philippe Coutinho and Juventus closed in on a summer free transfer for Emre Can.

In the blue corner, [Everton's](#) Turkish new boy Cenk Tosun just failed to beat the noon deadline to make his debut in the cup-tie while home-grown Ross Barkley completed his £15m move to Chelsea.

But there was nothing half-hearted about the team selections with Klopp and Allardyce both fielding their strongest possible teams – although Liverpool were missing their two leading scorers Mo Salah and Philippe Coutinho through injury. And there was nothing half-hearted about some of the tackles in a thunderous first half littered with numerous free-kicks but precious little goal threat.

Wayne Rooney was booked for a lunging late challenge on Joe Gomez but it underlined Everton's approach to get stuck in and not give their in-form opponents an inch of space.

Liverpool were restricted to long-range efforts with Milner going closest with a volley that flew just wide of the far post from Joe Gomez's cross. But he was on target with the penalty that broke the deadlock after 33 minutes.

Mason Holgate foolishly invited Adam Lallana to go to ground when he put his arm around the Liverpool player to stop him from turning into the penalty area and referee Madley had no hesitation pointing to the spot despite heated Everton protests.

Milner kept his nerve in front of the Everton supporters in the Anfield Road end to send Jordan Pickford the wrong way.

The incident was clearly playing on Holgate's mind moments later when he compounded his blunder by pushing Roberto Firmino into the advertising hoardings at the side of the pitch as the Brazilian blocked his run to retrieve a ball that was running out of play.

Madley had to intervene to stop a furious Firmino from confronting Holgate, who was given a stern lecture by the referee for his rush of blood as the half ended with Liverpool on top.

Liverpool came out with all guns blazing early in the second half looking to kill off their neighbours.

Oxlade-Chamberlain sent Lallana clean through but he showed his rustiness after his long injury lay-off by firing a tame shot wide as Pickford came off his line.

Andrew Robertson saw a fierce shot from a tight angle kept out by Pickford as Liverpool turned the screw.

Rooney was treading a fine disciplinary tightrope after his early booking and when he tangled with Can the Liverpool fans called for his dismissal.

Referee Madley ignored them and gave Rooney the benefit of the doubt but Allardyce decided not to risk his player collecting a second caution and a red card and replaced him with youngster Ademola Lookman early in the second half.

Liverpool were left to regret their chances when Everton stunned them with an equaliser from a rapid breakaway in the 67th minute.

Bolassie fed sub Lookman who found Jagielka of all people on the edge of the Liverpool area and he turned the ball back into the path of Sigurdsson who struck a first time shot past the helpless Karius.



Virgil van Dijk crowns Liverpool debut to see off Everton in Cup derby
The first instalment has been repaid with exquisite timing. Five minutes remained at Anfield when Virgil van Dijk towered above the [Everton](#) defence and announced his arrival as Liverpool's record signing with the winning goal in front of the Kop. Some players wilt under pressure and expectation. The most expensive defender in world football soared.

This had been another gruelling derby for Jürgen Klopp against a Sam Allardyce team far more expansive than anticipated. Everton gave their all and were on course for a replay when Gylfi Sigurdsson equalised the second successive soft penalty awarded in an Anfield derby. This time it fell in Liverpool's favour and was converted by James Milner. An ugly confrontation between Mason Holgate and Roberto Firmino added to the controversy, with the Everton defender understood to have accused the [Liverpool](#) striker of using racist language when they clashed in the first half.

As for the football, this was about vindication for Van Dijk and Klopp. Early days of course, and at £75m Liverpool will expect a greater return than the goal that beat Everton in an [FA Cup](#) tie at Anfield for the first time but, as the Holland international put it, this was the dream start. Van Dijk's aerial command had been to the fore in dealing with Everton pressure and his physical quality paid off in attack when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain swung over a late corner and he beat Phil Jagielka plus a flapping Jordan Pickford to head in the winner. The first Liverpool player to score on his debut against Everton since 1901 is up and running in style. Defeat was hard on Allardyce's team, who produced a much improved and more offensive performance than in the [recent 1-1 draw here](#) in the Premier League. Yannick Bolasie's return from a 12-month injury lay-off was a significant factor with his willingness to attack the impressive Andrew Robertson offering Dominic Calvert-Lewin necessary support. Everton, however, did not create one chance of note in the first half. That will not have shocked regular observers of this team, who have sought to rectify their season's biggest failing by signing Cenk Tosun for £27m from Besiktas. The club bizarrely announced the completion of the deal at half-time.

More surprising was Liverpool's equal ineffectiveness in the final third. In mitigation Klopp's forward options were reduced or lacking sharpness. Sadio Mané arrived back from the African Footballer of the Year awards in Ghana only in the early hours of the morning via private jet. The winner, his team-mate Mohamed Salah, was absent through injury along with the transfer window distraction that is Philippe Coutinho. Salah's replacement, Adam Lallana, was on the periphery of a contest played in a good atmosphere until being central to the breakthrough.

The only incident of note in the opening 25 minutes was a poor challenge by Wayne Rooney on Joe Gomez that brought a deserved booking. Otherwise it had been a flowing, even but incident-lacking derby until Emre Can found Lallana inside the penalty area and the boyhood Evertonian went down under a touch from Holgate. The referee, Robert Madley, immediately pointed to the spot and the controversy that shaped the last derby, and earned Everton a point, had resurfaced. Holgate raised his arms foolishly, Lallana tumbled easily, and a highly contentious penalty resulted. Milner dinked his spot-kick straight down the middle of Pickford's goal but showed barely a flicker of emotion at scoring. Allardyce argued over the decision with Jon Moss, the fourth official. Given their respective takes on Dejan Lovren's push on Calvert-Lewin last month, the Everton manager would have agreed and Klopp disagreed with Madley's judgement if they were being consistent. In fairness to the Liverpool manager, he was. "For me it was exactly the same situation as the last game," he said. "You all said the hands were there and it's a penalty. I don't think both situations were a penalty." Another flashpoint involving Holgate soon followed. The young defender stupidly pushed Firmino over the advertising hoardings in front of the Main Stand as the pair chased the ball out for a throw-in. Firmino reacted furiously and made a bee-line for Holgate. Madley stepped in the Liverpool forward's path as the Everton defender first eyeballed Firmino then erupted in response to something the Brazilian said, man-handling the referee in the process. Remarkably no cards were shown but Madley engaged in a long conversation afterwards with Moss, who took notes. The match official's report will shape what action, if any, the Football Association takes next.

A dubious penalty was not the only similarity with the clubs' recent league meeting. Again, Liverpool should have put the contest beyond Everton at 1-0. Joe Gomez squandered a gilt-edged chance early in the second half when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner found him completely unmarked at the back post. Lallana also shot wide when given a run on Phil Jagielka and van Dijk headed straight at Pickford from an Oxlade-Chamberlain free-kick.

Again, just like in the league meeting, Everton capitalised. Allardyce introduced Ademola Lookman for the unhappy Rooney, with the former England captain sailing too close to a red card, and the youngster was central to the equaliser. Collecting Bolasie's clearance, he broke into the Liverpool half before spraying the ball out to Jagielka of all people sprinting down the right. Jagielka stumbled over his first touch but passed inside to Sigurdsson and he rolled a cool finish inside Loris Karius' left-hand post.

Klopp lamented the lack of protection given for Everton's equaliser. He gave thanks, by contrast, for changing his mind and deciding to play Van Dijk after all.

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5 January 2017

The Mail

Virgil van Dijk scores late header on debut to win Merseyside derby as Jurgen Klopp's men march through to FA Cup fourth round

Smart move, playing him. There were those who thought Jurgen Klopp had erred, plunging Virgil van Dijk into the derby for his debut. Certainly, when he missed a free header in front of the Kop, four minutes before Everton equalised. It could ruin a man's confidence, that. Fortunately, Liverpool's record acquisition is made of stronger stuff. That's what you pay £75million for. So when, with five minutes to go, Liverpool won a corner on the left, up went Van Dijk again. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain struck an inswinger and there was Liverpool's instant hero, rising with goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, getting there first, winning the game against Liverpool's oldest and nearest rivals. Julian Dicks was the last Liverpool player to be given a debut in the derby, in 1993, but he didn't come with the weight of expectation that accompanies Van Dijk. Opinion was divided on whether throwing him in was sensible given the frenetic nature of this fixture, but the player was certainly up for it, and did his defensive duties well, too. He's not really there to score goals, but could have got two, had Oxlade-Chamberlain's free-kick after 63 minutes set up his first. Instead, that time, Van Dijk gave Pickford little to do, and could then do nothing as Everton broke to get back in the game. Sam Allardyce drew here earlier in the season but, if anything, Everton were better on Friday.

His goal was a magnificent piece of counter-attacking, started by Yannick Bolasie on the left, feeding substitute Ademola Lookman — on for Wayne Rooney, wisely removed before he picked up a second yellow card — who played the ball in to Phil Jagielka. Firmino controls an awkward ball that was fizzed into him as Everton defender Phil Jagielka looks to move in tight Quite what Everton's centre half was doing sprinting upfield, who knows, but it worked and he picked out Gylfi Sigurdsson arriving late. His finish, low, precise, left keeper Loris Karius with no chance and delighted the Blue contingent behind the goal. Van Dijk could only look on in envy and wait for his moment to come. He may not have expected it so soon, either. Yet, once the dust settles on what was a very positive night for Liverpool in so many ways, there may be repercussions over a first-half controversy involving Roberto Firmino and Everton defender Mason Holgate.

That it also involved perhaps the Premier League's least convincing match official in Bobby Madley is sadly par for the course these days. Madley didn't have the best holiday season, and nor did many of the teams he refereed, and some will say he fell for one again here with Liverpool's opener, a penalty.

He didn't, it was a foul — but it's also fair to say Adam Lallana's fall was unnecessary and exaggerated. The whole incident could be recast as a riddle. When is a dive not a dive? When it's a foul anyway. Without doubt Holgate put his arms around Lallana to limit his movement, although it was hardly a vicelike grip. Lallana responded by collapsing to the floor as if manhandled. Put it like this, if such contact was really enough to fell a human being, the ballrooms of Britain would be lousy with prone dancers. So a penalty, but one that left a slightly nasty taste, although James Milner was entirely unaffected, clipping his kick down the middle, cool as you like. That, however, was only the start of it. Defender Van Dijk looks to show Bolasie down the left as the winger dribbles into the Liverpool penalty area Holgate was clearly still fuming five minutes later, when he chased Firmino out towards the near touchline. The Brazilian got there first, but as he slowed to avoid sprinting into the hoardings, he felt a double-handed push on his back that propelled him off the pitch and into the crowd. It was a stupid, irresponsible act from Holgate, one that could have caused injury were it not for pure good fortune. Firmino was seething and ran back on to the pitch, seeking confrontation. And now it gets complicated. Whatever Firmino said sent Holgate berserk and he laid both hands on Madley to pull him back and draw attention. An unsightly melee ensued, with claims on all sides. We're back in the realms of lip-reading, unfortunately. Holgate seems to believe he was racially abused.

Those familiar with Firmino's native tongue say after calling Holgate 'loco', the insult used was filho da puta — son of a bitch, or whore. Yet that is not to say Holgate is lying and, in the current climate, it is hard to imagine there will not be an investigation. To add to the complication, the Everton bench said Firmino spat at Holgate, although there is little evidence to support that accusation. It is hard to imagine there will not be an investigation. Yet Madley ducked it all, even the push. Not so much as one card was shown. Jon Moss, the fourth official, then got involved, one presumes to report the spitting allegation. All that can be said is we haven't heard the last of it. Back to the football. Did Liverpool deserve the win? Yes. It wasn't the best game in terms of goalmouth action but, what there was, mainly came in red. Lallana missed a one-on-one and Pickford made a superb save from Andrew Robertson. Everton did not get much on target, unless one counts the foul by Rooney on Joe Gomez. Even Madley couldn't miss that.

MATCH STATISTICS AND MATCH ZONE

Liverpool (4-2-3-1): Karius, Gomez (Solanke 77), Matip, van Dijk, Robertson, Can, Milner (Alexander-Arnold 77), Mane, Lallana (Wijnaldum 70), Oxlade-Chamberlain, Firmino; Subs not used: Lovren, Klavan, Ings, Ward
Goalscorers: Milner (35), van Dijk (84) Booked: NONE
Everton (4-3-3): Pickford, Kenny, Holgate, Jagielka, Martina, McCarthy (Davies 86), Schneiderlin, Sigurdsson, Rooney (Lookman 49), Bolasie, Calvert-Lewin (Niasse 82); Subs not used: Williams, Vlasic, Robles, Banning
Goalscorer: Sigurdsson (67) Booked: Rooney, McCarthy
Referee: Robert Madley Attendance: 52,513

The Daily Telegraph

Virgil van Dijk exploits Jordan Pickford error on dream debut
Whatever he achieves at Liverpool, however long he stays at this illustrious club, Virgil Van Dijk will have this night; will have this encounter; will have this piece of history.

To score the winning goal, so late on, in front of the Kop, on his debut, after a record £75million transfer, is remarkable enough. To do it to win the 230th Merseyside derby, and to dramatically knock Everton out of the FA Cup, made it all the more so. "Expectation can lead to pressure," Jurgen Klopp purred afterwards. "He obviously could stand the pressure."

The noise, even for the incredible level of decibels previously achieved inside Anfield, was astonishing when the realisation dawned that it was Van Dijk who had reached Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's in-swinging corner, taking advantage of a mistake by goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, to score.

It was a 'Very Valuable Debut' indeed for Virgil Van Dijk and, understandably, he had a slightly disbelieving look afterwards as he was wrapped in one of those enveloping bear-hugs by Klopp. £75million? Van Dijk, bought to be the commanding centre-half Liverpool so obviously lack, felt priceless at that moment.

The Dutch international was not the only one stunned. So were Everton who conceded a first-half penalty that even Klopp acknowledged should not have been given, who were transformed once 20-year-old Ademola Lookman replaced a fired-up Wayne Rooney — who risked being red-carded — who scored a rapid, Liverpool-like breakaway goal, but who eventually slumped to a third successive defeat.

In fairness they are far better under manager Sam Allardyce who, like Klopp, had to deal with questions afterwards as to whether Everton defender Mason Holgate was abused by striker Roberto Firmino after an ugly first-half incident soon after Liverpool had opened the scoring. Holgate pushed Firmino over the advertising hoardings, with Firmino then saying something to him. Referee Bobby Madley broke it up and then went over to speak to fourth official Jonathan Moss. An investigation looms.

It was heated, predictably so, given the occasion and given the rarity of such a derby being played on a Friday evening, from the start. Rooney walked a tightrope from the seventh minute after he slid in recklessly on Joe Gomez in an unwise challenge he probably felt he had to make given the circumstances but really should not have done.

"In Germany we say cup games have different laws and it was like that - there was an extra push from both sides," Klopp said while both he and Allardyce respected the occasion by fielding what was their strongest available line-ups despite it being a third round tie. Liverpool even started with Sadio Mane who had arrived back for morning training having flown overnight from Ghana where he, and the unfit Mohamed Salah, who was named player of the year, had attended the African Football Awards. How Everton had wished they could have used their new £27million signing, striker Cen Tosun, brought in from Besiktas. Instead they could only confirm the deal — bizarrely — at half-time. And by then they were behind. Liverpool will have felt, and Klopp alluded to this, that there was a certain 'karma' in the kick with Holgate punished for sticking out his right arm to impede Adam Lallana as he ran into the area. Even then Madley played on, with Mane firing wide, before he pointed to the spot. Allardyce was apoplectic, James Milner clipped the penalty to Pickford's right, as the goalkeeper dived the other way, and Liverpool were ahead. It was, Klopp grinned, 'soft' — and soft in the way that Liverpool had been similarly punished with a penalty in the recent 1-1 draw here. Probably that score-line was reached again after Allardyce had seen enough of Rooney's charged-up commitment and fearing he would be red-carded, brought the 32-year-old off instead to the delighted jeers of the Liverpool fans. Soon after and they should have been cheering another goal — only for Gomez to guide a header wide after being left unmarked at a corner. Lallana shot past the post when sent clear, Pickford saved superbly from Andrew Robertson and Van Dijk planted a header straight at the goalkeeper.

Just as it seemed that pressure would surely tell, it was Everton who struck with the impressive Yannick Bolasie, who had been their biggest threat throughout, finding Lookman who sprinted into Liverpool's half and played the ball infield to Phil Jagielka. Yes, the Everton centre-half was incredibly the furthest of their players forward and turned it back to Gylfi Sigurdsson who had not been tracked by Emre Can. He side-footed from the area's edge past goalkeeper Loris Karius and Everton were level.

It was out-of-the-blue from the Blues. Their 8,000 fans — a bigger allocation given it was a FA Cup tie — erupted with one supporter even rushing forward, waving two crutches in the air.

Both sides continued to go for it, not least because they did not want a replay. Neither did they want to lose with Liverpool again going close after an Oxlade-Chamberlain free-kick ran through to Firmino who steadied himself and half-volleyed, with Pickford pushing the ball away. But then he was beaten. Liverpool won yet another corner, substitute Oumar Niasse was slow to react, allowing Van Dijk to jump in front of Jagielka and plant his header into the net. "It's a fairy-tale and there are not a lot of fairy-tales in the world anymore," Klopp said. Van Dijk wrote his own story. Or, at least, a promising first chapter. Virgil came to the rescue.

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THE INDEPENDENT

Liverpool's record signing Virgil van Dijk climbs highest to knock Everton out of the FA Cup on dream debut

There was always a sense that only two outcomes were possible here. The most likely would be determined by Liverpool and how well they played; how clinical they could be, whether they would avoid the complacency that crept into their game last month when these sides met in the league, a complacency that swept across the watching crowd and possibly impacted upon the result. It nearly happened again.

"The one thing we won't be doing is coming here and playing open and expansive football," Allardyce warned. The second outcome involved a dogged performance from Everton, one that would require a solid start to encourage frustration inside Anfield; it would need their players to concentrate and hang in there; to be absolutely ruthless whenever a rare opportunity came their way. This nearly happened as well.

Everton were not open and they were not expansive but they were more open and expansive than they were in December's draw. It had been a surprise decision of Allardyce's to partner Rooney and Dominic Calvert-Lewin in attack and then Yannick Bolasis on the right wing, with the Congolese clearly given the instruction to run at Andrew Robertson as much as possible. The first half hour was low in quality but Everton appeared to have the slightly more convincing plan.

Liverpool, of course, were without Mohamed Salah and Philippe Coutinho and they were struggling to build momentum. Adam Lallana and Firmino were trying but having poor games, while Oxlade-Chamberlain was not receiving the necessary level of service to trouble Everton's weak link, Cuco Martina.

An error from Holgate's shifted the mood. It was the type of decision you might expect from a 21-year-old in his earliest days as a centre back. As Allardyce said last month when Dejan Lovren was punished for fouling Calvert-Lewin at the same end: "You use your hands, the referee's got a decision to make." Lallana's fall was dramatic. But Holgate had halted his quick turn. James Milner scored the subsequent penalty.

Suddenly, there were fouls everywhere. Holgate particularly was losing control of his senses, pushing Firmino over the advertising hoardings. Firmino was incandescent, chasing the defender and releasing a volley of expletives. Holgate appeared to think one of the words used was unacceptable. Referee Bobby Madley was on top of the incident but it is not his fault he does not speak Portuguese. Then again, neither does Holgate.

Everton's equaliser had not been coming exactly but a series of crosses into Liverpool's box had caused concern before. Rooney was gone by then, replaced by Ademola Lookman after he avoided a second booking in the 50th minute. Only Phil Jagielka will be able to explain why he was Everton's furthest player forward when a counter-attack was sprung. He served Gylfi Sigurdsson and it became 1-1. Jürgen Klopp had explained that van Dijk was "fresh" but not "fine-tuned," before leaving a request for patience: "I hope that especially all the people of Liverpool accept that the best things will come." With his clinching moment, it is difficult to see how it can really get any better than this.

DAILY MIRROR

Virgil van Dijk heads debut winner in FA Cup Merseyside derby
Virgil van Dijk wrote his name in Anfield legend with a fairytale winner in a pulsating Mersey derby on his debut.

The Liverpool defender could not have scripted a better story had he written it himself, as he rose majestically to head home Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner six minutes from time to cap an incredible night.

In an FA Cup tie that had everything – including controversy when Roberto Firmino and Mason Holgate almost came to blows after words were exchanged just before half time – it was the Dutchman who had the last word and broke Everton hearts.

His celebration said everything about the joy he experienced after his £75m started in such spectacular fashion and it made him an instant Anfield icon.

And it was the right ending to a game that had threatened to boil over when Holgate and Firmino squared up after the Everton defender had pushed his opponent over an advertising hoarding.

Holgate clearly thought he had been insulted by the Brazilian, and suggested it had been a racist comment, but in fact he misheard, with Firmino clearly using a Portuguese phrase which basically called him a "crazy mother*****".

The matter seemed to have been settled at half time when Everton's backroom staff cleared up the misunderstanding with their defender, and that set up a wonderful tie, when Gylfi Sigurdsson equalised James Milner's opening penalty. But perhaps inevitably, it was van Dijk who stole the show and the glory, as he wrote another incredible chapter in cup and derby history.

Here our reporter David Maddock looks at some of the issues from a fantastic tie.

An eventful evening for Virgil van Dijk! If ever the desire of Liverpool's fans to see a proper defender was evident, it was before kick off at Anfield last night.

The greeting that met the announcement of his name name spoke volumes about the suffering they have endured with a defence that has suffered so much uncertainty for so long.

The defender certainly showed himself, with a pummeling challenge on Yannick Bolasis, a glorious chance at 1-0 which he headed straight at Jordan Pickford, and then the panic as Bolasis's cavalry charge produced a brilliant Everton leveller.

The Dutchman wasn't at fault, and the fans would still have been happy even before than memorable goal at the end. What a night.

2. Holgate impresses for Blues

Everton may have a defender in Mason Holgate who could one day go on to build a reputation a little like van Dijk's. His second half display shows he is a quick learner, and also a hugely promising young centre half.

He lost his head completely in his first half altercation with Roberto Firmino – and he got it wrong too, because he clearly misheard what the Brazilian said – but showed the presence and maturity to sort himself out immediately.

That sort of mental strength at a young age is good news for Everton.

3. Rooney loses his cool

Sam Allardyce has his critics and Wayne Rooney may be amongst them after being hauled off at Anfield at such an early stage of the game...but it proved to be a fine decision.

Not only did it remove the risk of a red card for the skipper, but it also introduced Ademola Lookman into the contest and his pace and touch on the ball was a big difference for the Blues in the second half, as his calm ball for Sigurdsson to score showed.

4. Liverpool almost rue missed chances

Liverpool looked in control, but will almost rue missed chances. Joe Gomez and Virgil van Dijk should have scored when the score was 1-0 and they had other moments too, with the Reds dominant for long periods without translating that into a more dominant scoreline.

They paid the price for missed chances in the league meeting here, and it seemed to be the case again when Sigurdsson converted to level a pulsating cup tie until van Dijk intervened.

5. FA Cup remains special

The game showed precisely how important a competition the FA Cup is.

The commitment of both teams and the desire to win showed it really means something to both, and it also presents the best – and in Everton's case only – chance of a trophy.

Friday night though? It is wrong for the FA Cup.

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Van Dijk breaks Everton hearts and becomes instant Kop hero
 Virgil van Dijk accepted the adulation of Anfield. Good things come to those who wait.

The Kop has a new hero after [Liverpool's](#) £75million signing wrote his name into derby folklore.

This was the stuff dreams are made of as the Dutchman capped a commanding debut by nodding home a dramatic late winner to break Evertonians' hearts and send the Reds into the fourth round of the FA Cup.

[Jurgen Klopp](#) had urged fans not to dwell on the size of the transfer fee following a deal which made Van Dijk the most expensive defender on the planet.

And if he keeps performing like this there will be no complaints – you simply couldn't put a price on his history-making contribution to settle the 230th Merseyside derby.

It was the first time Liverpool had ever won an FA Cup tie against Everton at Anfield and a hard-fought victory means the Reds are now unbeaten in a record-breaking 16 meetings with their neighbours.

Van Dijk, who had to sit tight for six months after Southampton refused to sell him last summer, became only the second Liverpool player ever to score on his debut for the club against Everton – the other was Bill White way back in 1901.

A contest overshadowed by the increasing likelihood of [Philippe Coutinho leaving for Barcelona](#), ended in glory as Klopp's men ensured momentum was maintained after a profitable festive period.

Having let Everton off the hook when they escaped with a point from last month's Premier League fixture, Van Dijk eased fears of a repeat after Gylfi Sigurdsson had cancelled out James Milner's first-half penalty.

Talk about swings and roundabouts. A month after being on the receiving end of a controversial spot-kick against the Blues when Dejan Lovren was adjudged to have shoved Dominic Calvert-Lewin, the Reds were fortunate to get one of their own after Adam Lallana went down.

[Liverpool were far from their fluent best](#) but they were still good value for their place in the fourth round.

Having stood accused of disrespecting the FA Cup with his team selection when the Reds crashed out to Wolves a year ago, Klopp had vowed to go strong with his line up and he was true to his word.

As well as handing Van Dijk his debut, Roberto Firmino, Andy Robertson, Milner and Joel Matip were all recalled after being rested for the win at Burnley on New Year's Day.

There was also a start for Sadio Mane following his 7,000-mile round trip to Ghana for the [African Player of the Year awards](#).

The atmosphere was electric and the opening stages were typically frenetic but quality was desperately thin on the ground.

Everton showed more ambition in the opening five minutes than they managed in the full 90 on their previous visit as they got bodies forward in support of Dominic Calvert-Lewin.

The inclusion of James McCarthy gave them more bite in midfield and Yannick Bolasie provided some pace out wide.

Van Dijk oozed composure as the new boy won his aerial battles, made a number of important interceptions and used the ball intelligently. Considering the Dutch defender hadn't played for nearly a month, this was a remarkable effort.

You couldn't fault Liverpool's hunger and desire. Full-backs Joe Gomez and Robertson were both outstanding.

The Kop roared its approval when Robertson thundered into Bolasie and dumped him on his backside. This was a tricky test for the Scottish left-back but he passed it with flying colours.

Emre Can, the only member of Klopp's squad to be making a fifth successive start in the space of a fortnight, put speculation about his future to one side as he delivered another tireless shift.

Mane fired wide from distance as Liverpool struggled to make turn promising moments into clear cut chances.

Strong defensively, Gomez was also a threat going forward and his inviting cross was volleyed wide by Milner.

Bolasie whipped in a couple of fine deliveries at the other end but on both occasions Matip was in the right place to nod clear.

With passes going astray, it was all desperately scrappy but controversy brought the contest to life 10 minutes before the break.

Lallana went down in the box after tangling with Mason Holgate and Bobby Madley pointed to the spot.

Soft? Undoubtedly, but then so was the penalty which enabled Everton to earn a draw at Anfield last month.

Milner, who turned 32 on Thursday, took responsibility and coolly dinked it down the middle as Jordan Pickford dived out of the way.

Finally, the derby fuse had been lit and tempers soon flared. Firmino reacted angrily to being shoved into the crowd by Holgate and climbed back over the hoardings to confront the young defender.

A melee ensued and whatever Firmino said clearly incensed Holgate. His complaints were passed on by Madley to fourth official Jon Moss.

Emotions were running high and the second half was much more of a spectacle as the game got stretched.

Robertson did brilliantly to prevent Calvert-Lewin from connecting with Wayne Rooney's cross.

As Everton gambled in a bid to find an equaliser, Liverpool really should have killed off the tie on the counter. But just like last month's derby the Reds were horribly wasteful.

Oxlade-Chamberlain put two gilt-edged chances on a plate. The first saw Gomez presented with a free header at the back post but he failed to hit the target. The second saw Lallana put clean through but the tiring midfielder poked wide of the upright.

Robertson's strike from a tight angle was beaten away by Pickford before Van Dijk's header was too close to the keeper.

Loris Karius had been largely a spectator but midway through the second half the Reds nodded off and paid the price – leaving themselves ridiculously exposed after Oxlade-Chamberlain's misplaced corner.

Lallana lost out to Bolasie and substitute Ademola Lookman fed the on-rushing Phil Jagielka. He teed up Sigurdsson, who coolly slotted into the bottom corner.

Klopp responded by calling for fresh legs. Gini Wijnaldum replaced Lallana and Dominic Solanke and Trent Alexander-Arnold followed for Gomez and Milner.

Just like they did at Arsenal and at home to Leicester recently, Liverpool picked their chins off the floor and went again.

With six minutes to go Van Dijk took centre stage and silenced the 8,000-strong away end.

He rose highest to meet Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner and got there ahead of Pickford to net in front of the Kop. The celebrations were manic.

Van Dijk described joining Liverpool as the "perfect match". He's off and running in the best possible fashion.

MATCH FACTS

Liverpool: Karius, Gomez (Alexander-Arnold 77), Van Dijk, Matip, Robertson, Milner (Solanke 77), Can, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Lallana (Wijnaldum 70), Mane, Firmino

Not used: Ward, Klavan, Lovren, Ings

Everton: Pickford, Kenny, Jagielka, Holgate, Martina, Schneiderlin, McCarthy (Davis 86), Rooney (Lookman 52), Bolasie, Sigurdsson, Calvert-Lewin (Niasse 82).

Not used: Robles, Williams, Vlasic, Baniingime.

Referee: Bobby Madley

Attendance: 52,513

Goals: Milner 35, Sigurdsson 67, Van Dijk 84.

Bookings: Rooney, McCarthy, Solanke.

Man of the match: Virgil van Dijk. Capped a fine debut with a dream winner.

Date: 5 January 2017

Opposition: Everton

Competition: FA Cup

Express Telegraph Echo

Guardian Mirror BBC

Independent Mail

5 January 2017



Virgil van Dijk made a dream start for Liverpool following his £75m move from Southampton as his late header settled a highly competitive FA Cup third round Merseyside derby against Everton at Anfield.

The visitors looked on course for a replay at Goodison Park until keeper Jordan Pickford misjudged a corner allowing Van Dijk, who cost a world record fee for a defender, to steal in six minutes from time and send the Reds into the fourth round.

Gylfi Sigurdsson's smooth finish from the edge of the area put Everton level in the second half after Liverpool had taken the lead 10 minutes before half-time, with James Milner scoring from the penalty spot following Mason Holgate's tangle with Adam Lallana.

In a fiercely fought game there was a first-half flashpoint when Holgate foolishly pushed Reds forward Roberto Firmino over the advertising hoardings and into the crowd, with the Everton defender left furious after the pair subsequently exchanged words.

Liverpool were without injured forward Mohamed Salah and midfielder Philippe Coutinho, who has been linked with a £140m move to Barcelona.

Van Dijk makes the dream start

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp wasted no time in introducing Van Dijk to his defence after he finally made his move from Southampton - but it was in attack where the 26-year-old Netherlands international fulfilled his dreams in front of the Kop.

He had already wasted one chance to mark his debut with a goal when he could only head at Pickford from six yards. He made no mistake when presented with that crucial opportunity six minutes from time.

Van Dijk got to the ball ahead of Pickford, whose rash attempt to claim was heavily punished as Anfield went into ecstasy.

It is in defence where he will be expected to do his main work, but this was a highly impressive debut at both ends for the Dutchman.

Van Dijk cuts an imposing figure and was almost unbeatable in the air up against the game and tireless Dominic Calvert-Lewin.

Greater tests than this lie ahead. Everton boss Sam Allardyce was unable to use the threat he hopes will come with the £27m arrival of Turkey striker Cenk Tosun, so Everton's danger was limited.

As a starter, though, this was exactly what Klopp and Liverpool had in mind when they handed over £75m to Saints.

Busy night for ref Madley

Merseyside derbies can always prove difficult occasions for referees - and this was no different as Bobby Madley had to deal with several contentious incidents.

Madley booked Wayne Rooney as early as the seventh minute for a reckless challenge on Joe Gomez - and he needed to keep an eye on the boyhood Evertonian as he sailed very close to the wind, and a second yellow card, before being substituted after 52 minutes.

He was in the action again on 35 minutes when he pointed to the spot after Holgate tangled with Lallana. Everton will complain it was a soft award - as Liverpool did when Dejan Lovren was punished with a penalty when he manhandled Calvert-Lewin in the recent 1-1 draw at Anfield - but once the Toffees defender laid hands on his opponent he was asking for trouble.

The biggest flashpoint came moments later when Holgate had a rush of blood to the head and shoved Firmino into the crowd. The incident boiled over as the Brazilian rushed back at Holgate to protest - angry words were exchanged and Everton's youngster reacted with undisguised fury to something Firmino said.

After that, Madley was able to keep a check on the emotions as a game that was passionate never threatened to get out of hand.

Can Tosun solve Everton's problems?

With interesting timing, Everton announced the completion of the [£27m deal for Besiktas striker Tosun](#) during the half-time interval.

And while their display was a vast improvement on the attritional effort in the recent draw at Anfield, it is clear the Toffees need the sort of spearhead Allardyce hopes Tosun will provide.

The visitors at least carried some threat here via the pace and width of Yannick Bolasie and substitute Ademola Lookman, but they require the sort of finishing power that has been missing with the failure to replace Romelu Lukaku.

And one final note on Everton: keeper Pickford will take responsibility for the winner but it should also be remembered he has been magnificent so far in what has been a very difficult season at Goodison Park.

More Merseyside derby success for Liverpool - the stats

Liverpool are now unbeaten in 16 matches against Everton (won eight, drew eight) - their longest ever unbeaten run against them.

Everton were unbeaten in their first seven matches under Allardyce (won four, drew three) but they have lost their past three, scoring just two goals in their past five matches.

Milner has scored 11 of his 13 penalties for Liverpool - though he had failed to score with his previous two efforts before Friday.

Milner has scored three goals in his past two FA Cup third-round matches, also scoring twice for Manchester City against Sheffield Wednesday in January 2015. All four of Sigurdsson's goals against Liverpool have been scored at Anfield, with two in the FA Cup (also for Reading in January 2010).

The Reds have not lost a Merseyside derby in which they have scored first since December 1992.

This was the 24th meeting between these sides in the FA Cup, making it the most-played fixture in the competition's history.

'Not a penalty' - what they said

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp to BBC Sport: "It was not the best piece of football for 95 minutes, but a proper fight. I'm delighted with the attitude we showed again - it was a difficult game. It was not the night for brilliant football. "You would love to see that but Everton defended well. They played football, a big difference to the last game between us.

"The equaliser was the worst protection I ever saw in my life. It made no sense at all. We were all in the wrong direction. But when you make mistakes in football you have to react and we did again.

"It was nice that Virgil van Dijk could score in his first game, a brilliant header. I am really happy. In front of the Kop makes it even better.

"It was a similar situation [to the penalty against Liverpool for Everton last month]: the first one was no penalty in my opinion and this one wasn't also. It's the same.

"It was not necessary for Mason Holgate to give Firmino that push. It was really dangerous and usually players don't do that."

Everton manager Sam Allardyce to BBC Sport: "We gave everything we could today and in the end we were disappointed we did not take them back to our place. It is a shame after all that effort.

"I didn't think it was a penalty, but there is not much we can do now. For me, I thought some of the fouls they got and bookings we got and fouls we didn't get was very harsh by the referee in terms of consistency. There were similar incidents, similar penalties.

"At the end of the day, we have given everything we could and we tried our very best today."

Asked about the incident between Holgate and Firmino, Allardyce replied: "I'm only interested in the football, not what happened with Firmino and Mason. I will definitely ask him and we will see where it goes from there."

What's next?

Both teams are next in Premier League action, with Everton away at Tottenham on Saturday, 13 January (17:30 GMT kick-off), before Liverpool host leaders Manchester City at 16:00 the following day.

Date: 5 January 2017

Opposition: Everton

Competition: FA Cup

Express

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5 January 2017



Match ends, Liverpool 2, Everton 1.

90'+5' Second Half ends, Liverpool 2, Everton 1.

90'+3' Attempt missed. Yannick Bolasie (Everton right footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Cuco Martina.

90'+2' Attempt missed. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum.

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

90' Foul by Jonjoe Kenny (Everton.

88' Dominic Solanke (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

88' Foul by Dominic Solanke (Liverpool.

88' Yannick Bolasie (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

86' Substitution, Everton. Tom Davies replaces James McCarthy.

84' Goal! Liverpool 2, Everton 1. Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool header from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain with a cross following a corner.

84' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Phil Jagielka.

82' Substitution, Everton. Oumar Niasse replaces Dominic Calvert-Lewin.

81' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right following a set piece situation.

80' Dominic Solanke (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

80' Foul by Cuco Martina (Everton.

78' Foul by Dominic Solanke (Liverpool.

78' Dominic Calvert-Lewin (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

77' Substitution, Liverpool. Dominic Solanke replaces Joseph Gomez.

77' Substitution, Liverpool. Trent Alexander-Arnold replaces James Milner.

75' Foul by Joseph Gomez (Liverpool.

75' Ademola Lookman (Everton wins a free kick on the left wing.

73' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Phil Jagielka.

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

72' Foul by Morgan Schneiderlin (Everton.

70' Substitution, Liverpool. Georginio Wijnaldum replaces Adam Lallana.

67' Goal! Liverpool 1, Everton 1. Gylfi Sigurdsson (Everton right footed shot from outside the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Phil Jagielka following a fast break.

67' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Mason Holgate.

66' Attempt missed. Dominic Calvert-Lewin (Everton header from very close range misses to the left. Assisted by Jonjoe Kenny with a cross.

63' Attempt saved. Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain with a cross.

62' Joseph Gomez (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

62' Foul by Cuco Martina (Everton.

61' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.

61' Gylfi Sigurdsson (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

60' James McCarthy (Everton is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

60' James Milner (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

60' Foul by James McCarthy (Everton.

59' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

59' Foul by Gylfi Sigurdsson (Everton.

59' Attempt saved. Andrew Robertson (Liverpool left footed shot from a difficult angle on the left is saved in the top centre of the goal.

58' Foul by Joseph Gomez (Liverpool.

58' Ademola Lookman (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

56' Foul by James Milner (Liverpool.

56' Yannick Bolasie (Everton wins a free kick on the right wing.

55' Attempt missed. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain with a through ball.

54' Attempt missed. Joseph Gomez (Liverpool header from the right side of the six yard box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain with a cross following a corner.

54' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Jonjoe Kenny.

52' Substitution, Everton. Ademola Lookman replaces Wayne Rooney.

52' Foul by Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool.

52' Morgan Schneiderlin (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

50' Corner, Everton. Conceded by Andrew Robertson.

47' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

47' Foul by Wayne Rooney (Everton.

Second Half begins Liverpool 1, Everton 0.

45'+3' First Half ends, Liverpool 1, Everton 0.

45'+1' Offside, Liverpool. Roberto Firmino tries a through ball, but Joseph Gomez is caught offside.

40' Attempt blocked. Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by James Milner.

35' Goal! Liverpool 1, Everton 0. James Milner (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the centre of the goal.

34' Penalty Liverpool. Adam Lallana draws a foul in the penalty area.

34' Penalty conceded by Mason Holgate (Everton after a foul in the penalty area.

33' Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

33' Foul by Dominic Calvert-Lewin (Everton.

33' Attempt missed. Sadio Mané (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left. Assisted by Adam Lallana.

27' Attempt missed. Cuco Martina (Everton right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right following a corner.

27' Corner, Everton. Conceded by Joel Matip.

26' Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

26' Foul by Jonjoe Kenny (Everton.

25' Attempt missed. James Milner (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Joseph Gomez.

24' Andrew Robertson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

24' Foul by James McCarthy (Everton.

22' Dangerous play by Joseph Gomez (Liverpool.

22' Wayne Rooney (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

22' Attempt blocked. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

17' Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

17' Foul by Dominic Calvert-Lewin (Everton.

15' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

15' Foul by James McCarthy (Everton.

14' Attempt missed. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Andrew Robertson.

12' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is too high.

8' Corner, Everton. Conceded by Andrew Robertson.

7' Wayne Rooney (Everton is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

7' Joseph Gomez (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

7' Foul by Wayne Rooney (Everton.

5' Foul by Andrew Robertson (Liverpool.

5' James McCarthy (Everton wins a free kick in the defensive half.

4' Joel Matip (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

4' Foul by Wayne Rooney (Everton.

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

1' Foul by James McCarthy (Everton.

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.