

Date: 2 April 2011
 Opposition: West Bromwich Albion
 Competition: League

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2 April 2011

THE TIMES

Hodgson starting to enjoy life again

WestBrom 2
 Brunt 62, 88
 (both pens)

Liverpool 1
 Skrtel 50

Referee: M Atkinson. Attendance: 26,196

BRENDAN McLOUGHLIN

There was not even a slither of a smile on Roy Hodgson's face.

By his own admission, he may have failed to compete with Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool "icon" as he referred to him last week, during his days at Anfield, but on Saturday the West Bromwich Albion manager stepped from the shadow of his successor by masterminding the sort of result that brought the Merseyside club to his door in the first place.

But did Hodgson view this victory as revenge? Absolutely not. You believed him, too, because it was said with the same dignity with which he carried himself before the match. Having faced a backlash over some ill-advised statements during his Anfield tenure, lessons appear to have been learnt.

"I drew a line under [the sacking] on January 8, having signed a compromise agreement," Hodgson said. "I packed my bags and went home to London.

"I'm enjoying my life here. It was a very important victory and the only extra satisfaction it gives me is that it was against a top team."

Last week, Hodgson said that Liverpool were the right club at the wrong time with Dalglish waiting in the wings. Now, though, he is certainly the right man at the right time for West Brom and the prospect of him repeating an escape act at Fulham that bordered on the miraculous grows by the week. He has been welcomed with open arms in the Black Country and is unbeaten in his five Barclays Premier League games in charge, with his team four points clear of the relegation zone.

Away from the unremitting glare of managing a club of Liverpool's stature, he looks far more comfortable and, perhaps sensing the discomfort of this day for their new leader, the home crowd boisterously bellowed out his name from start to finish.

The frustration for Dalglish, meanwhile, is that he is yet to field his strongest side. Such a prospect is no closer, either, after Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger limped off within the opening 25 minutes.

Liverpool's midfield looked ordinary, but the away team did seize the advantage in the 50th minute with a goal of uplifting simplicity. A corner by Raul Meireles was delivered with pace and precision and the emphatic header from Martin Skrtel, the defender, flew beyond Scott Carson and into the top corner.

That, in all likelihood, would have meant curtains for the pre-Hodgson West Brom, who had failed previously to score a goal against Liverpool in the Premier League, never mind beaten them.

But 12 minutes later Peter Odemwingie outfoxed Sotirios Kyrgiakos, a substitute, on the edge of the penalty area and although the Greece defender took some of the ball, his challenge was clumsy enough to warrant a spot-kick.

Chris Brunt drove the ball down the middle and it was deja vu with two minutes left as Odemwingie was again felled, this time by Pepe Reina, and the Northern Ireland player drilled the penalty into the left corner of the net.

Although the result failed to undermine Dalglish as King of the Kop, it did provide further confirmation Hodgson is fast becoming the hero of the The Hawthorns. West Bromwich

Albion (4-4-2): S Carson 8 - S Reid 7, A Meite 8, J Olsson 8, N Shorey 7 - C Brunt 8, P Scharner 7, Y Mulumbu 8, J Thomas 7 (sub: G Jara, 90min) - S Cox 7 (sub: M-A Fortune, 74), P Odemwingie 9. Substitutes not used: B Myhill, P Ibanez, M Cech, C Vela, G Zuiverloon. Booked: Thomas, Scharner. Next: Sunderland (a).

Liverpool (4-4-2): J M Reina 7 - J Carragher 6, M Skrtel 7, D Agger 5 (sub: D Wilson, 25 5), G Johnson 5 (sub: S Kyrgiakos, 8 4) - R Meireles 7, J Spearing 5, Lucas Leiva 5, D Kuyt 6 (sub: J Cole, 87) - L Suarez 6, A Carroll 5. Substitutes not used: P Gulacsi, M Rodriguez, D Ngog, C Poulsen. Booked: Reina, Wilson, Carroll. Next: Manchester City (h).

Gerrard hit by new injury woe

Steven Gerrard looks likely to miss the rest of the season after suffering a serious setback in his recovery from a groin operation (Tony Barrett writes). Should Liverpool's worst fears be realised, the captain could also miss England's Euro 2012 qualifier against Switzerland in June. Gerrard broke down in training on Friday in preparation for the game against West Bromwich Albion.

the guardian

Hodgson's blueprint for survival cracks open Liverpool

The roar of delight, tinged with more than a little relief, which greeted West Bromwich Albion's win over Liverpool would have drowned the relatively muted response to Liverpool's narrow win against Albion last August when Anfield was reserving judgment on the management of Roy Hodgson. That is the difference between desperate hope and wary expectation.

The brevity of Hodgson's employment with Liverpool already looks like being the salvation of West Bromwich. In the five games since he took over Albion have yet to lose. Having turned defeats into draws Hodgson is now turning draws into wins, and in terms of what needs to be done to avoid relegation the most significant moment on Saturday came in stoppage time when Nicky Shorey practically turned himself inside out to stop a chip from Luis Suarez floating in under the crossbar.

Two days before he took over at The Hawthorns Hodgson watched his new charges surrender a 3-0 lead to West Ham United, dropping a couple of home points in the process. He has wasted no time reshaping the defence to give a firmer base from which to make better use of attacking qualities which were already there. West Bromwich no longer get flustered when they lose possession.

Kenny Dalglish's team faced defensive problems once Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger had been forced off with injuries during the opening 24 minutes. While Dalglish did not use this as an excuse - "it might have been a little bit disruptive but you should be able to cope" - the inability of one of the replacements, Sotirios Kyrgiakos, to deal with the nimble feet and sure touches of Peter Odemwingie led directly to the two penalties from which Chris Brunt won the match for Albion after Martin Skrtel's header had given Liverpool the lead early in the second half.

Just past the hour Kyrgiakos, beaten by Odemwingie's sharp turn, lunged back and although he got the ball first he also brought down the striker. Then in the 88th minute the Liverpool defender allowed Odemwingie to control a dropping ball deftly on an instep before taking it on past Pepe Reina, who then bowled him over. Brunt's kicks were positively Germanic in their power and direction.

Hodgson does not do schadenfreude. "I gain no extra pleasure from this win," he said. "My great pleasure is taken from beating Liverpool because West Bromwich don't often do that." In fact before Saturday Albion had lost all nine of their Premier League matches against Liverpool without scoring and had not beaten them in any competition since 1981.

While Dalglish has revived Liverpool and got them playing with more spirit and commitment they are far from a finished product. His team dominated the early period and for much of the first half restricted Albion to long shots. Reina's most urgent save needed to keep out a header back from Skrtel, who had intercepted a cross from Jerome Thomas. Yet once Odemwingie started to drift out to the left to find space before turning inside to take on defenders Liverpool became increasingly uncertain at the back.

In attack Andy Carroll looked short of match fitness following his recent lay-off and after going close in the second minute Dirk Kuyt was subdued. Suarez's ability to take the ball past opponents in tight situations became Liverpool's best hope of saving the game and but for Shorey the Uruguayan might have done just that. Man of the match Peter Odemwingie (West Bromwich Albion)

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The Sunday Telegraph

Hodgson refuses to revel in revenge

West Brom 2
Brunt 62 pen, 88 pen

Liverpool 1
Skrstel 50

Att: 26,196

Having worked in Italy, Roy Hodgson knows all about the old Sicilian saying that revenge is a dish best served cold. But ever the gentleman, Hodgson refused to revel in this victory over the side that dispensed with his services barely 12 weeks ago.

He may have made a point to his former employers about his abilities as a manager, but he was happier to talk about the three points and huge lift his side gained in their battle against relegation.

West Brom moved up to 12th place, four points clear of the relegation zone, after Chris Brunt scored from the penalty spot twice to cap a thrilling comeback for the home side, who had not beaten Liverpool for 30 years. Victory extended Hodgson's unbeaten run to five games since taking over at the Hawthorns.

"I made a lot of friends at Liverpool so I don't take any particular pleasure from that. The great pleasure I take is from beating Liverpool football club because at West Brom it is not something we do very often, and we deserved it. I was really happy with the performance. After the first 15 minutes we really took the game to Liverpool."

Apart from a good chance in the second minute and two goal-line clearances in stoppage time, Liverpool did not really test Scott Carson anything like as much as West Brom stretched Pepe Reina, who was in superb form.

Carson saved well from a Dirk Kuyt header early on before the striker put the rebound over the bar, but after Kenny Dalglish had to rejig his defence twice because of injuries to Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger, it was all West Brom. Led by the lively Peter Odemwingie and crafty Brunt, West Brom tested Reina repeatedly.

Odemwingie fired in a shot that was well saved, but Reina did even better to prevent a headed own goal by Martin Skrtel from Jerome Thomas's cross. Carson, by contrast, had little to do in the first half after Kuyt's early chance.

Luis Suarez struggled to find space in front of goal, while Andy Carroll seemed caught up in a personal battle with Jonas Olsson that led to a yellow card for the [pounds sterling]35million striker.

But Carroll played a large part in the goal that gave Liverpool the lead five minutes into the second half, as he won the corner from which Skrtel scored. After Carroll's 20 yard snap shot was turned over the bar by Carson, Raul Meireles drove a corner into the home penalty area. Skrtel rose high above Paul Scharner to power his header into the roof of the net from 12 yards. But Hodgson's side would not buckle.

Brunt had a volley well saved before equalising from the penalty spot.

Odemwingie turned Sotirios Kyrgiakos on the edge of the area before sprawling under the Greek defender's challenge, and Brunt sent Reina the wrong way with his penalty kick. That got the home fans going and Odemwingie went close when he hit a vicious shot that Reina did well to beat away.

Jamie Carragher made a brilliant block to keep out a goalbound shot from Thomas, who then had a curling effort saved well by Reina.

With two minutes remaining Odemwingie went through on goal and as he turned past Reina, the keeper's legs took him down. Despite Reina's protests, Martin Atkinson pointed to the spot again and Brunt made no mistake, smashing the ball into the far corner. Liverpool almost equalised in stoppage time but Suarez had a shot blocked before his lob was headed off the line by Nicky Shorey.

Dalglish bemoaned his side's lack of luck, summed up by another injury to Steven Gerrard in training on Friday. "We lost Steven in training innocuously," he said.

"He tried to turn with the ball and felt a sharp pain." A groin injury kept Gerrard out of England's games last week, but Dalglish stressed: "It is not the same injury."

West Brom (4-4-2): Carson; Reid, Olsson, Meite, Shorey; Brunt, Scharner, Mulumbu, Thomas (Jara 89); Odemwingie, Cox (Fortune 74). Subs: Myhill, Cech, Ibanez, Vela, Zuiverloon. Booked: Thomas, Scharner.

Liverpool (4-4-2): Reina; Johnson (Kyrgiakos 8), Agger (Wilson 24), Carragher, Skrtel; Kuyt (Cole 85), Leiva, Spearing, Meireles; Carroll, Suarez.

Subs: Gulacsi, Cole, Rodriguez, N'Gog, Poulsen. Booked: Reina, Wilson, Carroll. Referee: M Atkinson (W Yorkshire).

The Daily Telegraph

West Bromwich Albion 2

Brunt 62 pen, 88 pen
Liverpool 1

Skrtel 50 Att: 26,196

Liverpool may be without both Steven Gerrard and Daniel Agger for the final seven games of the season as the injury crisis afflicting Kenny Dalglish's side deepened before, during and after this defeat.

Gerrard underwent groin surgery last month and had been in line to return against West Brom but Dalglish confirmed he had suffered a recurrence in training on Friday. "It is the same area of his groin but not the same thing," said the Liverpool manager. It is feared the club's captain may not recover from the setback in time to feature in any of the remaining games this campaign.

Agger, meanwhile, was substituted in the first half -- along with Glen Johnson -- after sustaining a tendon injury and reports in Denmark yesterday suggested the problem would put an end to the defender's troubled season. Dalglish is already without Martin Kelly for the remainder of the campaign, with Fabio Aurelio and Johnson also plagued by niggling complaints.

Meanwhile, Dalglish must find out how to get the best out of Andy Carroll. The striker might have scored his first goal for England four days earlier, but he barely had a sniff of goal against a relegation-threatened side and spent too much of the game distracted by a running battle with West Brom's defenders. Although it was his shot that was tipped over for the corner from which Martin Skrtel headed Liverpool ahead in the 50th minute, Carroll carried a fraction of the threat offered by Peter Odemwingie in the West Brom attack.

The speedy Nigerian was a menace to Liverpool's defence all game and was fouled by Sotirios Kyrgiakos and then Pepe Reina for the penalties that were dispatched in emphatic style by Baggies captain Chris Brunt to bring them victory. Carroll and Odemwingie are different types of front men, but they both need support.

Eschewing the chance to gloat after victory over the club who sacked him three months ago, Hodgson, the West Brom manager, preferred to talk about the reason for giving Simon Cox a rare run-out alongside Odemwingie. "Cox hasn't played since I've been at the club, but James Morrison felt a thigh strain in training. Simon is a goal threat and we were anxious not to isolate Peter Odemwingie. We don't want him having just crumbs to feed on, he needs someone to play with. If we had put a midfield player on he may have got isolated."

Perhaps that was Carroll's problem, with his new strike partner, Luis Suarez, being moved out to the left rather than tucked in behind as a second striker as the game wore on. Hodgson was careful not to get carried away with the win that takes his unbeaten run to five games since taking over and puts West Brom in 12th place. "It's nice to be four points off the relegation zone rather than one. But it would be foolish to think it was like being 12th last season as I was with Fulham, when relegation was not an issue."

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Carroll struggles with Liverpool's inability to set up supply lines
 Shortly after Stan Collymore joined **Liverpool**, for a then-record [pounds sterling]8.5m in 1995, he gave an interview in which he observed that most companies, if they spent millions on a new piece of equipment, would have had a plan as to how they were going to use it. **Liverpool**, Collymore said, had bought him without realising his style of play and theirs were incompatible. The partnership did not last long.

At first glance the club would seem to have made the same mistake with their latest record signing, Andy Carroll, for **Liverpool** have a squad which is totally unsuited to the centre-forward's strengths.

For much of their first defeat to West Bromwich Albion in three decades on Saturday, **Liverpool** were narrow and devoid of any crossing capability. Largely through injury and lack of alternatives Kenny Dalglish mostly deployed four centre-halves in defence, and three central midfielders and a striker in midfield. There were wingers on the pitch, and overlapping full-backs, but they all played for West Brom.

As a result Carroll's aerial strength was negated in open play. "Carroll is an excellent player," said Roy Hodgson, Albion's manager, "one of those who is a real handful when the ball is played into the penalty area." He added that when facing such players "you have to accept you won't win every ball" but should focus on the knock-downs and flick-ons, and keep them away from the box.

Hodgson said Albion had concentrated on preventing a supply of crosses - a task made easier by their opponents' lack of width. As a consequence **Liverpool** began to play long, towards Carroll's head but, observed Hodgson, "were struggling to get their midfield players up in support of the long balls". It was, he concluded, "a really satisfying performance for us tactically."

Dalglish bristled when it was put to him that **Liverpool** played long, and he correctly noted that Albion's second penalty followed "a launch which travelled 50 yards", adding there was nothing wrong with hitting the long ball at times.

Liverpool's problem was that it was done too often and without appropriate support for Carroll.

With Raul Meireles drifting inside, Dalglish eventually sent Luis Suarez on to the left wing but Carroll remained unserved. That, however, will not be the case next season, insisted Dalglish "We signed Andy Carroll for five-and-a-half years, not for three weeks. [In the summer] we'll analyse what we need. Andy is going to be part of our team, so is Suarez, so we need a combination of players who are going to be complementary to what we have."

For now Dalglish must make do with what he has, and his squad has been further depleted by the loss of Glen Johnson (hamstring tear), Daniel Agger (knee) and Steven Gerrard (a new groin problem). With none likely to return quickly, **Liverpool's** pursuit of fifth, and a place in Europe, may fade. They had looked like closing the gap on Spurs when Martin Skrtel headed in Meireles' corner early in the second period but Peter Odemwingie twice outwitted Sotirios Kyrgiakos to win a brace of penalties converted by Chris Brunt.

For Albion the task remains avoiding relegation - with 36 points they are four clear of the drop zone with seven matches remaining. "This is an important win psychologically but I think relegation will remain in question until the last game," said Hodgson, who added: "I feel the magical 40 points safety mark will be well and truly shattered this season."

WEST BROM 2-1 LIVERPOOL

Scorers: West Bromwich Brunt 62 pen, 88 pen **Liverpool** Skrtel 50.

Substitutes: West Bromwich Fortune (Cox, 74), Jara (Thomas, 90) **Liverpool** Wilson 6 (Agger, 25), Kyrgiakos 3 (Johnson, 8); Cole (Kuyt, 86)

Booked: West Bromwich Scharner, Thomas. **Liverpool** Carroll, Wilson, Reina.

Man of the match Odemwingie. Match rating 7/10

Possession West Bromwich 52% **Liverpool** 48%

Attempts on target West Bromwich 14 **Liverpool** 9

Referee M Atkinson (Yorks) 7 Attendance 26,196



HODGSON HAS THE LAST LAUGH; Mocked by Kop fans, Roy tastes sweet revenge & Scharner can only say: CHEERS LIVERPOOL

WEST BROM 2 LIVERPOOL: 1

WEST BROM: Carson 7, Reid 7, Olsson 8, Meite 7, Shorey 7, Thomas 8 (Jara 90), Mulumbu 7, Scharner 7, Brunt 8, Odemwingie 8, Con 7 (Fortune 74, 6)

Goals: Brunt 62,88 (2 pens)

LIVERPOOL: Reina 7, Carragher 7, Agger 6 (Wilson 24,6), Skrtel 7, G Johnson 6 (Kyrgiakos 8,4), Kuyt 6 (Cole 87), Melreles 6, Lucas 6, Spearing 6, Suarez 8, Carroll 6.

Goal: Skrtel 50

REFEREE: Martin Atkinson

LIVERPOOL fans moan Roy Hodgson drove them to the bottle, but his West Brom reign already looks vintage. Hodgson went from Manager of the Year with Fulham to getting a P45 in January after just 191 days in charge at Liverpool. But he has underlined his coaching credentials since accepting the Albion post in February and turning their doomed side into an organised, well-drilled outfit.

Albion's once-leaky defence shut out Liverpool's pounds 58 million strike force of Andy Carroll and Luis Suarez. The win, courtesy of two nailed-on Chris Brunt penalties, after the Baggies had gone 1-0 down, was thoroughly deserved.

And it means Albion are still unbeaten in five games under Hodgson. Reds fans still mocked his short-lived reign at Anfield, but their West Brom counterparts have already taken him to their hearts. A first win over bogey-club Liverpool for 30 years sees them well-placed to survive.

Albion insist Liverpool's loss is their gain after new owners NESV caved in to fan pressure to appoint Reds legend Kenny Dalglish. Austrian midfielder Paul Scharner said: "We have to say thank you to Liverpool. I think Roy will have maybe one or two bottles of wine now - maybe more! "He is really pleased with the performance. Of course if you imagine you are in the same situation and you get sacked and beat them quite well then you are happy too.

"He didn't say it, but you could see it. He is very calm and doesn't show it outside, but inside and when he goes home, he will celebrate." Martin Skrtel headed the visitors ahead from a corner five minutes after the break. But Liverpool's makeshift defence, weakened by first-half injuries to Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger, were stretched by Albion striker Peter Odemwingie. The Nigerian earned two penalties, both converted by skipper Brunt, to secure a shock victory. It was a miserable afternoon for Liverpool's pounds 35m striker Carroll, still yet to score since his January move. Versatile Scharner marked Carroll out of the game when he played in defence on the Geordie's last visit to Albion with Newcastle in December. Scharner added: "It was another nightmare game for Carroll here at the Hawthorns.

"If you remember when we played Newcastle, he didn't get any chances then and this wasn't a good game for him. "We were rock solid at the back. The whole team worked really hard and created a lot of chances on the offensive." Since taking over from Roberto Di Matteo, Hodgson has worked wonders on the training ground. Some Albion players claim they have learned more in three weeks under Hodgson than in the last three years.

Scharner said: "Since Roy came in, we have worked really hard on the defensive shape. Roy is very focused on the system and tactics.

"If you look at our conceded goals record before he joined then it has changed a lot." Such schooling may not have improved Liverpool's superstars, but Albion's squad have responded brilliantly. Odemwingie was delighted with the win and planned to phone his room-mate from international duty with Nigeria, Everton striker Victor Anichebe, to wind him up. The pair had a bet about the result while away with Nigeria. Anichebe reckoned Albion were certain to lose, but Odemwingie always had faith and said Hodgson fired up the side in the pre-match team talk. Odemwingie (below) said: "It was inspirational. He talked about the fact we had a plan and had worked throughout the week.

"He said if we did that and kept our concentration and belief we would do well and he said we would need that not only for this game but for the rest of the season.

"After the game we all applauded each other in the dressing room for our effort because we did a good job." But for Liverpool caretaker boss Dalglish it is back to the drawing board after another blank from Carroll.

The England striker was well marked by Jonas Olsson, who dominated him physically. But referee Martin Atkinson booked Carroll instead and hardly gave him any free-kicks. Reds veteran Jamie Carragher admitted: "I had to tell Andy to calm down after he got the yellow card.

"He was unfortunate and if anyone should have got a yellow card, it was the defender for the amount of whacks Andy took. "When you have been booked, you have to be careful. We need Andy to stay on the pitch and credit to Andy, he did that in the second half." Carragher was heartened by another impressive showing from their new Uruguayan striker Suarez. He added: "He was unlucky not to score at the end. "In the last 10 minutes he produced a few bits of magic and has done that since he has been at the club."

The Scouse defender has not given up on overhauling Tottenham to finish fifth. Carragher said: "There have been plenty of times this season when we thought European qualification had gone. But you never know - a couple of good results and we could be back in it."

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Reds pay the penalty against Roy Hodgson's side

"The only thing I would say about the penalties is one was given by the referee and one by the linesman. If they just tell us when the linesman takes over the authority from the referee, then I think we will understand it better." KENNY DALGLISH

"I get no extra pleasure from beating Liverpool. I made a lot of friends when I was at Liverpool. "The players, I have a lot of time and respect for, and the coaching staff, many of them worked with me and worked very loyally." ROY HODGSON
 ROY HODGSON may be convinced fate conspired against him during his short-lived Anfield reign but the footballing Gods were in his dugout at The Hawthorns. Liverpool's mission to show their former boss just how far they have come since his dismissal 12 weeks earlier was severely undermined by a combination of wretched fortune and dismal defending.

West Brom should have come up against a resurgent Steven Gerrard following his recovery from groin surgery but a setback in training on Friday put paid to that. As if that wasn't bad enough the Reds were then rocked by the loss of in-form defenders Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger inside 25 minutes.

Scans will be needed to determine the severity of the injuries but with Johnson clutching his hamstring and Agger having damaged a tendon in his knee the signs aren't promising.

With Fabio Aurelio and Martin Kelly still out, Liverpool are desperately short of defensive cover and a weakness in the squad Kenny Dalglish inherited was exposed for all to see.

If only Hodgson hadn't seen fit to fritter away £3.5million on Paul Konchesky. As it was Dalglish had no choice but to put square pegs in round holes.

Jamie Carragher did a solid job on the right but there's no question Liverpool are a tighter unit when he's able to organise the back four from a central role.

Communication and composure were qualities sadly lacking as the Reds tossed away the lead given to them by Martin Skrtel's header early in the second half. Substitute Sotirios Kyrgiakos had a nightmare. The big Greek international has been a decent servant for the club over the past two seasons but it's difficult to see where the £2million signing from AEK Athens fits into the bright future owners Fenway Sports Group are plotting.

Give Kyrgiakos an aerial duel with a big frontman like Kevin Davies and he will rise to the challenge but up against pace he looks like he's running in treacle. The outstanding Peter Odemwingie tore him to shreds on Saturday with Kyrgiakos a bag of nerves. He gave away one penalty with a clumsy challenge and it was his embarrassing error which led to the second spot-kick.

Of course it is not just at the back where Liverpool need strengthening this summer. There's no point having two top class strikers if there is no-one to provide the ammunition.

Luis Suarez was excellent again on Saturday and came agonisingly close to grabbing a point late on. The Baggies couldn't get near him but for the most part Andy Carroll and Suarez were left to feed off scraps.

Liverpool don't possess a genuine winger and until they do the true potential of their £57.8million double act won't be unlocked.

Reduced to chasing lost causes, Carroll cut an increasingly frustrated figure at The Hawthorns.

West Brom's centre-backs looked like they had been ordered to rough up the England international and it was a plan Jonas Olsson and Abdoulaye Meite went about with relish.

Referee Martin Atkinson failed to clamp down on it and goaded by the home fans, Carroll unsurprisingly lost his rag.

Booked for a late challenge on Steven Reid, Carroll then found himself getting a final talking to from the hapless Atkinson after being cynically blocked by Meite. Carroll heeded his team-mates' call to calm down but in the knowledge another foul could trigger an early bath he was on the periphery for the rest of the contest.

Hodgson wasn't the only face from Liverpool's past to come back to haunt them on Saturday.

Scott Carson never made the grade at Anfield but he played his part in his old club's downfall.

Inside two minutes he did well to keep out a header from Dirk Kuyt who somehow blazed the rebound over.

Having named an unchanged side from the victory at Sunderland a fortnight earlier Dalglish must have hoped for a repeat display

With Jay Spearing once again impressing in the middle of the park, it looked like he might get it but Liverpool lost their way after the enforced defensive reshuffles.

Their passing was sloppy and only the brilliance of Reina kept the Reds on level terms before the break as he thwarted Reid, Odemwingie and then Chris Brunt. With Liverpool still on the back foot early in the second half it was something of a surprise when they broke the deadlock. Skrtel rose highest in the box to meet Raul Meireles' corner and powered a header into the top corner.

Kuyt wasted a chance to make it 2-0 soon after and it proved to be costly as the Reds shot themselves in the foot.

Kyrgiakos allowed Odemwingie to turn far too easily on the edge of the box and then compounded the error by bringing him down. With Skrtel covering it was a clumsy challenge he didn't need to make.

Brunt fired home from the spot and suddenly Liverpool were rocking. Reina continued to excel but with two minutes to go he was beaten again.

There appeared to be little danger when Olsson pumped the ball forward but Kyrgiakos made a hash of it to leave Odemwingie through on goal.

The striker needed no second invitation to fall over Reina's outstretched leg and Brunt secured the Baggies' first win over Liverpool for 30 years.

It was Hodgson's day as these points came gift-wrapped.

WEST BROM (4-4-2): Carson; Reid, Meite, Olsson, Shorey; Scharner, Mulumbu, Brunt, Cox (Fortune 74); Thomas (Jara 90), Odemwingie.

Not used: Myhill, Cech, Pablo, Vela, Zuiverloon.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): Reina; Carragher, Skrtel, Agger (Wilson 24), Johnson (Kyrgiakos 8); Kuyt (Cole 87), Spearing, Lucas, Meireles; Carroll, Suarez. Not used: Gulacsi, Maxi, Ngog, Poulsen.

GOALS: West Brom: Brunt (62), Brunt (88). Liverpool: Skrtel (50).

CARDS: Booked – West Brom: Scharner, Thomas. Liverpool: Carroll, Wilson, Reina.

REFEREE: Martin Atkinson (W Yorks).

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Hodgson revenge
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WEST BROM had never taken a Premier League point from this fixture; not even scored a solitary goal. Then, led by the man turfed out of Anfield after just six traumatic months, they rise from a goal behind to claim an emotional, potentially critical victory in the struggle for survival.

One man's training ground ennui is another's inspiration. At Liverpool, players took badly to Roy Hodgson's repetitive formation drills. At The Hawthorns, they've introduced a sorely needed solidity to a pleasantly creative side.

"I don't take any particular pleasure in that [victory] at all because I made a lot of friends when I was at Liverpool," said Hodgson, his team now 12th, four points cushioned from the drop zone. "The great pleasure I take is in beating Liverpool Football Club, because at West Brom that's not something we do very often.

Today we did it and we deserved to do it." Hodgson was not wrong. Never less than precisely organised, always a threat through Peter Odemwingie, his new charges refused to accept defeat.

Deprived of Steven Gerrard after a new, as yet unidentified, injury preparing for the game, Liverpool's other shortfall was at full-back; one exacerbated when Glen Johnson pulled a hamstring chasing Chris Brunt. Shunted out to the left of a back four comprised entirely of central defenders, Daniel Agger quickly joined Johnson with a strained knee tendon.

West Brom used the possession ceded to them to garner confidence. Shifting Jamie Carragher one way then the other, Odemwingie fired angled balls at goal. Pepe Reina athletically gathered strikes from him and Steven Reid, then kept out a Martin Skrtel back header.

Then came an undeserved Liverpool opener as Abdoulaye Meite misread an unthreatening centre, allowing Andy Carroll to gather and launch a deflected shot at goal. From the corner, Skrtel leapt high above Paul Scharner to head in Raul Meireles' precise delivery.

Reina saved once more from Brunt before his makeshift defence overexposed him. On the edge of the area Odemwingie applied sleight of body to Sotirios Kyrgiakos to draw an unnecessary foul. Betraying his anxiety, Brunt quickly drove the penalty past Reina for West Brom's first Premier League against Liverpool.

Twice more was Reina required to turn away efforts from the persistently excellent Odemwingie. Worse was to come. Jonas Olsson's thumped clearance was wonderfully controlled by Odemwingie, who sent the hapless Kyrgiakos toppling to the turf. Sprinting on towards the six-yard box, he swivelled past Reina, whose trailing leg brought a penalty. Brunt's kick was as emphatic as the Hawthorns roar.

Kenny Dalglish asked why the second spot kick had been awarded by the linesman. "If you don't get penalties for that then penalties might not exist," parried Hodgson.

Skrstel missed with a header; Luis Suarez stared in disbelief as first Carson then Nicky Shorey clawed shots off the line. "Thanks for the grey hairs," read Liverpool's banner to their former manager. They weren't thanking Hodgson for yesterday's.

Star man: Peter Odemwingie (West Brom) Yellow cards: West Brom: Scharner, Thomas Liverpool: Carroll, Wilson, Reina Referee: M Atkinson Attendance: 26,196
 West Brom: Carson 7, Reid 7, Meite 5, Olsson 7, Shorey 7, Brunt 8, Scharner 4, Mulumbu 7, Thomas 7 (Jara 90+2min), Cox 6 (Fortune 74min), Odemwingie 8
 Liverpool: Reina 7, Carragher 5, Skrtel 7, Agger 6 (Wilson 24min, 6), Johnson 6 (Kyrgiakos 8min, 6), Kuyt 5 (Cole 87min), Lucas 6, Spearing 5, Meireles 7, Carroll 6, Suarez 7

Odemwingie too hot to handle as Brunt bears his burden well: Hodgson enjoys the points rather than revenge, writes Russell Kempson
 WEST BROM 2

Brunt 62pen 88pen
 LIVERPOOL 1
 Skrtel 50

Roy Hodgson lived painfully in the shadow of Kenny Dalglish at Anfield this season until, after six months of stress and near-humiliation, he was relieved of his duties in January. Yesterday he exacted some small measure of revenge.

Dalglish - "It was not easy with 'an icon' in the background," Hodgson said on Friday - may be only the caretaker manager at Liverpool. Fenway Sports Group, the club's owner, has yet to decide whether iconic status will translate into a meaningful challenge in the league next season. On the latest evidence, though, perhaps even the Scot may have second thoughts.

Liverpool had edged control for much of a rousing game. They took the lead in the 50th minute when Martin Skrtel, the central defender, powered in a fearsome header from a Raul Meireles corner and they should have gone on to strengthen their case for a Europa League place. But just when Dalglish wanted strength and resilience, just when a bit of nous was required, Liverpool collapsed.

It was self-inflicted, too, with West Brom scoring twice from penalties. First, Sotirios Kyrgiakos clumsily felled Peter Odemwingie in the area; then, with two minutes remaining, Jose Reina also brought down Odemwingie. The referee Martin Atkinson, on the advice of an assistant, again pointed to the spot. And again, Chris Brunt hammered in the spot-kick.

Not that Dalglish agreed with Atkinson's decisions. Odemwingie fell too easily for the first award, according to Dalglish, who then questioned why the assistant had got involved for the second. "When does the linesman take over responsibility from the ref?" he said. "It's important that we are told this. We can't dictate referee's decisions, we can only dictate our own." So much for managers being asked to show more respect to referees.

Dalglish did admit to having plenty of "food for thought", not least after Steven Gerrard broke down in training on Friday with a recurring groin problem. "He tried to turn and felt a sharp pain," Dalglish said. "It's in the same area but not the same injury."

The defenders Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger departed early with injuries and Dalglish may look closely at the temperament of Andy Carroll. The England striker tangled with Steven Reid, Abdoulaye Meite and Jonas Olsson, and earned two warnings from Atkinson and a booking for a late challenge on Reid. When will he learn the difference between harmless boisterousness and blatant stupidity?

West Brom did need a superb save from Scott Carson and a headed goalline clearance from Nicky Shorey to survive but just about deserved their good fortune, which took them up to 12th. Seemingly light years away from the relegation threat, but in reality they are still in the mix.

Hodgson refused to gloat. His stay at Anfield may have turned into a horror show but he does not bear grudges. "No, I gain no extra pleasure from this win," he said. "I made a lot of friends at Liverpool and I have a lot respect for them. My great pleasure is taken from beating Liverpool FC because West Bromwich don't often do that."

The Hawthorns 26,196

Game rating 7/10 Referee Martin Atkinson