

Date: 21 January 2012

Opposition: Bolton Wanderers

Competition: League

Echo	Mirror	Independent	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail
Observer	Sunday Indep	Guardian	Bolton News	
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21 January 2-12

## THE TIMES

Dalglish calls for order in riot act

**Bolton Wanderers** 3  
M Davies 4, Reo-Coker 29, Steinsson 50

**Liverpool** 1

Bellamy 37

Referee: K Friend. Attendance: 26,854

The scoreboard explained why the away end had long since been emptied of supporters who had voted with their feet in showing the cause of their displeasure -- a 3-1 defeat at a Lancashire venue where **Liverpool** usually expect to win.

Twelve months ago, it was exactly this kind of result that prompted the return of Kenny Dalglish. This time around it raised inevitable questions about whether his second spell as manager has delivered the progress that it initially promised.

Whereas Blackburn Rovers' 3-1 win at home over **Liverpool** last January brought Roy Hodgson's reign to a merciful and overdue end, a similar setback away to **Bolton Wanderers** will not have a similar effect on Dalglish's continued employment. A combination of his standing at the club and the improvements in playing style, performance and points -- **Liverpool** had nine fewer at the same stage of last season -- make him, if not bullet-proof, then certainly in a position where there is nowhere near enough ammunition for pot shots to be taken at him.

The same can not be said of his players, who let him down at the Reebok Stadium to such an alarming extent that they provoked Dalglish into an unprecedented attack on their integrity and commitment. **Bolton**, who went into the fixture with the worst home record of any English team, were everything that **Liverpool** were not -- passionate, incisive, aggressive and disciplined in defence.

"If that is the level they think **Liverpool** Football Club should be playing at, they are wrong," Dalglish said. "The problem started with our approach and if that is not right then who are we to be disrespectful to anyone? We think we can turn up and get a result? **Liverpool** have never been built on that foundation, they have always been respectful, and we have always had to work hard. If they don't want to do that, then fine.

"That is the worst performance I have seen without taking anything away from Owen Coyle. Some of those players won't be in red shirts much longer if they carry on playing that way. It was disrespectful. They've got to realise every game this football club plays is a big game, not just the ones that suit them."

If the aim of Dalglish's shock treatment is clear -- he is hoping it yields a positive reaction, ideally in time for the second leg of the Carling Cup semi-final at home to Manchester City on Wednesday -- so are the risks.

First, that half a dozen who failed so badly on Saturday were his signings is unlikely to reflect well, particularly as they cost more than [pounds sterling]80 million. To add insult, only Craig Bellamy, a free transfer, performed to an acceptable standard. Second, the previous **Liverpool** manager to rebuke his players publicly was Rafael Benitez after another 3-1 defeat, on that occasion to Aston Villa in May 2010, and his relationship with them never recovered. Third, threats of a clearout are all well and good, but what clubs would relieve them of their underperforming, expensive acquisitions and at what price?

Regardless of the inherent dangers, Dalglish clearly believes that the gamble is worthwhile. It was only a few days earlier that Dalglish had shown his customary protection towards his players by claiming that the hugely disappointing Stewart Downing is "even better" than he thought he would be. If his outburst at **Bolton** was a desperate measure, the inference to be drawn is that it was caused by a fear of desperate times.

Conceding three preventable goals to a side who were second from bottom at the start of play is just one reason for his concern. Mark Davies and Nigel Reo-Coker each took full advantage of yawning gaps in the **Liverpool** defence to give **Bolton** a wholly deserved 2-0 lead.

Although the lively Bellamy reduced the arrears, **Liverpool**'s defensive failings were again to prove their undoing as Gretar Steinsson was left unmarked at a Martin Petrov corner to score with an unerring volley from a headed knockdown by David Wheeler.

## the guardian

Dalglish promises action after Liverpool's day of disrespect

It is almost two decades since Kenny Dalglish fashioned a title-winning side at Blackburn Rovers by investing the late Jack Walker's cash on some of the best emerging British talent around. A year into his latest incarnation as Liverpool's manager Dalglish is following broadly the same blueprint amid a vastly different Premier League landscape.

This time round, returns on his pounds 100m plus Anfield transfer market investments are stubbornly refusing to bear much fruit. Qualification for the Europa League, let alone the Champions League, is turning into such a struggle that, on Saturday evening, the normally protective Scot accused his team of disrespecting both Bolton and their own club's traditions.

After collecting six points from their past six games, Liverpool are clinging on to seventh place. They were eclipsed by a Bolton side who, with Mark Davies, Chris Eagles, David Ngog, David Wheeler and Nigel Reo-Coker all shining, hauled themselves out of the bottom three.

Of the pounds 100m odd Dalglish spent on six of his seven key signings, only the pounds 22m invested in Uruguay's Luis Suarez and the pounds 5m paid for the Spanish left-back Jose Enrique have paid real dividends. While Craig Bellamy has impressed - the forward was Liverpool's best individual at Bolton - he arrived on a free transfer and represented nothing like the sort of high stakes gamble Liverpool took on Andy Carroll, Jordan Henderson, Stewart Downing and Charlie Adam.

Significantly that latter quartet all disappointed at the Reebok, although, in partial mitigation, Downing did not step off the bench until the 65th minute when he replaced Adam. Unusually Jose Enrique, too, struggled throughout as Eagles revelled in reminding him precisely why he was once a Manchester United winger. Things might have been different had Suarez been around but Liverpool's gifted striker is serving an eight-match suspension for racially abusing Manchester United's Patrice Evra.

If Dalglish's loyalty to Suarez heightens the impression of a man operating in something of a time warp, Liverpool's manager must have long since privately realised that the Uruguayan's mesmerising talent deflects attention from his underachieving British buys. In public at least Carroll, Downing and company have benefited from expressions of blind faith but, during an eviscerating, wholly uncharacteristic, outburst, Dalglish derided his players' complacency and suggested that drastic action may ensue.

"That's not the way to go about representing this club," he said. "The foundation of the club has always been built on respect for other people. It's always been built on the philosophy that the next game was the most important. If they thought this wasn't as important as the other game [City], then they'll not be here."

If 2011 proved tough for Owen Coyle, a switch to a flexible 4-1-4-1 system, which has involved Bolton's manager taking the bold decision to leave Kevin Davies on the bench, is provoking a renaissance. Suddenly Ngog no longer looks like a Liverpool discard but the pacy, strong and skilful forward who once starred for the France Under-21s. Thoroughly upstaging Carroll, Ngog's delightful flick encouraged Mark Davies to burst between Daniel Agger and Martin Skrtel before eluding Jose Reina with an expert low finish. Davies was the evening's outstanding player. All quick feet, close control and smart vision, he made Adam and Henderson look distinctly ordinary in a midfield dominated by Reo-Coker.

After Reo-Coker, Eagles and Ngog had combined to evade a slapdash Agger, the former chested the ball down and seamlessly shot the second. Haring on to Carroll's flick, Bellamy reduced the deficit but the flicker of a revival was soon extinguished. Instead Wheeler - who courtesy of a splendid block on Bellamy and the reduction of Carroll to a study in frustrated despair reprised the form that once earned him an England call-up - headed down for Gretar Steinsson to volley Bolton's third.

Coyle's speciality is reviving the careers of once much hyped players such as Mark Davies, Eagles, Ngog and Wheeler. Without a dramatic improvement Carroll and company could soon be seeking similarly unglamorous rehabilitation.

Man of the match Mark Davies (Bolton)

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## The Mail

Dalglish facing a Kop calamity

CONSIDER this statistic: after 22 games last season, **Liverpool** had scored 27 times. Craig Bellamy's goal, in Saturday's desperate 3-1 defeat at **Bolton**, means their tally at the same stage is two fewer.

When principal owner John W Henry said back in August that his club's main aim was to qualify for the Champions League, such a goal return was clearly not what he had in mind.

Then, he believed, the woeful performances seen under Roy Hodgson, which scarred the opening months of Fenway Sports Group's reign, were a thing of the past. At the Reebok, however, Kenny Dalglish's side were every bit as bad.

How Henry will be feeling today, after his club's humbling at the home of a prime relegation candidate, can only be surmised. **Liverpool** were dreadful. After a turgid 0-0 home draw with Stoke, they needed to provide some reassurance.

What they actually delivered merely showed that they remain several rungs below Champions League class.

Henry, it seems, must prepare for a 'major disappointment'.

What was most significant though, were the eviscerating words Dalglish (right) aimed at his squad. No manager defends his players more robustly, so for him to accuse them of lacking respect showed how woeful they were.

'The foundation of this club has been built on respect for others,' he said. 'If they needed a lesson taught to them, this was it. If they thought this game wasn't important, then they'll not be here.' The question supporters were asking afterwards, though, was: 'Should some of them be here in the first place?'

Dalglish knows better than anyone what standards are expected of **Liverpool** players and he will discover in the next week whether this crop has the mettle to cope. On Wednesday, they attempt to protect a 1-0 lead in the Carling Cup semifinal against Manchester City. Next Saturday it's Manchester United in what will be a combustible FA Cup fourthround tie.

Win both and a sense of order will be restored, and perhaps he launched this attack to garner a response. Should they lose both, Dalglish, Henry and Co will face calamity. 'If they want to be involved in big games, they have to realise every game at this club is big, not just the ones that suit them,' added Dalglish. 'This is the worst performance I've seen.'

## The Daily Telegraph

Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish feels the heat as signings fall flat with Bolton defeat the latest blow

Little did we know the full extent of the club's remorse: in the event, the Reebok Stadium was the backdrop to the most sorry performance of Kenny Dalglish's second reign in charge as **Liverpool** were beaten 3-1 by **Bolton Wanderers**.

John W Henry and Tom Werner plan to fly into Merseyside on Monday, expecting to see their club progress to their first major final in five years. A glance at the **Premier League** table suggests **Carling Cup** progress will do little more than apply a sticking plaster to yet another sickly campaign.

When Dalglish returned as Liverpool manager, he endangered the infallibility he enjoyed as a club ambassador. For many of his brethren, querying his judgment is still akin to questioning the celibacy of the Pope. Such historical, unconditional devotion will be tested if performances and signings continue to fail to match expectations. There's no Hicks, no Gillett, no Parry, no Purslow, no Benitez and no Hodgson to blame any more, so for the time being alternative non-provocative, populist targets are being located.

The most expensive Liverpool players fit the bill, although if the club continues to play like this the politically vulnerable director of football, Damien Comolli, will be well advised to stock up on a ready supply of tin hats.

Dalglish has accumulated over three decades of credit at Anfield, so it will take longer than 12 months for his reign to be subject to the same scrutiny within Merseyside's boundaries as it necessitates beyond it.

His break with tradition with a full-frontal rebuke of his players in the aftermath of the 3-1 defeat surprised many, but there was a flaw in his argument. He bought at least six of those players, and in some cases the dip into the abyss of abominable badness was not an especially severe drop. For many of them, it was not a lengthy journey from being plain mediocre to wretchedly appalling.

Luis Suárez, absent for three more games, stands alone as the unqualified success of Liverpool's recent investment. Anyone who thinks he'll hang around for more than another 18 months if Liverpool are not back in the **Champions League** has learned nothing from the final chapters of **Fernando Torres's** Anfield story.

Liverpool's scorer and sole contributor here, Craig Bellamy, also underlined why of all last summer's purchases he was the one that made most sense.

Herein lies another irony. Liverpool have been sucked into a world where players are judged on flip charts, statistical data and youthfulness. Bellamy does not fit the profile of the Moneyballderdash cult Liverpool have championed.

He is 32, he cost no transfer fee and he will be worth nothing once his contract is up. But try telling anyone on The Kop those in their early 20s purchased for in excess of £20 million represent forward thinking while the pursuit of ageing, experienced, proven talent is a retrograde step.

Liverpool's transfer outlay has been seduced and sabotaged by the most dangerous word in football: 'potential'. Andy Carroll, Jordan Henderson, Charlie Adam and Stewart Downing were signed at huge cost not because of anything extraordinary they had ever done, but for what they might eventually do. And they are not doing it.

Carroll is the most striking case of all, and the most imaginative work of fiction to have been written in Liverpool recently must surely be the scouting report valuing him at £35 million.

Various theories have now been proposed as to why he has been so abysmal, but the most simple is surely the most convincing: he is not a particularly good footballer. There is nothing there: no first touch, no burst of pace, no physical presence. Milk turns quicker than Carroll.

The contrast with David Ngog was devastating. Ngog, a former emergency Liverpool striker of limited means, was sold to Bolton for £4 million last summer. As a lone striker, he was everything Carroll was not, his delicate flick in the build up to the excellent Mark Davies's fourth-minute goal setting the tone for a comfortable evening for Owen Coyle's side.

Nigel Reo-Coker and Gretar Steinsson made Bellamy's first-half strike irrelevant and lifted Bolton out of the bottom three.

Coyle believes the money invested from the sale of Gary Cahill will enable Bolton to emerge from the transfer window stronger. Exactly a year ago, Liverpool argued the same when they re-invested the Torres fee.

They've collected six more points this season than this time a year ago. Get your sabermetric calculator around that, Mr Henry.

If everyone at Anfield believes this is a consequence of a single poor display at the Reebok Stadium, you can add lack of self-awareness to Liverpool's mounting Premier League problems.

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## THE INDEPENDENT

Clock is ticking for Dalglish as time for excuses is over

In times of adversity, Kenny Dalglish usually resembles the tougher types that populate John le Carr[c] novels. The sort the Circus would happily send to Moscow, safe in the knowledge that, under interrogation, he would not even divulge his shoe size.

It made his post-match interview on ESPN on Saturday night all the more extraordinary. Dalglish is typically the master of evasion, one who turns questions back on the questioner. But after defeat to **Bolton** Wanderers he presented, unprompted, a comprehensive demolition of his own players' performance. "If anybody has aspirations of staying any length of time at this football club," he said, "they will not be here much longer if that's the way they are going to perform."

Most intriguing was his insight that, "it is all well and good saying they might have been distracted because there's another game on Wednesday and on Saturday." That sounded like the remnants of a conversation he had just had in the dressing room. Who, you had to wonder, had turned to Dalglish and told him that he was preoccupied with the Carling Cup semi-final second leg?

Dalglish's one-year anniversary as **Liverpool** manager passed earlier this month and it all feels a lot grimmer than it did on those sunny uplands of last season when, in March, the Kop sang "Happy Birthday" to their manager as his team defeated Manchester United, 3-1. That was an afternoon when the club at last emerged from under a dark cloud, most of it brewed up by the previous owners and then the acrimony of Roy Hodgson's brief reign.

Recently, the results have been less consistent and the problems conspicuous. The mishandling of the Luis Suarez affair. The problems Suarez's subsequent absence has left. The never-ending wait for Andy Carroll to come good. Stewart Downing's failure to score. The nagging fear that a net spend of around [pounds sterling]48.5m in the summer on the likes of Downing, Charlie Adam and Jordan Henderson has not paid dividends.

It was always going to take at least [pounds sterling]50m to transform what remained of the **Liverpool** squad one year ago into something resembling a team capable of competing for a finish in the top four. This is the team's first season together and, by Wednesday night, they could be in their first domestic final in almost six years. As for a top-four finish, that still looks unrealistic.

**Liverpool** are not the first of the big dogs in the Premier League to teeter on the brink of some form of mini-crisis. Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal have all been there at some point this season. What changed on Saturday was that Dalglish was unwilling to lend anymore of the considerable well of goodwill that he has with the club's supporters to his underperforming players.

As **Liverpool** manager between 1985 and 1991, his patience with his team was rarely tested because, put simply, his team rarely lost. On Match Of The Day on Saturday night, Alan Hansen recalled a Dalglish team talk he had heard many times. "Effort, attitude and commitment was what he stressed," he said, but there was no mention of Dalglish having to remind his players in public what was expected of them.

The team beaten by **Bolton** included five players Dalglish brought to the club and Downing, a second-half substitute, was another of his signings. This is, by and large, Dalglish's team and their league form has not been good enough. This is his credibility on the line. His reaction on Saturday night told you that there is a limit to the lengths he will go to in order to protect them.

Taking your players on like that is a big step for any manager and is fraught with risk. You get the impression that Andre Villas-Boas, for all his confidence, is still a long way from telling the world that Fernando Torres has let the club down. Arsene Wenger never criticises his players. Sir Alex Ferguson only rarely and only when the occasion demands, such as the 6-1 home defeat to Manchester City. Of all of them, Roberto Mancini can be the most publicly critical of his players.

Already this season, Dalglish has blamed referees for **Liverpool's** misfortune and he has, of course, sanctioned a pretty extraordinary broadside at the Football Association over the Suarez affair. The press are another regular target. Now that he has turned that critical gaze upon his own players, the excuses really are over. And about time too.

Starting with Manchester City in the second leg of that semi-final on Wednesday, **Liverpool** have a defining run of fixtures: Manchester United at home in the FA Cup, Wolves away, Tottenham at home, United away and then home games against Everton and Arsenal. It is a reasonable expectation that Dalglish should be judged at the end of the season, yet no one can be in any doubt this is a significant six weeks.

"If they think they can turn the clock on and off they will not be turning it on and off at this club," Dalglish said. The clock is a pertinent image at **Liverpool**. Of all the benchmarks in their wait for a 19th league title, the 2015-16 season looms as large as any other. If they have not won the title by the end of that season they will have gone longer without being champions than Manchester United did between 1967 and 1993.

There is much around the periphery of the business of a modern football club that can make a small difference, but in the end it still comes down to the players. There are times when there is a benefit in shielding them from their own shortcomings but it is not a position any manager, even Dalglish, can afford to adopt indefinitely.

## DAILY Mirror

KING'S RANSOM; Fans starting to get restless as they wait for return on Kenny's pounds 115m investment

BOLTON 3 LIVERPOOL 1

AFTER a year in charge and pounds 115million spent on players, Liverpool fans are entitled to ask whether much has actually changed under Kenny Dalglish.

This defeat was the latest miserable episode in a Premier League run that has seen Liverpool take just six points from as many games against mainly modest opposition.

Wigan, Blackburn, Newcastle, Manchester City, Stoke and Bolton. With the exception of the Premier League leaders and highflying Newcastle, such a run provided Liverpool with a chance to endorse their claim for a Champions League spot.

Instead, Dalglish's side have squandered chance after chance to push Chelsea, Arsenal and Newcastle in the battle for a top-four place, seven draws at home this season further evidence of Liverpool's shortcomings under the man whose return was set to transform them.

When Dalglish was appointed 12 months ago, his remit was to restore Liverpool's bruised pride. A year down the line, it is tempting to wonder whether the 60-year-old manager has bitten off more than he can chew by coming back.

With the exception of Luis Suarez, whose absence during an eight-match ban has robbed Liverpool of its most potent attacker, Dalglish (above) has made too many mediocre signings.

The inflated fees for Stewart Downing, Jordan Henderson and Andy Carroll increasingly look like disastrous pieces of business.

Dalglish must shoulder the blame for that, but he did not spare his players in a brutally honest post-match assessment that suggested some of the underachievers could find themselves out the door.

"That's the worst performance I've seen, without taking anything away from Bolton," said Dalglish. "I don't think the approach was correct, I don't think the way we went about our work was correct.

"If the players needed a lesson to be taught to them, then this was it.

"If they just think they can turn up and get a result, not be as competitive and match the opposition for effort and commitment, then they've had a lesson.

"If they thought this wasn't as important as other games, then they'll not be here.

"And if that's the level they think Liverpool football club should be playing at, then they're wrong.

"If you have pride in yourself and your football club, that reflects in the effort you put in. I don't know where this has come from, but it had better go quickly." Chief among those players whose future is under scrutiny is Carroll.

Despite Dalglish's bullish public support for his pounds 35m striker, privately the Liverpool manager must wonder what has happened to the forward who looked unplayable at Newcastle, but is now bereft of confidence and form.

Of equal concern to Dalglish will be Liverpool's defence, which had conceded just six goals away from Anfield all season prior to this encounter, but which displayed all the dexterity and focus of magician Paul Daniels doing a spot of DIY with a circular saw.

Liverpool could reach the Carling Cup final this week but it is in the Premier League where their real problems lie. The harsh reality for Reds fans is that their team is still so prosaic, despite significant investment.

To put Liverpool's defeat into context, prior to the game, the only team from the top seven divisions in England to have a worse home record than Bolton this season was Thurrock, of the Blue Square Bet League South.

But Liverpool never looked comfortable against a Bolton side whose recent run of 10 points from their last six games suggests Coyle's resurgent side may yet save themselves from the drop.

Mark Davies put Bolton ahead after four minutes, thanks to some generous defending from Liverpool, Nigel Reo-Coker doubling their lead just before the halfhour, with the visitors' defence going AWOL again.

Craig Bellamy pulled a goal back before half-time, but further shoddy defending allowed Greta Steinsson to score five minutes after the break to kill off Liverpool. WHAT PRICE A WINNING MANAGER?

Rafa Benitez 2004-10 P: 350 W: 194 D: 77 L: 79 Win ratio: 55% Money spent: pounds 247.9m

Roy Hodgson 2010-11 P:31W:13D:9L:9 Win ratio: 42% Money spent: pounds 22m  
Kenny Dalglish 2011-P: 51W: 26 D: 13 L: 12 Win ratio: 51% Money spent: pounds 114.3m

BOLTON: Bogdan 6, Steinsson 7, Knight 6, Wheeler 7, Ricketts 6, Reo-Coker 7, Eagles 7 (Sanli 90), Muamba 7, Petrov 7, M Davies 8, Ngog 7 (K Davies 88). Goals: M Davies 4, Reo-Coker 29, Steinsson 50 LIVERPOOL: Reina 6, Johnson 4, Skrtel 5, Agger 5, Jose Enrique 4?, Maxi 5 (Kuyt 64, 5?), Gerrard 5, Adam 4 (Downing 64, 4), Henderson 5, Bellamy 6, Carroll 4. Goal: Bellamy 37 REF: Kevin Friend ATT: 26,854  
CAPTION(S):

BOLTON BLAST OUT OF DANGER ZONE Top: Mark Davies fires Bolton to a fourth-minute lead with Reo-Coker coolly making it 2-0 after 29 minutes. Bellamy gives the Reds some hope before Steinsson makes it 3-1 EMPTY-HANDED REDS Even the presence of fit-again skipper Gerrard (left) could not lift Liverpool

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LIVERPOOL'S hopes of Champions League qualification suffered a major setback as they endured an embarrassing 3-1 defeat at the hands of lowly Bolton Wanderers at the Reebok.

With Chelsea and Newcastle having both dropped points earlier in the day, it was the perfect opportunity for the Reds to close the gap on the top four.

However, Kenny Dalglish's side responded by producing their worst performance of the season and paid the price.

Relegation-threatened Bolton had won just once at home in the league all season yet they were made to look like world beaters as the Reds were outfought and outclassed.

Mark Davies opened the scoring early on and then Nigel Reo-Coker made it 2-0 as the Trotters punished some woeful defending.

Craig Bellamy pulled one back before half-time but Gretar Steinsson's volley early in the second half wrapped up maximum points for the hosts.

Dalglish must now lift his players for a crunch week with Wednesday's Carling Cup semi-final second leg against Manchester City followed by the FA Cup clash with Manchester United next Saturday.

The Reds boss made four changes from the side which drew 0-0 with Stoke a week earlier.

Andy Carroll, Bellamy, Daniel Agger and Maxi Rodriguez all returned, with Dirk Kuyt, Stewart Downing, Jamie Carragher and Sebastian Coates dropping to the bench.

Having reverted back to playing 4-4-2, it looked like a team perfectly equipped to pile the pressure on the struggling Trotters but pre-match optimism was swiftly ended.

Liverpool were sloppy from the start and they trailed inside four minutes. Martin Skrtel's error allowed Mark Davies to latch on to former Reds striker David Ngog's flick and charge through a gaping hole in the middle.

Davies held his nerve to coolly slot the ball past Pepe Reina and into the bottom corner,

Chris Eagles almost doubled Bolton's account but after dispossessing Jose Enrique he shot wide from an acute angle.

Jordan Henderson tested Adam Bogdan from the edge of the box but the Reds were second best in all departments. Their passing was poor and it was the hosts showing the greater quality and desire.

The second goal Bolton deserved arrived just before the half hour mark.

Eagles played a neat one-two with Ngog and picked out Reo-Coker's run into the penalty box.

The former West Ham midfielder wasn't tracked and had time to chest the ball down and fire home.

Briefly, the Reds came to life and started to cause Bolton some problems of their own.

Bellamy forced a save from Bogdan after latching on to Carroll's flick and that combination helped Liverpool half the deficit eight minutes before the break. It was route one with Reina's long punt flicked on by Carroll for Bellamy. The Welshman burst clear, outpaced the trailing defenders and clinically beat Bogdan. Having gained a foothold in the game, the Reds had Reina to thank for reaching the interval only one behind.

Charlie Adam's clumsy tackle on Ngog gave Bolton a dangerous free-kick on the edge of the box.

Martin Petrov stepped up to take it and his strike was destined for the corner before Reina brilliantly pushed it away.

The interval gave Liverpool the chance to regroup but hopes of a fightback were dashed five minutes into the second half.

Petrov's corner was nodded back across goal by David Wheeler and Steinsson hammered a volley into the bottom corner. The defending was shoddy and there was no way back for the Reds.

Dalglish responded by bringing on Kuyt and Downing for Adam and Rodriguez. But despite enjoying plenty of possession, Liverpool created little.

Agger ventured forward to slam a 25-yarder against the bar and then Bellamy saw his deflected effort kept out by Bogdan.

But Bolton's lead was never in serious threat with most away supporters having already headed for the exits before referee Kevin Friend finally ended Liverpool's misery.

Bolton: Bogdan, Steinsson, Knight, Wheeler, Ricketts, Eagles (Tuncay 90), Reo-Coker, Muamba, Petrov, Mark Davies, Ngog (Kevin Davies 87). Not used: Lynch, Pringle, Boyata, O'Halloran, Riley.

Liverpool: Reina, Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Jose Enrique, Rodriguez (Kuyt 64), Henderson, Adam (Downing 64), Bellamy, Gerrard, Carroll. Not used: Doni, Coates, Carragher, Shelvey, Kelly.

Referee: Kevin Friend

Attendance: 26,854

## The Bolton News

MARK Davies is a young man of very few words but thankfully for [Wanderers](#), he's [letting](#) his feet do the talking right now.

If anyone sums up the Reebok revival lifting the gloom in recent weeks, it's the fleet-footed midfielder whose third-minute strike set the ball rolling on a victory of epic proportions against Liverpool.

Davies has never been short of admirers, and was singled out as a teenager by none other than Glenn Hoddle as one to watch in his formative years at Wolves. But it has only been in the last couple of months that his promise has truly looked like being realised. From someone capable of lifting fans out of their seats with a 15-minute substitute's cameo to a player more likely to leave them standing the whole match through, the boy from the Black Country is now the real deal, not that you'd find him bragging about it.

Even though he had seen off midfield behemoths like Steven Gerrard and Charlie Adam, Davies shunned the interviews and TV cameras as per norm.

Uncomfortable though he may be with the press, the 23-year-old looks much more at ease in Wanderers' current system, which has now proved the undoing of both Merseyside clubs inside three weeks.

Much of his success is down to Nigel Reo-Coker's influence in the anchor role, and once again the former Aston Villa man was the beating heart of Owen Coyle's midfield.

Quite aside from scoring the evening's second goal, the captain's constant barking of orders could be picked up even against the backdrop of the Reebok's biggest crowd of the season, and that constant cajoling has certainly brought out the best in Davies, and indeed other more impressive characters such as [Fabrice Muamba](#), David Ngog, Martin Petrov and Chris Eagles, who have looked a little lost at times in an unpredictable campaign.

Kenny Dalglish has seen it all at Liverpool but even he was struggling to answer why his side looked so ordinary in long spells on Saturday evening. Take nothing away from Wanderers, who set a frenetic pace from the start, but it seems the business over Luis Suarez has taken a serious toll on a club who looked anything but top four material.

The Mersey men had remained unbeaten in their last 11 meetings with Bolton, but were put immediately on the back foot when Eagles and Ngog combined cleverly to put Davies through a giant gap in the middle to place home the opening goal.

Eagles might have made it two when he stole the ball from sloppy full-back Jose Enrique and narrowly failed to squeeze his shot past Pepe Reina from a tight angle.

Any joy Liverpool were getting was through the pace of Craig Bellamy in the channels but while Zat Knight and David Wheeler lived on their instincts at times, they too are showing improvement as a defensive partnership, especially with the added insurance of pace alongside them in Sam Ricketts and Gretar Steinsson. That said, Wanderers got a little luck when referee Kevin Friend decided against giving Liverpool a penalty when Maxi Rodriguez's effort seemed to hit Knight on the arm, shortly before a great clearance from Ricketts.

Moments later, Reo-Coker doubled the lead from close range after another incisive move instigated by Eagles and yet another intelligent lay-off from Ngog. Had the Whites held on to a clean sheet until the break it would have been hard to see Liverpool getting back into it, but the only defensive lapse of the game came at just the wrong time. Andy Carroll beat Wheeler in the air to flick on for Bellamy, who burst past Knight and Ricketts before finishing low under the advancing Adam Bogdan.

Would this signal a collapse? There were certainly a few concerned faces around the Reebok.

Petrov went close with a free-kick that could have calmed things down – but looking at the agitated state Reo-Coker was in as he headed back down the tunnel, it was clear that emotions were running high on and off the pitch. Nerves were settled five minutes after the restart, however, when Steinsson produced a textbook volley into the bottom corner after Wheeler had headed Petrov's corner back at the far post.

Watched by Icelandic former Wanderers legend Gudni Bergsson, the goal capped the full-back's return to favour after what has been a difficult season on and off the pitch.

From there, Liverpool did little to get back into the game. Daniel Agger's steaming shot from 25 yards skimmed Bogdan's crossbar but with the threat of Bellamy now neutralised, there was little of concern to deal with. Eagles may have turned it into a rout had he kept his head with a couple of chances in and around the penalty box – but given his contribution to the first two goals, it was hard to criticise him. Whereas a few months ago it was difficult to highlight an individual for praise, or recognise anyone being in what you would term "form" – it has been decidedly rosier in Coyle's garden since the turn of the year.

Even though they escaped the bottom three for the first time since October, Wanderers are still in the midst of a relegation battle. But the prognosis looks healthier based on recent outings and, taking the lead from Sunderland, who now sit in 10th, it does not seem impossible to think the final months of the season can be enjoyable after all.

Date: 21 January 2012	Echo	Mirror	Independent	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail		21 January 2-12
Opposition: Bolton Wanderers	Observer	Sunday Indep	Guardian	Bolton News			
Competition: League	Mail	Times	Sunday Tel	Sunday Mirror	Telegraph		



# THE INDEPENDENT

ON SUNDAY

## Eagles brings shambolic Liverpool down to earth

Loyalty is Kenny Dalglish's overriding emotion and yet after the worst performance since he returned to manage Liverpool, he turned on his team, accusing them of a lack of respect for both their opponents and the history of their own club.

Dalglish said his players appeared far more focused on their two upcoming matches that pitch them against Manchester City for a place in the Carling Cup final and United in the FA Cup rather than a run-of-the-mill fixture against a team they had beaten consistently.

"The most disappointing thing was I don't think we were ready to play the game," he said. "The approach was not correct, the way we went about our work was not correct. The foundations of this football club have always been based on respect for our opponents.

"The philosophy has always been that the next game is the most important one, not one that's two or three down the line. If they thought they were just going to have to turn up, they needed a lesson to be taught to them and today was it. They thought they didn't need to match the opposition for effort and commitment. It is not the right way to represent this football club.

"If they thought this game was not as important as the next ones they will not be here next season."

For season after season Bolton have been Liverpool's patsies. They went into this game having lost the last 10 of these fixtures and responded like a schoolboy turning on the playground bully.

Bolton emerged into the sunlight after four months in the Premier League's relegation zone, having delivered the kind of result and performance that turns seasons.

The collapse began after four minutes and like much of Bolton's play, it was supremely well worked, beginning with Chris Eagles on the right flank who found David Ngog, who with one flick sent Mark Davies running between Martin Skrtel and Daniel Agger to finish the move perfectly. Eagles is showing the kind of form he suggested he was capable of when on Manchester United's books.

On the edge of the Liverpool area, he appeared to have far more time than he knew what to do with. He chose a little dink into the area that Nigel Reo-Coker anticipated before any of his potential markers.

Defensively, Liverpool had been a shambles and had Pepe Reina not diverted Martin Petrov's free-kick at full stretch with virtually the final kick before the interval, they would have conceded a third, although this was only delayed for a matter of minutes.

There was some sporadic resistance, which included a penalty appeal for handball against Zat Knight and a shot from Daniel Agger that skimmed the bar. However, it was Craig Bellamy who displayed the kind of grit Liverpool had entirely lacked, although it spilled over when he confronted Reo-Coker in the first half, to reignite a spat that long predates this fixture. The Bolton captain afterwards said he had "no respect" for the Liverpool striker, who at West Ham had compared him unfavourably to Kieron Dyer.

Nevertheless, he scored. Andy Carroll, who had been taunted by chants of: "You're just a shit Kevin Davies" headed on into the Welshman's path. Bellamy has a reputation for not being particularly strong when one on one with the keeper and Adam Bogdan half saved his shot before looking up to see it roll over the line.

It was, however, only a temporary reprieve. Five minutes after the restart, David Wheeler rose to meet a deep corner from Petrov and Greter Steinsson, sweeping in, drove home an astonishing third. Had Roy Hodgson been managing Liverpool he would have been howled down; instead for the man on the touchline there was only stunned silence.

Bolton Wanderers: (4-5-1) Bogdan; Steinsson, Wheeler, Ricketts; Eagles (Tuncay, 90), Muamba, Davies, Reo-Coker, Petrov; Ngog (K Davies, 88).

Liverpool: (4-2-3-1) Reina; Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Enrique; Adam (Downing, 64), Henderson; Bellamy, Gerrard, Rodriguez (Kuyt, 64); Carroll.

Referee: Kevin Friend

Man of the match: Eagles (Bolton)

Match rating: 8/10

## The Sunday Telegraph

Resurgent Bolton deal new blow to Liverpool's confidence

**Bolton 3**

Davies 4, Reo-Coker 29, Steinsson 50

**Liverpool 1**

Bellamy 37 Att: 26,854

**Liverpool's** season of one step forward and two back continued at the Reebok Stadium last night as **Bolton** put their horrendous home form behind them to record a comprehensive victory against Kenny Dalglish's side.

With [pounds sterling]35million Andy Carroll once more failing to find the net, and a former Anfield striker David Ngog influential for the hosts, Mark Davies and Nigel Reo-Coker put **Bolton** well in control before Craig Bellamy reduced the deficit - only for it to be restored early in the second half by **Bolton** defender Greter Steinsson.

Newcastle's defeat at Fulham, along with the inactivity of Arsenal, had afforded **Liverpool** the chance to leap two places in the table and, more relevantly, arrest an alarming run that had seen them collect just one victory, and six points, from their previous five league games.

Even with an eye on this week's Carling Cup semi-final second leg with Manchester City, the visitors must have entertained high hopes of continuing a sequence of 10 consecutive league victories against their opponents. None of which, of course, took into account the vagaries of this season or **Liverpool's** surprising inability to cope with a committed and energetic opening from a **Bolton** team whose recent mini-recovery has injected some much-needed self-belief into their ranks.

After three minutes, Chris Eagles's short pass inside was helped into the path of Mark Davies by a touch from Ngog, allowing the midfielder to surge forward, Martin Skrtel snapping haplessly at his heels, before placing a finish past Pepe Reina.

A mistake by left-back Jose Enrique almost made it worse. Eagles did well to dispossess him and showed great pose and strength in working into the area where his low cross missed two team-mates and might even have been turned in by Glen Johnson.

**Liverpool's** response was initiated by Bellamy, via a couple of darting runs and crosses which were ably dealt with by the home defence. He was also presented with an early shooting opportunity, thanks to the approach play of Steven Gerrard and Maxi Rodriguez, only to see his shot charged down.

However, **Liverpool** were left with an even stiffer challenge just before the half-hour mark when they were on the receiving end of one of those moments that so often proves pivotal. First, they failed in a strong penalty appeal as Zat Knight seemed to handle and, within moments, found themselves a further goal behind as **Bolton** broke down the other end of the field with Ngog and Eagles exchanging pass before the latter lifted through the perfect through ball. With **Liverpool's** defending less than stellar, Reo-Coker controlled the ball well on his chest before chipping the ball neatly over the advancing Reina.

Finally, after 36 minutes **Liverpool** hit back. Adam Bogdan's long clearance upfield was returned via the heads of Daniel Agger and Carroll, permitting Bellamy to sprint clear of two defenders and convert from a dozen yards, via a touch from the **Bolton** keeper. **Bolton** might have restored their two-goal cushion on the stroke of half-time, courtesy of Martin Petrov's curling 20-yard free-kick awarded for a foul on Ngog, but Reina did well to parry the ball, diving to his right.

A growing tension in the game manifested itself at the break when a long-running feud between Bellamy and Reo-Coker ended with the pair being pulled apart by Knight on their way down the tunnel. Nor did the tempo of on-field matters lessen after the restart, as Charlie Adam emerged from a midfield tangle with the ball and powered into the **Bolton** area where his shot was blocked by Greter Steinsson.

**Bolton** responded swiftly, however, and a nervous Agger back pass almost played Reina into trouble and maintained the pressure on **Liverpool**, pressure from which the home side were able to take a further grip on the game in the 50th minute.

Petrov's left-wing corner was met at the far post by David Wheeler with a firm header back across goal and there was Steinsson who, with no defender near him, scored his first goal of the season with a firm and precise shot from around the penalty spot.

Bellamy, Maxi and Carroll combined in one of a number of promising **Liverpool** attacks but it was not until Adam whipped over a dangerous left-wing cross, forcing Bogdan into a solid piece of handling, that they could turn possession into a real threat or moment of genuine concern for the **Bolton** goalkeeper.

**Liverpool** maintained the pressure but without any real conviction. Bellamy's threatening cross was put behind by Knight, Carroll skied a half-chance over and Agger, from all of 30 yards, chanced his arm and saw his shot clip the crossbar and fly onwards.

Bellamy tried to launch a late comeback by running half the length of the field and delivering a 20-yard shot which, given the ensuing deflection, Bogdan dealt with impressively. But **Bolton** were just as likely to add to their tally as the game opened up and Eagles twice came close with shots from the edge of the area.

Date: 21 January 2012

Opposition: Bolton Wanderers

Competition: League

Echo	Mirror	Independent	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail
	Observer	Sunday Indep	Guardian	Bolton News
Mail	Times	Sunday Tel	Sunday Mirror	Telegraph



21 January 2-12

### Coyle springs shock

AS AN opportunistic striker, Owen Coyle worked hard to feed off scraps. As a manager he is the same. Coyle is making it a speciality to get the best out of players developed and let go by others. He did it with Daniel Sturridge when Chelsea were unsure of their player and lent him out last season. He has done it with his best signing, Stuart Holden, picked up from the MLS after being discarded by Sunderland.

This has not been Coyle's best season, but he may slowly be reviving his team by showing he hasn't lost his touch. This, Bolton's best result in a year, was inspired by Chris Eagles, once of Manchester United and refurbished by Coyle, and Nigel Reo-Coker, who fell a long way from being an England Under-21 captain once signed for [pounds sterling]8.5m by Aston Villa but has been revived.

Mark Davies, who Wolves let slip from them, was also brilliant and scored the first of three marvellous goals - Reo-Coker adding the second, Greter Steinsson the third - that stunned Liverpool.

Bolton kicked off second bottom against opponents who had beaten them in 10 consecutive Premier League games. White scraps of litter blew across the pitch - but it could have been ripped-up pages of that mythical thing, the formbook.

Bolton were on their game from the start. Reo-Coker, setting the example with his running and tackling, showed Coyle's men would impose themselves physically. Eagles, with his relish at taking on Jose Enrique, showed they could do so from a technical standpoint too.

Within four minutes Bolton had a wonderful goal. Eagles dribbled infield from the right and found Ngog, whose lovely flick supplied the oncoming Davies, and he burst between Daniel Agger and Martin Skrtel before stroking a left-footed finish beyond Jose Reina.

Liverpool were forced back again and Enrique was dispossessed by Eagles, who showed great strength to maintain possession with Enrique leaning into him as the Spaniard got back on terms, but not great awareness when he tried to score from a prohibitive angle instead of pass to Ngog. At that stage Liverpool looked chaotic. A 4-2-3-1 formation was supposed to open spaces for Kenny Dalglish's players to attack. It did, but for both sides with Bolton the main beneficiaries. It was because Davies, Reo-Coker and Fabrice Muamba used the freedoms in midfield better and Ngog proved a more mobile and canny focal point than the [pounds sterling]35m signing who helped force him out of Anfield, Andy Carroll. Jordan Henderson struck a clean drive but Adam Bogdan saved and Craig Bellamy was foiled by a great David Wheeler block, but then Bolton scored a second goal. It started with Charlie Adam's free kick being flicked on by Carroll and bouncing in front of Zat Knight, who touched the ball with his arm - after what seemed a deliberate movement.

Kevin Friend declined to award a penalty.

Bolton went upfield, Eagles wall-passed with Ngog, evaded a lazy challenge by Agger and scooped an insightful pass to Reo-Coker, who controlled with his chest and finished far more expertly than a player with his moderate scoring record (it was his first goal for 14 months) should have had any right doing.

Finally, Liverpool were jolted into matching their opponents. Agger won a header, on the half-way line Carroll flicked on and Bellamy sped away from all pursuers, covered 45 yards and beat Bogdan in the one-on-one.

The first half finished with fireworks. In stoppage time, Agger supplied Steven Gerrard, who worried Bogdan with a drive, and Martin Petrov belted a bending free kick round Liverpool's wall, forcing a stout save from Reina.

After the restart Bolton grabbed back the initiative.

Petrov sent a corner deep into Liverpool's box and Wheeler outjumped Skrtel - not the most fearsome in challenges - to head down for Steinsson to score with a volley.

At 3-1 Bolton did not retreat and Liverpool, even in their best moments, were not good enough. Agger strode forward to spear a magnificent shot over Bogdan from 40 yards out but it skimmed the bar. Gerrard released Stewart Downing, a substitute, with a dazzling pass but when Downing centred Carroll mis-kicked quite horribly.

The home fans loved that - but acclaimed the final whistle even more.

Reo-Coker, who exchanged words with Bellamy in the second half, said afterwards: "Craig Bellamy is Craig Bellamy.

I have no respect for him.

He can do what he wants."

Bolton: Bogdan 7, Steinsson 7, Wheeler 8, Knight 6, Ricketts 6, Reo-Coker 8, Eagles 8 (Tuncay 90+1min), Davies 8, Muamba 6, Petrov 6, Ngog 6 (K Davies 88min) Liverpool: Reina 6, Johnson 5, Skrtel 5, Agger 6, Enrique 5, Adam 5 (Downing 65min), Gerrard 7, Henderson 5, Bellamy 7, Maxi 4 (Kuyt 65min), Carroll 5

10 Liverpool's run of winning Premier League matches against Bolton was ended by yesterday's defeat

### Steinsson finishes off Liverpool

BOLTON 3 M Davies 4 Reo-Coker 29 Steinsson 50  
LIVERPOOL 1 Bellamy 37

Bolton climbed out of the bottom three with one of the most improbable results of their season, surprising not only Liverpool but possibly some of their own supporters with the quality of their football and the neatness of their execution. Liverpool were never allowed to settle, conceded early in both halves, and did not display too much appetite for getting back into the game. Where Bolton have been hiding this poise and control all season is a mystery, but with David Ngog effortlessly outshining his pounds 35m replacement in the Liverpool ranks and Mark Davies having his second excellent game in eight days, the result was never in doubt. "Sometimes you have to ride your luck against teams like Liverpool, but not today," Owen Coyle said. "We needed a win but we got more than that, we played to a very high standard and showed we believe in what we are doing." Kenny Dalglish could not even pretend to be proud of his players and did not even try. "I don't think our approach was correct," the Liverpool manager said. "I think some of our players thought they could just turn up and win and they got taught a lesson." Looking for only their second home win of the season, Bolton got off to a better start than they could ever have imagined, with Mark Davies putting them in front after four minutes from the first attack of the game. Ngog's clever flick left Martin Skrtel out of position and powerless to do anything about Davies's dart into the area, leaving the Bolton midfielder free to carry the ball almost to the penalty spot before poking a low shot past Pepe Reina for only his third Premier League goal in three seasons at the club.

It almost got even better for the home side four minutes later, when Chris Eagles dispossessed Jose Enrique on the Bolton right and held off defenders to run all the way along the goal line, yet with all the hard work seemingly done his final ball rolled harmlessly across the face of goal. Liverpool, who had Charlie Adam and Steven Gerrard at the rear of midfield, started with Jordan Henderson on the right wing. Stewart Downing had to watch from the bench, for all Dalglish's insistence that his pounds 20m signing from Aston Villa was a better player than he had initially realised. At least Henderson was able to produce Liverpool's first shot of any note. Bolton survived a scare after half an hour when Adam's free-kick hit Zat Knight on the backside in the area, with neither Andy Carroll nor Maxi Rodriguez able to take advantage of the loose ball. Liverpool were left regretting their hesitancy when the home side swept straight down the field to score a second with a superbly incisive attack. Nigel Reo-Coker has never scored at the Reebok before, but you would never have guessed from the confident manner in which he started and completed the move that put Bolton two up. Releasing the ball towards Eagles on the right, Reo-Coker moved smartly into the area to accept the return, and was not even fazed when the winger decided to chip the ball in his direction rather than roll a pass along the floor. Reo-Coker simply took one touch to control the ball and a second to bury a shot beyond the advancing Reina.

Liverpool did not seem to know what had hit them and could hardly have been expecting such finesse from a team in the bottom three, yet to their credit they pulled a goal back before half-time. Carroll had not done an awful lot to impress in front of goal but his header forward from the halfway line perfectly bisected Bolton's central defenders and allowed Craig Bellamy to run free, the Welshman's pace doping the rest and leaving Adam Bogdan little hope of reaching the ball first. That should have been enough action for a lively first half, though there was still time for Martin Petrov to bring a flying save by Reina from a stoppage-time free-kick, after the impressive Ngog had been fouled by Adam. Reo-Coker resumed an old argument with Bellamy as the teams left the pitch at the interval, then apparently turned on Knight when the centre-half attempted to intervene. If Liverpool thought they were getting back into the game, they were disabused of the notion five minutes into the second half. Bolton were by far the more positive side straight from the restart, and from a corner won on the left they increased their lead. Petrov sent over a deep one, for David Wheeler to rise above Skrtel at the far post and nod down for Greter Steinsson to volley home from close to the penalty spot. Bolton players had been first to the ball both times, with Steinsson beating Daniel Agger to the knockdown, and Dalglish cannot have been happy with the marking at a set piece.

He sent on Downing and Dirk Kuyt for the last quarter of the game, to disappointingly little effect. Carroll produced an air shot when Downing managed a cut-back from the left and the closest Liverpool came to scoring was when Agger let fly from 30 yards out and grazed the top of Bogdan's bar. Bolton's underrated Mark Davies was adjudged man of the match, though in truth this was a day when everyone in white had a game to remember. It was also a day that everyone in red will spend a long time trying to forget.

### BOLTON

Bogdan; Steinsson, Wheeler, Knight, Ricketts; Eagles (Tuncay 90), Muamba, Reo-Coker, M Davies, Petrov; Ngog (K Davies 88) Subs not used Lynch, Pratley, Boyata, O'Halloran, Riley

### LIVERPOOL

Reina; Johnson, Agger, Skrtel, Enrique (Booked); Henderson, Bellamy, Adam (Downing 64), Gerrard, Rodriguez (Kuyt (Booked) 64); Carroll Subs not used Doni, Coates, Carragher, Shelvey, Kelly

Reebok Stadium 26,854 Game rating 8/10 Referee Kevin Friend

Date: 21 January 2012

Opposition: Bolton Wanderers

Competition: League

Echo	Mirror	Independent	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail
Observer	Sunday Indep	Guardian	Bolton News	
Mail	Times	Sunday Tel	Sunday Mirror	Telegraph



21 January 2:12

# The Mail

ON SUNDAY

It just gets worse for Liverpool; Kenny's men are red-faced as Bolton climb out of danger zone

BOLTON 3 M Davies (4), Reo-Coker (29), Steinsson (50)  
LIVERPOOL 1 Bellamy (37)

BOLTON climbed out of the relegation zone as Liverpool were torn apart at The Reebok and Craig Bellamy was at the centre of a tunnel bust-up with old enemy Nigel Reo-Coker. An early goal from Mark Davies set the tone for a dismal showing from Kenny Dalglish's men, whose Champions League hopes are evaporating the longer Luis Suarez is suspended. Owen Coyle could never have imagined breaching one of the Premier League's best defences within the opening five minutes, but that is exactly what happened with a generous contribution from Liverpoolthemselves. It was Anfield old boy David Ngog who set up the goal.

The [pounds sterling]4.5million striker discarded by Kenny Dalglish in the summer showed strength and purpose with his back to goal to ward off Martin Skrtel with a clever flick. It allowed the quick-thinking Davies to burst in behind them and once he had raced into the penalty area theLiverpool defence were too fearful about conceding a penalty to make a challenge. Davies exploited the situation admirably, holding off Skrtel, Daniel Agger and Glen Johnson before clipping a low finish past Pepe Reina into the corner. It was a cool finish, belying the fact it was only the 23-year-old midfielder's third Premier League goal in three seasons at Bolton. Coyle screamed at his players to keep their concentration as the fans celebrated a rare home goal. Remarkably, it was nearly 2-0 before Liverpool had settled down when Jose Enrique, possibly put off by the swirling wind, surrendered possession to Chris Eagles close to the goal-line on the edge of the penalty area. To the full-back's relief, though, Eagles' low cross went tantalisingly across the face of the goal but eluded any of the Bolton strikers in the box.

This was not what Liverpool had expected, given their excellent recent away record, and their only attacking contribution in the opening 20 minutes came when Bellamy had a shot charged down by David Wheeler. Andy Carroll had a sniff of goal soon after but his header from Steven Gerrard's cross was aimed straight at Adam Bogdan. The [pounds sterling]35m Carroll has not scored a league goal since October and it would not have done his confidence much good to be outshone by Ngog. Bolton sensed Dalglish's men were there for the taking and after halfan-hour they took them for a second time. Skipper Reo-Coker started the move with a forceful driving run from midfield. He played a pass to Ngog, who helped it on to Eagles. The winger chipped a pass into the penalty area where Reo-Coker arrived like an express train to control on his chest before executing a lovely finish. It was the midfielder's first goal at The Reebok following his summer move from Aston Villa.

Liverpool needed a quick response to get back in the game and it arrived after 36 minutes. Carroll illustrated that whatever his faults there are few better in the air and he produced a tremendous leap to send Bellamy clear. The Welshman dinked a little finish past the onrushing Bogdan with just enough pace to creep across the line before defensive cover arrived. Bolton will apply for a work permit for American defender Tim Ream on Monday and the nature of the goal underlines why Coyle will be keen he gets it to replace Gary Cahill, who moved to Chelsea this month. Bolton nearly scored a third with the last attack of the first half, with Reina saving well from Martin Petrov's free-kick. But that was not the end of the drama, with a clearly upset Reo-Coker exchanging words with Bellamy as the teams walked down the tunnel for half-time. The Wanderers skipper had been angered by a Bellamy challenge near the halfway line, feeling the Welshman had led with his shoulder. He let his feelings be known at the time and then waited for Bellamy to carry on at the end of the half. Zat Knight tried to drag his team-mate away and also got a mouthful of abuse from Reo-Coker, who has previous history with Bellamy. Bellamy joined West Ham days after Reo-Coker had left the club for Aston Villa and said about another Hammers player. Kieron Dyer: 'He's like Reo-Coker, except he can play.' But Bolton were all smiles again early in the second half when they scored their third in the 50th minute. Petrov's corner was nodded back across goal by Wheeler and fullback Gretar Steinsson swivelled like a top-class striker to direct his volley into the bottom corner.

Liverpool looked a beaten side and it needed a sweet left-footed strike from Agger that skimmed the crossbar to show his forwards how it should be done. Dalglish was left holding his head in his hands when Reo-Coker bundled over Gerrard on the edge of the box without a free-kick being awarded. The club can reach Wembley this week when they face Manchester City in their Carling Cup semi-final second leg on Wednesday holding a 1-0 advantage. But in the league the return of Suarez against Spurs on February 6 cannot come soon enough.

BOLTON (4-2-3-1): Bogdan; Steinsson, Knight, Wheeler, Ricketts; Muamba, Reo-Coker; Eagles (Tuncay 90min), M Davies, Petrov; Ngog (K Davies 88). Subs (not used): Lynch, Pratley, Boyata, O'Halloran, Riley.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): Reina; Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Jose Enrique; Henderson, Gerrard, Adam (Downing 64), Maxi (Kuyt 64); Carroll, Bellamy. Subs (not used): Doni, Coates, Carragher, Shelvey, Kelly. Booked: Jose Enrique, Kuyt.

No respect for Bellamy, says angry Reo-Coker CRAIG BELLAMY'S long-running feud with Bolton captain Nigel Reo-Coker exploded into life again last night as they clashed by the tunnel during the half-time interval ofLiverpool's 3-1 defeat at The Reebok Stadium.

Bolton defender Zat Knight had to drag Reo-Coker away as the clearly upset midfielder waited for Bellamy to give him a volley of abuse about a first-half challenge by the Welshman.

It re-opened old hostilities between the pair dating back to 2007 when Bellamy was recorded mocking Reo-Coker's playing ability to West Ham fans.

Bellamy described Kieron Dyer as 'like Reo-Coker except he can play' and TV pundit Kevin Keegan last night admitted that may have contributed to Reo-Coker's furious reaction to yesterday.

Reo-Coker continued the spat after the match when he was asked about the flare-up and stated: 'Craig Bellamy is Craig Bellamy. No respect for him, so he can do what he wants to do.'



NICE ONE MY SSON; Gretar grabs a stunner as Reds are rocked at Reebok  
BOLTON 3 M Davies 4, Reo-Coker 29, Steinsson 50

LIVERPOOL 1 Bellamy 37

BOLTON produced their best performance of the season to climb out of the relegation zone and leave Kenny Dalglish facing another inquest.

Goals from Mark Davies, Nigel Reo-Coker and Gretar Steinsson gave Owen Coyle's side only their second win in 11 Premier League outings at the Reebok.

It was no more than Wanderers deserved against a Liverpool team beaten with comfort, despite Craig Bellamy's reply.

Current form and history suggested that this would be a profitable evening for Kop boss Dalglish.

Bolton had lost eight of their 10 Premier League home games this season to slip into the bottom three.

Liverpool also knew that a fifth successive win at the Reebok would lift them into fifth place for a week in which cup games against both Manchester clubs would define their chances of lifting silverware.

Yet Owen Coyle's side were ahead inside four minutes.

Bolton's former Liverpool striker David Ngog drifted deep to collect Chris Eagles' pass and when marker Martin Skrtel followed him, it was fatal.

Ngog's clever flick found Davies rampaging into the space left by Skrtel and as Glen Johnson and Daniel Agger closed in, the Wanderers midfielder placed a perfect low shot past Pepe Reina.

Bolton continued to play on the visitors' nerves. And when Eagles smuggled his way past Jose Enrique, he sent in a ball which flew dangerously across the face of Reina's goal.

Liverpool finally conjured up a response with a shot from Bellamy that was blocked by David Wheeler.

Then Jordan Henderson took aim with a raking drive from 25 yards that packed plenty of power but flew straight at Adam Bogdan in the Bolton goal.

Maxi Rodriguez got a decent sight of Bogdan's goal when Gerrard's free-kick bounced his way, but Sam Ricketts snuffed out the danger with a crucial tackle. Moments later, Bolton went further ahead.

Eagles combined with Ngog in the 29th minute to get clear down the right and his clipped cross found Nigel Reo-Coker bursting into the Liverpool penalty area.

The midfielder controlled the ball with his chest before beating Reina with a side-foot volley that the Liverpoolkeeper could only help into the roof of his net. It all got too much for Dalglish (below), who had to be calmed by fourth official Neil Swarbrick when he took out his growing frustration on referee Kevin Friend.

But his side were back in the contest in the 37th minute when Bellamy burst on to Andy Carroll's header with a devastating turn of pace and beat Bogdan with a toe-poked finish. But it then needed a flying save from Reina to beat away Martin Petrov's free-kick as the home side threatened again just before the break.

Reo-Coker had to be dragged away from a confrontation with Bellamy by teammate Zat Knight as the players walked off at half-time.

Their feud dates back to 2007 when Bellamy joined West Ham a few days after Reo-Coker had departed for Aston Villa. Bellamy was caught on a fan's mobile phone making derogatory remarks about the midfielder. The duo appear to have been at war ever since. Within five minutes of the restart, the home side delivered a devastating blow.

Petrov's corner was met at the far post by Wheeler and his knock down was met with an emphatic volley from Steinsson that bulged the bottom corner of the net. Steven Gerrard did his best to rally Liverpool with a couple of trademark forays. But the Merseysiders were coming off second best in all the individual battles.

Johnson was fortunate when he hooked a hurried clearance just wide of his own goal. Dalglish responded by bringing on Dirk Kuyt and Stewart Downing for Rodriguez and Charlie Adam.

And Agger came within a whisker of grabbing a lifeline for the visitors.

The Danish centre-back strode forward with purpose before unleashing a blast from 25 yards that crashed against the top of Bogdan's crossbar.

Despite Liverpool's growing pressure, it was a rare moment of danger for the Bolton goalkeeper as the home side held out with relative ease.

### MULLOCK'S VERDICT

This was a priceless three points for Bolton as they battle to beat the drop, while Liverpool looked nothing like a top-five side chasing a European spot. Killer stat 11 Liverpool lost to Bolton for the first time in 11 Premier games