

Date: 5 May 2012  
 Opposition: Chelsea  
 Competition: FA Cup

Times	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail	Independent
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5 May 2012

## THE TIMES

History men ready to take a giant step

Chelsea 2 Ramires 11, Drogba 52  
 Liverpool 1 Carroll 64

Referee: P. Dowd. Attendance: 89,102

Even at 9pm on Saturday, as the corporate areas emptied and last stragglers filed down Empire Way to Wembley Park Tube Station, you could hear that Liverpool chant about Chelsea having "no history".

How Chelsea's players must laugh when they hear that. On Saturday evening John Terry became the first captain to lift the FA Cup four times. Ashley Cole got a record seventh winner's medal. Didier Drogba scored in a Final for the fourth time, another record.

There must have been times over the traumatic past couple of years when Chelsea's history boys -- Terry, Cole, Drogba, Petr Cech, Frank Lampard and the rest -- feared that they would never enjoy the success together again. But here they were, cavorting around Wembley with the FA Cup yet again, chucking a jubilant Roberto Di Matteo into the air, Drogba leading them in a euphoric dance to the strains of Madness's One Step Beyond, a track that will remind them of their glory days for as long as they live.

One step beyond. That is the challenge now for Chelsea's players. Winning the FA Cup has become such a familiar feeling, after a fourth triumph in six seasons, but to take their history -- and the club's history -- to the next level, they must beat Bayern Munich in the Champions League final in the Allianz Arena a week on Saturday. True, it would only be a first European Cup to set against Liverpool's five, but it would force the Roman Abramovich era to be appraised in a different context. Whatever happens in Munich, though, the names of this group of players are writ large in Chelsea's history. There will always be profound nostalgia for Ron "Chopper" Harris, for Peter Osgood, for Gianfranco Zola, but the names of Cech, Terry, Cole, Lampard, Drogba et al will join them and perhaps even surpass them when the time comes to look back on their time at Stamford Bridge.

In some cases, that day may come sooner rather than later. Drogba's contract expires next month and he is waiting to see whether, at 34, he will get the kind of offer that would tempt him away from a lucrative swansong in China or elsewhere. Lampard will be 34 next month.

Frequently stories filter out of the club suggesting that Abramovich wishes to get rid of the old guard. Yet the older players have, after the ill-fated Andre Villas-Boas regime, been fundamental to Chelsea's revival under Di Matteo.

Di Matteo was asked afterwards whether English football has a hang-up over players' ages. "Yes," he said. "If you live a professional life and you train well, you can prolong your career. We have many examples in recent years of players who have played up to 38 or 40. Careers are much longer now than 15 years ago." Villas-Boas felt Chelsea's needs were best served by looking forward without the older players, Lampard in particular. Di Matteo, more tuned in to the dynamics of the dressing-room, knew that, for now, he needed to tap into their experience and to try to recreate the spirit that went missing under Villas-Boas. If there are those who would call this papering over the cracks, ignoring long-term issues, well, what other option was there for Di Matteo as he looked to salvage Chelsea's season? Di Matteo said on Saturday that his first game in charge, an FA Cup fifth-round replay away to Birmingham City, had been crucial. "If we didn't win that game, it could have gone completely the other way," he said, another nod to how fragile Chelsea's "unbelievable spirit" (copyright John Terry) can be.

The Chelsea that lined up against Liverpool on Saturday was unrecognisable to the one that looked so fragmented under Villas-Boas. They looked the more assertive, proactive team from the start, with Lampard and John Obi Mikel quickly establishing the upper hand against Jay Spearing, Jordan Henderson and Steven Gerrard in central midfield.

Chelsea did not bring their Champions League "A-game", but they did not have to, such was Liverpool's miserable first-half performance.

Spearing and Jose Enrique were both culpable for Chelsea's opening goal on 11 minutes, but even as Ramires charged through on goal, released by Juan Mata on the counter-attack, the midfielder's shot should still have been stopped by Pepe Reina, who was beaten at his near post.

Di Matteo's team had Liverpool where they wanted, allowing them to soak up what little pressure there was and to counter-attack when the mood took them.

Early in the second half Lampard found space in midfield, stepped away from Spearing and picked out Drogba, who, given too much room by Martin Skrtel, struck a low shot inside Reina's far post to make it 2-0.

Only now did Liverpool rouse themselves, energised at last by the introduction of Andy Carroll, who soon reduced the deficit, profiting from Stewart Downing's persistence then showing deft footwork to beat Terry and strike a shot past Petr Cech. The subsequent Liverpool surge culminated on 82 minutes with the incident that, even more than the goals, will be remembered from this Final. Luis Suarez crossed to the far post, where Carroll's header was deflected upwards by and against the underside of the crossbar by Cech. Carroll and his team-mates insisted that the ball had crossed the line, but the officials were unmoved and television replays,

while not entirely conclusive, seemed to indicate their judgment was spot-on.

And with that, Liverpool's chances disappeared. Kenny Dalglish shrugged afterwards and said that they had not started playing until it was too late. Anfield logic would dictate that the trophy Chelsea had won is not one of the big ones.

But it was the one Liverpool craved this season, a season in which Chelsea, almost in spite of themselves, have continued to rewrite their history.

Their names are on the cup

Chelsea made plenty of history at Wembley on Saturday, as a team and individually. By beating Liverpool they became the first club to win the trophy in four years out of six since the Wanderers in the 1870s.

Didier Drogba, who scored Chelsea's second goal, has been on target in all four of their recent triumphs, and no other player has scored in more than three finals. Ashley Cole now has seven FA Cup winners' medals, two more than any other player. He also won in 2002, 2003 and 2005 with Arsenal and 2007, 2009 and 2010 with Chelsea.

Will Chelsea's cup-winning run continue in Munich?

Blues lose puff

Chelsea faded badly at Wembley, perhaps feeling the effects of a gruelling end to their season. Yet they still have two league games to play before their Champions League final against Bayern Munich on May 19

Tough Terry

John Terry was rarely tested by Liverpool and will be missed when he is suspended for the Champions League final

Ramires on the charge

Chelsea will also regret the absence of Ramires in the Allianz Arena. The Brazilian recorded what is becoming a trademark goal at Wembley, when his pace and strength saw him charge down the inside-right channel to score

Ramires goals

Against Liverpool, FA Cup Final

Away to Barcelona, Champions League

Against Tottenham, FA Cup semi-final

Second goal at home to Swansea, league this season

## the guardian

Cech provides resistance but Champions League will be a tougher test

This FA Cup final was anything but a game apart. Recent results loomed over it, with Chelsea alone heartened by those memories. Roberto Di Matteo's side were galvanised by beating Barcelona to reach the Champions League final and exercised a degree of control at Wembley. Liverpool will realise the current limitations. Kenny Dalglish is the type of manager who does not labour under any delusions even if he is unlikely to bare his soul in public.

The struggle had been intense because each club is at odds with itself as much as with the opposition. Chelsea merited their victory, but there was nothing magisterial about the win. A remarkable piece of resistance was demanded of their goalkeeper Petr Cech in the 82nd minute when, following a Luis Suarez cross, he put a close-range header from the substitute Andy Carroll against the underside of the bar and so preserved a 2-1 lead.

Liverpool were left in anguish after finding the menace they showed was insufficient. Carroll had smartly outmanoeuvred John Terry in the 64th minute as he made space and shot home, but the victors somehow prevented further harm. It would be unjust to ignore the excellence of the attacking midfielder Juan Mata, but there were few team-mates with even a tinge of his style. Frantic defiance was not a method associated with Chelsea during comparatively recent days, yet they now have to scramble to succeed. The side are adept at it. A survivalist streak has deepened.

Such an approach does not tally with the vision of splendour the owner Roman Abramovich must hold after flooding the club with wealth, but the current grittiness of the squad carries its own appeal. The interim head coach Di Matteo does not look a stopgap appointee.

Chelsea generally guarded their lead over Liverpool with confidence. The victors are a side under gradual redevelopment and may return to the Champions League next season only if they beat Bayern.

Even so, age itself does not necessarily define their players. The contest with Liverpool was settled by the goal that put Chelsea 2-0 ahead and it was notched by Didier Drogba. The Ivorian may not be prolific, but he is formidable. His continuing impact at the age of 34 is sometimes ascribed to the fact that he only began his career in earnest 10 years ago, when making his mark with Guingamp in France.

Regardless of the physique, Drogba's style is not attritional and he would have faded by now if he did not have supreme gifts. He may have heft, but it is sheer talent that bruises the minds of opponents. When Frank Lampard picked out the striker in the 52nd minute, his shot allowed Jose Reina no hope as he stretched the lead.

Dismay had particular bite because Liverpool ought to have prevented Chelsea's opener in the 11th minute. There was no resilience after possession was lost by Jay Spearing. With the left-back Jose Enrique failing to intervene, Mata found Ramires and his shot went home at the near post after coming off the leg of Reina. It was an unkempt breakthrough. The larger truth is the victors had the better squad. The outcome may have been no more than a diversion for the owner, taking his mind off the Champions League, however briefly.

Man of the match Didier Drogba (Chelsea)

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## The Mail

### ROBERTO SENDS A MESSAGE

Chelsea 2 Liverpool 1 FOR two managers, the contrast could not have been more brutal. For Roberto Di Matteo these were the sweetest moments. Never mind that Chelsea's 'interim first-team coach' had given Roman Abramovich another reason for handing him the job on a permanent basis. This gave him the opportunity to stroll through the interview area, one hand gripping his seven-year-old son, the other the FA Cup. In the dressing room the same little boy was seen proudly clutching his dad's winners' medal. He might not have been around for that goal inside a minute in 1997. He might not have seen dad win the world's oldest cup competition for a second time three years later. But he was here for this one.

They were moments to savour for Di Matteo and they were his moments, even if Abramovich does take what would look an increasingly ill-judged decision and bring in another new manager for the start of next season.

For Kenny Dalglish there is the same uncertainty, but it was all that much more uncomfortable in defeat. Dalglish would not discuss how it might undermine his chances of remaining in charge; how he might be viewed by Liverpool's owners when it has been such a disappointing season.

OK, so he guided them to two Wembley finals. But they performed as poorly in those as they have in the Barclays Premier League. All he would say on the matter is that they would sit down, as planned, and review the season once it had been completed. But then he was as defensive as he has been since he got it so wrong over Luis Suarez.

Why had he not started with Andy Carroll? Because he could 'only select 11 players'. Well then one of them should have been Carroll rather than Jordan Henderson or Jay Spearing. That way Suarez would not have had to play in a role that left him completely isolated until Carroll was sent on in the 55th minute. By then Didier Drogba had doubled an advantage established in the first half by Ramires; two terrific goals that illustrated Chelsea's dominance. The irony was not lost on seasoned Liverpool followers. Having been heavily criticised for squandering [pounds sterling]35million on Carroll, Dalglish was now going to suffer for leaving his troubled striker on the bench.

But Carroll did change this enthralling contest. He might even have done enough to secure a place in Roy Hodgson's squad this summer having scored one goal within nine minutes of replacing Spearing. He is sure to feel he scored an equaliser, too.

The disallowed goal will give Dalglish something to cling on to even if the officials were as right as referee Martin Atkinson was wrong in the semi-final.

If there is doubt -- and there was plenty on this occasion given how inconclusive the replays proved -- the goal cannot be given.

Phil Dowd took the right option, the only sensible option, essentially crediting Petr Cech with making a save every bit as impressive as his one in the Nou Camp. 'Incredible,' was how Di Matteo described it and he was right.

Carroll will wince when he watches it again and not just because he will doubtless feel the ball did cross the line. Rather than celebrate, he should have finished the job and buried the ball in the back of the net. A harsh lesson but a lesson all the same.

There are lessons for Di Matteo to learn, too, Carroll demonstrating how difficult his defenders could find their encounter with Bayern Munich's Mario Gomez.

In fact, this was a game that highlighted how costly the absence of two players in particular could prove -- Ramires on the right and John Terry at the heart of the defence. Even Terry struggled with Carroll, highlighting the difficulties David Luiz and Gary Cahill could endure should they recover in time for Munich.

It is the challenge facing Di Matteo is how to reproduce the performance of the first hour at Wembley while avoiding a repeat of the final 30 minutes. That will not be easy when Ramires has become such an important player.

His goal owed much to errors from Spearing, Jose Enrique and Pepe Reina -- the Liverpool goalkeeper did say he had been poor of late -- but also to qualities typical of the Brazilian's performances this season; a combination of skill, speed and sheer determination.

Ramires offers so much to Chelsea. A real threat going forward but also the kind of security Chelsea will need with Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben supporting Gomez on the flanks.

Jose Bosingwa, the leading candidate for the role at right back, will certainly miss him.

In the closing stages of this final, the irrepressible Drogba was doing as much as anyone to contain Carroll. The 34-year-old was immense -- not for the first time in this remarkable run Chelsea are enjoying under Di Matteo.

His goal, while in part the product of a super pass from the excellent Frank Lampard, was magnificent, the first touch as brilliant as the finish. It was also his fourth in as many finals; a record for the competition.

Di Matteo clearly wanted to enjoy this victory before focusing on what follows, starting with another meeting with Liverpool tomorrow night. His team in Munich? He said he wasn't sure but he would be drawing on the experience he gained under 'Arrigo Sacchi and Dino Zoff'.

the on defensive The a and Munich.  
 The experience of Drogba, Cech, Lampard, Ashley Cole and Juan Mata should also come in handy.

It did at Wembley.

## The Daily Telegraph

Di Matteo passes first test at Chelsea's second home

Chelsea 2 Ramires 11, Drogba 52

Liverpool 1 Carroll 64 Att: 89,102

Forget Batterssea. Chelsea should just move to Wembley. They love it there. Four FA Cup final triumphs in six years, conceding only twice in six hours and 30 minutes, is a phenomenal return, a sign of their commitment to the competition. Frank Lampard roamed Wembley as if he owned the place. Didier Drogba set a record for scoring in four finals. Roberto Di Matteo danced a jig of glee like a well-dressed David Pleat. If the FA Cup occupies a near-permanent place in the Chelsea trophy cabinet, concerns proliferate over whether it retains a place in the nation's heart. The FA will derive pleasure from viewing figures revealing ITV's audience peaked at 11.1million, with ESPN also pouring huge resources into their coverage, giving it an old-school lengthy build-up, but cherished Cup traditions are being trampled on. Even the sun was missing on Saturday.

However enticing for television, the 5.15pm kick-off rubs away some of the sheen from the Cup. It allows significant Premier League fixtures like Arsenal versus Norwich to cast a long shadow across what should be a special day reserved for the Cup. The timing demonstrates a lack of respect to Northern fans reliant on public transport. Shoehorned into a crammed calendar, the FA Cup risks becoming just another match. The FA, the guardians of the game's heritage, needs a rethink. Other ancient customs were eroded. Wembley was not full, seeing pockets of empty seats, 100 at most, but still strange. The jeering of the National Anthem by many Liverpool fans was another depressing moment. If you don't want to sing, fine, but stay quiet, don't ruin it for others, don't embarrass your great club. Enough carping. Saturday offered much to celebrate. Fabrice Muamba's presence was warmly noted by both sets of supporters, admiring the power of the human spirit and the qualities of the medical profession. The game itself was routine for an hour, the expected Chelsea control unfolding. Lampard ran midfield, eclipsing Steven Gerrard.

Kenny Dalglish's 4-2-3-1 formation was designed to give Liverpool security in the centre against Chelsea's heavyweights like Lampard and John Obi Mikel, whose re-emergence pays eloquent testimony to Di Matteo's man-management skills. "I just tried to give him the confidence to express himself at the highest level," said Chelsea's interim head coach. Di Matteo's midfield dominated Dalglish's.

Unfortunately for Liverpool, Jordan Henderson remains too diffident and Jay Spearing too raw. Among the countless hours of pre-match carousing, many Liverpool fans must have been tempted to raise a glass to an absent friend, to the injured Lucas. The intelligent Brazilian ball-winner was again badly missed. Spearing, a determined young character, will doubtless respond, but this was a chastening experience. When he lost the ball in midfield after 11 minutes, Juan Mata pounced and released Ramires. Exploiting a sluggish response from Jose Enrique, Ramires motored into the box and beat Pepe Reina at the near post. Of the many issues confronting Dalglish, including getting Stewart Downing to deliver and making Henderson believe in himself, restoring Reina to his old imperious form - and fitness - is one of the most pressing.

One of Dalglish's few consistently reliable performers this season, Martin Skrtel, was then made to look leaden-footed by Drogba early in the second half. Lampard, looking every inch a big-game player, was the catalyst, ushering Drogba through to score. Lampard is 33, Drogba a year older and both made a mockery of the Chelsea Pensioners' tag. "We have many examples in the last 10 years of players that have played up to 38, 40," said Di Matteo.

Chelsea were as rampant as the lion on their badge. Liverpool were crestfallen. But then Andy Carroll rose from the bench, unleashed like a flint from a catapult. Carroll was almost unplayable, charging into Chelsea's defenders, lifting Liverpool's tempo and spirits. In creating room for his emphatic goal after 64 minutes, Carroll turned so brilliantly and suddenly that he left John Terry with twisted blood and Petr Cech grasping at thin air. This was what Liverpool supporters craved: Carroll and Luis Suarez in harness, Gerrard scheming behind them, sending red waves rolling towards Chelsea's defence. The final half-hour, as Liverpool fought to save their season, provided gripping entertainment. Operation Carroll so nearly worked. The sight of Liverpool hammering against Chelsea's backdoor inevitably stirred the thought of what would have happened if Dalglish had believed enough in Carroll to start. He thought he had scored a second but Cech's save to claw out his header via the bar ranks alongside the finest Cup-final saves, including Sunderland's Jim Montgomery denying Leeds United in 1973.

Carroll was convinced the ball crossed the line, turning away in celebration rather than ending any doubt by turning the loose ball in as Branislav Ivanovic and Cech regained their bearings. The goal-line technology debate intensified, occupying phoneins slightly pointlessly. It is coming, soon to be tested in the Hampshire Senior Cup final. The assistant referee Andrew Garratt and the referee Phil Dowd made the right call anyway, determining that not all the ball had crossed the line, an instant judgment confirmed by television replays.

Liverpool still raged against the fading of their season's light, Carroll still threatening, their fans still willing them on but Terry embodied Chelsea's defiance with a magnificent late block to frustrate Carroll. Liverpool left empty-handed but with the knowledge that Carroll can be a force. Dalglish still needs to buy, and buy wisely.

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It is hard to see Liverpool's Fenway owners tolerating further squandering of their money, although Carroll begins to pay his way.

As Dalglish departed, as Terry and Lampard climbed up to lift the Cup, Di Matteo beamed that smile of his, part-beatific, part-inscrutable. By reenergising Chelsea, Di Matteo has become the fans' and players' choice to be permanent manager. Roman Abramovich still needs to be convinced. The second part of Di Matteo's audition comes in Munich, in another final.



Di Matteo looks just the man for evolution, not revolution

Asked to namecheck his managerial influences after steering Chelsea to a seventh FA Cup triumph, Roberto Di Matteo reeled off Arrigo Sacchi, Ruud Gullit and Dino Zoff. But it was a coach he did not reference who has been the biggest influence these last two spectacular months.

Any successful manager needs the luck to be in the right place, at the right time, and the ability to learn from mistakes. Di Matteo was the man on hand at Stamford Bridge when Roman Abramovich decided to cut his losses and end the renewal project he had entrusted to Andre Villas-Boas. The Italian then rectified the mistakes his former boss had made.

Di Matteo showed humility, treated players with respect, backed their ability - and reminded them of it. He also made some astute tactical adjustments that showcased his senior players' strengths instead of exposing their weaknesses. It is not rocket science, but football remains, in its core aspects, a simple game while management, in any walk of life, is about dealing with people.

"First of all I started with communicating with the players," said Di Matteo, as he reflected on the turnaround he has overseen. "They are good players, there is no doubt about that, but we are all human and when things don't go your way sometimes you have doubts. The only way for us to be able to win was to get everyone on board and involved, give them confidence and trust them to play. I spoke to every individual player.

"The Birmingham game [the FA Cup fifth-round replay] was crucial because it was my first game and if we didn't win it could have gone completely the other way. Every victory since has just cemented their confidence and we rolled on from one win to the next."

Di Matteo is putting together an impressive CV but, even if Chelsea lift the Champions League, there are no guarantees he will be made manager on a permanent basis. This is because the job at Chelsea is seen as requiring a man who can rebuild from scratch, not just paper over the cracks. But does it require that? Chelsea are regarded as Los Geriatricos but of their leading players only Didier Drogba, 34, and Frank Lampard, 33, are over 31 years old and both look to have plenty of match-winning performances left in them.

"If you live a professional life and you train well, you can prolong your career," said Di Matteo. "We have many examples in the last 10 years of players that have played up to 38, 40. Obviously, physiologically it changes a little bit because your recovery time will be a bit different, but careers are much longer now than 15 years ago."

The evidence is not just at Old Trafford, where Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs have a combined age of 75. Lampard is two years younger than Mark van Bommel and only a year older than Xavi and Andrea Pirlo; John Terry is three years younger than Carles Puyol; Drogba is the same age as Antonio Di Natale, who so troubled Arsenal at the start of this season, and a year older than Miroslav Klose.

It is evolution, not revolution, which is required at Stamford Bridge. Their dressing room has to be worked with, not taken on, but with a cadre of younger players coming through in Ramires, Gary Cahill, Juan Mata, John Obi Mikel and David Luiz there is no need to fight the older ones. They need merely to be assured they have a part to play and for those words to be followed through often enough in team selection.

Kenny Dalglish suggested that Chelsea's greater experience was the difference, but of his starting XI only Jordan Henderson and Jay Spearing were callow. Liverpool's problem was just as much a lack of the belief that Di Matteo has restored to Chelsea. Abysmal league form has so sapped confidence that Dalglish opted to pack midfield for protection, leaving Luis Suarez isolated. It failed: Ramires took advantage of a series of errors, then Drogba scored his customary Wembley goal.

After Andy Carroll was belatedly introduced, and scored, Liverpool were injected with confidence. But for the calm heads and sharp eyes of referee Phil Dowd and his part-time assistant Andrew Garratt (a Walsall bank manager in real life), who rightly decided there was too much doubt to award Carroll a second goal, they would have forced an extra period against tiring opposition.

Carroll's cameo augured well for his personal future after a difficult year but, if he plays, proper wingers are required, capable and prepared to cross the ball. Yet Suarez prefers passes into feet and Bellamy wants the ball in behind. Dalglish, and his employers, have much to ponder. A once-dominant club seems now to have been in transition for two decades with no end in sight.



ALL THAT GLITTERS IS OLD

THEY have been derided as the Old Guard. Criticised and condemned for the power they wield.

Yet the foundation stones of Jose Mourinho's Chelsea remain the essence of Stamford Bridge. Unyielding, impervious and resourceful.

And as Roberto Di Matteo began to dream of the ultimate knockout double, he knew that had it not been for Petr Cech, John Terry, Frank Lampard and Didier Drogba, the FA Cup would probably have been wearing red ribbons not blue ones.

At Wembley, as on so many occasions over the past eight trophy-laden Chelsea seasons, it was Mourinho's core men who did the damage. Over the first hour of his Lampard, bossing the first hour with his passing range and acute tactical intelligence, Drogba with yet another Wembley goal, yet another winner. Behind them, Terry the beacon of resistance, standing tall against the late Andy Carroll-led bombardment.

And, in the crunch moment, Cech with a cup final save to place alongside Jim Montgomery's 1973 effort to deny Leeds, a wonder-stop to win the famous old trophy.

Munich beckons, of course, and in truth Chelsea's campaign will be judged by what happens on May 19.

Yet for now, in the afterglow of a triumph that became far more than it seemed set to be, tribute was due to the cornerstones of a fourth FA Cup victory in the six years since the match returned to Wembley.

"We do get too obsessed by players' ages," suggested Di Matteo. "If you live a professional life and you train well, you can prolong your career.

"Physiologically it changes a little bit because your recovery time will be a bit different, but careers are much longer now than probably 15 years ago.

"We have had a very difficult season. But there is a lot of quality and ambition in this team. In adversity it seems to come out.

"The players dig very deep into their reserves, and we seem to be able to face all the problems and difficulties people throw at us."

And delivered time and again, although quite how Cech managed to claw away Carroll's header eight minutes from time defied belief and geometry. "I was calling him Gordon Banks in the dressing room because from where I was it was a goal, simple as that, once it was set up for Carroll," said Lampard.

"Keepers win games and they don't maybe get the credit that goalscorers do. Petr won that game for us with that save alone."

He did, destroying the belief Liverpool had gained after Carroll twisted Terry to thrash home. In truth, though, Cech's save served to ensure that the justice of the first hour was done.

Pepe Reina's inglorious part in the 11th-minute opener from Ramires (above) was shared by Jose Enrique, as Liverpool froze.

And Chelsea's early superiority was confirmed when Lampard found Drogba, who made Martin Skrtel pay for his reluctance to close down the shot.

It was Drogba's fourth goal in four FA Cup finals, the third winner after the strikes against Manchester United in 2007 and Portsmouth three years later.

Drogba - seemingly China-bound - kissed the pitch at the end, signs of a farewell to the stadium that bears his huge imprint.

Terry said: "The big players step up on the big occasions and Didi and Big Pete did exactly that."

CHELSEA v LIVERPOOL MAN OF THE MATCH PETR CECH  
 Wonder save won game for Blues  
 BALL POSSESSION 62% 38% SHOTS ON TARGET 4 5 SHOTS OFF TARGET 8 7  
 CORNERS 7 1 OFFSIDE 4 3 FOULS 8 7 CARDS 2 1 0 CHELSEA:

Tomorrow: Liverpool (a), Sunday: Blackburn (h) LIVERPOOL: Tomorrow Chelsea (h), Sunday: Swansea (a)

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**FA Cup final woe for LFC**  
 LIVERPOOL FC were made to pay for a desperately first hour at Wembley as Chelsea won the FA Cup final - despite Andy Carroll inspiring them to a courageous second half performance.

Goals from Ramires and then Didier Drogba punished a woeful opening 60 minutes from Kenny Dalglish's men and though substitute Carroll reduced the advantage, the Reds found the gap too much to bridge.

The £35m striker thought he had equalised with nine minutes remaining but goalkeeper Petr Cech produced a magnificent save the push Carroll's header onto the bar.

In winning tonight's game, Chelsea have now drawn level with Liverpool with seven final wins in the competition but Liverpool will be left ruining such the highly disappointing performance which contributed to them conceding two goals. Carroll's stirring display from the bench gave supporters real hope that at Anfield South they were far from down and out in the 131st Cup final but their second half showing was ultimately in vain.

There will be no domestic double this season.

Liverpool FC came into the game having failed to keep a clean sheet in this season's Cup and any hope of bucking that trend was dashed after just 11 minutes.

Juan Mata's weighted through ball caught Jose Enrique flat-footed and Ramires, described as a "road runner" this week, marched towards the Liverpool goal before firing low past Pepe Reina.

The Reds' keeper, the first Spaniard to play in two FA Cup finals, tried to second guess the Brazilian's effort but ended up diving the wrong way.

Chelsea were hardly scintillating but several notches above a highly disappointing Liverpool.

The Stamford Bridge side snuffed out the threat of an isolated Luis Suarez with ease whilst the Reds struggled to put the shackles on Mata who orchestrated much of Chelsea's play.

But with all but two of Liverpool's FA Cup final goals coming in the second half, supporters still went into the break knowing there was no need to panic.

Steven Gerrard's surging run early in the second half, which ultimately resulted in unsuccessful penalty appeals, raised hope of another Wembley fightback was possible but Didier Drogba soon cut through that optimism.

Collecting a pass in the area from Frank Lampard seven minutes after the restart, the Ivorian engineered room away from Martin Skrtel and fired low beyond the reach of Reina.

Excluding the Community Shield, Drogba has now scored in all eight of his Wembley appearances.

The fears that he would produce on the big stage were realised.

For all his detractors, Carroll has increasingly shown himself for the major stage in recent times and 12 minutes after Drogba had doubled Chelsea's lead the Liverpool FC substitute cut the deficit.

Stewart Downing tackled Jose Bosingwa in possession, the ball ricocheted out to Carroll who showed composure and close control before firing high into Petr Cech's net.

Liverpool were now awake and alive in the Cup final.

The Reds upped the ante and looked infinitely more threatening with Carroll partnering Suarez.

Gerrard volleyed over before Cech smartly turned Suarez's effort round the post.

With nine minutes left Liverpool thought they had clawed the game back.

Suarez chipped to the back post, Carroll headed on goal but Cech produced an outstanding save to palm the ball onto the underside of the bar before the danger was cleared.

Liverpool FC's players protested heavily but replays strongly suggested the ball had not crossed the line.

Skrtel had a glorious sight of Cech's goal soon after but took too long and allowed Chelsea to put a tackle in.

It would be Liverpool's final chance in a game they frustratingly left themselves with too much to do.

**LIVERPOOL (4-5-1)** Reina, Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Enrique, Bellamy (Kuyt 78), Henderson, Spearing (Carroll 55), Gerrard ©, Downing, Suarez. Not used: Rodriguez, Carragher, Doni, Shelvey, Kelly  
 Goals: Carroll (64)  
 Cautions: Agger  
 Red Cards: None

**CHELSEA (4-5-1)** Cech, Bosingwa, Ivanovic, Terry ©, Cole, Kalou, Mikel, Lampard, Mata (Malouda 90), Ramires (Meireles 76), Drogba. Not used: Turnbull, Essien, Torres, Ferreira, Sturridge.  
 Goals: Ramires (11), Drogba (52)  
 Cautions: Mikel  
 Red Cards:  
 Referee: Phil Dowd (Staffordshire)  
 Attendance: 89, 102



**FA Cup glory for Chelsea**  
 Didier Drogba became the first man to score in four FA Cup finals as Chelsea overcame Liverpool 2-1 at Wembley thanks to another massive goal-line controversy.

The Blues appeared to be cruising when Drogba scored at the start of the second half following Ramires's early opener, but the arrival of Andy Carroll turned the game on its head.

He smashed home a superb goal not long after his arrival, then, with nine minutes left, rose to meet Luis Suarez's cross at the far post. Carroll was convinced he had scored before Petr Cech clawed it on to the crossbar, but linesman Andrew Garratt was not so sure - and those with the advantage of TV replays were mostly of the same opinion.

Once another goal-bound Carroll effort had been blocked in stoppage time, the Blues were able to complete their fourth FA Cup triumph in six seasons, and give Roberto Di Matteo his first piece of silverware as a manager in what could turn out to be a glorious double against Bayern Munich later this month.

There was no hint of the drama to follow when Juan Mata slipped a pass beyond Jose Enrique and the Liverpool full-back failed to recover his ground, allowing Ramires to bear down on the Reds' goal and then leave Jose Reina stranded as the ball was slotted past him and into the net at the near post.

It was not until the half-hour, when Steven Gerrard started to get in advanced areas, that the Merseyside outfit began to exert any influence on the game, but by that time Drogba, Frank Lampard and Salomon Kalou had all wasted half-chances.

Branislav Ivanovic, like Ramires banned from the Champions League final in Munich on May 19, had done well to block a snap-shot from Craig Bellamy early on. That was Liverpool's only opportunity though, until Suarez rose on the edge of the six-yard box only to nod Jordan Henderson's knock-back wide.

Unfortunately for Kenny Dalglish's team, their momentum was halted by the half-time break and before they could get into their stride again for the second 45, Chelsea had doubled their advantage. Drogba found space on the left side of Liverpool's area and rattled a shot through Martin Skrtel's legs and into the far corner.

It prompted Dalglish into making his move, introducing Carroll - and the £35million striker responded immediately, twisting John Terry around superbly inside the area before lashing his shot into the roof of Cech's goal.

And Liverpool were convinced Carroll had levelled nine minutes from time when he rose at the far post to power Suarez's cross goalwards. But the celebrations were cut short as the officials ruled Cech had clawed the ball out before it had crossed the line, leaving Dalglish to reflect on the moment of controversy that denied him.

Date: 5 May 2012  
 Opposition: Chelsea  
 Competition: FA Cup

Times	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail	Independent
Mail	Sun Telegraph	Sunday Mirror	Guardian
Mirror	Sun Independent	Observer	Telegraph



5 May 2012

# THE INDEPENDENT

ON SUNDAY

## Drogba reprises his role of Wembley warrior

Liverpool, officially the away team here yesterday, produced their wretched Anfield home form for too long before rallying to make a real contest of the FA Cup final. Chelsea, looking worthy winners for an hour or so, ended up hanging on and hugely relieved that Andy Carroll's late header was ruled not to have crossed the line. Two teams who had scored 35 goals between them in reaching Wembley managed only one in a dull first half, from Ramires, before the encounter came to life. Didier Drogba became the first player to score in four finals but Carroll, sent on as a substitute, brought Liverpool into contention by halving the lead and almost equalising.

Midfielders Jay Spearing and Jordan Henderson did not produce enough on the day and Steven Gerrard was strangely deep when his role required him to support Luis Suarez, the lone forward until Carroll appeared just after the hour. Chelsea were comfortable in defence until the later stages and had a warrior's performance from Drogba as usual at Wembley, well supported by the elegant Juan Mata and a hard-working Frank Lampard.

Having denied Liverpool a domestic cup double, they now face the Champions' League final in Munich where they must secure an "away" victory to prevent joining yesterday's opponents in the Europa League next season. Kenny Dalglish's take on yesterday was: "We were excellent for the last half hour but the game lasts 90 minutes. You can't give a two-goal start a team of Chelsea's quality. They're in the Champions' League final and they know how to win games." His opposite number, Roberto Di Matteo, said: "I'm really happy for the players because we've been heavily criticised this season. They pressed hard in the second half but we defended well after scoring two good goals."

Chelsea started more brightly and as Dalglish (pictured) admitted were the better team for just over an hour, during which they scored twice. Liverpool did not feature as an attacking force before falling behind in the 11th minute, when three of their players were culpable, starting with the local boy Spearing, who lost possession to prompt a swift counter. Mata sent Ramires down the right to outpace Jose Enrique and instead of a chip like the one that stunned Barcelona, the Brazilian went for power at the near post, where Jose Reina was beaten as no experienced goalkeeper should be. Reina has admitted to a poor season and that was one of its least distinguished moments.

There was one threat of reprisals, quickly enough to encourage Liverpool but not built on. Glen Johnson, once of Chelsea, broke down the right and crossed superbly, Branislav Ivanovic headed away only as far as Craig Bellamy, and had to block the fierce shot as the red hordes appealed for handball. Chelsea played the ball around more comfortably, their confidence reflected by both Drogba and Lampard taking on shots from 35 yards. To Reina's relief, each drifted wide. He was grateful too to Martin Skrtel for preventing Salomon Kalou wriggling through to shoot and to Lampard for failing to control Kalou's pass with an errant first touch when he would have been clear.

Liverpool players bringing the ball out of defence tended to look up and see nothing but Suarez and a crop of blue shirts, and the Uruguayan's body language suggested he did not think much of it. Carroll must have been itching to get on from an early stage and there would have been strong temptation for Dalglish to introduce him from the start of the second half, which he resisted until the second goal went in seven minutes after the restart. John Obi Mikel began the move by finding Lampard, who turned away from his marker Spearing and played the ball down the inside left channel for Drogba. Neither Johnson nor Skrtel were close enough to him and the shot with his left foot went through the latter's legs and across Reina low into the far corner.

A much more open game had suddenly broken out and Carroll offered new hope to his side's supporters with a goal. When he received the ball at his feet from Downing as Jose Bosingwa was caught in possession, the big striker fooled Terry and shot high into the net. Cech had to save twice from Suarez and Carroll headed over the bar before meeting a chip from Suarez with another header. As Cech pushed it on to the bar he wheeled away in celebration but television replays suggested the officials had made a correct decision; or at very least the only decision they could on the available evidence. By the time of future Cup finals they may have some technological support at last.

There was still time for the lively Carroll to force one more chance, Terry doing better this time with a characteristic block to ensure he made history by lifting the Cup as captain for the fourth time.

Chelsea (4-2-3-1): Cech; Bosingwa, Ivanovic, Terry, Cole; Mikel, Lampard; Ramires (Meireles, 76), Mata (Malouda, 90), Kalou; Drogba.

Liverpool (4-1-4-1): Reina; Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Jose Enrique; Spearing (Carroll, 55); Bellamy (Kuyt, 78), Henderson, Gerrard, Downing; Suarez.

Referee: Phil Dowd

Man of the match: Mata

Match rating: 7/10

AMAZING EIGHT OUT OF 10

The Wembley way: How one man hogs limelight

Yesterday's goal took Didier Drogba's (below) remarkable Wembley tally to 8 in 10

games at the national stadium. It was a record fourth goal in as many FA Cup finals, following his winners against Manchester United (2007) and Portsmouth (2010) and the equaliser in Chelsea's 2009 win against Everton.

Incredibly, seven of his Wembley goals have helped secure victories. His strike against Spurs in the 2008 Carling Cup final came in a 2-1 defeat.

2007, May 19: Drogba nets in extra-time to condemn Man United to a 1-0 defeat, lifting the ball over a flailing Edwin van der Sar from close range.

2009, May 30: Heads powerfully past Everton's Tim Howard from six yards to equalise Louis Saha's early goal.

2010, May 15: Scores a free-kick in off the post to beat David James and break Portsmouth's resistance.

2012, May 5: Hits Chelsea's second, match-winning goal with a strong low, left-foot finish into the corner.

FA Cup semi-final goals: Against Arsenal (2009), Aston Villa (2010), Spurs (2012).

### MAN MARKING

#### CHELSEA

##### PETR CECH 9/10

Almost nothing to do until beaten by Carroll(tm)s rising drive. But then produced a Cup-winning save from the striker(tm)s header.

##### BRANISLAV IVANOVIC 6/10

Valuable block from Bellamy(tm)s volley in what looked likely to be uneventful day until Carroll arrived.

##### ASHLEY COLE 6/10

Tied down by Bellamy early on, then found himself needing to defend as Liverpool upped their game after the interval.

##### JOSE BOSINGWA 5/10

Seen as the weak link in back four, but had few problems until he was finally caught in possession for Carroll(tm)s goal.

##### JOHN TERRY 6/10

Seldom under any pressure until the arrival of Carroll, who made him look leaden-footed with his turn and scoring shot.

##### RAMIRES (right) 7/10

His run for the first goal recalled his sprint in Barcelona but this time the finish was all about power.

##### FRANK LAMPARD 7/10

Kept the ball moving in midfield and provided the pass for Drogba(tm)s goal " and how many times has that been written over the years?

##### JOHN OBI MIKEL 6/10

Booked for a late challenge on Gerrard but, like most Chelsea players, had an easy first 60 minutes.

##### JUAN MATA 8/10

Was able to find space at will and his pass provided the assist for Chelsea(tm)s opener. Made the game look easy.

##### DIDIER DROGBA 8/10

Scored his customary FA Cup Final goal and made every forward pass look good with his determination to impose himself on Liverpool(tm)s central defenders.

##### SALOMON KALOU 6/10

His pace and trickery kept Glen Johnson at full stretch and he almost broke through more than once.

#### Substitutes

Raul Meireles for Kalou, 77; Florent Malouda for Mata, 90.

#### LIVERPOOL

##### PEPE REINA 5/10

Gambled on a shot across him but was beaten at his near post by Ramires(tm) opener, then nearly made a hash of straightforward cross.

##### GLEN JOHNSON 5/10

Found Kalou a handful, but offered a brief flash of his attacking potential when his cross provided Liverpool(tm)s sole first-half chance.

##### JOSE ENRIQUE 5/10

Got it all wrong after 11 minutes, badly positioned and then outpaced by Ramires for Chelsea(tm)s goal. Improved after that

##### DANIEL AGGER 6/10

One front-to-back run almost brought much-needed spark but had his hands full with Drogba. Booked for needless foul.

##### MARTIN SKRTEL 5/10

Will see Drogba in his nightmares after an uncomfortable day. Nowhere near tight enough for Ivorian(tm)s goal.

##### STEVEN GERRARD 6/10

Played too deep early on and struggled to make an impact. His first forward surge did not come until the 50th minute.

##### JORDAN HENDERSON 4/10

Disappointing again. Anonymous first-half display apart from one header that almost created a chance for Suarez.

##### STEWART DOWNING 6/10

Chances to run at defence but failed to deliver until catching Bosingwa in possession for Carroll goal.

##### JAY SPEARING 4/10

Holding midfield role but gave the ball away for the first goal and Chelsea had few problems passing the ball round him.

##### LUIS SUAREZ (right) 6/10

Wasted in an isolated role for the first 55 minutes until Carroll joined him and

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unable to turn and get at the defenders.  
 CRAIG BELLAMY 6/10  
 Began on right, covering Cole(tm)s runs instead of causing mischief. Much more of a threat when given licence to roam.  
 Substitutes  
 Andy Carroll 7 for Spearing, 54 " made immediate impact, turning Terry inside out and powering an angled shot past Cech into the roof of the net. Late header deserved a goal; Dirk Kuyt for Bellamy, 78.

## The Sunday Telegraph

Agony for Liverpool as Chelsea inch over line  
 CHELSEA 2 RAMIRES 11 DROGBA 52  
 LIVERPOOL 1 CARROLL 64

It was the moment Liverpool had dragged themselves back into a game that they had all but lost. Luis Suarez crossed from the right and Andy Carroll met it with a firm header. Carroll ran off in celebration, Kenny Dalglish leapt up and punched the air. Liverpool were level. Only they weren't.

The cheers from the red end suddenly went stereo as the blue half realised what was happening; referee Phil Dowd had not given the goal. The ball had not crossed the line. Liverpool's players were in disbelief and Dalglish seemed to indicate it had gone about three feet over. It was much closer than that.

Replays could not clarify if the whole ball had crossed the line. One thing was sure: Petr Cech had done superbly to push the ball up on to the bar and create the doubt in Dowd's mind. It was only from the overhead camera that it looked like the ball might have gone far enough but even after multiple replays it was impossible to tell for sure. In the semi-finals Chelsea had been credited with a goal that did not cross the line, in the final it looked like they had been spared one that had. Chelsea were relieved. They had dominated this game for over an hour and then nearly thrown it away as Liverpool belatedly awakened.

Ramires had punished Liverpool's early mistakes and then Didier Drogba had scored his eighth Wembley goal, becoming the first player to score in four different FA Cup finals. Roberto Di Matteo made history in becoming the last player to score at the old Wembley; Drogba tightened his grip on the new. The game ended frantically but it had begun almost sedately.

Then, with 11 minutes played, Chelsea pounced. Jay Spearing gave away the ball in midfield and Juan Mata was on to it. The Spain midfielder rolled the ball to Ramires on the right and Enrique was caught between going in for the challenge and holding off. Ramires slipped past him and his acceleration left the Liverpool leftback in his wake. Pepe Reina should not have been left so easily exposed but the Liverpool goalkeeper should have offered greater resistance. He seemed to anticipate Ramires shooting across him towards the far corner and, off balance, could only deflect the Brazilian's shot in at the near post.

Liverpool sought a response. Glen Johnson twisted and turned on the right before putting in an excellent low cross which Branislav Ivanovic had to dive low to head clear. The Serb sprang back to his feet and blocked Craig Bellamy's volleyed follow up. That attack aside, the Chelsea defence were barely troubled for much of the first half. Liverpool were being suffocated by Di Matteo's team in midfield and, under that pressure, started misplacing passes and falling out of sync, with huge gaps opening between the lines and Suarez isolated up front.

Chelsea began to dominate. Ramires and Salomon Kalou were full of confidence, running with the ball at their feet while Liverpool's midfielders were struggling to track the movement of Mata. Confident Drogba was shooting on sight.

The urgency to close down Gerrard went too far as half-time approached, when John-Obi Mikel went in late on the Liverpool captain, his studs catching Gerrard's boot after he had struck the ball. Chelsea's holding midfielder was shown the yellow card. Dan Agger followed Mikel into the book shortly after, clumsily sliding into the Chelsea player after the ball had gone.

There were some flickers of improvement from Dalglish's side as half-time approached -- Stewart Downing and Craig Bellamy put in crosses that required astute defending -- but Liverpool needed to find substantial improvement in the second half. It came in the game's final third but by then it was too late.

There was momentary optimism they could get back into it quickly -- Gerrard went surging forward, past two men and into the Chelsea box, where he crashed into Ivanovic. Moments later, the game looked out of Liverpool's reach.

Lampard span away from Spearing and fired the ball into Drogba's feet. The Chelsea striker controlled with his right, let the ball run out of his feet and then shot low with his left foot through Martin Skrtel's legs and into the far corner - a superb clinical finish. Chelsea were full of confidence now. Kalou curled one shot over, then Lampard hit a cross-field pass, Mata juggled and passed to Drogba, whose volleyed smashed into the side-netting. Liverpool were floundering and needed a change -- Dalglish sent on Andy Carroll for Spearing and switched to a more aggressive 4-4-2 and then with one moment, the whole complexion of the game changed. Liverpool were making progress down the left but it looked like Jose Bosingwa would clear. Downing got his boot in, though, and the ball flew straight to Carroll.

The big Liverpool No9 wrongfooted Terry with a sort-of stepover, bringing the ball back on to his left foot and thumping it high into the net.

Liverpool were enlivened. Carroll had two chances to head an equaliser; Suarez cut inside from the left along the edge of the box and forced Cech to push his low shot behind.

Then came the controversial moment. Liverpool fuelled by their sense of injustice, piled the pressure on. Only a brilliant lastditch tackle from Terry stopped Carroll scoring from close range. Chelsea were clinging on but they have become rather expert in rearguard actions and they made it to the final whistle.

MAN MARKING  
 JEREMY WILSON

Petr Cech 8 Initially a spectator but was alert when needed to make two low saves from Suarez and to claw Carroll's header on to the bar.

Jose Bosingwa 5 Chelsea were most vulnerable down his right flank and he was dispossessed by Downing in the build-up to Liverpool's goal.

Branislav Ivanovic 7 Made crucial blocks to deny Bellamy and then Kuyt to underline just why he will be so missed against Bayern Munich.

John Terry 7 Marshalled Chelsea's defence with usual authority. Made vital challenges on Suarez and Carroll but was slow to react for Liverpool's goal.

Ashley Cole 8 Delivered his usual all-round quality to write his name even further into the history books with a seventh career FA Cup win.

Jon Obi Mikel 7 Booked for late firsthalf challenge on Gerrard but his presence provided the basis on which Chelsea established initial dominance.

Frank Lampard 8 Excelled again in a disciplined holding midfield position and also produced a wonderful pass to provide the assist for Chelsea's second.

Ramires 8 Has been a model of consistency this season in a variety of midfield positions. Always brings great energy and calmly converted his chance.

Juan Mata 7 His awareness and ability to drift into space caused Henderson and Spearing difficulty. Sliced Liverpool open for Chelsea's first.

Salomon Kalou 7 Has been a revelation since the sacking of Andre Villas-Boas and produced another performance of energy and incision down the left.

Didier Drogba 8 Chelsea's big-game specialist delivered again, becoming the first player to score in four different FA Cup finals. Important defensively.

Substitutes

Raul Meireles replaced Ramires after 76 minutes as Roberto Di Matteo tried to stem the late flow of Liverpoolpressure. Florent Malouda came on in the 90th minute as Chelsea just held on.

MAN MARKING

Pepe Reina 4 Admitted before the game that he has had a poor season and really should not have been beaten at his near-post by Ramires.

Glen Johnson 7 More impressive going forward than defensively, notably in turning Drogba to create an excellent first-half chance for Bellamy.

Daniel Agger 7 The pick of Liverpool's defenders. Made an important first-half challenge on Kalou and also impressed with his distribution.

Martin Skrtel 5 Could easily have conceded a secondhalf penalty while jostling with Terry and was well beaten by Drogba for Chelsea's second.

Jose Enrique 6 Caused problems going forward but was caught for Chelsea's first when he could make only a feeble challenge on Ramires.

Jordan Henderson 6 Looked overawed in the first-half but got better as the match unfolded, especially when Gerrard dropped alongside him centrally.

Steven Gerrard 6 Anonymous when he was given the freedom to roam in behind Suarez but grew in influence when Liverpoolswitched to 4-4-2.

Jay Spearing 4 Started with Henderson in front of Liverpool's defence but lost the ball before Ramires' goal and totally failed to impose himself.

Stewart Downing 7 Delivery was erratic but he was still a threat and his persistence forced the mistake from Bosingwa in the buildup to Liverpool's goal.

Craig Bellamy 6 Was initially sloppy in possession but did drift in from the right to have a powerful goal-bound volley well blocked by Ramires.

Luis Suarez 7 Isolated until the 55th-minute arrival of Carroll but twice forced good low saves and also provided cross for Carroll's late header.

Substitutes

Carroll (for Spearing, 55) changed the game, scoring once and forcing a superb save from Cech. Dirk Kuyt (for Bellamy, 78) also came on but just hesitated when presented with a decent late chance.



Di Matteo powers up his CV

CHELSEA 2  
 Ramires 11 Drogba 52  
 LIVERPOOL 1  
 Carroll 64

Yellow cards: Chelsea: Mikel

Liverpool: Agger, Suarez

Referee: P Dowd

Attendance: 89,102

"WHY always me?" is Mario Balotelli's line but it should be engraved on the crammed cabinet that houses Didier Drogba's winner's medals. With yet another decisive goal in a cup final, and yet further scoring exploits at Wembley, Drogba gave the honours to Chelsea.

But there was another familiar story and one that threatened to overshadow a match with turgid beginnings that grew into a drama befitting its stage. Goal-line technology: like a world champion gurner, it just keeps rearing its ugly head. Fifa are likely to introduce it in July and are choosing between one system that

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uses a magnetic field and another deploying computer analysis to triangulate images from highspeed cameras. If that all sounds complicated, here was why: the officials were left unsure and television replays could not prove whether or not Andy Carroll's header, late in the game with Chelsea leading 2-1, crossed the line before Petr Cech pushed it against the bar.

Most replays suggested it probably hadn't, a couple of angles showed perhaps it might have. Phil Dowd and his assistant Andrew Garratt had to go with the naked eye and made the only decision possible -- to give Chelsea the benefit of the doubt. But who will ever know if they were right? One thing is certain. Carroll should have buried the simple chance.

In the end, it was either a famous equaliser or a historic save; whether the ball was over the line or not, Cech's feat in reaching Carroll's header and keeping his wrist strong enough to deflect it onto the woodwork seemed superhuman. Had Carroll or Dirk Kuyt followed up instead of celebrating prematurely, one might have been able to knock home the rebound before Branislav Ivanovic could clear and avert heartbreak. Having claimed Liverpool denied them a Champions League final place in 2005 with a "ghost goal", Chelsea were losing no sleep. After the controversy, they clung on. It became another enervating and heroic defensive effort from Chelsea.

Drogba, adding to Ramires' early goal, had just made it 2-0 to Chelsea when Carroll replaced Jay Spearing with 54 minutes played. It was like watching a besieging army go from using a toothpick to a battering ram against the enemy's doors. Carroll juddered Chelsea and scored a tremendous goal but Terry and Co held out to give Roberto Di Matteo a trophy just nine weeks into a remarkable stint as interim manager and allow him to join Kenny Dalglish in the elite company of those who have won the FA Cup as both player and coach.

The second goal was one of Drogba's best moments. Collecting an outstanding pass from Frank Lampard, he outpaced Martin Skrtel and angled a shot through the centreback's legs and beyond Pepe Reina. Drogba continually outmuscled Skrtel.

Reina -- desperate to atone for errors in the 2006 final -- made another mistake when Ramires put Chelsea ahead. Others were also culpable for the goal. In the centre circle, Jay Spearing ambitiously tried to sweep a dropping ball, onetouch, to a teammate. He miscued, allowing Juan Mata to collect. Reading the situation instantly, Mata delivered the exact pass required to release the breaking Ramires. Jose Enrique misjudged an attempt to tackle and Ramires sped into the box, found Reina poorly positioned and beat him at the near post with a firm, low shot. This was one of the few flurries of vivid action in an attritional first half. The teams knew one another too well for risk-taking; no full-backs overlapped and both frontlines had to defend as much as attack.

Chelsea, classier in possession, especially when Mata or Lampard was on the ball, were superior and Liverpool got so little out of Jordan Henderson and Stewart Downing until Carroll came on that their only way of supporting Luis Suarez was throwing bodies forward, but this left them vulnerable to Chelsea breaks. Lampard burst on to a Salomon Kalou pass inside the box but Skrtel made a good interception and Daniel Agger did equally well to tackle Kalou as he threatened to dribble clean through. Henderson had to move smartly to get in the way of Ashley Cole's shot.

Until Carroll replaced a distraught Spearing, Liverpool threatened only once, when Ivanovic repelled Craig Bellamy's volley. In hindsight Carroll should have started but before kick-off Dalglish's choice of Bellamy -- in an attempt to repress Cole -- seemed sound.

Carroll obviously likes Wembley, having been decisive in the semi-final versus Everton and having excelled there on his England debut. His introduction rocked Ivanovic and Terry and gave Downing a target for his crosses.

A mistake changed the game once more. Jose Bosingwa was casual and Downing charged down his attempt to clear to touch, the ball ricocheting to Carroll's feet. These have always been better than imagined (Carroll's movement is more what's been hampering his development) and with fine control he turned Terry one way then another before smashing a finish past Cech. Suddenly Chelsea, playing their 18th game in 60 days, looked shattered. Carroll was rampant, chesting down for Downing to shoot just over and heading a Glen Johnson cross close.

He teed up Steven Gerrard but for once the skipper was out of Cup final magic. Suarez stretched Cech with a clever shot. The possession count during one-five minute period was 85% Liverpool, 15% Chelsea but -- despite Liverpool's disbelief over Carroll's header, which came after lovely work from Suarez, Gerrard and Johnson -- the score remained 2-1. And John Terry became the first man to captain one side to four FA Cup victories.

Chelsea: Cech, Bosingwa, Ivanovic, Terry, Cole, Ramires (Meireles 76min), Mikel, Lampard, Kalou, Drogba, Mata (Malouda 90min)

Liverpool: Reina, Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Enrique, Spearing (Carroll 55min), Henderson, Downing, Gerrard, Bellamy (Kuyt 78min), Suarez

## The Observer

Drogba extends record before Cech delivers for mates  
 CHELSEA 2 Ramires 11 Drogba 52  
 LIVERPOOL 1 Carroll 64

Chelsea survived a Liverpool fightback to lift the FA Cup for the third time in four years, Andy Carroll's excellent second-half goal setting up a close finish but not quite saving the game. The Liverpool centre-forward thought he had done exactly that with a powerful header from Luis Suarez's cross eight minutes from time that Petr Cech appeared to claw back from across the line, but though the Liverpool bench celebrated prematurely in the manner of Fabio Capello in Bloemfontein, referee Phil Dowd let play continue, correctly as it turned out, since the immediately available replays did not establish that the ball had gone in. While from Cech's positioning it was possible to suspect it might have, there was no incontrovertible evidence, as was the case with Frank Lampard's disallowed equaliser against Germany. It was more of a goal than the Juan Mata effort that helped Chelsea past Spurs in the semi-final, though not enough of one to be awarded on the desperate pleading of Suarez and Carroll. Kenny Dalglish, to his credit, did not harp on about the incident afterwards. "If the officials got it right they deserve credit," the Liverpool manager said. "We were excellent in the last half hour but the game lasts for 90 minutes. You can't give a team as good as Chelsea a two-goal start." Roberto Di Matteo, becoming the fourth Chelsea manager to win this trophy in six years, accepted it had been a tense finish. "We played well for the majority of the game and scored two very nice goals, but it got a bit nervy towards the end," he said. "When Carroll came on he caused us some problems." Carroll was of two sub-plots who did not start. His goal against Everton in the semi-final only earned him a place on the bench, where he was in close proximity to Fernando Torres, who probably expected to be left out against his former club in favour of Didier Drogba and his enviable Wembley scoring record, which, in fairness, the Chelsea striker was able to extend with what turned out to be the winning goal. After an opening 10 minutes that were cagey even by cup-final standards, the game came to life with a goal before either side had properly constructed a move. Jay Spearing gave the ball away to Mata on halfway and paid a heavy price for his carelessness when the Chelsea forward raced away to supply Ramires, who held off Jose Enrique with surprising ease to beat Pepe Reina at his near post with a confident early shot. The goalkeeper could perhaps have done better but appeared wrong footed and could not get his hands to the ball, ending up deflecting it into the net off his leg.

Liverpool appeared stunned, and Steven Gerrard was lucky to get away with a scything tackle on Mata before Suarez attempted a shot from the halfway line and missed the target so badly the ball went out for a throw. Liverpool still played quite cautiously after going behind, with Suarez an isolated figure up front and Craig Bellamy not quite functioning as a link between midfield and attack. On the rare occasions they did threaten the Chelsea penalty area, Suarez and Stewart Downing were both guilty of giving the ball away again, and though Gerrard made a couple of typically determined runs he was not in the game enough to exert any sort of control. A hopeful long shot from Drogba was about the sum of Chelsea's attempts to increase their lead in the first half, which could have ended all square had Suarez been able to take advantage of a sharp chance that came his way. Gerrard began the second half with a surging run into the Chelsea area, only to end up on the floor in a vain attempt to win a penalty. Chelsea responded by going straight down the field and snatching another goal with another lightning strike, Drogba scoring his eighth goal at Wembley to keep up his record of scoring on major occasions. The move was a familiar one, though it still seemed to take Liverpool by surprise. Frank Lampard threaded a carefully weighted diagonal pass forward for Drogba to take, turn, and find Reina's bottom-left corner with a low shot before Martin Skrtel could close him down, not that the defender, with his back to the Chelsea player, managed a particularly good job of attempting to close Drogba down. Suarez brought a save from Petr Cech as Liverpool tried to hit back, and Dalglish sent on Carroll for Spearing after 55 minutes to beef up their attacking presence. Drogba was in the process of launching an extravagant strike from 30 yards out when Suarez put his foot in the way and brought him down. From the free-kick, Lampard tried his luck from the same distance but shot wide, as did Drogba from closer range on the next Chelsea attack.

Just as it began to look as if Chelsea would be able to increase their lead at will, Liverpool made a game of it with a fine goal from their much-maligned substitute. Carroll's goal was finished with such conviction he almost made his pounds 35m fee look reasonable. Controlling the ball in the area then sending John Terry first one way then the other, the centre-forward made space for a shot with his left foot and crashed the ball past Cech with a narrow angle. Dalglish's side enjoyed their best spell after that, playing with real self-belief and managing to bring Bellamy more into the game, though when Gerrard galloped onto a Carroll knockdown and attempted what would have been the most spectacular of equalisers, he could not keep his shot down and the ball nearly ended up in Wembley's second tier. Chelsea were suddenly having to do all the defending, as Suarez saw a shot tipped round a post and Carroll headed over, and at least a game that had failed to produce any excitement in the first half had turned into an absorbing contest. Carroll's goal-line controversy added further spice, and he came closer than anyone to taking the game into extra-time in the closing seconds, when it took a terrific block from Terry to stop his goal-bound shot. On

Date: 5 May 2012  
 Opposition: Chelsea  
 Competition: FA Cup

Times	Sunday Times	Sunday Mail	Independent
Mail	Sun Telegraph	Sunday Mirror	Guardian
Mirror	Sun Independent	Observer	Telegraph



5 May 2012

this evidence, Carroll might not just be worth pounds 35m, he might be worth a whole game.  
 Wembley 89,102 Game rating 7/10 Referee Phil Dowd



Cup warrior Drogba is king again; Chelsea's luck holds as Carroll denied in late drama

2 CHELSEA Ramires (11), Drogba (52)  
 1 LIVERPOOL Carroll (64)

AT the end they embraced like champions, those old warriors of Chelsea, and bounced up and down in a circle like excited children in familiar fashion. Chelsea, yet again, are the FA Cup winners. A season that seemed to be disappearing into the abyss, ends in silverware again. The ultimate dream of Roman Abramovich may yet follow, of course, but for now they - and Roberto Di Matteo in particular - should glory in the remarkable turnaround of a season.

It is, of course, familiar territory for the west London club, who have dominated possession of this famous old trophy in recent years with four victories since 2007. Ashley Cole has now won it seven times, Didier Drogba was once more at centre stage scoring his fourth goal in four FA Cup finals. And yet, Chelsea's Wembley celebrations were infused with a considerable degree of relief. For more than an hour they had dominated this final, utterly superior in every respect. Yet, a 64th-minute goal from substitute Andy Carroll changed everything. Liverpool, who had been sleepwalking to defeat, were suddenly galvanised. Chelsea, previously untroubled, spent the rest of the game on the back foot, scrambling shots away. And when Carroll headed goalwards on 82 minutes and seemingly over the line, it seemed extra-time beckoned. Mercifully, a goalline controversy was for once settled correctly with the goal not given after Petr Cech clawed the ball against the underneath of his bar.

For Liverpool there can be only regrets. What if they had competed from the off? What if they had shown that the same spirit for the opening hour of the game? Questions, no doubt, their manager Kenny Dalglish will now have to answer for his American bosses. An early goal defined the opening exchanges, laying the foundation for Chelsea's dominance. Juan Mata, a player whose slightest movement can quicken the heartbeat, was given far too much space in midfield on 11 minutes as Jay Spearing failed to control a clearance. Inevitably, the delivery for Ramires was immaculate but the manner in which he simply shrugged off the challenge of Jose Enrique will not make for happy viewing by the Spaniard. Ramires skipped away, with Daniel Agger closing in desperation, but the Brazilian shot sweetly and beat Pepe Reina at his near post.

It was a soft goal on so many scores and Liverpool could ill-afford to concede it so early. Going into this match you wondered how they would cope with Chelsea's sheer power and defensive resolution.

Now, 1-0 down, their task was considerably greater. They responded on 14 minutes when Glen Johnson fooled Drogba on the right and delivered an excellent cross, which Branislav Ivanovic stooped to head away. Craig Bellamy snapped at the loose ball, which was blocked in the six-yard area by Ivanovic.

Thereafter, little transpired before half-time as Chelsea, with Frank Lampard and John Mikel Obi the midfield alpha males, untroubled.

Briefly, after the interval, there was a show of spirit from Liverpool. Stewart Downing emerged from his shell to trouble Jose Bosingwa; Steven Gerrard tumbled in the penalty area but there were neither appeals nor protests.

Seven minutes into the second half, Lampard received a ball from Mikel and skipped past Spearing, who was enduring what might be called an educational afternoon. The England midfielder thrust the ball to Drogba, who is always a danger turning into the box with his sights on goal. This time the Ivorian was afforded space by Martin Skrtel, sized up the target and swept the ball into the far corner. With Chelsea in control, Salomon Kalou shimmied inside and tried a chip, Lampard drove a free-kick just wide and Drogba fired a chance into the side-netting. For Liverpool it seemed over. When Carroll came on shortly after the second goal it seemed a desperate act of a losing team playing badly. But a single moment changed the entire tone of the match.

Bosingwa dwelt inexplicably on the ball at right back and Downing robbed him and crossed for Carroll. Panic seized Chelsea, with Carroll turning John Terry one way, then the other, before smashing the ball into the roof of the net. Wembley was suddenly alive, as were Liverpool. While not quite Istanbul, they flowed forward, with Carroll a compelling force and Suarez forcing a smart save from Cech. Gerrard played a great one-two, fed Johnson who in turn put Suarez into the box. The Uruguayan dinked a delightful ball onto the waiting Carroll's head. He met it perfectly, and wheeled away in celebration but Cech palmed it on to the bar. Briefly it seemed the ball had crossed the line in flight and assistant referee Andy Garratt was besieged. But the official stood firm and replays bore him out: no-one could be sure the whole ball had crossed the line.

CHELSEA (4-2-3-1): Cech; Bosingwa, Ivanovic, Terry, Cole; Mikel, Lampard; Ramires (Meireles 76min), Mata (Malouda 90), Kalou; Drogba. Subs (not used): Turnbull, Essien, Torres, Ferreira, Sturridge. Booked: Mikel.

LIVERPOOL (4-1-4-1): Reina; Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Enrique; Spearing (Carroll 55); Bellamy (Kuyt 78), Henderson, Gerrard, Downing; Suarez. Subs (not used): Rodriguez, Carragher, Doni, Shelvey, Kelly. Booked: Agger, Suarez.

REFEREE: P Dowd.



ANOTHER SEASON OF STRIFE, YET JT'S STILL A WINNER

CHELSEA 2 LIVERPOOL 1 IN THE shadow of John Terry, the chairman of the Football Association appeared to shrink, offering only a sheepish smile.

David Bernstein was the driving force behind the decision to strip Terry of what the Chelsea skipper considered his greatest honour - the England captaincy. Here he was on the pre-match red carpet, a dignitary whose hand Terry was expected to shake.

And of course, he did.

It was just another brief snapshot of one of the game's most controversial lives. A couple of hours later, Terry barely noticed the VIPs as he hoisted the trophy aloft.

You see, Terry does not do grudges, does not do regrets, does not even do bitterness.

Whatever happens to him away from the pitch - the loss of the armband, an impending trial - never pierces his self-belief.

Whatever happens to him on it - that Champions League Final miss in Moscow four years ago, the shocking mental aberration in Barcelona last month - never undermines his ferocious commitment.

Fortune's arrows never scar him.

Yet another season pockmarked by spats and speculation careers towards its end with Terry beating his chest in triumph.

In a fortnight's time, he will not play in Munich, the result of his own rank stupidity.

UEFA have said he can collect the trophy if Chelsea should overcome Bayern Munich.

I suspect he might not want to.

Pride might forbid it.

No, this was the crescendo of Terry's predictably eventful club season.

One that has seen him outlast yet another manager - and become key to the fortunes of that manager's replacement.

Terry, at the age of 31, shows few signs of relinquishing his own seat of power at Stamford Bridge.

This was his 10th major honour with the club.

For long swathes of this game, he did not have to be at his most resilient to lead Chelsea to their fourth FA Cup success in six years.

Which is just as well, because Andy Carroll's turn and strike highlighted Terry's growing fallibility.

Even Terry will not be able to defy age.

But a real examination at the quick feet of Luis Suarez never materialised because of the Uruguayan's isolation for at least half of the game.

Kenny Dalglish's tactical acumen will be questioned over that situation, but the truth is this was a cup match that was, for the most part, a dispiriting reflection of Liverpool's desperately disappointing league season.

The performances of Jordan Henderson and Jay Spearing were so below the required level that it was hard not feel a twinge of sympathy for them.

And no longer does Steven Gerrard have shoulders broad enough to carry the yoke when surrounded by mediocrity.

When Gerrard's one meaningful surge of the match was answered by Didier Drogba's customary Wembley goal, the stark truth about this expensively-assembled Liverpool side was painfully exposed.

A couple of England players have regressed - Glen Johnson and Stewart Downing - while Suarez is repeatedly starved of support.

Considering his service to the club, you have to give Pepe Reina the benefit of the doubt... but his demeanour yesterday bordered on the disinterested. And with no Champions League football next season, you wonder if Reina's commitment is as unwavering as it has been for so long.

For him, for Kenny Dalglish and for the owners, Wembley echoed to the sound of paper being stripped away from deep cracks.

In keeping with their efforts in the Premier League, most of this display - particularly before Carroll galloped into view - was simply not even close to the standards expected within Anfield.

The fabulous stirring inspired by record signing Carroll, whose finish - and a very close shave with that powerful header - showed he might yet be a useful asset, enlivened the occasion.

But Liverpool did not deserve to add the FA Cup to the Carling Cup.

No, this was a day when Chelsea yet again somehow managed to emerge from a season of strife with silver in their hands.

And there is no-one in football more familiar with that feat than a certain J Terry.