Date: 26 September 2012
Opposition: West Bromwich Albion
Competition: League Cup

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Birmingham Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

26 September 2012

THE TIMES

Rodgers tastes victory at last as Sahin provides change for better

West Bromwich Albion 1
Liverpool 2

Brendan Rodgers was last night celebrating his first domestic victory in charge of Liverpool after Nuri Sahin scored twice to alleviate some of the pressure on the League Cup holders' new manager.

Sahin, the Turkey midfield player on a season-long loan from Real Madrid, claimed the winner eight minutes from time, just moments after Rodgers's faith in youth was exemplified by the introduction of the youngest player in Liverpool's history when Jerome Sinclair came on as a substitute for Samed Yesil at the age of 16 years and six days.

So unheralded is the history-maker that his name was recorded incorrectly, as Jordan Sinclair, by theLiverpool staff on the official team-sheet. The England Under-17 striker had little chance to make any personal impression, although he was on the field to celebrate as Suso, another substitute, was allowed to run through and feed the ball wide for the impressive Oussam Assaidi to cross low across the edge of the six-yard area for Sahin to sidefoot into the roof of the net.

The victory was raucously greeted by the thousands of Liverpool supporters who had shown unequivocal support for their new manager throughout an evening that started with West Bromwich Albion going ahead in the third minute.

Rodgers's response to Liverpool's worst opening to a league campaign in 101 years was to change his entire starting line-up. This smacked either of overwhelming confidence on the manager's part or of a willingness to sacrifice this competition to address the increasing priority that is the Barclays Premier League.

Of course, the Liverpool manager could argue that the likes of Jordan Henderson, Stewart Downing and Jamie Carragher are full internationals in need of match practice. He also has the Europa League to consider, asLiverpool face Udinese after Saturday's visit to Norwich City, where the need for a first league victory of the season is becoming pressing.

Rodgers refused to panic last night, even as his inexperienced team went behind in the third minute courtesy of the first of two goalkeeping gaffes that contributed to a compelling first half. He continued to encourage his young charges -- nine of whom had rallied from going 3-2 behind to win away to Young Boys in Berne six nights earlier -- to play the ball about in his trademark fashion and, initially at least, it paid off.

West Brom's confidence levels have been soaring after their best start to a top-flight season in 30 years and, while Liverpool sit in the relegation zone of the Premier League, Steve Clarke's team are in the Champions League frame at this embryonic stage.

That optimism was reflected in a team selection with a mere five changes from the team who beat Reading to go fourth on Saturday. When Brad Jones dropped a routine cross from Liam Ridgewell for Gabriel Tamas to score, West Brom dominated the opening quarter of an hour as Liverpool struggled to find their feet.

Romelu Lukaku levered Carragher off the ball with disarming ease as they ran down the channel in competition for a pass from Billy Jones and, from the Belgium striker's pull-back, Markus Rosenberg saw his shot well saved low down by Jones.

But in the sixteenth minute the large Liverpool following started chanting the manager's name volubly and Rodgers clapped his appreciation. The team showed theirs by keeping the ball impeccably until Andre Wisdom passed inside for Sahin to try his luck from 25 yards. Ben Foster fumbled the shot, allowing the ball into the bottom corner of the net, and Liverpool proceeded to play their way back into the ascendancy.

Foster got away with another misjudgment early in the second half when he patted down Yesil's powerful shot, for the ball to bounce underneath him and over the crossbar, before Daniel Pacheco unleashed a swerving effort that struck the top of the crossbar.

West Bromwich Albion (4-2-3-1): B Foster - W Jones, G Tamas, J Olsson, L Ridgewell (sub: C Dawson, 26min) - Y Mulumbu, G Thorne - M-A Fortune (sub: Y El Ghanassy, 87), G Dorrans, M Rosenberg - R Lukaku (sub: S Long, 70). Substitutes not used: L Daniels, C Yacob, G McAuley, S Berahino. Booked: Mulumbu. Liverpool (4-4-1-1): B Jones - A Wisdom, S Coates, J Carragher, J Robinson - S Downing, J Henderson, N Sahin, O Assaidi - D Pacheco (sub: Suso, 81) - S Yesil (sub: J Sinclair, 81) Substitutes not used: P Gulacsi, D Wilson, R Sterling, C Coady, S Sama Booked: Wisdom. Referee: M Oliver.

theguardian

Sahin leads youngsters in Rodgers' true style

These are challenging times for Brendan Rodgers, whose Liverpool side have endured the ignominy of making the club's worst start to a league campaign in 101 years, but a committed and impressive performance from what was effectively a reserve XI provided the Northern Irishman with a much needed first domestic victory since taking over at Anfield.

On a night when Jerome Sinclair came off the bench to become Liverpool's youngest ever player at the age of 16 years and six days - he is so new to the scene that the club got his christian name wrong on the team-sheet and put him down as Jordan - Nuri Sahin endeared himself to the travelling supporters with two goals to help the holders vanquish West Brom and secure a place in the last 16, where Rodgers will come up against Swansea City, his former club.

Sahin, on loan from Real Madrid, could have a valuable role to play at Liverpool this season, although it was the sparkling form of Oussama Assaidi that did most to catch the eye. Assaidi, signed from Heerenveen in the summer, was a joy to watch on the left flank as his dextrous footwork and sinuous runs tormented Albion time and again. There was also an end product to his play, which was evident long before the Moroccan provided the centre that Sahin turned home in the 82nd minute.

It was a result that Rodgers was entitled to cherish, even if moving up the Premier League remains the priority. His side showed character and composure to play themselves back into the game after suffering the blow of conceding a dreadful goal inside the first three minutes, when Gabriel Tamas volleyed home after Brad Jones allowed Liam Ridgewell's floated free-kick to slip from his grasp. On a bad evening for goalkeepers Ben Foster was guilty of a blunder every bit as bad at the other end, and from the moment that Sahin's 30-yard shot slipped beyond the Albion No1 in the 17th minute, the complexion of the game changed and a youthfulLiverpool side grew in confidence.

"It's always exciting when you see young players, guys that have got great technique, but what is important as well is that they understand how to fight," Rodgers said. "It was a wonderful performance against an experienced team. For us to dominate the game like we did and to get the goals, especially the second goal, which typified what we are about, was very pleasing.

"I think it was a symbolic night as well because it shows how far we're moving as a group from our first day of the season here, when we were a wee bit disjointed and players were not quite understanding my methods, to the last three or four weeks, where our tempo, our rhythm and our relentless possession has started to come through. It was good to see that."

This Liverpool side was unrecognisable from the one that struggled so badly at The Hawthorns on the opening day of the season in more ways than one. As well as the difference in the level of the performance, there was a huge change in personnel, with Stewart Downing the sole survivor from the team that suffered a 3-0 defeat then.

Rodgers said afterwards that he has only 12 senior players fit, although on this evidence it will be no bad thing if a few fresh faces feature against Norwich on Saturday.

Sinclair, who was part of Albion's academy until he moved to Liverpool last summer, is unlikely to be on show at Carrow Road but this night will live long in the memory of a teenager who was four months old when Jamie Carragher made his debut. He supplants Jack Robinson, who was 244 days older when he made his firstLiverpool appearance, as the club's youngest player. "He got a nice round of applause afterwards in the changing room," Rodgers said. "But now his hard work begins."

For Albion this was a deeply frustrating evening. Although Steve Clarke made five changes from the side that beat Reading on Saturday, it was still a strong Albion team and the manager was at a loss to explain why Sahin's first goal "knocked the stuffing out of us". Foster struggled to recover from that error and looked vulnerable on a couple of occasions in the second half, when he made unconvincing saves to deny Samed Yesil and the enterprising Daniel Pacheco, who also hit the bar with a delightful curling shot. Extra-time was looming at that point but Suso's driving run at the heart of the Albion defence ended with the substitute releasing Assaidi to deliver the cross that implored Sahin to score the winner.

Rodgers can now look forward to a reunion next month. "Swansea is a wonderful club and I was in no rush to leave," the Liverpool manager said. "It promises to be a great night at Anfield."

West Brom 4-2-3-1
Foster; Jones, Tamas, Olsson, Ridgewell (Dawson, 22); Mulumbu*, Thorne; Fortune (El Ghanassy, 87), Dorrans, Rosenberg; Lukaku (Long, 70).
Subs not used
Daniels, Yacob, McAuley, Berahino.
Liverpool 4-2-3-1
Jones; Wisdom*, Coates, Carragher, Robinson; Sahin, Henderson; Downing, Pacheco (Suso, 81), Assaidi; Yesil (Sinclair, 81).
Subs not used
Gulacsi, Wilson, Sterling, Coady, Sama.
Referee M Oliver

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The Mail

Sahin delivers for the Kop kids

WEST BROM 1
LIVERPOOL 2

BRENDAN RODGERS may have overseen the worst Liverpool start to a league campaign in a century, but two goals from Nuri Sahin last night rewarded the manager for sticking to his principles.

Two points from the opening five matches in the Premier League could have seen the Liverpool boss adopt a more pragmatic approach for this difficult tie in the Black Country.

But far from sending out some of the big guns in a bid to change his luck, Rodgers fielded a team virtually unrecognisable to those without an intimate knowledge of the club.

And the Northern Irishman was rewarded for his brave and youthful selection eight minutes from time when on-loan Real Madrid midfielder Sahin finished from close range, capping a thoroughly impressive show from Rodgers' rookies.

The victory was all the more impressive because Liverpool had to recover from the shock of losing a third-minute goal to West Brom centre half Gabriel Tamas that was as soft as they come.

But home keeper Ben Foster was culpable in allowing Sahin to equalise shortly afterwards and Liverpoolsettled into the tie, running out worthy winners.

Such has been the emphasis placed on youth and Rodgers' determination to experiment that this third-round clash also saw Jerome Sinclair set a record as the youngest player to wear the club's colours.

Remember the name, because Liverpool's staff don't seem able to do so. Persons unknown filled in the team-sheet beforehand, listing the striker's name as Jordan. But his introduction in the 81st minute meant Sinclair, aged 16 years and six days, created history.

'It's great to have young players like that,' said Rodgers. 'I think it's a symbol of how we are looking to progress.

'We want to bring in top players but it's equally important for us to develop top players. For me it's about talent -- irrespective of age. We have a very small squad. At the moment, I've got 12 senior players fit. We've had four games in 10 days and we are busy again next week.

'So, young players are going to get their chance, if they have the talent. There's a bright future here. And I think the fans are buying into what we are trying to do. 'It's even more special when you have so many young players against a West Brom side that have had such a fantastic start.'

Rodgers could not avoid a slight hiccup, however, as he referred to record-breaker Sinclair as 'Jermain' in his first post-match interview. After the team-sheet gaffe, you could say the youngster made three names for himself last night.

Rodgers added: 'It was a great moment for him and it was nice when he received a round of applause in the dressing-room afterwards. But it's no good setting the record, the hard work starts here. He wants to learn and he's a good kid.'

The manager was not the only one to slip up last night. Liverpool goalkeeper Jones was at fault after Liam Ridgewell pumped a 40-yard free-kick deep into Liverpool's penalty area. Jones sprinted from his line to take what should have been a routine catch.

However, with West Brom defender Jonas Olsson in pursuit, the Australian dropped the ball. Tamas had an empty net to aim for and duly found it from 12 yards.

As the match progressed, Liverpool enjoyed increasingly more of the ball. They had worked it neatly around the pitch in the 17th minute before Sahin drew them level. The midfielder tried his luck from 30 yards with a low, left-foot drive that did not rise more than a foot above the ground and skidded past Foster.

The keeper did not have a clear view of the shot but the reaction suggested he felt he should have kept it out. Thumping his hand against the turf repeatedly, the ex-England man probably realised at the same time he had given the visitors a confidence boost as well as a way back into the tie.

Jones was properly tested just once more, when he palmed clear a shot from Markus Rosenberg from the edge of the area early in the second half.

At the other end, Daniel Pacheco hit the bar with a cheeky 30-yard lob and Samed Yesil missed two headers. He was a nuisance throughout.

To cap an impressive return following his three-goal thumping on the opening day, Rodgers' substitute Suso set up the outstanding Oussama Assaidi, who crossed for Sahin to sidefoot the winner.

It remained for Rodgers' satisfactory evening to be rounded off with a home tie in the fourth round. It was the one he must have wanted, too: his old club Swansea, at Anfield.

'They are two wonderful clubs with fantastic supporters,' he said. 'To get a home tie is special. For it to be Swansea is extra special.'

The Daily Telegraph

Sahin double breathes new life into Liverpool's season

West Bromwich Albion 1
Tamas 3
Liverpool 2
Sahin 17, 82 Att: 21,164

Nuri Sahin struck twice to guide Liverpool into the fourth round of the Capital One Cup last night on a night full of positives for Brendan Rodgers.

His team showed resilience in recovering from Gabriel Tamas' early goal for West Brom. The Liverpoolmanager's decision to bring in Sahin on loan from Real Madrid, calling on his contacts with Jose Mourinho, was vindicated.

Rodgers's inexperienced players refused to be overawed, particularly the 24-year-old Moroccan winger Oussama Assaidi, who was outstanding down the left flank all evening. The Liverpool youngsters impressed, particularly Samed Yesil, while Jerome Sinclair, a fleet-footed striker, rose from the bench to become the youngest player in the club's history at 16 years and six days, obliterating Jack Robinson's 16 years 250 days.

Rodgers will also take great heart from the manner in which his reserves played his way, keeping possession, and from Liverpool supporters repeatedly chanting his name as an experienced West Brom team were overcome.

West Brom had won many friends amongst their visitors with a dignified pre-match tribute to the victims of Hillsborough. Steve Clarke began his programme notes with a salute to the families, expressing his hope they get justice. A mascot accompanied the players on to the pitch, bearing a shirt with the number 96.

After sustained applause from all corners of the Hawthorns, Michael Oliver got the tie under way. Liverpoolendured a wretched start, going behind after only three minutes. When Liam Ridgewell swept over a free-kick from the left, Brad Jones rushed from his line and appeared to have the situation under control. But theLiverpool goalkeeper ran into Romelu Lukaku and Jonas Olsson, dropping the ball invitingly forTamas, who drilled it in.

Liverpool appealed loudly to Oliver for a free-kick for a perceived infringement on Jones, but the referee signalled a goal. West Brom fans chuckled "can we play you every week", remembering their 3-0 opening-day Premier League win over Liverpool. But Rodgers' side hit back.

Sahin began to become involved, dictating moves with that clever left foot from in front of Liverpool's back four. Rodgers's youthful three-man attack started to move with more con-fidence. Assaidi, quickly indicating his promise, went down the left and lifted in a terrific cross that Yesil headed wide, a real waste of a gem of a ball. Increasingly assertive in possession, Liverpool equalised after 17 minutes.

When Andre Wisdom rolled the ball inside from the right to Sahin, the Turkish international nudged it forward before unleashing a low leftfooted shot which should have been comfortably saved by Ben Foster. Suffering one of those aberrations that have scarred his career, Foster allowed the ball to slip between his grasp and his left-hand upright.

West Brom remained dangerous on the counter, particularly when they were able to get Lukaku to run at Jamie Carragher and Sebastian Coates. Lukaku broke clear at one point, bringing a low save from Brad Jones. Yet the force appeared with Liverpool, especially when the ball was at the quick feet of Assaidi, who kept dribbling at Billy Jones, often darting inside to good effect.

Having been slow to get going in the first half, Liverpool were a minute late for the second period but were soon moving forward confidently. Yesil, increasingly influential, fired in a shot that totally bamboozled Foster, rearing up and going over.

Albion responded, charging downfield. Markus Rosenberg turned smarly on the edge of the area but Brad Jones was equal to the shot, saving athletically. The game flowed from end to end, soon Daniel Pacheco examining Foster's reflexes. Clarke tried to force a breakthrough by freshening up his attack. He removed Lukaku and sent on Shane Long. But one familiar theme continued. Assaidi was still running at Billy Jones, winning a free-kick after 73 minutes. When Sahin curled the ball in, Coates snaked out a boot to flick the ball goalwards at speed but Foster saved well.

Sinclair then made history, running on with Suso after 78 minutes. It was Suso who began the move toLiverpool's second, sending Assaidi down the left. The Moroccan's cross was low and hard, fractionally in front of Sinclair but not for Sahin, who swept it into the roof of Foster's net.

West Bromwich Albion (4-2-3-1): Foster; Billy Jones, Tamas, Olsson, Ridgewell (Dawson 22); Thorne, Mulumbu; Fortune (El Ghanassy 87), Dorrans, Rosenberg; Lukaku (Long 70). Subs L Daniels, Yacob, McAuley, Berahino. Booked Mulumbu. Liverpool (4-3-3): Brad Jones; Wisdom, Carragher, Coates, Robinson; Henderson, Sahin, Downing; Pacheco (Suso 81), Yesil (Sinclair 81), Assaidi. Subs Gulacsi, Wilson, Sterling, Coady, Sama. Booked Wisdom.

Referee M Oliver (Northumberland).

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THE INDEPENDENT

Sahin shows Liverpool a way forward

Still without a win in the Premier League, Brendan Rodgers clearly has some distance to travel in his quest to reshape Liverpool in his own image but that development process perhaps took a significant step forward with a victory that might have piqued his interest in defending the club's possession of the League Cup, particularly now that the draw has given him his old club, Swansea, in the fourth round.

Rodgers, his hand partially forced by injuries but largely because of where his priorities lie, cast aside all of his 11 starters from Sunday's home defeat against Manchester United in favour of most of those who emerged on top in that other unwanted diversion, the Europa League, in Switzerland last week, in that extraordinary tie against Young Boys of Berne.

Even he admitted most neutrals, and perhaps a good few who were not, would have weighed up last night's odds and predicted that the home side, who had beaten a much more experienced Liverpool team in some comfort on the opening day of the Premier League, would come out on top again.

Yet the opposite happened. Steve Clarke's team took an early lead when a mistake by Brad Jones handed Gabriel Tamas an easy goal and might have gone further ahead in a strong opening phase. But Liverpoolrecovered to draw level and then dominate the remainder of the first half, before withstanding a second wave of pressure at the start of the second period to take charge again, scoring their decisive second goal eight minutes from the end.

The finisher in both instances was the German-born Turkey international Nuri Sahin, signed on a season-long loan from Real Madrid, whose integration into the Liverpool side might have been further advanced by now had he not missed a chunk of pre-season while his future was in the balance.

On only his third appearance, Sahin scored first after 17 minutes, beating Ben Foster from 25 yards at the near post. Always a key figure in linking Liverpool's passing manoeuvres, he already had a claim to be man of the match before he popped up with the winner, steering the ball home from close range on the end of a low cross from Oussama Assaidi.

"He is still getting up to speed," Rodgers said. "It has been difficult for him. He missed a big part of pre-season but he is getting better every day. He has a great football arrogance, the confidence to shoot from distance and the ability as he showed with the second goal to arrive in the box.

"But it was a good team performance. The courage to want the ball was very prominent tonight.

"It is exciting to see young players with great technique but what is important is they know how to fight," Rodgers added. "The second goal in particular showed what we are about."

The reception from the Liverpool fans was certainly in approval. There were three teenagers on at the start with another five on the bench, including Jerome Sinclair, whose appearance in the last 10 minutes made himLiverpool's youngest senior player at 16 years and six days. Where they lacked experience they compensated in fearlessness.

Their spirit was exemplified, as Rodgers said, in the decisive goal. Albion had looked strong enough perhaps to persuade a more conservative approach from Liverpool but then Suso, the Spain Under-19 international Rodgers ushered on at the same time as Sinclair, responded to his first possession by launching a run through the middle that had the home defence back peddling. Intelligently, he slipped the ball wide to Assaidi, in free space, whose cross was perfectly weighted for Sahin to convert and send Liverpool onwards.

MATCH FACTS
Substitutes:
West Bromwich Albion Dawson (Ridgewell, 22), Long (Lukaku, 70), El Ghanassy (Fortun[c], 87).
Liverpool Suso (Pacheco, 81), Sinclair (Yesil, 81).
Booked: West Brom Mulumbu. Liverpool Wisdom.
Man of the match Sahin. Match rating 7/10.
Possession: West Brom 43% Liverpool 57%.
Attempts on target: West Brom 8 Liverpool 9.
Referee M Oliver (Northumberland).
Attendance 21,164.

DAILY Mirror

Fightback means it's nappy days for Brendan's Babes

Brendan Rodgers challenged Liverpool to retain the League Cup and Jerome Sinclair to continue to make history after this promising win.

Rodgers inherited the Carling Cup in the Anfield trophy room after succeeding Kenny Dalglish this summer.

And the new Liverpool boss has no plans to give up the trophy easily after his new-look side put up a real fight at The Hawthorns.

Rodgers must have feared the worst when the visitors fell behind to Gabriel Tamas' third minute goal.

It was a nightmare start for the Reds as keeper Brad Jones failed to hold Liam Ridgewell's outswinging free-kick.

But the visitors responded strongly with goals in either half from new midfielder Nuri Sahin, on loan from Real Madrid.

As well as the win, the manner of their slick, enterprising football delighted Rodgers, whose side are in the top-flight bottom three.

And after giving Raheem Sterling his chance to shine in the top-flight, sub Sinclair is now Liverpool's youngest player aged 16 years, six days.

Rodgers revealed: "I said to the players afterwards that the League Cup is stored an Anfield.

"I don't want us to give it up too easily. It is a competition we want to do well in. I want us to fight.

"This is one of the iconic clubs in world football, but we are not at that level as a team.

"The fans can see we are working hard to get back there though.

"The Liverpool supporters are very educated and clever. The support they have given the team and myself has been incredible.

"And whether it is a young player or a senior player, all players want to do is play football. I try to build a framework for them to have the confidence to go and play.

"Certainly tonight, in particularly with the young players, they were outstanding."

Rodgers' faith in youth meant even at 1-1 with the tie heading to extra-time, he was bold enough to throw on Suso and Sinclair in a double substitution in the 81st minute.

Just 60 seconds later, the Reds had taken the lead when outstanding winger Oussama Assaidi crossed for Sahin to net.

Turkish midfielder Sahin had earlier struck from distance in the 17th minute as keeper Ben Foster was also at fault at the other end.

Sahin then won it late on despite the moans of Baggies boss Steve Clarke who felt the goal was offside.

Rodgers was thrilled for his entire side and especially Sinclair who now replaces Jack Robinson in the Anfield history books.

Rodgers added: "He got a nice round of applause afterwards in the dressing room but now his hard work begins.

"It is no good being the youngest player and then drifting out.

"But fortunately he is a focused kid and has good concentration. He wants to learn and once you have that hunger to learn it can take you a long way."

The Reds' win ensured quick revenge after they lost 3-0 at Albion on the opening day of the League campaign.

Now Liverpool must look to reproduce another decent display on Saturday at struggling Norwich.

Rodgers made 11 changes to the side which lost at United at the weekend.

It meant an exciting glimpse of the future for the sold-out away section, who sung Rodgers' name loudly.

With new winger Assaidi wrecking havoc on the left flank, Liverpool were always a threat.

Daniel Pacheco also hit the bar after the break and forced Foster into a good save.

While Foster had to make a good save from Sebastian Coates' header which atoned for his earlier blunder on an indifferent night for the shot-stopper.

Albion had their chances but neither new signing Markus Rosenberg or in-form Romelu Lukaku managed to take them.

Baggies boss Clarke named a strong side against his old club but Liverpool's youthful enthusiasm and skill prevailed.

Compiled by Graeme Riley

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26 September 2012

LIVERPOOL ECHO

THE defence of the League Cup could prove to be a thrilling case of trial and error. If tonight at the Hawthorns, Liverpool showed us how they intend to go on in the Capital One Cup then these games could provide an outlet of excitement whilst progress in the league remains a more stubborn foe.
Manager Brendan Rodgers has to rotate his squad in order to keep his side as competitive as possible on all fronts this season, so his trust is placed in those of potential and promise. The historic debut of Jerome Sinclair, a late replacement to become the youngest player to play for the club at 16 years and six days, only emphasised the point. This group may ultimately lack the cunning and know-how to navigate a return to Wembley, but the manner in which they responded to going a goal behind at West Bromwich Albion says this Liverpool selection will attack the task. Barring the one of two players who still have hefty price tags to justify, the team which saw off the Baggies played free from the shackles of pressure and close scrutiny. And Rodgers used that to encourage their flair, confidence in possession and willing to experiment. It is a freedom that eventually the manager hopes Liverpool's strongest side will play with.
For now, the taster sessions come in midweek, in the Capital One Cup and Europa League. A first goal for the club from the on-loan Nuri Sahin brought Liverpool level after Brad Jones' error gifted West Brom an early opener.
The equalising goal allowed Rodgers' men to go forward with intent though their control of the game was not rewarded until eight minutes from time when Sahin scored his second, booking Liverpool into the fourth round.
Last season's cup run eased Liverpool in before the challenges stiffened as the rounds progressed. Unfortunately for Rodgers, his opening two months of competitive action have rarely allowed him a gentle ride or the rub of the green. After last season's opening tie in the League Cup at Exeter City, Liverpool faced a far sterner test this time around as West Brom were plucked out of the hat.
A trip to the West Midlands was made all the more undesirable given the side's chastening experience on the opening day. Fortunately perhaps, the side which played out last night's third round tie at the Hawthorns, had been spared the nightmare of August's 3-0 defeat. The necessity to carefully balance the demands on his limited number of senior players – as much as Rodgers' desire to nurture players from within the club's Academy – shaped his team sheet.
Only Stewart Downing and Jamie Carragher featured in the opening game of the Premier League season and even they have found themselves increasingly reserved for the cup nights. And with the exception of two changes, this was the 11 who started the up and down thriller against Young Boys six days earlier in the Europa League. Though Liverpool lacked experience in most areas, they had least had the element of surprise and the fearless nature of youth about them.
It is such qualities Rodgers needs to rely upon as he juggles Liverpool on four fronts in this season of transition, where improvements in the league remain the priority. The travelling supporters were given a first look at Samed Yesil, the 18-year-old signed from Bayer Leverkusen, as well other unfamiliar faces such as Oussama Assaidi and Sahin.
Liverpool's substitutes' bench was even more of a window into the future.
But Liverpool in the here and now are of the greater concern and the soft manner in which they conceded after three minutes did not make for pleasant viewing. Brad Jones dropped the ball from Liam Ridgewell's free-kick into the area and from the spoils, Gabriel Tamas capitalised by firing into the unguarded net.
West Brom immediately had their tails up, Romelu Lakaku took little time in finding his appetite for the game and Jones was again in the thick of it, saving low at his near post from Markus Rosenberg's drive. But the inclusion of fresh blood and thinking into this team helped show the Liverpool supporters some shoots of recovery. Assaidi's jinking run and cross found Yesil whose header glanced marginally wide of the goal in a move which pleased the manager.
Liverpool by now had settled and found a degree of momentum, yet they were indebted to some welcome fortune for their equaliser.
Sahin struck well from 30 yards but where Ben Foster looked certain to palm away to safety, the West Brom goalkeeper instead allowed the strike to slip through his guard and into the net. Naturally, the goal gave Rodgers' men confidence and impetus with much of their improved work came down the left flank through Assaidi. Sahin too, provided the midfield with rhythm and though not every pass came off, in the main he kept Liverpool moving in the first half.
Defensively, he also deserves credit. West Brom rallied as the break approached but it was Liverpool who had controlled the game for longer spells.
And the visitors picked up where they left off with a blistering start to the second half. Yesil troubled a nervous Foster from the edge of the area, with the keeper relieved to see the shot ricochet over the bar.
Foster could only watch Daniel Pacheco's effort as it sailed over his head but on to the top of the bar. At the other end, Jones had to remain alert to keep out Rosenberg's strike from the edge of the area before his opposite number again looked uncomfortable dealing with a Liverpool shot from range.
Though, it must be said that Foster showed greater composure when saving at close range from Sebastian Coates' effort with 15 minutes remaining.
But there was nothing Foster could do about Sahin's strike, eight minutes from time.
A flowing move found Assaidi wide on the left and his low cross found Sahin who strode onto the ball and converted from six yards.
It was a move to reinforce that Liverpool's fourth round tie could be one worth watching.
WEST BROMWICH ALBION (4-2-3-1): Foster, Olsson ©, Ridgewel (Dawson 22)l, Rosenberg, Thorne, Dorrans, Lukaku (Long 70), Mulumbu, Jones, Tamas, Fortune (El-Ghanassy 89). Subs: Daniels, Yacob, Long, El Ghanassy, McAuley, Dawson, Berahino.
Goals: Tamas (3) Cautions: Mulumbu Red Cards: None
LIVERPOOL (4-2-3-1): Jones, Robinson, Coates, Carragher ©, Wisdom, Henderson, Sahin, Downing, Pacheco (Suso 81), Assaidi, Yesil (Sinclair 81). Subs: Gulacsi, Sama, Suso, Sterling, Wilson, Coady, Sinclair.
Goals: Sahin (17, 82) Cautions: Wisdom Red Cards: None
Referee: Michael Oliver Attendance: 21, 694
Next match v Norwich City (A) Saturday, September 29 (3pm)

BIRMINGHAM Mail

THAT CUP run, so desperately sought by West Bromwich Albion, will have to wait until January at least.
Albion fell to a late Nuri Sahin goal to end their Capital One Cup ambitions.
Yet it had looked so promising early on when Gabriel Tamas pounced onto a Brad Jones error.
It certainly wasn't to be a vintage night for goalkeepers.
Ben Foster made a rare slip when he allowed Sahin's long-range shot to slip underneath him.
The equaliser transformed the landscape of the game.
Liverpool's young side – orchestrated from midfield by the brilliant Sahin – were to grow in confidence against an Albion side which boasted more experience and, on paper certainly, more pedigree.
And Brendan Rodgers was to be handed his first competitive domestic victory thanks to Sahin's close effort during the close stages.
Steve Clarke picked a strong side Albion side – certainly one which gave few clues to a slump in momentum during the first half. Liverpool's side smacked of priorities being elsewhere. And it showed. Within three minutes Albion were ahead. Liverpool conceded a free-kick on their right-hand side.
Liam Ridgewell's set-piece floated into the box and should have been easily taken by Brad Jones. The Liverpool keeper spilled the ball, allowing Gabriel Tamas to drive a shot into the unguarded net.
The lead could have been doubled minutes later when Romelu Lukaku left Jamie Carragher on his backside. He sent in a low ball for Markus Rosenberg, whose low shot was saved by the foot of Jones.
In the 17th minute it was 1-1. Andre Wisdom fed Sahin some 30 yards out. The Reds midfielder let fly with a shot that Foster should have saved but allowed to slip underneath his body.
It got worse for Albion when Ridgewell's night ended early. The Albion left-back was forced off after suffering an injury in the build up to the goal. Craig Dawson came on in his place and Billy Jones moved over to left-back, leaving Dawson to deal with speedy left-wing nuisance Assaidi.
Albion's spirited start floundered. The midfield lacked ingenuity and tempo with Sahin directing the play around him.
Liverpool threatened after the break. Yesil's 50th minute shot was beaten into the ground by Foster. The ball bounced down and over the bar. It was a nervous moment from the Albion goalkeeper.
The Reds weren't finished. Moments later Daniel Pacheco dipping curler had Foster beaten but not his goal. The ball bounced onto the bar and out of play. At the other end Rosenberg was having one of those days, it seemed.
A long range effort opportunity came his way. His shot was nearer to troubling the corner flag than Jones' goal. But the Swedish striker was unlucky in the 56th minute. Again from close range, he despatched a powerful shot – this time it flew towards the top corner and Jones had to react quickly. Foster did well to deny Coates in the 71st minute as the visitors piled forward. A free-kick came in, Coates steered it goalbound but Foster reacted sharply.
But there was little he could do about Liverpool's winner. Assaidi was fed by substitute Suso. The ball came across the box and was turned into the goal by Sahin to hand Liverpool an 82nd minute lead.
There was still time for Marc-Antoine Fortuné to go close with a vicious volley from Olsson's chip.
ALBION (4-2-3-1): Foster 5, Jones 6, H Tamas 7, Olsson 6, Ridgewell 5 (Dawson 22, 5), Mulumbu 5, Thorne 5, Fortuné 6 (El Ghanassy 88), Dorrans 5, Rosenberg 5, Lukaku 6 (Long 70). Not used: Daniels, Yacob, McAuley, Berahino.
LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Jones; Wisdom, Carragher, Coates, Robinson; Henderson, Sahin, Downing; Pacheco (Suso 81), Yesil (Sterling 81), Assaidi. Not used: Gulacsi, Wilson, Coady, Sama.

Compiled by Graeme Riley

Date: 26 September 2012
Opposition: West Bromwich Albion
Competition: League Cup

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Birmingham Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

26 September 2012

BBC

90:00+3:29Full time The match has reached full-time.
90:00+2:19 Foul by Nuri Sahin on Youssouf Mulumbu, free kick awarded. Ben Foster takes the direct free kick.
89:46 A cross is delivered by Youssouf Mulumbu, Andre Wisdom makes a clearance.
89:03 Gabriel Tamas has an effort at goal from 30 yards. Blocked by Jamie Carragher.
86:45Substitution SubstitutionYassine El Ghanassy comes on in place of Marc-Antoine Fortune.
86:00 The offside flag is raised against Jerome Sinclair. Ben Foster takes the indirect free kick.
85:31 Free kick awarded for a foul by Sebastian Coates on Markus Rosenberg. Graham Dorrans restarts play with the free kick.
84:03 The ball is delivered by Marc-Antoine Fortune, Jamie Carragher makes a clearance.
83:41 The ball is sent over by Jonas Olsson, Marc-Antoine Fortune takes a shot. Save by Brad Jones.
81:39 The assist for the goal came from Oussama Assaidi.
81:39Goal scored Goal - Nuri Sahin - West Brom 1 - 2 LiverpoolNuri Sahin gets on the score sheet with a goal from close range to the top right corner of the goal. West Brom 1-2 Liverpool.
80:22Substitution SubstitutionJerome Sinclair on for Samed Yesil.
80:22Substitution SubstitutionJesus Fernandez Saez is brought on as a substitute for Daniel Pacheco.
76:51 A cross is delivered by Stewart Downing, clearance by Gabriel Tamas.
72:39 Oussama Assaidi fouled by Craig Dawson, the ref awards a free kick. Nuri Sahin restarts play with the free kick. Sebastian Coates takes a shot. Save made by Ben Foster. Outswinging corner taken from the left by-line by Nuri Sahin, Jonas Olsson manages to make a clearance. Corner taken left-footed by Nuri Sahin, Craig Dawson manages to make a clearance.
72:21 Marc-Antoine Fortune produces a cross, save by Brad Jones.
71:38 Free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on George Thorne by Samed Yesil. Free kick taken by George Thorne.
69:20Substitution SubstitutionShane Long on for Romelu Lukaku.
68:19 Craig Dawson gives away a free kick for an unfair challenge on Oussama Assaidi. Jack Robinson takes the free kick.
67:41 The ball is delivered by Markus Rosenberg, save made by Brad Jones.
67:06 A cross is delivered by Jack Robinson.
64:42 Romelu Lukaku concedes a free kick for a foul on Brad Jones. Brad Jones restarts play with the free kick.
62:27 Oussama Assaidi produces a right-footed shot from just outside the box that misses to the right of the target.
61:54 Daniel Pacheco produces a drilled right-footed shot from 25 yards. Save by Ben Foster. Corner taken left-footed by Nuri Sahin from the right by-line, Graham Dorrans makes a clearance.
60:15 The ball is delivered by Oussama Assaidi, Jonas Olsson makes a clearance.
57:26 The ball is swung over by Marc-Antoine Fortune, clearance made by Jamie Carragher.
56:09 Graham Dorrans takes a outswinging corner from the right by-line to the near post, save by Brad Jones.
55:23 Shot from 20 yards by Markus Rosenberg. Save by Brad Jones. Corner taken by Graham Dorrans from the left by-line, Brad Jones makes a save.
52:39 Shot from just outside the area by Markus Rosenberg misses to the left of the target.
51:17 Drilled right-footed shot by Daniel Pacheco.
49:45 Shot by Samed Yesil. Save made by Ben Foster. Outswinging corner taken by Nuri Sahin from the left by-line, clearance made by Gabriel Tamas.
45:51 Oussama Assaidi sends in a cross.
45:01 The match restarts for the second half.
2:31 Assist on the goal came from Liam Ridgewell.
2:31Goal scored Goal - Gabriel Tamas - West Brom 1 - 0 LiverpoolGabriel Tamas finds the back of the net with a goal from inside the box to the bottom left corner of the goal. West Brom 1-0 Liverpool.
45:00+2:13Half time The ref blows to end the first period.
45:00+1:04 Daniel Pacheco gives away a free kick for an unfair challenge on Youssouf Mulumbu. Graham Dorrans delivers the ball from the free kick right-footed from right channel, clearance made by Jamie Carragher.
44:32 Free kick awarded for a foul by Sebastian Coates on Marc-Antoine Fortune. Free kick taken by Graham Dorrans.
43:28 Drilled right-footed shot by Youssouf Mulumbu. Blocked by Jamie Carragher.
42:03 Graham Dorrans takes the free kick. Outswinging corner taken by Graham Dorrans from the right by-line played to the near post, clearance made by Jordan Henderson.
42:03Booking Andre Wisdom is cautioned by the ref for unsporting behaviour.
41:45 Free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on Billy Jones by Andre Wisdom.
40:23 Stewart Downing produces a left-footed shot from inside the area that goes over the bar.
38:28 Direct free kick taken by Jack Robinson.
38:28Booking Caution for Youssouf Mulumbu.
38:23 Unfair challenge on Nuri Sahin by Youssouf Mulumbu results in a free kick.
37:58 Romelu Lukaku produces a drilled left-footed shot from 20 yards. Brad Jones makes a save.
35:44 Effort from 25 yards by Nuri Sahin. Gabriel Tamas gets a block in.
34:25 Free kick awarded for a foul by Jack Robinson on Marc-Antoine Fortune. Billy Jones takes the direct free kick.
33:36 The ball is swung over by Nuri Sahin.
33:07 Outswinging corner taken left-footed by Nuri Sahin, clearance made by Gabriel Tamas.
29:41 Stewart Downing crosses the ball, clearance by Jonas Olsson.
26:10 Andre Wisdom crosses the ball, clearance by Gabriel Tamas.
25:52 The ball is delivered by Stewart Downing, Billy Jones gets a block in.
24:40 Oussama Assaidi takes a shot from 18 yards. Save made by Ben Foster.
23:04 Shot from 18 yards by Daniel Pacheco. Blocked by Gabriel Tamas.
21:31Substitution SubstitutionCraig Dawson comes on in place of Liam Ridgewell.
20:55 Shot by Jordan Henderson. Blocked by Gabriel Tamas.
16:10 The assist for the goal came from Andre Wisdom.
16:10Goal scored Goal - Nuri Sahin - West Brom 1 - 1 LiverpoolGoal scored by Nuri Sahin from outside the area to the bottom left corner of the goal. West Brom 1-1 Liverpool.
13:35 Samed Yesil produces a right-footed shot from just outside the area that goes harmlessly over the bar.
11:44 Unfair challenge on Oussama Assaidi by Marc-Antoine Fortune results in a free kick. Jack Robinson takes the direct free kick.
10:58 Effort on goal by Marc-Antoine Fortune from just inside the penalty box goes harmlessly over the target.
10:04 Samed Yesil has a headed effort at goal from close in which goes wide right of the goal.
9:05 Corner taken short by Stewart Downing. The ball is crossed by Stewart Downing, clearance made by Gabriel Tamas.
6:33 Shot by Markus Rosenberg. Save by Brad Jones.
6:33 Marc-Antoine Fortune produces a drilled right-footed shot from 12 yards. Save made by Brad Jones.
5:01 Romelu Lukaku takes a shot. Jamie Carragher gets a block in. Outswinging corner taken by Graham Dorrans, Jonas Olsson challenges Sebastian Coates unfairly and gives away a free kick. Direct free kick taken by Brad Jones.
2:31 The assist for the goal came from Liam Ridgewell.
2:31Goal scored Goal - Gabriel Tamas - West Brom 1 - 0 LiverpoolGabriel Tamas finds the back of the net with a goal from inside the area to the bottom right corner of the goal. West Brom 1-0 Liverpool.
1:56 Markus Rosenberg fouled by Andre Wisdom, the ref awards a free kick. Direct free kick taken by Liam Ridgewell.
0:43 The referee penalises Marc-Antoine Fortune for handball. Brad Jones takes the direct free kick.
0:00 The match has kicked off.

Compiled by Graeme Riley