

Date: 30 December 2012 Opposition: Queens Park Rangers Competition: League	BBC	Times	Telegraph	Echo		30 December 2012
		Guardian	Mirror	Post		
		Independent	Mail	Standard		

THE **TIMES**

Suarez reminds Redknapp why he needs a clear-out

QPR 0

Liverpool 3 Suarez 10, 16, Agger 28

Referee A Taylor Attendance 18,304

Brendan Rodgers may have been absent with a stomach virus, but his suffering paled compared with the sickness Harry Redknapp must have felt in the pit of his stomach before this mismatch had even reached half-time.

With the colour drained from his usually rosy-red cheeks as he stood motionless on the touchline, the Queens Park Rangers manager looked as if he had seen the ghost of Christmas past, possibly that of 2004-05, the season that his Southampton side were relegated.

QPR look like they are facing a similarly doomed battle against relegation, and on this evidence few of their players possess the requisite guts for the fight.

Redknapp will attack the transfer window with gusto in an attempt to recruit players who do, but the question he is facing is: where to start? The squad he has inherited is so lacking in quality, character and cohesion that a complete overhaul is required, a restoration project that may be beyond even Redknapp at this stage of the season. Not even the adjacent Westfield shopping centre has enough bargains on offer to lift the mood that has descended upon Loftus Road.

Redknapp described saving QPR as the biggest challenge of his career after his appointment last month, and for once in his life may have been guilty of understatement. The eight-point gap to seventeenth place already resembles a chasm, particularly when you consider that Aston Villa have surely hit rock bottom after conceding 15 goals in their past three matches.

Redknapp's appointment cheered QPR fans, but it appears to have had little effect on a demoralised group of players hindered by limited ability or lackadaisical attitude, or in some cases both. Clint Hill and Ryan Nelsen toiled manfully but were unable to get close to the outstanding Luis Suarez, Nedum Onuoha looks a shadow of the promising youngster who emerged at Manchester City, while the supposed engine room of Stephane Mbia and Samba Diakite looked like they were pining for a midwinter break. Some of their team-mates could soon be having an extended holiday as Redknapp is planning a clear-out.

"Those who are moping around, the subs who are not playing, are not playing because they're no good," he said. "If there are people who don't want to be here, as soon as the window opens we'll see if we can fix something up for them."

Liverpool had begun the day with a reason to feel sorry for themselves as Rodgers was sent home with a virus that has also hit Colin Pascoe, his assistant, who despite taking charge, was unable to enter the dressing room at half-time for fear of infecting the players, but left London in good spirits after effectively winning the game with a minimum of fuss inside half an hour. The visiting team did not have to be anywhere near their best, but with Steven Gerrard and Joe Allen controlling the midfield and Raheem Sterling and Stewart Downing bright on the flanks, this still represented an impressive response to their Boxing Day defeat away to Stoke City.

Suarez provided the cutting edge to complement their neat build-up play, as he always seems to when Liverpool play well and his pace and movement gave Hill an afternoon to forget. The Uruguayan provided a warning of his threat by beating Hill for fun before shooting at Julio Cesar in the fourth minute, but it went unheeded as he opened the scoring seven minutes later.

After collecting the ball with his back to goal, Suarez created space for himself before side-footing past Cesar for his fifteenth goal of the season. Suarez's sixteenth came five minutes later and was an even more straightforward finish thanks to the home side's negligence.

QPR's insipidness was such that even Downing became a terrifying opponent, and when his cross from the right was only half-cleared by Onuoha, Suarez was on hand to tap in.

QPR came from two down to win this corresponding fixture 3-2 last season, but another comeback was never on the cards and Liverpool capitalised on dreadful defending to score their third in the 28th minute. Downing's short corner from the right was not taken particularly quickly, but there was no hooped shirt near him as Armand Traore allowed Gerrard time and space. The Liverpool captain picked out Daniel Agger, who rose unchallenged to head in his second goal of the season.

Liverpool looked like running up a cricket score at that stage, and Gerrard had a shot cleared off the line by Nelsen shortly afterwards, but Redknapp's pragmatism in replacing Djibril Cisse with Shaun Derry at half-time inspired greater resilience and ensured that they avoided further embarrassment. "It was damage limitation," he said grimly.

Redknapp is less fatalistic about their survival chances, however, despite a fixture list that has them starting 2013 with matches against Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur, West Ham United and Manchester City. After that Redknapp may need a sick day himself.

QPR'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

Tighten up at the back, sign half a team, don't hold your breath.

LIVERPOOL'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

Keep Suarez fit, sign some support strikers, win a cup competition.

RATINGS

Queens Park Rangers (4-4-1-1): Julio Cesar 6 -- N Onuoha 4, R Nelsen 5, C Hill 4, A Traore 5 -- J Mackie 5, S Diakite 4 (sub: E Granero, 63min 5), S Mbia 5, S Wright-

Phillips 5 (sub: Fabio Da Silva, 80) -- A Taraabt 6 -- D Cisse 5 (sub: S Derry, 46 5). Substitutes not used: R Green, A Ferdinand, J Hoilett, A Faurlin. Booked: MBia, Fabio. Liverpool (4-2-3-1): J M Reina 6 -- G Johnson 6, M Skrtel 6, D Agger 6, J Enrique 6 (sub: Suso, 71) -- J Henderson 6 (sub: Lucas Leiva, 64), J Allen 7 (sub: J Carragher, 87) -- R Sterling 6, S Gerrard 7, S Downing 7 -- L Suarez 8. Substitutes not used: P Gulacsi, O Assaidi, S Coates, J Shelvey. Booked: Lucas.

Referee: A Taylor.

the **guardian**

Suarez leaves Rangers looking down and out

QPR 0

Liverpool 3

Suarez 10 16, Agger 27

Harry Redknapp puffed out his cheeks, muttered an expression of disbelief to Joe Jordan at his side, then slumped back against the dugout with a shake of his head in disgust. This mismatch was less than half an hour old and Queens Park Rangers were already embarrassed having just conceded a third goal, a thumping header by Daniel Agger. The centre-half was unmarked, though that was not surprising. Rangers' attempts at resistance had long since disintegrated. This team are sinking without trace.

The QPR manager offered something approaching bullish optimism afterwards, saying his team can still survive, but recovery from a defensive display this shambolic seems improbable even with January and another potential transfer frenzy only a couple of days away. Three clubs have survived having been bottom on New Year's Day in the 20 years of the Premier League but there has to be a spark to instigate a revival and there was simply no real sign of progress to be seen.

The prerequisite for a struggling side, principally tightening up at the back, had been abandoned here amid the desperation to register a victory. Redknapp acknowledged that, having belatedly hauled off Djibril Cisse with the game lost to avoid suffering a drubbing from which confidence might never have been restored. "We were never going to win 4-3, so I shut up shop," he said, explaining the half-time substitution. "Maybe I should have done that from the start, but we wanted the win and had been open and attacking." Luis Suarez had already torn the home side to shreds by then with the Uruguayan's team-mates revelling in the wide open spaces at his back.

Even when trying to be upbeat, Redknapp could only describe this as "a doing", the first time his side have been truly overrun and outclassed over his six weeks in charge. The eight-point gap from 17th place is a gulf, with this performance arguably every bit as abject as the surrender to Southampton in Mark Hughes' last game in charge in November. Redknapp has not had a chance to wheel and deal as yet but he will be the third successive QPR manager to survey a transfer window with a sense of desperation, players stacking up at the training ground, though the reality is reinforcements are required.

Clint Hill and Ryan Nelsen are seasoned professionals and utterly committed but, at 35, forwards such as Suarez can and will humiliate them. Both full-backs selected here, Armand Traore and Nedum Onuoha, looked like broken men defensively. Jose Bosingwa, a European Cup winner in May, is now "injured" and has been since he refused to sit on the bench against Fulham. Fabio da Silva, on loan from Manchester United, was cast on late but is unfamiliar with relegation scraps. As, indeed, are a number of a party recruited from Real Madrid and Internazionale. One of those, Julio Cesar - recalled for Rob Green, who wallowed miserably on the bench - cannot perform heroics alone. There is imbalance all around.

Liverpool had arrived mid-table and with the norovirus apparently festering in their midst; the manager, Brendan Rodgers, and No2 goalkeeper, Brad Jones, were quarantined and sent back to Merseyside earlier in the day. The assistant, Colin Pascoe, also under the weather, was not allowed into the changing room either pre-match or at half-time by the club's medical staff and yet they still ran riot.

Suarez rejoiced in the freedom of Loftus Road. His clever drift away from Hill 10 minutes in to collect Stewart Downing's pass, before tearing at and beyond the back-peddalling centre-half, set the tone. The finish was precise and the hosts already looked in pieces. Within six minutes he had wriggled to the byline, cutting back towards Raheem Sterling in the centre. Onuoha's lunge denied the former QPR youngster but merely set up Suarez to thrash in a second. "He's a magician," said Steven Gerrard, even if an apprentice might have prospered against these opponents.

Agger's header as QPR dawdled at another short-corner routine completed the scoring, though Nelsen twice cleared attempts from his goalline, with the visitors content in their superiority. They will unveil Daniel Sturridge from Chelsea, and most likely Blackpool's Thomas Ince once the window opens this week. Rangers will not have the same leeway in the market but whatever additions they do secure must make an immediate impact before this miserable campaign unravels entirely.

Man of the match

Luis Suarez (Liverpool)

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 Rudderless Rangers are exposed by super Suarez There are some home defeats in a relegation battle that feel like a setback. Then there are defeats like the one Queen's Park Rangers endured yesterday, in which even to describe them as having gone out with a whimper might be to ascribe rather too much resilience to the first-half performance. Within 10 minutes they were reeling from Luis Suarez's first goal. Within 16 minutes they had flatlined as the Liverpool striker scored the second. When Daniel Agger made it 3-0 in the 28th minute, a QPR fan removed his club jacket and threw it in the direction of the pitch. In keeping with the calamitous nature of his team's day, it blew back towards him. On the touchline, Harry Redknapp frowned and shook his head. He has said in the past that he does not want the owners of the club to have to invest in the team again next month but really, who is he kidding? Both sides must realise they have no alternative, although there can be no guarantees about the success of the remedy. There are 18 games left to play for a team that is bottom of the table and eight points adrift of safety. In the previous 20 seasons of the Premier League only three teams who were bottom on New Year's Day have survived in the division. For the first half at least, QPR had the death rattle about them. It was a performance that was shockingly bereft of anything that might be described as character or purpose, made worse by the fact that Suarez was on the kind of form that makes him hard to stop even for defences that are not manned by Clint Hill, 34, and Ryan Nelsen, 35. Suarez was electrifying, sending Hill the wrong way with a shift of his body and accelerating from a standing start to poke the ball past the goalkeeper Julio Cesar for his first goal. By the time Agger scored, Redknapp said he was worried it could end up an eight- or nine-goal defeat and said he replaced Djibril Ciss[c] with Shaun Derry at half-time for "damage limitation". Redknapp did not explode with anger after the game, although at times you got the impression he would have liked to. Instead he bemoaned what he regarded as the sheer gulf in quality between the two sides and the improbability of anything being able to breach it. "What can you do?" he said. "It's hard. It can happen, being smashed by Liverpool. It can happen on their day." Highlighting his players' shortcomings might be what Redknapp would like to do, but he recognises that will only compound a very bad situation. "I know what the problems are, but I don't want to say them publicly" was as close as he got. Although he did not spare Jose Bosingwa, the player he fined for refusing to be a substitute whom he said pointedly had been "injured ever since the day he wasn't on the bench". Redknapp's key point was that bad though QPR were in the first half yesterday, it was the first time in his seven games in charge that his side had, in his words, "a doing". He added: "I still think we'll stay up. You'll think we're mad, but I think we will." But how could he say anything else? As for Tony Fernandes - QPR's prolific tweeting chairman who was absent when Mark Hughes was sacked - he had made his feelings known on Twitter even before Redknapp had arrived at his post-match press conference. "No excuse. Lost for words. Back to the drawing board. Woeful performance." A quick journey through the QPR team tells its own sorry story. Shaun Wright-Phillips was anonymous. Armand Traor[c] strolled back towards goal when Suarez scored his second and Ciss[c] scarcely had a shot worthy of the name. QPR got it together in the second half but only by sitting Derry in front of what looked like a five-man defence and relying upon Liverpool losing interest. Liverpool are ninth at new year, after only their third away win of the season. They won yesterday without their manager Brendan Rodgers on the touchline, a victim, like goalkeeper Brad Jones, of a stomach virus. It meant that Colin Pascoe, his assistant, was in charge for the day and now has a better win percentage in charge of the club than Bill Shankly. Nevertheless, Pascoe, also ill, was advised by his medical team not to go into the dressing room for the half-time team talk in case he passed on the bug. Mike Marsh took care of that, although by then Liverpool were three up. Suarez scored his second after his cross to Raheem Sterling was blocked. Agger headed the third in from Steven Gerrard's cross. The only worry was Jose Enrique's hamstring tear. For once, this was not about Liverpool's struggles to reinvent themselves under Rodgers. It was about how much worse QPR could get. Next up on Wednesday: Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, with Tottenham and Manchester City to come in the same month. On yesterday's evidence, it looks hopeless. 1,100 Daniel Agger scored the 1,100th Premier League goal of 2012 - a record for a 20-team top-flight year.	 Three and easy: Suarez scores twice in Liverpool stroll over abject QPR He may be suffering from a virus but Brendan Rodgers will never get sick of seeing Luis Suarez score goals. The Liverpool boss was ordered to bed by the club doctor early yesterday. But his star striker filled his boots against a QPR side equally poor at both ends. In fact, Suarez and Liverpool were helped by the worst first-half performance from a Premier League team for years as Harry Redknapp's men barely broke sweat to infuriate their fans. If Rangers reproduce that display at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday then Chelsea will score even more than the eight goals with which they destroyed Aston Villa last week. And yet you wouldn't bet against it because Rangers right now are a mess. A team overloaded with average players enjoying one last big pay day. A team whose limitations were brutally laid bare in front of millions of TV viewers. Liverpool, to be blunt, are a mid-table side who have failed to beat any of the teams in the top 10 so far this season. A side that had won just one of their previous six away games in the Premier League before this bloodless victory. A team beaten 3-1 at Stoke on Boxing Day. At Loftus Road, however, they took ruthless advantage of QPR's failure to turn up for a fixture they actually won last season. And now, for all their inconsistencies, Rodgers' men sit eight points off the Champions League places with striking reinforcements on the way in the January transfer window. The rout started with Suarez, who turned defender Clint Hill on the edge of the box before sending a low drive into the bottom corner after 10 minutes. It was the 14th time this season that QPR had conceded the opening goal and in the 16th minute Liverpool doubled their advantage. Again it was Suarez whose low ball into the box from the byline was cleared back into his path by Nedum Onuoha. With an instinctive swing of his left foot, Suarez swept the ball into the back of the net giving keeper Julio Cesar no chance. Suarez has now scored eight Premier League goals away from home, more than any other top-flight player this season. Daniel Agger capped the rout with a near-post header from Steven Gerrard's cross after 28 minutes to make it three. The home fans laid into their own players with chants of "You're only here for the money" as the Rangers players continued to go through the motions. There was no pressure on the ball, no tackling, no heart, no hunger, no desire and no way back after Agger's goal. Indeed, it was the first time the Reds had hit three goals inside half an hour of a Premier League away game since May 2011 when they beat Fulham 5-2. And had Liverpool not taken their foot off the gas in the second half it could have been even more embarrassing. Instead, the Reds were satisfied with the points that put them ninth in the Premier League. They will have to wait a few days to receive the praise of their boss, with Rodgers expected to be ill for several more days. Rodgers' assistant, Colin Pascoe, deputised in the dugout. But Pascoe revealed he too had been ordered to stay away from the players as he also was showing signs of the bug. On the performance, Pascoe said: "The way Luis put his chances away, and his movement, was fantastic. "That's probably the best we have played for a long time with the display in the first half. The way we took our chances was pleasing. "It was a great result from the lads and the way we performed in the first half secured the win. We were disappointed with the defeat by Stoke and the response from the players was terrific." As for QPR, Redknapp maintains they can still stay up. If they are to do so, he will need to draft in some urgent quality, because right now there are no easy games in the Premier League – except against his team.
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Reds rout is perfect medicine for sick boss Brendan Rodgers

THIS was the best kind of medicine for Brendan Rodgers.

As the Liverpool FC boss lay watching at home after being struck down by the Norovirus, 200 miles away in the capital his players delivered for him emphatically.

The Reds overcame the absence of the Northern Irishman to produce the perfect response to their painful Boxing Day setback at Stoke.

Queens Park Rangers were ruthlessly put to the sword during a hopelessly one-sided opening 45 minutes.

Harry Redknapp's lowly outfit had no answer to the magical talents of Luis Suarez, who struck twice before Daniel Agger's header wrapped up the points.

Suarez was the chief tormentor but the supporting cast more than played their part as Liverpool were out of sight before the interval.

QPR were woeful and appear doomed to relegation. However, the fact is they simply weren't allowed to play as the Reds wrestled control from the start and refused to let go.

The performance continued Liverpool's recent habit of lurching from one extreme to the other. The final fortnight of 2012 has been some ride.

From the desperate low of losing 3-1 at home to Aston Villa to the 4-0 thrashing of Fulham. From the abject 3-1 capitulation to Stoke to yesterday's demolition of QPR. They need to break that pattern when Sunderland come to Anfield on Wednesday.

There are signs of progress but unless some consistency can be found with the assistance of some new recruits in 2013 then Liverpool will fail to rise from mid-table mediocrity.

Having woken up yesterday morning feeling unwell, Rodgers was assessed by club doctor Zaf Iqbal who informed him he had a contagious virus which would force him to miss the match. The Reds' head of performance Glen Driscoll and keeper Brad Jones were diagnosed with the same illness.

The trio left London around midday with Rodgers arriving back on Merseyside in time to watch the match on television.

With Rodgers having already picked the team, it was left to assistant boss Colin Pascoe and first team coach Mike Marsh to carry out the final preparations.

Whatever was said did the trick as the Reds dominated from the start. The passing was slick and the movement intelligent as QPR were carved apart time and time again.

Suarez couldn't hide his disgust at the end of the defeat to Stoke as he turned on his heels and raced straight off down the tunnel at the final whistle.

That sense of hurt had clearly lingered as he tore into the home side. Suarez stung Julio Cesar's palms with a sweetly-struck drive early on and by the 10th minute the Reds were in front thanks to the brilliance of the Uruguayan.

Jordan Henderson picked out Suarez 25 yards out and QPR made the fatal error of giving him space to operate in. The striker duly embarrassed defender Clint Hill, poking the ball past him and bursting through to send a clinical finish into the bottom corner.

Just six minutes later Suarez doubled his tally. He latched on to Stewart Downing's pass down the right and raced into the penalty box.

His low cross towards Raheem Sterling was blocked by Nedum Onuoha but it dropped kindly to Suarez who hammered home from close range for his 13th league goal of the campaign.

The fresh legs in midfield provided by Joe Allen and Henderson, who had replaced Jonjo Shelvey and Lucas Leiva, added a welcome injection of energy.

A third change from the Stoke defeat saw Suso replaced by Raheem Sterling, who after an uncertain first half started to show his old club what they're missing.

There was a real hunger and desire about Liverpool as they poured forward in search of greater reward.

Glen Johnson got inside Armand Traore as he latched on to Martin Skrtel's lofted pass and his cross-shot was hacked over his own bar by Ryan Nelsen. The pressure was incessant with Steven Gerrard's strike then fumbled by Cesar.

Just before the half hour mark the points were secure. Downing took a short corner to Gerrard who whipped in the perfect cross for the unmarked Agger to guide a header past Cesar.

It could have got worse for QPR before the break with Suarez again causing havoc in the area and finding Gerrard whose deflected shot was cleared off the line by Nelsen.

The only threat from the hosts in the first half came from Adel Taarabt but Pepe Reina was equal to the Moroccan's long-range efforts.

With Pascoe also feeling unwell, the Welshman passed his notes on to Marsh to deliver the half-time team talk. Liverpool were taking no chances and their attempts to ensure the virus doesn't spread through the squad saw Pascoe travel home separately from the squad last night.

After the fireworks of the opening 45 minutes, the second half was largely a non-event.

Redknapp was clearly only interested in damage limitation as he withdrew former Reds striker Djibril Cisse and replaced him with defensive midfielder Shaun Derry.

Having thrown away a 2-0 lead to lose 3-2 at Loftus Road back in March, Liverpool

were intent on ensuring there would be no repeat. Rather than throwing caution to the wind, they sat back and were happy to hit QPR on the counter attack.

Suarez went close to completing his hat-trick after being teed up by Sterling but his fierce strike was brilliantly turned over the bar by Cesar.

Just past the hour mark Lucas came on for Henderson and the Reds then suffered a setback when Jose Enrique pulled up clutching his hamstring. The crestfallen Spaniard limped off with Suso replacing him.

Reina denied Stephane Mbia a consolation before Jamie Carragher came on for a late cameo in place of Allen.

Suarez was the game's outstanding performer but Gerrard wasn't far behind. The skipper has played every minute of every league game so far this term and at Loftus Road he was relentless. In stoppage time Gerrard was still straining every sinew, flying into tackles and winning back possession.

Rodgers will have enjoyed the show from his sickbed.

Now standards must be maintained.



LFC provide Brendan Rodgers with a New Year pick-me-up

LIVERPOOL FC provided an ill Brendan Rodgers with the perfect pick-me-up – as resounding win against Queens Park Rangers.

The Reds boss was forced to watch today's game at Loftus Road from home after picking up a virus overnight but in his absence, Liverpool produced one of their best displays since he took the job.

Assistant manager Colin Pascoe was charged with looking after the team in London and oversaw a comprehensive victory over the Premier League's bottom club.

The exceptional display of Luis Suarez will have brought a smile to the face of an under-the-weather Rodgers as the Uruguayan terrorised a fragile QPR defence and helped Liverpool move up one place to ninth in the table.

Suarez scored twice with centre-half Daniel Agger adding the third before half an hour had been played.

The home fans were in disbelief and some of them even left the ground early.

Liverpool dominated enough to have added to the scoreline and to have hammered home just how wide the gulf was between the sides.

But a mixture of last-gasp defending from QPR – to deny Steven Gerrard and Glen Johnson – and an understandable drop in the tempo after half-time, meant Liverpool's lead remained at three.

But having come into the game on the back of a humbling defeat at the hands of Stoke City on Boxing Day, the Reds can hardly be choosy.

Indeed, they could not have asked for a better performance in the first-half as they were rampant against a decidedly poor home side.

Suarez was the chief tormentor this afternoon, running rings round the QPR back four.

And in particular Clint Hill, the man he bamboozled to open the scoring after just 10 minutes.

The Liverpool striker swerved inside Hill, found a burst of pace to stride into the area and then side-footed past Julio Cesar to put the Reds ahead.

His second, six minutes later, came from his endeavour but owed much to generous QPR defending as he smashed home to the rebound from his own cross.

And just before the half hour mark, Liverpool made it 3-0 when Steven Gerrard's cross was met by Agger's expert header.

Liverpool were unable to add to the scoreline but the win was still their biggest at Loftus Road.

QUEENS PARK RANGERS (4-4-2) Cesar, Onuoha, Nelson, Hill, Traore, Mackie, Diakite (Granero 63), Mbia, Wright-Phillips (da Silva 80), Taarabt, Cisse (Derry 46).
Subs: Green, Derry, Ferdinand, Granero, da Silva, Hoilett, Faurlin.
Goals: None
Cautions: Mbia, da Silva.
Red Cards: None

LIVERPOOL (4-2-3-1) Reina, Johnson, Skrtel, Agger, Enrique (Suso 71), Gerrard ©, Allen (Carragher 87), Downing, Henderson (Lucas 63) Sterling, Suarez.
Subs: Gulacsi, Assaidi, Coates, Lucas, Carragher, Suso, Shelvey.
Goals: Suarez (10, 16) Agger (27)
Cautions: Lucas
Red Cards: None
Referee: Anthony Taylor
Attendance: 18, 304
Next Match v Sunderland (H) January 2, 7.45pm kick-off

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BBC

Times

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Standard

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Evening

Standard

Suarez double sends Redknapp's QPR closer to relegation

During a relegation battle, some home defeats can feel like a setback.

Then there are defeats like the one Queen's Park Rangers endured yesterday, in which even to describe them as having gone out with a whimper might be to ascribe rather too much resilience to the first half performance.

Within ten minutes they were reeling from Luis Suarez's first goal. Within 16 minutes they had flatlined as the Liverpool striker scored the second. When Daniel Agger made it 3-0 in the 28th minute, a QPR fan removed his club jacket and threw it in the direction of the pitch. In keeping with the calamitous nature of his team's day, it blew back towards him.

On the touchline, Harry Redknapp frowned and shook his head. He has said in the past that he does not want the owners of the club to have to invest in the team again next month but really, who is he kidding? Both sides must realise they have no alternative although there can be no guarantees about the success of the remedy.

There are 18 games left to play for a team that is bottom of the table and eight points adrift of safety. In the previous 20 seasons of the Premier League only three teams who were bottom on New Year's Day have survived in the division. For the first half at least, QPR had the death rattle about them.

It was a performance that was shockingly bereft of anything that might be described as character or purpose, made worse by the fact that Suarez was on the kind of form that makes him hard to stop even for defences that are not manned by Clint Hill, 34, and Ryan Nelsen, 35.

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Redknapp did not explode with anger after the game, although at times you got the impression he would have liked to. Instead he bemoaned what he regarded as the sheer gulf in quality between the two sides and the improbability of anything being able to breach it. "What can you do?" he said. "It's hard. It can happen, being smashed by Liverpool. It can happen on their day."

Highlighting his players' shortcomings might be what Redknapp would like to do, but he recognises that will only compound a very bad situation. "I know what the problems are, but I don't want to say them publically" was as close as he got. Although he did not spare Jose Bosingwa, the player he fined for refusing to be a substitute whom he said pointedly had been "injured ever since the day he wasn't on the bench".

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As for Tony Fernandes – QPR's prolific tweeting chairman who was absent when Mark Hughes was sacked – he had made his feelings known on Twitter even before Redknapp had arrived at his post-match press conference. "No excuse. Lost for words. Back to the drawing board. Woeful performance."

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Nevertheless, Pascoe, also ill, was advised by his medical team not to go into the dressing room for the half-time team talk in case he passed on the bug. Mike Marsh took care of that, although by then Liverpool were three up. Suarez scored his second after his cross to Raheem Sterling was blocked. Agger headed the third in from Steven Gerrard's cross. The only worry was Jose Enrique's hamstring tear. For once, this was not about Liverpool's struggles to reinvent themselves under Rodgers. It was about how much worse QPR could get. Next up on Wednesday: Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, with Tottenham and Manchester City to come in the same month. On yesterday's evidence, it looks hopeless.

BBC

A woeful QPR display intensified their relegation fears as they were beaten by a Luis Suarez-inspired Liverpool.

Reds' boss Brendan Rodgers was absent from the game with a bug but Suarez twice capitalised on poor defending to put the visitors 2-0 ahead.

QPR were denied a penalty when Adel Taarabt's free-kick hit the arm of Jordan Henderson, before Daniel Agger headed in Liverpool's third.

Steven Gerrard's shot was cleared off QPR's goal-line as the Reds won easily. Bottom-of-the-table QPR tamely went down to a 12th league defeat in 20 games this season and had the air of a side resigned to relegation, with eight points separating them from safety.

They had seen fellow bottom three sides Reading win and Southampton draw on Saturday and, while the least QPR might have showed is the stomach for a survival fight, they were missing that quality to an alarming scale.

Liverpool were quicker, hungrier and stronger and, although they were allowed the freedom to dominate the game, they did so with some delightful play which should help Rodgers feel better.

The livewire and menacing Suarez was again key to their win and he put his side 2-0 up in the first 16 minutes.

He jinked past a defender and had a 20-yard shot parried away, before giving his side the lead when he eased past centre-back Clint Hill and slotted a shot into the bottom corner.

The Uruguayan's second came when his low cross was cleared back to him by the sliding Nedum Onuoha to leave Suarez to side-foot in his 13th league goal of the season.

QPR playmaker Taarabt had a fair shout for a penalty when his free-kick hit the arm of Henderson, although referee Anthony Taylor was unmoved.

But QPR were crumbling against the endeavour and quality of the visitors and conceded a third when Agger headed in Gerrard's cross.

Soon after, Suarez shrugged off defenders Onuoha and Ryan Nelsen, before teeing up Gerrard - whose shot was cleared off the goal-line.

QPR fans booed their side off at half-time and their side continued to be outplayed after the break.

A Suarez shot was well saved by Julio Cesar, while Henderson shot high.

QPR midfielder Stephane Mbia curled a rare shot wide but the efforts came way too late.

The home side were 2-0 down with 13 minutes left against Liverpool last season before rescuing a 3-2 win which kick-started them beating the drop.

There was no such turnaround this time around, with Chelsea and Tottenham next up in the top flight for the Loftus Road club.

Liverpool assistant manager Colin Pascoe:

"That's probably the best we have played for a long time with the display in the first half. The way we took our chances was pleasing.

"Luis Suarez is superb. He's a maverick. He creates chances for himself, finishes them and is a great lad.

"It was great result from the lads and the way we performed in the first half secured the win. We were disappointed with the defeat by Stoke on Boxing Day and the response from the players was terrific."

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