Date: 13 April 2013
Opposition: Reading
Competition: League

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13 April 2013

THE TIMES

Rodgers finds reasons to be cheerful after 'superhuman' earns a draw

Reading 0
Liverpool 0
Referee M Clattenburg Attendance 24,139

This was not at all a difficult match for Brendan Rodgers, the Liverpool manager, to smile about. Yes, this was the second goalless draw in succession against opposition whom his team had been expected to defeat, but Liverpool had summoned 26 shots, 15 of them on target and were unfortunate to discover that Reading had a reserve goalkeeper, Alex McCarthy, who, in spite of being rusty, was in near-superhuman form.

Rodgers has been in far less comfortable situations in his first season at Anfield, so, even though he was questioned about his determination not to mix tactics and about Andy Carroll's scoring exploits while on loan from Liverpool to West Ham United, the Anfield manager beamed.

"It's straightforward, when you believe in something inherently, it's relatively straightforward," he said when asked where he finds the strength to stick to his philosophy in the face of criticism.

"And I think if you ask the players, they will tell you they have enjoyed the season's work. The team had problems scoring goals last season; that hasn't been the case this season. We're one of the highest scorers in the league, so it shows the balance and creativity is getting better and I feel if we can add quality to the ranks in the summer, that can take us on again."

Rodgers's analysis holds up if you assess the final 20 minutes of this game, when Reading truly found themselves under the cosh. But Reading's ability to cling on and indeed create bother of their own was fuelled by Liverpool's slightly tentative approach. It would be harsh to conclude that Liverpool took their dominance for granted, but for much of the game they seemed to lack urgency, although Nigel Adkins's preparation of Reading should not be overlooked.

"We knew Liverpool were an excellent football side, so from a defensive point of view we had to put certain barriers in p lace to limit the opportunities for them to score," the Reading manager said. "They weren't able to play it out from the back because we locked on to some good positions -- Pepe [Reina] had to kick it. We did really well, they're a good side."

RATINGS

Reading (4-4-1-1): A McCarthy 9 -- C Gunter 7, S Morrison 6, A Mariappa 6, S Kelly 6 -- J McAnuff 6, D Guthrie 5, J Karacan 5 (sub: D Carrico, 57 5), G McCleary 5 -- N Hunt 5 (sub: A Le Fondre, 79) -- P Pogrebnyak 5 (sub: N Blackman, 73). Substitutes not used: A Pearce, M Leigertwood, I Harte, S Taylor. Booked: Guthrie, Blackman.

Liverpool (4-2-3-1): J M Reina 6 -- G Johnson 5, J Carragher 5, D Agger 6, J Enrique 4 -- S Gerrard 7, Lucas Leiva 5 -- D Sturridge 6, P Coutinho 7, J Henderson 5 (sub: S Downing, 57) -- L Suarez 7. Substitutes not used: B Jones, O Assaidi, S Coates, Suso, J Shelvey, M Skrtel.

Booked: Lucas.

theguardian

McCarthy is simply the best, says Rodgers

Reading 0
Liverpool 0

Brendan Rodgers in his time as Liverpool manager has developed a reputation for making grand statements, yet the one he delivered after this game seemed appropriate. Asked if he felt Alex McCarthy's display for Reading was the best he had seen by a goalkeeper, Rodgers was in no doubt. "I can't remember being at a game where a goalkeeper has performed like that," he said. "He was brilliant."

McCarthy's showing did not surprise Rodgers. He was the Reading manager in 2009 when the player was making his name in the club's academy. Rodgers sent McCarthy on loan to Yeovil but knew he would return to stake a claim for a place in the first team.

His opportunity came this season when he was chosen by Brian McDermott for the visit of Tottenham. McCarthy became the team's No1 until a shoulder injury picked up in early November checked his momentum.

This was his first appearance since then, having undergone an operation, and it ended with the former England Under-21 international having made 10 saves.

"It was nice to come back with a bang," he said. "This was the first injury that's kept me out for more than a couple of weeks so it's disappointing. But I'm now where I want to be."

McCarthy, who "modelled my game on Petr Cech", was the only Reading player to emerge from the game with credit. His outfield colleagues displayed the tentativeness of a side sat at the foot of the Premier League. The hosts, who are 10 points from safety, were overwhelmed by a Liverpool team in which Phillippe Coutinho, Daniel Sturridge and Luis Suarez moved with fluidity and pace.

There was frustration, then, for the visitors on a day when the 96 Liverpool supporters who died at the Hillsborough disaster, the 24th anniversary of which is today, had been remembered before the kick-off with a minute's silence. For Rodgers, however, positives could be taken. "Everyone can see we've improved," he said.

Man of the match
Alex McCarthy (Reading)

Compiled by Graeme Riley

Date: 13 April 2013
Opposition: Reading
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13 April 2013

The Mail

Alex in Wonderland! Rodgers predicts Reading stopper McCarthy will be new England keeper

Brendan Rodgers predicted that Alex McCarthy will become England's No 1 after the Reading goalkeeper produced a stunning display to dent Liverpool's hopes of European football.

The 23-year-old, on his return to the Premier League after six months out with a shoulder injury, kept Liverpool at bay with a string of outstanding saves, which bemused Steven Gerrard and Luis Suarez.

Reading fans will be wondering what their season would have been like if McCarthy had not collided with a goalpost at Loftus Road in November. And will they now be able to keep a player who is likely to be a target for top clubs?

Rodgers said: 'I've known Alex a long time and he has always had the quality to be top keeper. Today he gave a staggering performance. He's 6ft 5in tall, he makes outstanding saves and he's also very calm and assured. Can he go on to become the England goalkeeper? Yes he can — he's that good.

'It will be difficult for him because Joe Hart is one of the top five goalkeepers in the world and he is only a young man. So Alex may have to be patient. But he is definitely good enough.

'Some of our creativity and interchanging was outstanding. 'We had 14 shots on target and could not have done more. But you have to give credit to the Reading boys. Apart from Alex McCarthy, they defended when they had to and threw their bodies on the line.'

In a one-sided first half, McCarthy stood between Liverpool and a glut of goals. With Reading understandably nervous following a run of eight successive defeats, Rodgers's team controlled the play with some assured passing and sliced through the home defence.

In the 15th minute Suarez chipped the ball over the stranded McCarthy, but Chris Gunter raced back to clear off the line. When Gerrard sent Daniel Sturridge racing clear, the striker was thwarted by McCarthy's rush from goal and the goalkeeper then went full-length to push Philippe Coutinho's 20-yard shot from the rebound away.

It seemed only a matter of time before Reading would crack. But whatever manager Nigel Adkins said at half-time worked wonders. Reading, so tentative in the first half, gained confidence and began to take the game to Liverpool. Pepe Reina had to earn his money with a point-blank save from Noel Hunt then sprang to turn over Jobi McAnuff's shot.

All this, though, was a prelude to McCarthy's finale. Gerrard was clearly astounded when his 18-yard shot towards the top corner was tipped away, then Suarez hit two thundering efforts from inside the area, which the goalkeeper kept out — one of them, a meaty volley, he even held.

Adkins said: 'Alex will get all the headlines, and rightly so. But I was pleased with the attitude of the whole team. After three games here I can now see signs of improvement.'

As for Liverpool, next season will test whether they can get back into the top four. And they will hope they do not meet many goalkeepers like McCarthy.

MATCH FACTS

Reading: McCarthy, Gunter, Mariappa, Morrison, Kelly, McCleary, Karacan (Carrico 57), Guthrie, McAnuff, Pogrebnyak (Blackman 73), Hunt (Le Fondre 79).
Subs Not Used: Taylor, Pearce, Leigertwood, Harte.
Booked: Guthrie, Blackman.
Liverpool: Reina, Johnson, Agger, Carragher, Jose Enrique, Henderson (Downing 57), Gerrard, Lucas, Coutinho, Suarez, Sturridge. Subs Not Used: Jones, Assaidi, Coates, Suso, Shelvey, Skrtel.
Booked: Lucas.
Att: 24,139
Ref: Mark Clattenburg (Tyne & Wear).

The Daily Telegraph

Downing vows to keep up the fight

Reading 0
Liverpool 0
Att: 24,139

Stewart Downing has promised that Liverpool will not give up on this season after they fell further behind rivals Everton.

Downing is well qualified to talk about persistence. The midfielder's desire was publicly questioned by Brendan Rodgers earlier in the season, but in the build-up to this match he was told by the manager that he is now part of his long-term plans. Quite a turnaround for the [pounds sterling]20 million signing since last season when he produced no goals or assists.

"We won't let the season peter out," Downing said. "The manager certainly won't let that happen. He has stressed that we keep going right to the end and see what happens."

Liverpool trail sixth-placed Everton by five points and fifth-placed Tottenham by eight, and have played a game more. "There are going to be slip-ups along the way but it's going to be tough for us, there's no hiding that. We have another big game coming up against Chelsea."

A failure to reach Europe - and finishing below David Moyes's men for a second season in a row - would be painful in the short-term but might be offset by long-term benefits.

Rodgers' squad is taking shape in his image and next season, following a summer of recruitment, could be one in which a top-four place is a realistic target. Not having the distraction of the Europa League would help in that aim.

"This season was always going to be a transition time, with new ideas and players," Downing added. "Next season is a big test for us. He [Rodgers] has most of the players he wants and we have to crack on."

Rodgers agreed: "The creativity is there. For us to get to the next level, we need to bring in a few extra bits of quality."

The harsh reality for Liverpool is that any team good enough to challenge for the top four would not fail to score after 26 shots against the bottom team. "Some of the chances we had, instead of making the keeper save them, we should have put them away," Downing admitted. "That's been our downfall."

Reading goalkeeper Alex McCarthy deserved praise, though, giving a display that led Rodgers to talk him up as a potential England player. "He produced the best goalkeeping performance that probably anybody in this stadium has ever seen in their lives," the Liverpool manager said.

McCarthy's most eye-catching stops kept out Steven Gerrard, Luis Suarez, and a five-yard effort from his former England Under-21 team-mate Daniel Sturridge.

The Reading goalkeeper, who models his game on Petr Cech, said: "England are blessed with really good, young keepers. Hopefully I'll get my chance soon enough."

Compiled by Graeme Riley

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13 April 2013

THE INDEPENDENT

McCarthy's keeping 'best I've seen' – Rodgers

Brendan Rodgers could only applaud the performance of the Reading goalkeeper Alex McCarthy on Saturday, even though it cost his Liverpool side two points.
It was, Rodgers said, the best goalkeeping display he had ever seen and he spoke with admiration and, as a former Reading manager, some pride about the heroics of the 23-year-old.
When asked if he had ever seen anything better, Rodgers had not. "I can't recall," said the Liverpool manager. "I was just sat in the changing room with the staff, and I can't remember being at a game where a keeper has made a goalkeeping performance like that, either as a manager or a coach or just being a spectator. Normally you get goalkeepers who make one save or two saves that make the difference. But the young guy made an incredible number of saves - and then when he was beaten it was cleared off the line."
Luis Suarez, Steven Gerrard, Daniel Sturridge, Stewart Downing and Philippe Coutinho were all denied by McCarthy. Having seen them create so many chances, Rodgers refused to blame his own players for failing to beat a team who had lost seven straight league games before Saturday.
"You can't go at the players and say, 'You've had 25 shots at goal, you've had 14 shots on target, good opportunities, defended the counter-attack well and you were on the front foot for most of the game.' You've just got to give credit to Reading, and they have a goalkeeper who probably produced the best goalkeeping performance that anyone in this stadium has ever seen in their lives."
The result leaves Liverpool eight points away from fifth place in the Premier League and unlikely to qualify for Europe, but Rodgers was fairly positive about his first season at Anfield, now drawing to a close.
"There haven't been too many games when we haven't played well," he said. "I could count them on one hand. Our creativity is there, the balance is getting better, and if we can add some quality to the ranks in the summer that can take us on again."
If that felt slightly generous, it had nothing on the relentlessly uncompromising optimism of Nigel Adkins, whose team are bottom, seven points from safety with only five games left to play. "There is a positivity moving forward," the Reading manager said, not for the first time. "It's an old adage but a good one: we just focus on one game at a time."

DAILY Mirror

JEWEL BE A STAR; Reading have unearthed a real gem as McCarthy shines bright

READING 0 LIVERPOOL 0
READING keeper Alex McCarthy turned in a diamond display to keep out Liverpool's striking gems.
The 23-year-old has a sideline business in jewellery, and had more time to spend on it during a lay-off for three and a half months following shoulder surgery.
But his main work has lost none of its sparkle, with a string of impressive saves on his return earning rock-bottom Reading a point and some pride.
And Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers hailed it as the best goalkeeping performance he had ever seen. McCarthy said: "It was nice to come back with a bang like that. It's probably the best performance I've ever had.
"It's been frustrating - it was my first major injury that's kept me out for more than a couple of weeks so it's disappointing going from playing to being in the treatment room.
"To come back with a performance like that is a great boost to confidence. It was a busy day but that's what I'm there for."
After Chris Gunter headed a Luis Suarez (left) effort off the line early on it turned into the McCarthy show - with Suarez, Steven Gerrard, Daniel Sturridge and Philippe Coutinho repeatedly denied.
The one time McCarthy was beaten, by a secondhalf Coutinho backheel, the offside flag meant it did not count.
Rodgers, who was Reading boss for six months in 2009, said: "Normally y goalkeepers make one or two saves that make a difference, but Alex made an incredible number of saves and when he was beat it was cleared off the line.
"It was a brilliant goalkeeping performance.
"He was always one that the guys here felt was going to be a top goalkeeper and you saw in this match that he has all the qualities to succeed."
The Royals' No.1 certainly adds to the potentially rosy goalkeeping future for England, with 20-year-old Jack Butland having already featured in Roy Hodgson's squad.
Academy product McCarthy looks to Chelsea for inspiration. He said: "I've sort of modelled my game on Petr Cech. I think we're the same sort of stature.
"I take a lot out of his game. I look at a lot of other goalkeepers but I think he's up there with the best. Mentally, he's a character, he's very strong and doesn't let anything affect him.
"You can see that by his week-in, week-out performances."
For Liverpool, chasing down Everton for sixth place and city bragging rights looks like their only realistic remaining target - and a five-point gap making even that a stretch.
But Stewart Downing, another to be denied by McCarthy after coming off the bench, insists Liverpool want to have more to play for this time next year.
He said: "We won't let the season peter out. The manager certainly won't let that happen. He's stressed that we keep going right to the end and see what happens.
"It was always going to be not a difficult season, but a transition one with new ideas, new players.
"I think we've adapted quite well. Next season is a big test. He has most of the players that he wants in the squad and that's when we have to crack on."
READING RUN-IN
Saturday Norwich (a)
Apr 28 QPR (h)
May 4 Fulham (a)
May 12 Man City (h)
May 19 West Ham (a)
LIVERPOOL RUN-IN
Sunday Chelsea (h)
Apr 27 Newcastle (a)
May 4 Everton (h)
May 12 Fulham (a)
May 19 QPR (h)
READING: McCarthy 8, Gunter 6, Mariappa 6, Morrison 6, Kelly 6, McCleary 5, Karacan 5 (Carrico 57, 6), Guthrie 5, McAnuff 6, Hunt 5 (Le Fondre 79), Pogrebnyak 5 (Blackman 73, 6).
LIVERPOOL: Reina 6, Johnson 6, Agger 6, Carragher 6, Enrique 6, Gerrard 6, Lucas 6, Henderson 6 (Downing 57, 6), Coutinho 7, Sturridge 6, Suarez 7.
REFEREE: Mark Clattenburg ATTENDANCE: 24,139

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13 April 2013

LIVERPOOL ECHO

Stats can't mask stark reality of Euro hopes disappearing for LFC

THE statistics were there for Liverpool FC to cling on to like a comfort blanket. They told the story of an afternoon of total domination. Brendan Rodgers' side had enjoyed 64% possession, mustering 26 attempts on goal of which 15 were on target. Yet somehow they conspired to walk away from the Madejski Stadium with only a share of the spoils.

Of course there were mitigating circumstances. The Reds had the misfortune of coming up against a goalkeeper who enjoyed the game of his life.

Rodgers described Alex McCarthy's performance as "absolutely staggering" and the tributes paid to Reading's Academy graduate were richly deserved.

Somehow McCarthy, making his first appearance for five months after Adam Federici was ruled out with an ankle injury, managed to repel the Reds' late onslaught as Steven Gerrard and Luis Suarez were left gazing in disbelief at his heroics. "I don't think our players could have done any more," was Rodgers' assessment and you could understand the sentiment.

There was no shortage of desire or commitment and for long periods Liverpool were slick and inventive as they created a host of opportunities.

However, the painful reality is that they failed to beat a desperately poor Reading side who are heading for the Championship. The Reds' profligacy was infuriating as the lack of a killer instinct in the final third cost them dear.

No matter how good McCarthy was, the talented shot-stopper doesn't possess 8ft long arms and there were times when he should have been taken out of the equation. Top teams find a way to win even when not at their best, but Liverpool simply don't have that ability. Their recent past is littered with examples of failing to make their dominance count and this was another hard luck tale for the collection with pleas of 'we deserved more'.

Ruthlessness is a quality still lacking in Rodgers' squad and that's an issue which needs to be addressed when the Northern Irishman makes his moves in the transfer market this summer. When Luis Suarez isn't at his brilliant best, Liverpool don't possess enough players capable of taking the goal burden off his shoulders. The Uruguayan frontman endured another frustrating afternoon and his wait to become the first Reds player since Fernando Torres in 2007/08 to score 30 goals in a season goes on. It's now more than seven hours of football since he last found the net against Tottenham. Rodgers insisted fatigue isn't a factor but whatever the reason, Suarez's sky-high standards have slipped.

Similarly, strike partner Daniel Sturridge is still struggling to recapture the heights he initially hit following his January move from Chelsea.

You couldn't fault his work rate on Saturday after he was recalled at the expense of Stewart Downing, but too often Sturridge took the wrong option and his wayward finishing showcased a lack of composure. It's the first time under Rodgers that the Reds have fired blanks in two successive matches and this stalemate effectively ended any lingering hopes of European qualification.

With five games remaining, the manager's task now is to ensure that the campaign doesn't just peter out. The upcoming home clashes with Chelsea and Everton are important not only in terms of pride but also in laying down a marker for next season. If Liverpool continue to stutter and finish a distant seventh or lower, arguments about progress being made will sound hollow.

Having been asked to invest in youth and build for the long term, this summer is not the time to be making judgements on Rodgers' reign. After such sweeping changes, this was always going to be a campaign of transition. The majority of fans understand that and admire the style of play the Northern Irishman has installed. w under his belt to reshape the squad and only domestic action to focus on next term, Rodgers will know that the bar must be raised.

Before kick-off Liverpool managing director Ian Ayre and Reading owner Anton Zingarevich carried a floral tribute into the centre circle in memory of the 96 who died at Hillsborough. The minute's silence was impeccably observed but the rapport between the two sets of supporters didn't last long.

The travelling Kop's chant of 'We're all going to have a party now Maggie Thatcher's dead', which was followed by the conga in the away end, prompted boos from the former Prime Minister's admirers amongst the home fans.

'You picked on the wrong city' and 'You didn't care when you lied, we don't care you died' were two of the more polite banners, but the role of Thatcher's Conservative Government in the cover-up of Hillsborough was seemingly lost on the population of Berkshire. Rodgers opted to play Philippe Coutinho in a central role behind Suarez with Sturridge on the right and Jordan Henderson on the other flank. Coutinho was a constant menace and one classy pass sent Suarez scampering clear early on. The Reds' top scorer clipped a shot past McCarthy but Chris Gunter got back to head off the line.

With Steven Gerrard stamping his authority on the game, the chances kept on coming. After the skipper won back possession, Sturridge saw his effort blocked by McCarthy, who then tipped behind Coutinho's low drive.

Sturridge pounced on an error from Gunter to tee up Suarez but his first-time strike was parried and Gerrard's follow up was deflected past the post by Adrian Mariappa. Just before the break Coutinho lashed over when well placed before McCarthy kept out Sturridge's point-blank strike.

The second half merely brought more of the same. Coutinho turned in Gerrard's cross but it was rightly ruled out for offside and the Brazilian then shaved the upright with a side-footer from the edge of the box.

Downing replaced Henderson and the reshuffle saw Sturridge moved into the centre alongside Suarez. Reading, who had suffered seven straight league defeats, took encouragement from the Reds' generosity and briefly threatened to grab a shock lead. Twice, Pepe Reina came to the rescue, first denying Noel Hunt with his legs before tipping over Jobi McAnuff's deflected shot. Liverpool responded but Reina could only watch in admiration as McCarthy stood firm.

The home keeper did brilliantly to palm away Gerrard's piledriver and then remarkably clung on to Suarez's blistering volley from eight yards out.

In a frenetic finale Sturridge blasted over when clean through and in stoppage time McCarthy thwarted both Suarez and Gerrard. There was no happy return to the Madejski for Rodgers as miraculously the doomed Royals survived.

DAILY POST

IT'S always the ones you least suspect who hurt you the most. Brendan Rodgers already knew Alex McCarthy well before this game. After it he will have been seeing the Reading keeper's face in his nightmares.

McCarthy, a 23-year-old making just his ninth Premier League appearance, and his first in more than five months, produced the performance of a lifetime.

The 6ft 4ins stopper repelled everything Liverpool threw at him. The point his heroics earned does little for Reading's survival hopes, but his display will live long in the memory. McCarthy denied Luis Suarez on three separate occasions, and kept out further efforts from Daniel Sturridge, Philippe Coutinho, Steven Gerrard and Stewart Downing. Liverpool had 26 efforts on goal, 15 of them on target, but instead had to settle for a second goalless draw in as many games. Seventh place is the summit of their ambitions this season, surely?

If that will jar with those Reds supporters raised on a diet of silverware and success, then so be it. This is not the Liverpool of old, this is a side playing catch up, a side capable of excellence but limited by the depth and quality of its players. If they were unlucky not to win this game, and they most certainly were, it was still not that surprising, either. Liverpool fans have seen it all before. Luck is an excuse with a limited shelf life. Rodgers could find little wrong with his side's performance in general. "We did everything right," he said. "We had all of the game, all of the ball, we had 15 shots on target, but we've come up against a goalkeeper who produced perhaps the best performance this stadium has ever seen." He has a point, though there will be frustration at his side's inability to find a way past a side hurtling towards relegation.

Reading are a side short on quality and low on confidence. They would do well to win the Championship with this team. Of course Liverpool dominated. So they should. But with McCarthy inspired and the visiting forwards not, there was no way through. Indeed, were it not for a fine stop from Pepe Reina to deny Noel Hunt, the home side would have pinched all three points. Imagine having to explain that. Rodgers had been bold in his team selection, recalling Sturridge for Stewart Downing. It was a move which added fluidity to Liverpool's attacking play, with the England striker interchanging regularly with Suarez and Coutinho, and Jordan Henderson and Steven Gerrard forever eager to join in from deep, though Sturridge had another afternoon perhaps best forgotten. A late chance hooked into the stands summed it up. With a minute's silence, in memory of the victims of the Hillsborough disaster ahead of Monday's 24th anniversary, impeccably observed by both sets of supporters prior to kick off, there was a low-key feel about the opening exchanges. Indeed, much of the early interest centred around events in the away end. Liverpool fans unveiled banners with messages aimed at Margaret Thatcher, and there were several chants about the late Prime Minister throughout the first half. There was also the surreal sight of travelling fans performing 'The Conga' across the stand. It may draw disapproval from some quarters, but disdain for Thatcher on Merseyside continues to run deep.

On the pitch, it was Suarez, predictably, who had the game's first chance, on 14 minutes. The Uruguayan collected Coutinho's pass after a smart Sturridge dummy, beat McCarthy with his clipped effort, but saw Chris Gunter get back to head off the line. Still, a breakthrough looked inevitable. McCarthy saved low from Sturridge, and then plunged to his left to turn Coutinho's curling effort round the post. Jamie Carragher then headed the resulting corner off target, when he might have done better.

Suarez was next to test the home 'keeper, after seizing upon Gunter's horrendously misdirected square pass, with Adrian Mariappa deflecting Gerrard's follow-up strike behind for a corner. Mariappa was at it again to deny Henderson three minutes before the break, whilst McCarthy made an excellent block to keep out Sturridge at the far post. Daniel Agger headed wide, as Liverpool headed into half time level, and scratching their heads at how.

Their mood will not have improved after the break, either. Coutinho had the ball in the net two minutes after the restart, flicking in Gerrard's cross at the near post. A linesman's flag, however, cut short his celebrations. It was the correct call. Suarez drilled off target, whilst Coutinho's side-footed effort grazed a post.

Rodgers replaced Henderson with Downing in a bid to further stretch the hosts, but was grateful to Reina for producing a fine save of his own to keep out Hunt on 67 minutes, after the Irishman had slid in to meet Pavel Pogrebnyak's excellent low cross. Reina was called into action again 14 minutes from time, turning Jobi McAnuff's deflected effort over the bar. McAnuff also had two tentative penalty

Compiled by Graeme Riley

appeals ignored.
Liverpool, meanwhile, were testing McCarthy at will. Suarez sent a free kick skidding wide from 25 yards, Downing drilled wide after opening up a shooting chance on his left foot, before McCarthy made stunning saves to keep out first Gerrard and then, improbably, Suarez, who had unfurled a fizzing volley from no more than 12 yards.
Sturridge should have broken through in the final minute, but shanked his effort high and wide after Glen Johnson's punt forward. Even then, there was still time for one more McCarthy save, the Reading 'keeper flying to his right to fist away Suarez's powerful strike. It was perhaps a fitting end to a game dominated by one man.

THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

'World class' McCarthy keeps Liverpool at bay

Reading, after seven straight league losses, were always going to need something special to hold off Liverpool yesterday and they found it in goalkeeper Alex McCarthy. Making his first league start for six months, McCarthy delivered one of the performances of the season, making at least 10 saves - half of them excellent - to repel Luis Suarez, Steven Gerrard and the rest.
It will probably not keep Reading in the Premier League. They are now seven points adrift with five games left. They needed to win this game and they never looked like they even believed it was possible, but it did at least bring some pride back to a side whose last few months have not exactly been a resounding triumph.
"It was a fantastic goalkeeping display, after being out for a while," said Royals' manager Nigel Adkins. "Alex pulled off some world-class saves today. He is going to get the headlines but I am really pleased with all of the players."
This was not Liverpool's finest performance of the season and, had Suarez, Gerrard, Daniel Sturridge and Philippe Coutinho played to their very best, they would have scored. But they still created enough chances to, in Brendan Rodgers' accurate judgement, "win two or three games," and it was only through McCarthy's brilliance that they did not.
"I don't think our players could have done any more," said Rodgers. "You have some days like that, where the goalkeeper makes two or three good saves but we had 14 shots on target today."
Rodgers knows McCarthy from his time at Reading and predicted he would have a great career. "He was always a talent, but he's got all the qualities to be a top, top goalkeeper. He's 6ft 5in, with good feet, he's calm and assured."
The first save though, before the master-class began, was from Chris Gunter, who headed off the line when Suarez chipped Coutinho's pass beyond McCarthy. That was the one the goalkeeper missed. His first real contribution was a double save, from Sturridge from close range and then from Coutinho from distance.
When Gunter gave the ball away Sturridge played in Suarez, but McCarthy blocked his shot before Adrian Mariappa got in the way of Gerrard's follow-up. In the final minutes of the half a Suarez corner fell to Sturridge, who forced McCarthy into a reaction save, and Daniel Agger headed the subsequent corner over.
The first half, in truth, was not compelling, with one of the few notable exchanges being between the home and away fans regarding how best to mark the passing of Baroness Thatcher. Both managers claimed not to have heard anything.
Four minutes into the second half Coutinho had a goal disallowed for offside but, from then on, McCarthy was unbeatable. Coutinho shot wide from Sturridge's pull-back, and the introduction of Stewart Downing added more impetus.
Reading did have a brief flurry with 20 minutes left, with Noel Hunt failing to turn Pavel Pogrebnyak's cross beyond Pepe Reina, but the rest of the action was all at the opposite end.
McCarthy blocked from Suarez again, with eight minutes left, before making a remarkable reflex save from Gerrard soon after. Sturridge then headed the ball down to Suarez, whose ferocious 10-yard volley was repelled by the inspired keeper. Downing cut inside and, aiming for the corner, dragged his shot wide.
Even in added time there were more saves, even after Sturridge volleyed over. Suarez's curler with the outside of his right boot was flying towards the top corner, but McCarthy reached it, and then Gerrard's characteristic last-kick blast he dived down to block.
Reading (4-4-2): McCarthy; Gunter, Morrison, Mariappa, Kelly; McCleary,Guthrie, Karacan (Caricco, 57), McAnuff; Hunt (Le Fondre, 78), Pogrebnyak (Blackman, 74).
Liverpool (4-2-3-1): Reina; Johnson, Carragher, Agger, Enrique; Gerrard, Lucas; Sturridge, Coutinho, Henderson (Downing, 57); Suarez.
Referee: Mark Clattenburg.
Man of the match: McCarthy (Reading)
Match rating: 6/10

The Sunday Telegraph

McCarthy denies Liverpool on day of division among the fans

Reading 0
Liverpool 0
Att: 24,139
A conga line, fireworks and joyful songs. It was an exuberant scene among a minority of fans. Not the typical reaction to the death of a British premier but certain Liverpool supporters feel strongly about Margaret Thatcher, prime minister at the time of the Hillsborough disaster.
There was little for them to celebrate on the field, however, as a dominant display against inferior opposition yielded a second successive stalemate after an extraordinary display from the opposition goalkeeper.
While Reading's fans could marvel at Alex McCarthy keeping out shot after shot, some of the Berkshire club's fans could not contain their displeasure with the songs and booed in response.
The chants from the away end included "Maggie's dead, dead, dead", "Margaret Thatcher's dead, and now we're going to party", "Let's all do the conga, Maggie is no longer" and "If you all hate Maggie, clap your hands".
The mood before kick-off was different; respectful and reflective.
A minute's silence was impeccably held - ahead of the Hillsborough tragedy's anniversary - to remember the 96 Liverpoolsupporters who lost their lives.
The first chant about Thatcher to emanate from the Liverpool support came in the third minute. Those chants grew in frequency and volume midway through the opening period.
This was always going to be an awkward afternoon politically and both managers claimed they could not hear anything when asked afterwards. Earlier in the week, Reading chairman Sir John Madejski had called for a minute's silence out of respect for Thatcher. Reading, however, later confirmed that they would hold a minute's silence to honour the Hillsborough victims.
It was up to the players to divert attentions on to the field.
Liverpool tried, their front three linking up with class at times, but yet again they lacked cutting edge.
"I don't think our players could have done any more," Brendan Rodgers, Liverpool's former Reading manager, said. "We had 14 shots on target away from home. I know Alex well and it was a staggering performance."
Whether it was with body, hands or desperate outstretched foot, McCarthy was unbreachable. And he had to be on guard too because Liverpool did everything right apart from score. Rodgers set them up effectively and - with Philippe Coutinho again excellent - they produced moments of passing and movement that were far too good for Reading.
That Liverpool were not ahead by half-time was surprising. By the end, though, it felt strangely predictable. Another slick performance; another profligate outcome.
Rodgers' team have a commendable scoring record, but it could have been so much better had they been more ruthless.
Reading, who had lost a clubrecord eight league games in succession, did not look likely to halt that run when Rodgers' team gave them the early runaround.
Coutino linked up well with Luis Suarez, who produced a smart chip over McCarthy, but on a rare occasion when the goalkeeper was beaten, right-back Chris Gunter cleared off the line.
McCarthy's heroics began with a double-save midway through the first half. First he blocked a Daniel Sturridge strike after Suarez had supplied, then he diverted Coutinho's follow-up for a corner.
Defensive defiance was saving Reading. Gunter's slip-up gifted possession to Sturridge, who picked out Suarez, but McCarthy stopped the Uruguayan's shot. Adrian Mariappa blocked Steven Gerrard's shot on the rebound.
Soon afterwards, Coutinho chipped over wastefully as Liverpool continued to dominate. Just before half-time, McCarthy used his right foot to halt an effort from Sturridge inside the six-yard box. Liverpool thought they had broken through just after the interval when Coutinho met Gerrard's cross with a delightful flick, but the effort was ruled out for offside.
There was a bizarre moment when Danny Guthrie was booked for pulling back Sturridge but only after referee Mark Clattenburg went to the sidelines to retrieve his misplaced cards.
Coutinho felt he had finally broken through when he curled a 25-yard effort beyond McCarthy, but the ball struck a post. Reading sensed a smash-and-grab win and Jobi McAnuff forced Pepe Reina into an impressive save.
McCarthy continued his brilliant display by thwarting Gerrard and Suarez, but the draw is unlikely to help keep Reading in the division.
"We're moving forward and we kept a clean sheet," said manager Nigel Adkins. "There was a lot of positivity around the stadium."
Perhaps, but there was a great deal of division, too.

Date: 13 April 2013
Opposition: Reading
Competition: League

Post	Mirror	Sunday Times	Sun Telegraph	Independent
BBC	Mail	Observer	Times	Telegraph
	Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Reading Chronicle

13 April 2013

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Keeper returns from injury to save Reading's day

AN IMPECCABLY observed minute's silence, in memory of the 96 who lost their lives at Hillsborough 24 years ago. Then some reference from the away fans to the Prime Minister who was in office in 1989, to whom the Reading chairman, John Madejski, had suggested respects might be paid at stadiums this weekend.

"You picked on the wrong city," said one of the Liverpool banners honouring the lost of Hillsborough. More explicit was a chant: "Let's all do the conga, Maggie is no longer."

Both sets of supporters then witnessed a contest more engaging for its end-to-end energy than the scoreline might imply. The draw was relatively welcome for Reading, who reached 24 points and have five games to go. They would need far more to push clear of relegation next month but their manager, Nigel Adkins, will take it as a foundation stone for the restoration of club morale.

His goalkeeper Alex McCarthy was outstanding and will be thrilled at the nature of his return from a long-term shoulder injury.

Reading, alas, have become a team who can be relied on, sooner or later, to respond to sustained pressure with nervous errors. Chris Gunter's square ball from his right-back position directly into the path of an unpoliced Luis Suarez was the most conspicuous of those in a first-half controlled by Liverpool. The striker played a neat diagonal pass to Daniel Sturridge, from whom McCarthy saved. Steven Gerrard, following up, saw his drive deflected for a corner.

There would be seven corners for the visitors in the first 45 minutes and 13 shots at goal, making it a busy return for McCarthy. The goalkeeper's first duel with Suarez, who had picked a hole between Reading's centre-halves, was won by the Uruguayan. Suarez lobbed McCarthy but Gunter headed the ball off the line.

While Suarez, Sturridge and Philippe Coutinho exhibited encouraging signs of sharing the same wavelength, they also shared frustration when it came to finishing.

Suarez invited Sturridge to take on McCarthy in the penalty box but a split-second's delay by the England international meant Reading's defenders could shepherd him into a less threatening area. Jamie Carragher and Gerrard then nodded off target from corners before Sturridge snatched at a volley that ballooned over.

Symptoms of anxiety at the poor ratio of possession to goals could be seen in Coutinho's slashed attempt, again too high, after a Sturridge effort had been charged down. Reading, all too familiar with falling behind in the course of their chastening season back in the Premier League, drew some comfort from the limited damage they received in what might have been a car crash of a first half.

Midway through the second period perhaps the best of the chances fell to the home side. Noel Hunt sent Pavel Pogrebnyak clear in the outside-left position and offered him a target for a low cross. Hunt met it but Pepe Reina responded with a jerk of his legs to keep the ball out.

The Spanish goalkeeper caused alarm moments later by missing a catch from a Reading corner. Liverpool, to their relief, were able to clear as he recovered his bearings.

As the contest entered the last quarter hour Adkins sensed the momentum turning Reading's way. Jobi McAnuff, the captain, found himself with a clear sight of Reina's goal. He dallied a little but found enough space to poke a strong left-foot shot that Reina tipped over the bar.

For all the brightness and ambition shown by Coutinho, his radar was awry. One of the muttered criticisms of the Brazilian during his stop-start spell at Inter Milan, from whom Liverpool bought him, concerned his poise and precision once he works his way into goalscoring positions. He saw enough of those yesterday to have tested McCarthy more than he did.

The same could be said of Stewart Downing and Sturridge, who both fired wide late on, and even Suarez. McCarthy made an excellent close-range save from a Suarez volley but the Premier League's top scorer shouldn't have given him a chance. When Suarez did produce an even more testing effort, McCarthy soared to his right to keep it out. The keeper had enjoyed a splendid comeback.

Star man: Alex McCarthy (Reading) Yellow cards: Reading: Guthrie, Blackman Liverpool: Lucas Referee: M Clattenburg Attendance: 24,139 Reading: McCarthy 9, Gunter 6, Kelly 7, Mariappa 7, Morrison 7, McCleary 6, Karacan 6 (Carrico 57min, 7), McAnuff 7, Guthrie 6, Pogrebnyak 6 (Blackman 73min), Hunt 7 (Le Fondre 79min) Liverpool: Reina 7, Johnson 7, Carragher 7, Agger 7, Enrique 7, Gerrard 7, Lucas 6, Henderson 6 (Downing 57min, 6), Sturridge 7, Suarez 8, Coutinho 7

The Observer

Magnificent McCarthy keeps out Liverpool

READING 0
LIVERPOOL 0

As the final few minutes ticked away, Reading's supporters could be heard chanting "England's No1" in praise of what must rank as one of the most astonishing goalkeeping displays ever seen in these parts. The hosts had been battered by aLiverpool side who appeared hell-bent on racking up a cricket score but simply could not find a way past Alex McCarthy. The 23-year-old made save after save and, as his team continue to slide towards relegation, provided them with hope for the future.

Liverpool had 23 shots on goal compared with Reading's five, with 11 on target and the vast majority of them kept out by McCarthy. His display began with a double save from Daniel Sturridge and Philippe Coutinho early in the first half and peaked late on with a point-blank stop from Luis Suarez that left the Uruguayan looking on in anguish.

What made McCarthy's display even more astonishing was that it came in his first appearance since undergoing a shoulder operation for an injury he picked up on 4 November. Having usurped Adam Federici as Reading's No1, McCarthy had not played since then but returned yesterday with a bang.

"Our players couldn't have done any more," Brendan Rodgers said. "Some of our interchange play was outstanding but it was just one of those days - we came up against an inspired goalkeeper."

The Liverpool manager knows McCarthy from his six-month spell as Reading manager in 2009 and, like the home fans, feels the former England Under-21 international has the credentials to play for the senior team.

"It'll be a hard job as Joe Hart is one of the top five goalkeepers in world football but Alex is a top talent," he said. "He showed that he can make saves, is good with his feet and very assured."

Nigel Adkins also praised McCarthy, describing his display as "world class", but the Reading manager was keen to point out that had it not been for Jose Reina's point-blank save from Noel Hunt midway through the second half, his side could have won.

But that would have been wholly unjustified given the gulf in class between the sides. Reading played with all the tentativeness of a team who had lost their last eight matches and find themselves rooted to the bottom of the Premier League, with their passing in particular lacking conviction. That was no more glaring than in the 33rd minute when Chris Gunter played an awful back-pass that was easily intercepted by Sturridge and played into the path of Suarez. McCarthy, unsurprisingly, pulled off a crucial save.

This contest had started with an impeccably observed minute's silence in tribute to the 96 Liverpool supporters who died at the Hillsborough disaster, the 24th anniversary of which falls tomorrow, although the atmosphere soon changed as the away section made clear their joy at the passing of Margaret Thatcher. Flares and fireworks were let off while some danced in delight at the death of a woman almost universally loathed on Merseyside.

On the pitch Sturridge, Suarez and Coutinho moved with fluidity and pace, their passing crisp and incisive. Reading could not cope and it appeared only a matter of time before the side with the worst defence in the Premier League conceded. McCarthy was beaten after 15 minutes only for Suarez to see his lob over the goalkeeper headed off the goalline by Gunter. Early in the second half Coutinho had the ball in the back of the net after back-heeling Steven Gerrard's cross but the effort was ruled out for offside.

Liverpool became ragged for a period, during which Hunt should have scored, but they finished strongly.

For Reading, relegation looms larger. They are seven points away from safety with five fixtures remaining. "We'll keep working hard," said Adkins as somewhere in the stadium his goalkeeper reflected on the performance of his life.

READING
McCarthy; Gunter, Morrison, Mariappa, Kelly; McAnuff, Guthrie (Booked), Karacan (Carrico 57), McCleary; Pogrebnyak (Blackman (Booked) 73), Hunt (Le Fondre 79)
Subs not used Taylor, Pearce, Harte, Leigertwood
LIVERPOOL
Reina; Johnson, Carragher, Agger, Jose Enrique; Lucas (Booked), Gerrard; Coutinho, Suarez, Henderson (Downing, 57); Sturridge Subs not used Jones, Coates, Skrtel, Shelvey, Assaidi, Suso
Madejski Stadium 24,139
Game rating 6/10
Referee Mark Clattenburg

Compiled by Graeme Riley

Date: 13 April 2013
Opposition: Reading
Competition: League

Post	Mirror	Sunday Times	Sun Telegraph	Independent
BBC	Mail	Observer	Times	Telegraph
	Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Reading Chronicle

13 April 2013

THE READING CHRONICLE proudly supporting Reading UK

Reading FC 0 - 0 Liverpool

READING FC keeper Alex McCarthy put in a man-of-the-match display to earn his side a deserved point against Brendan Rodgers' Liverpool.

McCarthy returned to the side in place of the injured Adam Federici for his first appearance since he damaged his shoulder at QPR last November.

But McCarthy showed few signs of rustiness with a performance of first-class goalkeeping to help Royals end a run of seven Premier League defeats.

The 23-year-old made at least half a dozen outstanding saves on the day to frustrate the visitors and Luis Suarez in particular. However, this was not all one way traffic and Royals were a threat themselves in arguably their best showing for many months. New boss Nigel Adkins made five changes in the 2-0 defeat by his former club Southampton a week earlier and he made another four here, mostly due to injuries, and altered his formation to a 4-4-2.

Federici, Hal Robson-Kanu and Hope Akpan were all ruled out with knocks so McCarthy and Garath McCleary came in. There was also a new-look strikeforce of Pavel Pogrebnyak and Noel Hunt which meant there was no place in the starting XI for Adam Le Fondre. Liverpool, meanwhile, named all their big guns in their side including Suarez, Steven Gerrard and Daniel Sturridge in a clear sign of intent from Rodgers. The day began in reflective mood as a minute's silence to remember the 96 who died in the Hillsborough disaster was impeccably observed before kick off. When play got underway, Royals refused to give an inch and denied Liverpool's playmakers any time on the ball.

However, as the game went on Rodgers' side gradually began to dominate and enjoy far more of the ball.

With talents like Suarez & Co in their midst, it was only a matter of time before the chances started to come. However, when Suarez found himself clean through in the 14th minute, his chip over McCarthy was headed off the Royals line by the back-tracking Chris Gunter. Then eight minutes later McCarthy made an outstanding double save to deny Sturridge then Phillipe Coutinho on the follow-up after Morrison had given the ball away with a terrible pass, with Jamie Carragher heading wide from the resulting corner.

Even so, there were still encouraging spells from the Royals and they caught Liverpool napping midway through the first-half with a quickly taken free-kick that ended with Jem Karacan's shot going wide for a corner and Morrison heading the flag-kick straight into Pepe Reina's arms.

Royals, though, didn't heed the warning and only the heroics from McCarthy prevented them from falling behind on 34 minutes.

Again another suicidal pass, this time by Gunter, was easily cut out but Suarez' initial shot was parried by McCarthy before Gerrard's follow-up was bravely blocked by Adrian Mariappa. Yet even then, Reading were still a dramatic improvement on the previous week when they were well beaten by Saints.

But McCarthy remained the biggest plus for the Royals and he kept his side level again on the stroke of half-time with a vital reflex save to deny Sturridge from inside the six yard box. The visitors thought they had broken the deadlock three minutes after the break when Suarez backheeled into the net. But the Uruguay international was in an offside position when Gerrard pinged the ball across the box. It sparked a strong response from the Royals who were next to go agonisingly close to breaking the deadlock.

Pogrebnyak got free down the left and drilled the ball across the Liverpool area into Hunt's path. The Irishman did well to get his shot away under pressure from Agger only for Reina to make a crucial block from point-blank range then McCleary blazed his effort over from the loose ball.

It sparked Royals' best period of the match as Adkins' men began to play with a freedom that has been sadly lacking in recent months. McAnuff saw a long-range effort blocked then Royals' skipper had another effort tipped over by Reina after taking a slight deflection. Suarez replied with a 25-yard free-kick that drifted inches wide of McCarthy's far post then Reds substitute Stewart Downing failed to hit the target from a good position. It was the start of a nervy ending for Royals fans as the visitors pushed for a winning goal. But McCarthy made sure there was no way through for the visitors with a string of memorable saves at the death.

He tipped a Gerrard piledriver destined for the top corner over the bar on 85 minutes then moments later he made the save of the match when Suarez hammered a shot towards the corner from no more than eight yards out, only for Royals' keeper to catch the ball.

It summed up Liverpool's fortunes but there was still time left for Sturridge to blaze a shot over and, in keeping with the theme, for McCarthy to deny Suarez and Gerrard yet again with two more stunning saves. It was Reading's first clean sheet in the Premier League since the 1-0 home win over West Ham on December 29 and will give Adkins' men confidence for a trip to Norwich City next Saturday (3pm ko).

Reading: McCarthy - Gunter, Morrison, Mariappa, Kelly - McCLeary, Guthrie, Karacan (Carrico 58), McAnuff (c) - Hunt (Le Fondre 78), Pogrebnyak (Blackman 74). Subs (not used): Taylor, Pearce, Leigertwood, Harte. Booked: Guthrie 51.

Liverpool: Reina - Johnson, Agger, Carragher, Enrique - Coutinho, Henderson (Downing 58), Gerrard (c), Leiva, Sturridge, Suarez. Subs (not used): Jones, Assaidi, Coates, Suso, Shelvey, Skrtel. Booked: Lucas 42.

Referee: Mark Clattenburg (Tyne & Wear). Attendance: 24,139 (Liverpool 2,225).

BBC

Liverpool's faint hopes of European qualification suffered a further setback as Reading held them to a second successive draw on an afternoon of frustration. Reading goalkeeper Alex McCarthy produced a man-of-the-match display with a string of outstanding saves.

Liverpool had a host of chances, with Luis Suarez going closest with a chip that was cleared off the line.

Reading twice went close late on but Liverpool's Pepe Reina stood firm.

This was a result that did little to cheer either manager. It was the first time in 14 months that Liverpool had failed to score in consecutive matches and although it ended a run of seven successive defeats for Reading, it did little to keep alive Nigel Adkins' increasingly desperate battle against relegation.

Brendan Rodgers had warned his players of the need to take care of the "ugly bits" in order to mount a late charge for European football next season. Too often this campaign Liverpool have slipped up against teams that, on paper, they should have beaten - undermining their momentum and draining them of confidence.

This was a case in point, an afternoon when both teams marked the 24th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster, Liverpool were, once again, unable to turn a turn superiority into success, possession into points. Much of that was down to the performance of 23-year-old McCarthy, who was only in the side because first-choice Adam Federici is injured, but Rodgers cut a frustrated figure at the final whistle.

Liverpool should have put the result beyond doubt before half-time. For 45 minutes their front three bristled with menace - Suarez and Philippe Coutinho swapped places at will, eluding markers, confounding plans and slicing through the Reading backline.

The pair almost had Liverpool ahead early on, the young Brazilian playing Suarez through only for his delicately floated chip to be headed off the line by the retreating Chris Gunter. Daniel Sturridge also went close.

Coutinho was providing the vision and the craft, Suarez the quick feet and the jet heels. But while Liverpool dominated, McCarthy stood firm time and time again. He denied all three of the Reds forwards before half-time, tipping Coutinho's low shot wide, pushing Suarez's effort away and denying Sturridge from close range. Adrian Mariappa threw himself in front of Steven Gerrard's volley, but this was a familiar story for Liverpool - dominant but not decisive, style but no substance. Within five minutes of the restart Liverpool had the ball in the net, only to see Coutinho's deft back-heeled flick correctly chalked off for offside. As the time ticked away, Reading grew in confidence as they added midfield creativity to their defensive resilience. Liverpool, weighed down by the burden of expectation, lost their way.

Moments after Coutinho's low shot brushed the outside of the post, Reading broke forward to create their best chance of the match. Pavel Pogrebnyak surged down the left and his low cross found Noel Hunt six yards out, only for Reina to deny the Ireland striker with an instinctive save.

Liverpool's run-in
21 Apr: Chelsea (H)
27 Apr: Newcastle (A)
5 May: Everton (H)
12 May: Fulham (A)
19 May: QPR (H)

The Spaniard made an equally impressive stop moments later, tipping Jobi McAnuff's deflected shot over the bar as Reading sensed an opportunity to snatch all three points. Liverpool continued to threaten, however, but time and again they found McCarthy in uncompromising mood.

The young goalkeeper denied Gerrard once again and twice more repelled shots from Suarez, while McAnuff's late appeal for a penalty was waved away by referee Mark Clattenburg.

Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers:

"We created enough chances to win a couple of games. We are very disappointed we didn't win. Their goalkeeper was outstanding and on another day the goals go in. I can't ask anything more of the players except that we should have been a wee bit more clinical. It was as good a goalkeeping performance as I have seen in a long time. Young Alex has all the attributes to be a top, top 'keeper. He is 6ft 5in, he has great feet and he has made a series of fantastic saves. But I have got no complaints with my team. Our creativity and movement was very good. But we just didn't do final bit and that is to the ball in the net and that cost us."

Reading boss Nigel Adkins:

"It is three games I have been in charge at Reading now and once again our attitude and application was top drawer. First 15 minutes they had good possession but our players have kept us in the game and we have had a great opportunity with Noel Hunt late on and Pepe Reina has made a great save.

It was an outstanding goalkeeper performance from Alex McCarthy. Has worked really hard to make sure we pick up a point today. It is only a one point, when we need three - we know where we are."

Compiled by Graeme Riley

Date: 13 April 2013
Opposition: Reading
Competition: League

Post	Mirror	Sunday Times	Sun Telegraph	Independent
BBC	Mail	Observer	Times	Telegraph
	Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Reading Chronicle

13 April 2013

BBC

90:00+4:09Full time The referee signals the end of the game.
90:00+3:03 Steven Gerrard takes a shot. Save by Alex McCarthy.
90:00+1:25 Luis Suarez produces a drilled right-footed shot from 12 yards. Save made by Alex McCarthy.
90:00+1:12 Effort on goal by Phillippe Coutinho from 20 yards. Blocked by Sean Morrison.
89:47 Daniel Sturridge produces a left-footed shot from close in that clears the bar.
89:11 Free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on Phillippe Coutinho by Danny Guthrie. Free kick taken by Sanchez Jose Enrique.
87:31 Chris Gunter takes the free kick.
87:31Booking Caution for Daniel Carrico.
87:20 Foul by Steven Gerrard on Daniel Carrico, free kick awarded.
85:34 Shot by Stewart Downing from 18 yards. Alex McCarthy makes a save.
86:25 Danny Guthrie has an effort at goal from just outside the box which goes wide of the right-hand upright.
85:34 Shot by Luis Suarez. Save by Alex McCarthy.
85:15 Luis Suarez takes a shot. Alex McCarthy makes a save.
84:44 Outswinging corner taken from the right by-line by Steven Gerrard.
84:26 Steven Gerrard takes a shot. Save by Alex McCarthy.
83:09 Effort from the edge of the box by Stewart Downing goes wide of the right-hand upright.
81:06 Luis Suarez takes the chance to get an effort at goal. Save by Alex McCarthy.
80:15 The assistant referee flags for offside against Luis Suarez. Free kick taken by Alex McCarthy.
78:31 The referee penalises Luis Suarez for handball. Free kick taken by Alex McCarthy.
78:05Substitution SubstitutionAdam Le Fondre replaces Noel Hunt.
76:57 Foul by Daniel Carrico on Luis Suarez, free kick awarded. Luis Suarez fires a strike on goal direct from the free kick.
75:51 Jobi McAnuff has a drilled shot. Jose Reina makes a save. Inswinging corner taken right-footed by Jobi McAnuff from the left by-line.
74:43 Foul by Phillippe Coutinho on Chris Gunter, free kick awarded. Danny Guthrie delivers the ball from the free kick right-footed from right channel, clearance by Jamie Carragher.
74:17 Steven Gerrard takes a shot. Adrian Mariappa gets a block in.
72:49 Free kick taken by Jamie Carragher.
72:49Substitution SubstitutionPavel Pogrebnyak leaves the field to be replaced by Nick Blackman.
72:49 Noel Hunt handles the ball and concedes a free kick.
71:35 Effort on goal by Phillippe Coutinho from inside the penalty box misses to the right of the target.
70:51 Noel Hunt challenges Daniel Agger unfairly and gives away a free kick. Leiva Lucas takes the direct free kick.
70:29 The official flags Pavel Pogrebnyak offside. Direct free kick taken by Jose Reina.
67:09 Danny Guthrie takes a shot. Blocked by Jamie Carragher.
65:22 Noel Hunt takes a shot. Jose Reina makes a save. Shot from deep inside the area by Garath McCleary clears the crossbar.
64:28 Shot by Phillippe Coutinho from deep inside the penalty area misses to the right of the target.
63:11 Free kick awarded for a foul by Noel Hunt on Glen Johnson. Free kick taken by Glen Johnson.
61:27 Danny Guthrie takes a shot. Blocked by Leiva Lucas. Corner taken by Stewart Downing from the right by-line to the near post, Adrian Mariappa manages to make a clearance.
57:21 Free kick taken by Daniel Agger.
56:22Substitution SubstitutionStewart Downing replaces Jordan Henderson.
56:22Substitution SubstitutionJem Karacan leaves the field to be replaced by Daniel Carrico.
56:22 Foul by Chris Gunter on Luis Suarez, free kick awarded.
54:47 Jamie Carragher gives away a free kick for an unfair challenge on Pavel Pogrebnyak. Free kick taken by Stephen Kelly.
53:42 Danny Guthrie is penalised for a handball. Daniel Agger restarts play with the free kick.
51:33 Luis Suarez produces a right-footed shot from just outside the box that goes wide left of the target.
51:33 Shot from just outside the box by Luis Suarez misses to the left of the target.
50:25 Direct free kick taken by Glen Johnson.
50:25Booking Danny Guthrie goes into the referee's book for unsporting behaviour.
50:07 Danny Guthrie gives away a free kick for an unfair challenge on Daniel Sturridge.
48:07 The assistant referee signals for offside against Phillippe Coutinho. Indirect free kick taken by Alex McCarthy.
47:18 Free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on Jobi McAnuff by Daniel Sturridge. Jobi McAnuff delivers the ball from the free kick right-footed from left channel, clearance made by Daniel Agger.
45:01 The second half kicks off.
45:00+1:03Half time The ref blows to end the first period.
45:00+0:48 Luis Suarez is flagged offside by the assistant referee. Direct free kick taken by Sean Morrison.
43:58 Shot by Jordan Henderson. Save by Alex McCarthy. Inswinging corner taken by Luis Suarez, Daniel Sturridge has an effort at goal. Alex McCarthy makes a save. Outswinging corner taken by Steven Gerrard from the right by-line played to the near post, Daniel Agger has a headed effort at goal from close in which goes wide left of the goal.
42:44 Effort from a long way out by Daniel Sturridge goes wide left of the target.
41:18 Free kick crossed right-footed by Danny Guthrie, clearance by Glen Johnson.
41:18Booking Leiva Lucas is given a yellow card.
41:12 Free kick awarded for a foul by Leiva Lucas on Garath McCleary.
38:34 Shot by Phillippe Coutinho from deep inside the penalty area misses to the left of the goal.
34:12 The referee blows for offside. Indirect free kick taken by Alex McCarthy.
33:10 Luis Suarez takes a shot. Alex McCarthy makes a save. Steven Gerrard takes a shot. Save made by Alex McCarthy. Inswinging corner taken by Steven Gerrard.
31:18 Danny Guthrie takes the outswinging corner, Steven Gerrard manages to make a clearance.
29:31 Jobi McAnuff takes the inswinging corner, Sean Morrison takes a shot. Jose Reina makes a comfortable save. Foul by Glen Johnson on Jobi McAnuff, free kick awarded. Jobi McAnuff takes the direct free kick.
24:26 Daniel Sturridge produces a left-footed shot from just outside the penalty box that misses to the left of the target.
20:49 Daniel Sturridge takes a shot. Alex McCarthy makes a save. Phillippe Coutinho takes a shot. Save made by Alex McCarthy. Corner taken by Steven Gerrard played to the near post, Jamie Carragher produces a header from inside the area that goes over the bar.
17:22 Outswinging corner taken by Steven Gerrard from the right by-line played to the near post, Noel Hunt makes a clearance.
16:20 Luis Suarez is flagged offside by the assistant referee. Alex McCarthy takes the indirect free kick.
13:41 Luis Suarez takes a shot. Sean Morrison manages to make a clearance.
15:00 Steven Gerrard takes a short corner.
14:21 Phillippe Coutinho challenges Jobi McAnuff unfairly and gives away a free kick. Alex McCarthy restarts play with the free kick.
13:41 Luis Suarez takes a shot. Clearance made by Sean Morrison.
12:26 Unfair challenge on Sanchez Jose Enrique by Noel Hunt results in a free kick. Free kick taken by Daniel Agger.
11:34 The assistant referee signals for offside against Luis Suarez. Alex McCarthy takes the indirect free kick.
9:59 Foul by Daniel Agger on Noel Hunt, free kick awarded. Danny Guthrie takes the free kick.
3:56 Corner taken right-footed by Steven Gerrard, clearance made by Pavel Pogrebnyak.
3:26 Pavel Pogrebnyak gives away a free kick for an unfair challenge on Glen Johnson. Free kick taken by Steven Gerrard.
1:22 Inswinging corner taken by Jobi McAnuff from the left by-line, free kick awarded for an unfair challenge on Jose Reina by Pavel Pogrebnyak. Direct free kick taken by Jose Reina.
0:00 The match begins.

Compiled by Graeme Riley