

Date: 16 September 2014
 Opposition: PFC Ludogorets Razgrad
 Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	BBC
Independent	Mail	

16 September
2014

THE TIMES

Gerrard stays cool during late drama to save his side
 Liverpool 2 Balotelli 82, Gerrard (pen) 90+202 21
 Ludogorets 1 Abalo 90

This may not go down as one of Anfield's most famous European nights but it ultimately lived up to the drama for which the stadium has become renowned. It was a thrilling denouement in which Liverpool took the lead with Mario Balotelli's first goal for the club only to be put on the brink of despair when Ludogorets equalised in the 90th minute. Steven Gerrard -- why always him? -- then bailed his team out with a coolly-taken penalty in stoppage time.

In what turned out to be as exacting a return to the Champions League as they could have wished for after a five-year exile, Liverpool managed to come through their first test but only just. When Dani Abalo brought the scores level in the final minute of regulation time, frustration seemed inevitable for Brendan Rodgers and his players, only for Gerrard to hold his nerve from the penalty spot after Javier Manquillo had been brought down by Milan Borjan, the Ludogorets goalkeeper.

After a blunt attacking performance by his side against Aston Villa on Saturday, Rodgers recalled Raheem Sterling to his starting line-up in the hope that the teenager, who is six years older than Ludogorets, could add the vim and vigour that his team had lacked at the weekend. The continued absence of Daniel Sturridge through injury meant that Balotelli started the game as a lone striker.

Only Gerrard remained from the previous Liverpool side to play in the Champions League, 1,742 days earlier, his presence a testament to both his own longevity and the high turnover of players that has taken place over the past five years. Liverpool had to wait until the 22nd minute for their first real opportunity to arrive and it was snuffed out as quickly as it had been created with Aleksandar Aleksandrov throwing himself in front of Balotelli's goalbound effort after the forward had turned Cosmin Moti. Ludogorets were anything but overawed by either the occasion or the grandeur of their adversary.

It was only when they reverted to the patient possession game that Rodgers had been seeking that Liverpool were able to cut through the Ludogorets defence with Adam Lallana having a shot blocked from close range. Dejan Lovren then headed over from Gerrard's corner.

Liverpool had to survive one anxious moment shortly before the interval when a failure of communication between Simon Mignolet and Mamadou Sakho caused a degree of panic. Matej Jug, the referee, ensured that the situation did not become any worse by penalising Roman Bezjak for a shove on Sakho in the build up but that did not prevent Gerrard from administering a rollicking to Mignolet. For all their outlay during the summer, the first half reinforced the view that Liverpool will need time to gel and are not yet ready to blitz sides at Anfield as they did on so many occasions in the previous campaign.

Rodgers resisted the temptation to make changes at half-time but the pattern of play remained largely the same with Liverpool dominating possession but struggling to find a way through. On the rare occasion that they did Manquillo raced on to Henderson's floated pass only to lose his nerve at the vital moment and shoot into the Kop with the goal at his mercy.

Moments later, Junior Caicara tested Mignolet with an angled drive that the Liverpool goalkeeper was forced to beat away as Ludogorets again demonstrated their ambition to do more than merely hold on for a point.

In a two-minute spell, it took four successive interventions from Lovren to prevent Ludogorets from breaking clear of Liverpool's back four but their threat was growing, much to the concern of Rodgers who beckoned Lucas Leiva and Fabio Borini to replace Lallana and Philippe Coutinho.

Before the substitutions could be made to allow Liverpool to revert to a diamond formation, Ludogorets came close to taking the lead when Bezjak fired over after being released by Marcelinho's quick throw. When Borini made his arrival he should have marked it immediately with a goal only to head too close to Borjan. Liverpool then survived a major scare when Bezjak struck a post after being put through by Marcelinho. With the two sides trading chances, Henderson then wasted Moreno's cross by planting a free header well wide. It was Ludogorets who were growing in confidence as the game entered its final stages, though.

The moment the home crowd had waited for finally arrived with nine minutes remaining when Balotelli opened the scoring with an outstanding finish. The Italian had his back to goal when receiving Moreno's cross but managed to hold off two defenders before beating Borjan with an unerring right-foot shot. Balotelli almost repeated the trick immediately after with a blistering strike that the goalkeeper could only palm away.

Liverpool had seemed to have done enough but they were undone in the final minute when Abalo, the substitute, equalised after rounding Mignolet far too easily. With so little time remaining a draw seemed inevitable, only for Liverpool to win a penalty when Manquillo was brought down by Borjan and Gerrard held his nerve to beat the goalkeeper from the penalty spot.

Liverpool (4-1-2-2-1): S Mignolet J Manquillo, D Lovren, M Sakho, A Moreno S Gerrard J Henderson, P Coutinho (sub: Lucas Leiva, 68min) R Sterling, A Lallana (sub: F Borini, 67) M Balotelli. Substitutes not used: B Jones, J Enrique, K Toure, Suso, R Lambert. Ludogorets (4-2-3-1): M Borjan J Caicara, A Aleksandrov, C Moti, Y Minev M Dyakov (sub: F Espinho, 85), A Abel M Aleksandrov, Marcelinho, V Misidjan (sub: D Abalo, 73) R Bezjak (sub: Y Hamza, 87). Substitutes not used: E Gospodinov, B Angulo, H Zlatinski, Wanderson. Booked: Aleksandrov, Caicara. Referee: M Jug (Slovenia).

the guardian

Late show from Gerrard rescues Liverpool on return from the wilderness

Mario Balotelli has always had a sense of timing and waiting until eight minutes from the end of a delicately poised Champions League tie to score his first Liverpool goal in front of the Kop was almost unimprovable.

Liverpool do not have a monopoly on drama, however, and in the final minute of normal time Ludogorets managed to equalise, only for their new goalkeeper Milan Borjan to spoil what would have been a fairytale result with a clumsy foul on Javier Manquillo in stoppage time to allow Steven Gerrard to settle the matter with a penalty.

Relief, more than anything, was detectable when the dust settled on a frantic last few minutes. The Bulgarian champions had proved capable and clever opponents and Liverpool were making such heavy weather of breaking them down that the visit of Real Madrid next month could only be imagined with dread.

Brendan Rodgers admitted that Liverpool are "not yet at the standard of last season" but predicted Ludogorets would cause other teams problems. "They have some good technical players and they are fast," the Liverpool manager said. "We are still a work in progress but in this tournament you need to win your home games and we did that. Mario's goal will give him confidence, he worked hard for the team tonight but at half-time I told him to get into the box more. That's where we need him."

While the Kop was in good voice, running through its considerable repertoire of European favourites in celebration of being back at the top table, on the pitch Liverpool initially struggled to rise to the occasion. Balotelli turned Cosmin Moti expertly on the edge of the area only to see Alek Aleksandrov throw himself in the way of his effort, then Adam Lallana's follow-up effort was kept out by Milan Borjan, the Canadian goalkeeper making his debut for Ludogorets after signing as a free agent a couple of days earlier.

At least that left Moti free to resume his outfield career, after the penalty shootout saves against Steaua Bucharest that enabled Ludogorets to reach this stage, and the big defender took up where Philippe Senderos left off on Saturday for Aston Villa, by finding space from a free-kick on the half-hour but putting his header too high. As the interval approached Ludogorets had played themselves into the game and their own fans were beginning to make themselves heard. Balotelli was too isolated up front and Sterling and Philippe Coutinho were too little involved in the game. When that pair finally combined excitingly on the left shortly before the break it led to a cross from which Lallana seemed certain to score, yet Svetoslav Dyakov popped up with a clearance off the line and Borjan and his defenders breathed again.

Liverpool opened the second half with shots from Coutinho and Jordan Henderson, again from distance and comfortably dealt with, before Balotelli called for and received a cross from the left only to be let down by a poor first touch. At least Liverpool were creating chances, though Manquillo was guilty of missing one of the clearest when Henderson picked him out with a lofted pass behind the Bulgarian defence, trying to dink the ball over the onrushing goalkeeper but putting it over the crossbar as well. That was the first real goalscoring opportunity missed, and within seconds Ludogorets' impressive wing-back Junior Caicara brought the first full stretch save of the evening from Simon Mignolet. The Liverpool goalkeeper could only parry a stinging drive from the angle of the area and must have been relieved that Ludogorets had no one in the middle to profit.

As the game entered its final half-hour Liverpool were piling on the pressure, yet the visiting back four was a solid barrier. Ludogorets' own liveliness and alertness was amply demonstrated when Dejan Lovren was caught out twice in quick succession on the right touchline, first idling on the ball and conceding a throw-in, then failing to recover quickly enough to prevent Roman Bezjak getting a shot on goal from a quick throw.

With the game surprisingly end to end, Fabio Borini, on as a substitute, thought he had made the breakthrough with a firm header from Manquillo's superbly flighted cross, yet Borjan was equal to the situation with a spectacular one-handed save. Not to be outdone, Ludogorets went straight to the other end where Bezjak struck a post, with Yordan Minev missing the target with a free shot at goal from the rebound.

Liverpool were hanging on a little by the time Balotelli intervened, controlling a cross from the left and getting in front of the excellent Moti for perhaps the first time in the match to beat Borjan from six yards. That should have been that, yet an exquisite pass from Younes Hamza sent his fellow substitute Dani Abalo clear to equalise. While a draw would have been fair, Liverpool kept going and were rewarded by Borjan's naivety. Moti must have been furious.

Liverpool 4-4-2

Mignolet; Manquillo, Lovren, Sakho, Moreno; Henderson, Gerrard, Lallana (Borini, 67), Coutinho (Lucas, 68); Balotelli, Sterling

Subs not used Jones, Enrique, Toure, Suso, Lambert

Referee: M Jug (Svn)

Ludogorets 4-2-3-1

Borjan--; Caicara--; A Aleksandrov, Moti, Minev--; Dyakov (Espinho, 85), Abel; M Aleksandrov--; Marcelinho, Misidjan (Dani Abalo, 72); Bezjak (Hamza, 88)

Subs not used Gospodinov, Angulo, Zlatinski, Wanderson

Date: 16 September 2014
 Opposition: PFC Ludogorets Razgrad
 Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	BBC
Independent	Mail	

16 September
2014

The Mail

Gerrard is the saviour on return to grand stage
 THEY needed a Steven Gerrard moment and there it was an effortless strike from the penalty spot deep into injury time.
 Remarkable.

It stirred so many memories of the Liverpool captain coming to his team's rescue on emotional nights in Europe.

This was a dramatic finish, a crazy end to a frustrating match for Liverpool after Mario Balotelli had scored for the first time since his move from Milan.
 That should have sealed it, but Ludogorets appeared to have earned a point when substitute Dani Abalo then rounded Simon Mignolet with a sweet strike on the break.

Anfield fell silent, but Fabio Borini won the dramatic penalty two minutes into injury time when he was felled by goalkeeper Milan Borjan.

Gerrard, who had barely crossed the halfway line in the previous 90 minutes, finished brilliantly from the spot. He's the man for the big occasion alright.

The fans were willing something to happen, a moment of inspiration to get them off to a flyer in this opening group game.

They have missed these European nights, a glaring omission in the Liverpool calendar over the past five seasons. It must have hurt.

Gerrard was psyched up. He admonished Philippe Coutinho when the little forward gave the ball away cheaply with a flick that was never going to come off and then had another crack at him for shoving Junior Caicara.

Liverpool's captain is playing very deep this days, mopping up for his back four. Those legs still have something to offer Liverpool going forward, but he seems reluctant to make those runs now.

Instead it's the job of others to make this team tick, to prod and probe in advanced positions until they find the feet of Balotelli.

There was so much enthusiasm about the place, so much energy in those red shirts that they spent too much time haring forward at breakneck speed. Relax, guys.

It will come together, it has to with a team boasting the creative talents of Raheem Sterling, Adam Lallana and Coutinho in that forward line.

Add the attacking thrust of Alberto Moreno, with those eyecatching runs down the left, and they will give anyone a game at this level.

The target is to get to grips with a dual season, competing at the top of the Barclays Premier League at the weekend and then facing the challenge of Ludogorets, Real Madrid and Basle on these midweek nights.

The Bulgarian champions were decent enough, forcing corners in the first half and relying on Anicet Abel and captain Svetoslav Dyakov to get them going.

Sterling was electrifying at times, the obvious dangerman and the 'release ball' for any Liverpool player in a spot of trouble.

He invited a foul from Aleksandar Aleksandrov, cleverly drawing the Ludogorets defender into a booking within the first five minutes. Aleksandrov couldn't afford to go near him again.

At times it felt like this would be Sterling's night, forcing saves from the stand-in keeper Borjan and teeing chances up for Balotelli and Lallana.

He was missing against Aston Villa at the weekend and his absence was heightened because they were beaten by Paul Lambert's team at Anfield. When he is in the team, he makes a difference.

There is an aura about him now and opponents are fearful of what he can do when he is on the ball. He can crush spirits.

Jordan Henderson, who has deservedly been promoted to the role of vice-captain, put in Javi Manquillo (left) with a lovely touch at the start of the second half.

It was a decent chance, falling nicely to the Liverpool full back, but he lacked the composure required and sent his effort over the crossbar and into the Kop.

Then came the frustration, the passes rattling off the shins of Balotelli, Coutinho and Henderson as they desperately tried to find a way through the opposition.

This is continental football, a gear change for a team that relied so heavily on the goals and the guts of Luis Suarez in domestic competition last season.

Without him they are revising the way they play, turning to others to make things happen.

Rodgers sent for Borini and Lucas with 20 minutes left, desperate for that breakthrough. Manquillo set up Borini with a header, but Borjan was on to it with a tip over the bar.

At the other end Ludogorets almost snatched a goal of their own. Roman Bezjak was released down the right, but the striker's shot cannoned off Mignolet's post. That was a let off, but Balotelli finally cracked it eight minutes from time when he got on the end of Moreno's cross to beat the Ludogorets keeper.

(4-3-3) TEAM AVERAGE 6.18 Mignolet 6 Manquillo 6 Lovren 6.5 Sakho 6 Moreno 7.5 Henderson 7 Gerrard 6 Lallana UBORINI 6.7 Sterling 7 Coutinho ULUCAS 6.7 Balotelli 5.2 Balotelli 82 Gerrard 90 pen 1 LIVERPOOL LUDOGORETS Abalo 90 Subs not used Jones, Jose Enrique, Toure, Lambert, Fernandez Manager Brendan Rodgers 5 Man of the match Alberto Moreno Referee Matej Jug 6 (4-2-3-1) TEAM AVERAGE 6.36 Borjan 6 Caicara 6 Moti 6.5 A Aleksandrov 6 Minev 6.5 Dyakov UGOMES 85 Abel 6 M Aleksandrov 6.5 Marcelino 6.5 MISIDJAN UABALO 73 6 Bezjak UYOUNES 86 Subs not used Gospodinov, Angulo, Zlatinski, Cristaido Manager Georgi Dermendzhiev 6 Booked Caicara, Minev, A Aleksandrov, Borjan

The Daily Telegraph

Liverpool's relief as Gerrard holds nerve

Liverpool 2
 Balotelli 82, Gerrard 90 pen

Ludogorets 1
 Abalo 90

Att: 43,000

As late European goals at the Kop end go, Steven Gerrard's last-minute penalty against Bulgaria's Ludogorets 1945 will not sit alongside that of Olympiakos, 2004.

In the context of an extraordinary return to Champions League football, however, the Liverpool captain may still consider his winner one of his most important of the current era of Anfield regeneration.

They want history to repeat itself here, but they could not have had the drama of the last seven minutes of breathless Anfield encounter in mind. Mario Balotelli thought he would win it on 83 minutes with a majestic finish with the deftest of touches, only for substitute Dani Abalo to believe he had claimed a point on 90 minutes after hapless Liverpool defending.

Anfield relief instantly followed when keeper Milan Borjan pulled down Javi Manquillo in the third minute of injury time, enabling Gerrard to claim three vital points.

So began Liverpool's Champions League refresher course.

The Uefa anthem was received with the rapture of a Merseybeat favourite, and never have advertising boards and footballs branded with a competition name been greeted with such enthusiasm.

This, Liverpool believe, is their entitlement. To restore certain traditions, where once European minnows were humbled leaving with only their photographs of the Shankly Gates to cherish. Times have changed in the last five years.

Ludogorets wasted little time to prove even the most unfashionable of clubs can no longer be dismissed. If Liverpool were not here to be 'tourists' as Brendan Rodgers had put it, there was precious evidence the Bulgarians had only come here to stock up in the Anfield megastore.

On the surface, the timing of Ludogorets' arrival seemed ideal. Five years too late given Liverpool's absence, but soon enough following Saturday's home defeat to Aston Villa for Rodgers to build momentum.

The fear is the Champions League will disturb domestic ambitions, but the competition also has a habit of keeping the season alive. Aside from giving Liverpool an early platform to escape their group, Rodgers sought to invigorate home form.

Sterling, rested against Villa, was back as the only change from the weekend, but a frustrating first half served only to confirm even England's most potent attacker might have made little difference last weekend. Liverpool lack firepower without Daniel Sturridge.

The Bulgarians were able to call upon Canadian Milan Borjan, signed at short notice but given permission to play, but if the keeper expected to be peppered from the first whistle he was pleasantly surprised.

Liverpool's passing was quicker than last weekend but they were still aimless whenever near the opponent's penalty area, their playmaker Philippe Coutinho especially wasteful. The Bulgarians looked confident, anything but the whipping boys many predicted, with Madagascar's Anicet Abel particularly impressive with his dribble and shoot on sight policy.

In Sturridge's absence, the onus was on Balotelli to provide forward impetus but the cartographers will not need protective gloves when handling the Italian's heat map.

Twice he threatened before halftime, cleverly turning Aleksandar Aleksandrov before the defender made a timely block of a goalbound shot. Balotelli then forced Borjan into his first save on 34 minutes.

Adam Lallana wasted the best chance of the half seven minutes before half-time as Sterling, Coutinho and Henderson finally found some penetration in their passion. Lallana hesitated instead of shooting.

As the tempo increased in the second half, Manquillo squandered an even more acceptable opportunity on 52 minutes. Henderson was again the provider, finding the right back in space, but the shot was high.

Simon Mignolet was forced to push aside Junior Caicara's 25-yard drive. When Fabio Borini made his introduction with Lucas on 66 minutes, Lallana and Coutinho were replaced; the Bulgarians were looking as likely to make the breakthrough, both Mihail Aleksandrov and Roman Bezjak shooting narrowly over.

Borini almost had an instant impact, forcing Borjan to push his goalbound header over.

But there more greater howls of frustration in the away end when Bezjak was denied a famous goal by the width of the post on 72 minutes, Mignolet beaten but thankful to see the ball rebound to safety.

As time started to run out, Balotelli finally made a telling contribution showing perfect control and a delicate touch to put Liverpool ahead seven minutes from time. An injurytime equaliser for Abalo sent the Kop into despair before Gerrard struck the penalty. Champions League nights are back at Anfield, and how they wanted Europe to know about.

Date: 16 September 2014
 Opposition: PFC Ludogorets Razgrad
 Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	BBC
Independent	Mail	

16 September
 2014



Gerrard's steady nerve rescues Liverpool after Balotelli strikes

This was not one of Anfield's great European nights but it was one of Anfield's great European 10 minutes.

A match that had seen Liverpool try and fail to break down a wonderfully determined team from the backwaters of Bulgaria appeared settled the moment Mario Balotelli, taking down Alberto Moreno's cross with surprising delicacy and forcing his way through two defenders, slammed his shot into the net beneath the Kop.

With eight minutes remaining, that seemed to be that, but Ludogorets are a team shot through with resolve and in the last minute of normal time Dani Abalo skipped past Dejan Lovren, rounded goalkeeper Simon Mignolet, and clipped home the equaliser his side deserved.

However, in virtually the last attack of the game, their keeper, Milan Borjan, needlessly brought down Javi Manquillo, who was running away from goal and conceded a penalty. Steven Gerrard, the lead actor in so many Liverpool dramas, drove home the spot-kick. As the teams embraced on the final whistle, Borjan, who had only joined the club at the weekend and had played superbly, walked off alone, a victim of football's essential cruelty.

The Champions League is football's grand theatre and Anfield is its Old Vic. As the Tannoy played the Champions League theme, a sound that Gerrard said he craved to hear, the Kop held up cards depicting the club's five European Cups.

Like Dortmund's Westfalenstadion, Anfield is a stadium of banners as their return to the European elite was marked by a vast, traditional one, the kind that could have been unfurled against St Etienne in 1977 that said bluntly: "We are Liverpool."

Beneath it was one depicting Brendan Rodgers and the words "Boss". For all his considerable achievements in taking Liverpool back to the heights of English football, it was rather premature. Rodgers would know that Liverpool managers are measured in silverware. He walked to the home dressing room for the interval having made plenty of notes and not all of them would have been positive.

The only way this night resembled the one against St Etienne (one of so many wondrous European occasions recalled in the run-up to the grand return) was in the colour of Ludogorets' shirts.

The men in green had their own, rather more recent, stories to sustain them, not least the penalty shoot-out which beat Steaua Bucharest in their qualifying tie. Borjan was not unduly tested in the first hour. There was a double save, a low, somewhat easier one from Balotelli and a fabulous flowing move that would have been the very epitome of the football Rodgers wants Liverpool to play, featuring first-time touches from Raheem Sterling and Philippe Coutinho. Adam Lallana's finish did not quite match the approach work. After the restart, Borjan did enough to put Javi Manquillo off his shot when the full-back seemed likely to score.

Defensively is where Liverpool are weak. Before the game, Lovren had said that poor communication between himself and Mamadou Sakho, which he put down to poor English, might have been the reason why Liverpool went into the evening with just one clean sheet. Lovren's English is fluent and Sakho looked forever to be teetering on the edge of a calamitous error.

It was, however, from left-back that Liverpool appeared most dangerous. Alberto Moreno exploited the space the Bulgarian champions offered him and produced one run that echoed the one at Tottenham that had brought him what even in May will be one of the goals of Liverpool's season. This shot disappeared into the Anfield Road End.

The expectation was that Ludogorets would be brushed aside as easily as Basel were in the Bernabeu. However, Liverpool's game-plan at home under Rodgers is based upon the early goal to force the opposition out. When it does not come, the flow can seize up. Rodgers made a double change, removing Lallana and Coutinho for Lucas Leiva. Within a minute of coming on, the Italian had forced Borjan to tip his header acrobatically into the Kop.

Ludogorets, their team sprinkled with Brazilians, are a fairytale team from a small town in northern Bulgaria made bigger through a benefactor's money. There were some fairytale performances. Defender Cosmin Moti made several vital challenges. When their centre-forward, Roman Bezjak, anticipated Marcelinho's throw and shot on to the roof of Simon Mignolet's net, there were suggestions that the fairytale might have a Disney-style ending. But for the width of the post that Bezjak shot against moments later, it might have done.

Given that roughly 10 per cent of Razgrad's population was in the stands, the near miss was greeted with quite a noise. As was their team's late equaliser before Gerrard's final intervention.



WE MISSED EU, ANFIELD

ABSENCE is supposed to make the heart grow fonder.

But on a night when Liverpool finally returned to Europe after a painful hiatus, it also almost a heart-stopper for everyone involved with Liverpool.

For drama and excitement, this game will go down as another chapter in the club's history.

It may not have the glamour of some of the biggest European nights, given the unknown Bulgarian opponents, but it certainly had just about everything else... including the kitchen sink the home side threw at the end.

It was a breathless, careering crash of a game, Mario Balotelli putting his name up in the lights and skipper Steven Gerrard's penalty ultimately ensuring victory for the home side.

Liverpool's return after a fiveyear absence from this level may have started slowly, but it sure ended at a frenetic pace.

It was Balotelli who changed the course of the game with an incredible goal just eight minutes from time.

He seemed to have written another page in an startling story when he held off two defenders to pirouette and smash the ball home, to lift the lid off this grand old stadium.

Yet Ludogorets were not prepared to play stooge to the Italian's starring role. And incredibly, they equalised on the stroke of 90 minutes, when a fine through ball allowed substitute Dani Abalo to exposed the home defence with a cool finish.

This is Liverpool in Europe though, and we should know by now stirring deeds are performed and strange, heart-stopping things happen.

In the fourth minute of stoppage time so it proved, as the irrepressible full-back Javier Manquillo charged into the box to be upended by the visiting keeper Milan Borjan, who had only arrived at the club five days ago.

Step forward Gerrard, the ice man from the spot, who converted with a casual ease that was never reflected in the almost psychotic Anfield crowd, to send them home deliriously happy.

This was still Balotelli's night though, because if there is one thing about the theatre that is the forward, then it is that he is made to perform on the biggest stage.

On a night when Liverpool invoked the richest traditions and memories of their illustrious European history, it was the maverick striker who delivered another outrageous chapter, with an audacious, improbable goal.

It was typical Balotelli. For almost all of this emotional evening, as his new club celebrated their return to the Champions League after a painful five year absence, he was an anonymous, almost apologetic figure.

Subdued by the energy and commitment of under-rated and quick-witted Ludogorets side, he seemed to sulk his way through the contest, seemingly uninterested in providing the energy required to lead the line.

It seemed Liverpool's European tradition weighed heavily on young shoulders unversed in these occasions, seven of the Liverpool team making debuts in the competition.

For much of the opening half hour, there was a hesitancy about Liverpool usually so adept in flying forward, a nervousness in possession never apparent through the excitement of last season.

Then with time slipping by and Liverpool seemingly heading to another Anfield frustration in the space of three days, in one explosion of strength and skill Balotelli struck.

Liverpool boss Rodgers said: "It was a great night for everyone at the club after five years.

"They showed great character to keep going. It was a penalty, you could see it in their reaction.

"It was a wonderful finish from Mario Balotelli. We told him to get in the penalty area more often, it was a world-class finish.

"We had signs of anxiety, we are not at the level we were at last year yet, that will come with time."

Date: 16 September 2014
 Opposition: PFC Ludogorets Razgrad
 Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	BBC
Independent	Mail	

16 September
2014



Well, what did you expect? Anfield welcomed back the Champions League in the only way it knows how as Liverpool marked their return to the competition in dramatic, thrilling action. And there, at the heart of it as ever, was Steven Gerrard. The Reds skipper held his nerve in the third minute of injury time to convert from the spot and earn Brendan Rodgers' side an opening Group B victory over Bulgarian side Ludogorets.

But boy, were Liverpool made to work hard for their win. Mario Balotelli appeared to have snatched the headlines with his first goal for the club eight minutes from time only for Ludogorets substitute Dani Abalo to equalise as the game drifted into stoppage time.

Nothing, though, could deny Gerrard, the midfielder notching the 40 European goal of a remarkable career. While this was Liverpool's first Champions League game in almost five years, for much of a tortuous encounter it seemed barely worth the wait as the Reds struggled in much the same fashion in Premier League defeat to Aston Villa three days earlier. Supporters approaching the ground discovered the Berlin Circus had set up camp on nearby Stanley Park.

But although the German city will play host to the Champions League final next June, that will be far from Liverpool's thoughts.

Progress from the group stage was regarded as an achievement for the Reds on their return to the competition, and here it was easy to see why. Ludogorets, the supposed whipping boys of the group, proved anything but, although they were aided by another display from a Liverpool side that appeared every inch the strangers they are. With Real Madrid thumping Basel in the night's other Group B game, it's already clear it will be a three-way battle for progress behind the Spaniards, with the Reds in Switzerland in a fortnight's time.

Liverpool had last appeared in the Champions League in December 2009 when Fiorentina gained a last-gasp victory against Rafael Benitez's already-eliminated side. But for all the talk of inexperience – five players were making their Champions League debut – more than half the team had previously featured regularly in the competition.

The Anfield faithful is well versed in such occasions and there was a crackling atmosphere before kick-off, the Kop holding up a mosaic in celebration of Liverpool's five European Cup triumphs.

Ludogorets shot to prominence by earning their berth in the group stages when centre-back Cosmin Moti stepped between the post to save two Steaua Bucharest penalties in their final qualifying round shoot-out.

But while only founded in 2001, the Bulgarians have pedigree having lifted their domestic title for the past three seasons and won at PSV Eindhoven, Dinamo Zagreb and Lazio in the Europa League last season. With Raheem Sterling restored to the Reds line-up in place of the suspended Lazar Markovic, Ludogorets were happy to play on the counter-attack and sought to capitalise on Liverpool's hesitancy at defending set-pieces. But the longer the half progressed, the more the visitors grew in confidence as the Reds once again struggled for any cohesion up front, the lessons of the weekend having clearly not been learned.

Their first opening of note came in the 21 minute when Balotelli left Moti for dead and struck from 25 yards only for Aleksandar Aleksanderov to block, with goalkeeper Milan Borjan then parrying Lallana's follow-up attempt.

The flow of the game wasn't helped by over-zealous referee Matej Jug, whose willingness to blow up for just about anything was almost as ridiculous as his attire. But Liverpool were fortunate the official overlooked an unwise shove inside the area by Dejan Lovren on Marcelinho shortly before the half-hour.

Liverpool's best move of the half came seven minutes before the interval.

After a clever flick from Sterling released Philippe Coutinho down the left, the Brazilian and then Jordan Henderson shifted the ball inside where Adam Lallana took too long to control and allowed Ludogorets to twice block his shots. From the resultant corner, Lovren headed over. Anfield grew restless into the second half, but the Reds should have been ahead on 53 minutes. Henderson's clipped ball evaded Virgil Misidjan but Javi Manquillo, ghosting into the area, prodded well over as Borjan approached. At the other end, Simon Mignolet was forced into his first save when pushing out a thumping drive by Junior Caicara, and Lovren was again a relieved man on 65 minutes when, after Ludogorets took a quick throw from the Croatian carelessly putting the ball out of play, striker Roman Bezjak blasted over. Rodgers turned to Fabio Borini and Lucas Leiva from the bench, and the latter made an instant impact on 69 minutes when his header from a teasing Manquillo cross was brilliantly turned over by Borjan.

But the Reds had another lucky escape on 72 minutes. After Mamadou Sakho coughed up possession, Marcelinho played the ball through the Frenchman's legs and sent Bezjak clear with the striker then hitting the post before Yordan Minev flashed the rebound off target.

With the game opening up, Henderson nodded a Moreno cross wide before the opener arrived eight minutes from time, Balotelli overpowering Moti in the tussle for another Moreno ball with the Italian then prodding the ball into the bottom corner from six yards. Balotelli almost grabbed a second shortly afterwards when his fierce shot was beaten out by Borjan.

But Ludogorets equalised on 90 minutes when, after Sterling lost possession, Younes Hamza fed fellow substitute Abalo who evaded Lovren and the onrushing

Mignolet to score.

That, though, wasn't it as Borjan stupidly upended Manquillo and Gerrard sent the goalkeeper the wrong way from the spot. Phew.

LIVERPOOL (4-1-4-1): Mignolet; Manquillo, Lovren, Sakho, Moreno; Gerrard; Lallana (Borini 69), Henderson, Coutinho (Lucas 69), Sterling; Balotelli. Subs: Jones, Enrique, Toure, Lambert, Suso.

LUDOGORETS (4-2-3-1): Borjan; Junior Caicara, Moti, A Aleksandrov, Minev; Dyakov (Fabio Espinho 85), Anicet Abel; M Aleksandrov, Marcelinho, Misidjan; Bezjak (Hamza 86). Subs: Gospodinov, Angulo, Dani Abalo, Zlatinski, Wanderson.

BOOKINGS: A Aleksandrov, Junior Caicara, Minev and Borjan (all fouls).

REFEREE: Matej Jug (Slovenia).

ATT: 43,307.

Date: 16 September 2014
 Opposition: PFC Ludogorets Razgrad
 Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	BBC
Independent	Mail	

16 September
2014



Steven Gerrard's stoppage-time penalty ensured Liverpool marked their return to Champions League football with a victory over Bulgarian champions Ludogorets Razgrad.

After a low-key first half, the Reds took the lead in the 82nd minute when Mario Balotelli held off two defenders and poked home his first goal for the club.

Substitute Dani Abalo appeared to have clinched a point for the visitors in the final minute when he rounded Simon Mignolet and scored.

But there was a further twist when debutant goalkeeper Milan Borjan fouled Javier Manquillo in the second minute of stoppage time to give the hosts a spot-kick.

Captain Gerrard found the net in front of the Kop to send the crowd into raptures and give Liverpool a winning start to their Group B campaign.

It was a fairytale ending reminiscent of the many glorious European nights that Anfield witnessed under Gerard Houllier and Rafael Benitez, who led the Reds to their fifth European Cup triumph in 2005.

Liverpool had reached the Champions League eight times in nine seasons but failed to qualify for five years before Brendan Rodgers led them to a second-place Premier League finish last season.

After a feverish build-up, Liverpool struggled to live up to the occasion in an underwhelming first half.

The hosts did not truly threaten until the 20-minute mark, when Balotelli expertly turned his marker only for his goalbound shot to be blocked, with Adam Lallana's follow-up drawing a save from Borjan.

Ludogorets, showing admirable composure on the ball for a side making their Champions League debut, had an appeal for a penalty turned down when Brazilian midfielder Marcelinho went down under a slight push from defender Dejan Lovren.

Moments later, a corner found defender Cosmin Moti at the near post, but he failed to make clean contact with a header.

Liverpool's breakthrough almost arrived before half-time, when the ball was worked swiftly from left to right by Philippe Coutinho and Jordan Henderson to Lallana. But the former Southampton man hesitated before his shot was blocked. The Premier League side's first clear sight of goal arrived soon after the break.

Virgil Misidjan's slip allowed Henderson's pass to slide through to Manquillo but the Spanish right-back's dinked effort looped over the bar.

At the other end, Ludogorets right-back Junior Caicara fired a shot from distance that Mignolet had to dive full length to push aside.

And Liverpool had another scare when Gerrard allowed striker Roman Bezjak to drift in behind him from a throw-in and poke a shot, which sailed inches over the corner of post and crossbar.

With the hosts looking increasingly vulnerable, Rodgers brought on Fabio Borini for the ineffective Lallana, and the change almost brought an instant reward as Manquillo's cross picked out the Italian striker, whose header was tipped over by Borjan.

When Moreno sent over a similarly pinpoint delivery from the opposite flank, Henderson's flicked header drifted wide.

In between, Ludogorets wasted a golden opportunity to take the lead. Marcelinho threaded a pass through the legs of Mamadou Sakho to Bezjak, whose shot rolled agonisingly onto the foot of a post.

With the Anfield crowd contemplating the possibility of defeat, Balotelli transformed their mood.

Moreno's cross picked out the Italian - a £16m summer signing from AC Milan - and he controlled the ball and turned in a single movement before steering it into the net with the outside of his right foot.

The Ludogorets riposte was swift and devastating. Younes Hamza's through-ball found his fellow substitute Abalo, whose first touch took the ball past Mignolet before his second found the net.

But just when the visiting fans were celebrating what looked certain to be a point, Borjan's ill-judged lunge and Gerrard's unerring strike gave the home supporters the win they were craving.



90:00+4:11 Full time Second Half ends, Liverpool 2, Ludogorets Razgrad 1.

90:00+3:35 Corner, Ludogorets Razgrad. Conceded by Javier Manquillo.

90:00+2:29 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Liverpool 2, Ludogorets Razgrad 1. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom right corner.

90:00+1:41 Booking Milan Borjan (Ludogorets Razgrad is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

90:00+1:31 Penalty Liverpool. Javier Manquillo draws a foul in the penalty area.

90:00+1:31 Penalty conceded by Milan Borjan (Ludogorets Razgrad after a foul in the penalty area.

90:00+0:02 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Liverpool 1, Ludogorets Razgrad 1. Dani Abalo

(Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from the right side of the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Hamza Younes with a through ball.

86:30 Fabio Borini (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

86:30 Foul by Cosmin Moti (Ludogorets Razgrad.

85:57 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Ludogorets Razgrad. Hamza Younes replaces Roman Bezjak.

84:51 Attempt saved. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.

84:19 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Ludogorets Razgrad. Fábio Espinho replaces Svetoslav Dyakov.

83:41 Attempt missed. Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from outside the box is too high from a direct free kick.

82:43 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool.

82:43 Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.

81:13 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Liverpool 1, Ludogorets Razgrad 0. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner.

Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross.

80:15 Attempt missed. Yordan Minev (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from

outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Junior Caicara.

79:46 Offside, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson tries a through ball, but Mario Balotelli is caught offside.

79:24 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

79:24 Foul by Anicet (Ludogorets Razgrad.

77:38 Attempt missed. Lucas Leiva (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.

76:27 Dangerous play by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool.

76:27 Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.

76:06 Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Jordan Henderson with a cross following a set piece situation.

75:39 Booking Yordan Minev (Ludogorets Razgrad is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

75:26 Fabio Borini (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

75:26 Foul by Yordan Minev (Ludogorets Razgrad.

75:15 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

75:15 Foul by Anicet (Ludogorets Razgrad.

73:56 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross.

72:39 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Ludogorets Razgrad. Dani Abalo replaces Virgil Misidjan.

71:25 Attempt missed. Yordan Minev (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right.

71:23 Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad hits the left post with a right footed shot from the right side of the box. Assisted by Marcelinho.

70:55 Attempt blocked. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Fabio Borini with a headed pass.

70:17 Lucas Leiva (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

70:17 Foul by Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad.

69:54 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool.

69:54 Virgil Misidjan (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.

69:22 Attempt blocked. Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Steven Gerrard with a cross.

69:04 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Milan Borjan.

68:56 Attempt saved. Fabio Borini (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Javier Manquillo with a cross.

67:16 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Lucas Leiva replaces Philippe Coutinho.

66:52 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Fabio Borini replaces Adam Lallana.

65:35 Attempt missed. Mihail Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from the right side of the box is close, but misses the top right corner. Assisted by Svetoslav Dyakov.

64:50 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool.

64:50 Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.

64:29 Attempt missed. Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from outside the box is just a bit too high. Assisted by Marcelinho.

63:29 Attempt missed. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Javier Manquillo with a cross.

59:57 Attempt blocked. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Javier Manquillo with a cross.

59:06 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

59:06 Foul by Alex Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad.

57:45 Attempt missed. Virgil Misidjan (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Marcelinho.

57:03 Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool.

Date: 16 September 2014 Opposition: PFC Ludogorets Razgrad Competition: Champions League	Times	Telegraph	Echo	16 September 2014
	Guardian	Mirror	BBC	
	Independent	Mail		

<p>57:03 Alex Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>55:44 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.</p> <p>55:44 Foul by Svetoslav Dyakov (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>55:29 Attempt blocked. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.</p> <p>53:36Booking Junior Caiçara (Ludogorets Razgrad is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.</p> <p>53:33 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.</p> <p>53:33 Foul by Junior Caiçara (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>52:48 Attempt saved. Junior Caiçara (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from long range on the right is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Marcelinho.</p> <p>52:07 Attempt missed. Javier Manquillo (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is too high.</p> <p>50:16 Foul by Javier Manquillo (Liverpool).</p> <p>50:16 Yordan Minev (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>48:59 Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool).</p> <p>48:59 Yordan Minev (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>47:35 Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.</p> <p>47:35 Foul by Mihail Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>47:00 Attempt saved. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Mario Balotelli.</p> <p>46:39 Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.</p> <p>45:09 Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).</p> <p>45:09 Svetoslav Dyakov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>45:00 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, Ludogorets Razgrad 0.</p> <p>45:00+1:04Half time First Half ends, Liverpool 0, Ludogorets Razgrad 0.</p> <p>44:51 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.</p> <p>44:51 Foul by Anicet (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>42:14 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).</p> <p>42:14 Mihail Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick on the right wing.</p> <p>40:49 Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>40:49 Foul by Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>38:59 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool).</p> <p>38:59 Junior Caiçara (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>38:20 Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is just a bit too high. Assisted by Steven Gerrard with a cross following a corner.</p> <p>37:53 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Anicet.</p> <p>37:51 Attempt blocked. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked.</p> <p>37:47 Attempt blocked. Adam Lallana (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.</p> <p>37:15 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool).</p> <p>37:15 Cosmin Moti (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>36:35 Attempt missed. Anicet (Ludogorets Razgrad left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Junior Caiçara.</p> <p>36:05 Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool).</p> <p>36:05 Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.</p> <p>34:08 Attempt missed. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Mario Balotelli.</p> <p>33:41 Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>33:41 Foul by Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>33:20 Attempt missed. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.</p> <p>31:14 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool).</p> <p>31:14 Alex Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>30:08 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool).</p> <p>30:08 Svetoslav Dyakov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.</p> <p>29:02 Offside, Ludogorets Razgrad. Mihail Aleksandrov tries a through ball, but Cosmin Moti is caught offside.</p> <p>28:24 Foul by Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool).</p> <p>28:24 Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick on the right wing.</p> <p>27:01 Foul by Javier Manquillo (Liverpool).</p> <p>27:01 Virgil Misidjan (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.</p> <p>23:48 Corner, Ludogorets Razgrad. Conceded by Alberto Moreno.</p> <p>23:03 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>23:03 Foul by Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>21:47 Offside, Ludogorets Razgrad. Milan Borjan tries a through ball, but Virgil Misidjan is caught offside.</p> <p>20:58 Offside, Liverpool. Adam Lallana tries a through ball, but Raheem Sterling is caught offside.</p> <p>20:57 Attempt saved. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal.</p> <p>20:52 Attempt blocked. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Dejan Lovren.</p> <p>20:27 Attempt blocked. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.</p> <p>19:26 Corner, Ludogorets Razgrad. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.</p> <p>19:23 Attempt blocked. Virgil Misidjan (Ludogorets Razgrad right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Svetoslav Dyakov.</p> <p>18:49 Dangerous play by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).</p> <p>18:49 Svetoslav Dyakov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>16:43 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool).</p> <p>16:43 Junior Caiçara (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>16:15 Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).</p> <p>16:15 Svetoslav Dyakov (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p> <p>13:17 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool).</p> <p>13:17 Virgil Misidjan (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the defensive half.</p>	<p>11:03 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Yordan Minev.</p> <p>7:52 Foul by Steven Gerrard (Liverpool).</p> <p>7:52 Marcelinho (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick in the attacking half.</p> <p>6:28 Delay over. They are ready to continue.</p> <p>5:59 Delay in match Mihail Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad because of an injury.</p> <p>4:30Booking Alex Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.</p> <p>4:25 Foul by Alex Aleksandrov (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>4:25 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.</p> <p>3:29 Offside, Liverpool. Mario Balotelli tries a through ball, but Adam Lallana is caught offside.</p> <p>2:11 Foul by Junior Caiçara (Ludogorets Razgrad.</p> <p>2:11 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.</p> <p>1:03 Roman Bezjak (Ludogorets Razgrad wins a free kick on the right wing.</p> <p>1:03 Foul by Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool).</p> <p>0:00 First Half begins.</p> <p>0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.</p>
---	--