

Date: 25 October 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

BBC	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
Mail	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Hull Daily Mail

25 October  
2014

## THE TIMES

Dull Liverpool frustrated by obdurate rivals

Liverpool 0

Hull City 0

Referee NSWARBRICK Attendance 44,591

There was a grand finale of sorts during which

Philippe Coutinho would have scored but for a graceful, acrobatic save from Hull City's third-choice goalkeeper and Mario Balotelli would have grabbed the winner but for the cloud of uncertainty that envelops his every move.

It was dramatic but only briefly; overall some on the Kop might even have yearned for the midweek fare when Real Madrid were in town and there was beauty and composure and true star quality to quicken the heart.

The worst insult you can level at Liverpool is that they are dull and for heavy chunks of this encounter they were pretty ordinary.

Hull had taken a point at the Emirates Stadium the weekend before, but had done so in a thrilling fashion in a thrilling game. This was the sort of point gained through obduracy.

Although the visiting team were far from incisive, there was real concentration among Liverpool's defence and a determination not to become unruffled.

There was a small dollop of joy, too, when Rickie Lambert came on, held the ball up well and looked more like the Lambert who terrorised when at St Mary's. The home crowd love him and are willing him to succeed.

They have not quite given up on Balotelli but this was a 0-0 that, curiously, smacked of the possible start of a new chapter, one that will, one day soon, have Daniel Sturridge at its core.

### RATINGS

Liverpool (4-1-4-1): S Mignolet 6 -- J Manquillo 5, M Skrtel 6, D Lovren 6, A Moreno 5 -- S Gerrard 5 -- R Sterling 6, J Allen 4 (sub: P Coutinho, 61min 7), E Can 6 (sub: J Henderson, 75) A Lallana 5 (sub: R Lambert, 61 6) -- M Balotelli 6.

Substitutes not used: B Jones, G Johnson, K Toure, L Markovic. Booked:

Henderson, Sterling, Balotelli.

Hull City (3-5-1-1): E Jakupovic 7 -- J Chester 6, A Bruce 6, C Davies 6 -- A Elmohamady 6, T Huddlestone 6, M Diame 6 (sub: D Meyler, 86), J Livermore 5, R Brady 6 -- H Ben Arfa 5 (sub: S Aluko, 71) -- A Hernandez 5 (sub: G Ramirez, 71).

Substitutes not used: R Watson, L Rosenior, P McShane, S Quinn. Booked:

Huddlestone, Ben Arfa.

## the guardian

Rodgers no closer to solving problem like Mario

It was not the best performance from Mario Balotelli, though neither was it the worst. If nothing the Italian produced on the pitch was really worth talking about, the same was true of the other 27 players involved in a forgettable contest.

Balotelli dominated the post-match conversations because that is what pounds 16m, non-scoring misfits do. Never mind that Adam Lallana cost pounds 25m and was hauled off early after another anonymous game, that Raheem Sterling was largely unproductive on the right wing, or that Philippe Coutinho was easily Liverpool's most effective attacker when he came on for the last half-hour.

How to solve a problem like Mario has become the default discussion on Merseyside, a situation that will continue until he loses his place in the team or scores his first league goal.

"You are never too old to learn," Brendan Rodgers suggested, when asked if Balotelli was finding it difficult to adapt to the way Liverpool want to play. "The key is whether you want to learn, and I think Mario does. He will be disappointed because he had two big chances. There was a great opportunity when the ball came into the box for a header, I could see John Aldridge scoring that type of goal. Then there was one right at the end but it wasn't to be. The ball just didn't fall for him. But Mario will get all the support he needs at this club. That is what happens at Liverpool. The people here back every new player. You don't have any excuses."

If the Liverpool manager is beginning to wish he had listened to the many people who advised him not to bother with Balotelli, even at a knock-down price, his opposite number from Hull had words of encouragement. "When you sign someone like Mario you have to understand the one thing they ain't going to do is change," Steve Bruce said. "It's a bit like me taking Hatem Ben Arfa. You have to find a way of getting the best out of them without changing them. Balotelli has been unfairly criticised in my opinion because of his body language, it looks like he doesn't care. But he was Liverpool's best player against us, better than Sterling, better than Lallana. The only reason Hull ended up with a player of Ben Arfa's ability is that he is obviously not everyone's cup of tea. You have to accept that." "It reminds me of the time at United when Eric Cantona turned up to a civic reception in jeans and flip-flops. As captain I had to ask Fergie on behalf of the rest of the squad whether he was going to let him get away with that. It turned out he was. He said: 'Tell the rest of the team if they play like he does, they can all wear jeans and flip-flops too.'"

Before anyone gets carried away, there was nothing produced by Balotelli or Ben Arfa at Anfield that was in any way Cantona-like. The former was booked for an elbow on Alex Bruce and found it difficult to get on the end of anything Liverpool produced, largely because Rodgers's players produced so little. The latter showed up with a threatening run in the first couple of minutes, then disappeared until just before half-time when, with another apparently effortless bound behind the Liverpool defence, he conjured a shooting chance for Jake Livermore, who shot too close to Simon Mignolet.

Liverpool dominated the second half but failed to build up a sufficient head of steam to bother Hull. It was significant that for all the home side's possession and intent, Hull's third-choice goalkeeper did not have a second-half save to make until stoppage time, when he denied Sterling, Coutinho and Balotelli in quick succession. Eldin Jakupovic was making a rare Premier League start because Hull were without several key players, including both senior goalkeepers.

"We've come quite a long way in a short time," Bruce said. "Eighteen months ago I wouldn't have thought it possible to come to Anfield and get a result without five of our big players." Last season it probably would not have been but Liverpool are struggling to reach those heights again.

Keeping a clean sheet for the first time since August was the home side's only small consolation; yet despite Rodgers bigging up the Hull attack - "They are a threat going forward, they scored two at Arsenal and Newcastle" - it was clear the visitors would be happy with a point and the home defence was never under concerted pressure.

Rodgers's old club Swansea City, up next in the Capital One Cup here tomorrow, could be a different proposition.

Man of the match Eldin Jakupovic (Hull)

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# The Mail

Sturridge is missing link

LIVERPOOL 0

HULL 0

THE moment was laced with symbolism. Just as Brendan Rodgers was walking into Anfield's press room, news began to filter through that Luis Suarez was up and running in Spain.

Before Rodgers had settled into his chair and explained 90 minutes of frustration, clips were already circulating on the internet of the goal Suarez had created three minutes into his Barcelona debut with an inchperfect cross-field pass for Neymar. How Liverpool could have done with such ingenuity as they huffed and puffed against Hull. It wasn't that they were particularly bad in this 0-0 draw, it was just they missed a spark to ignite everything, to turn the weight of possession into the goals.

Nobody expected Liverpool to match the 100-plus strikes of last season once Suarez had departed for Catalonia, but they have gone from being a team that you expected to score heavily every time they set foot on a pitch to one that has lost a killer instinct.

'I think we had that confidence last season,' Rodgers said. 'When we go into games we still have it. That confidence doesn't diminish. What was important here was if we didn't score then we didn't concede. Defensively we looked solid. It was just unfortunate that we didn't get three points.' Unfortunate or careless? Though Eldin Jakupovic, Hull's third-choice goalkeeper, earned himself a generous ovation from The Kop at the final whistle after making a string of late saves, the best of which came from Philippe Coutinho, he should have been taken out of the equation.

Mario Balotelli, inevitably, had the game's defining moment in injury time but, after a magical piece of play from Coutinho, the Italian got his feet caught in the wrong position and kicked at fresh air just as the stadium was ready to shout 'goal'.

'He will be disappointed because he had two big chances,' Rodgers observed.

'Then there was the one at the end but it wasn't to be. It just didn't fall for him.' It is indicative of where they are at this moment. Their joint-top scorer -- on three -- in the Barclays Premier League with Raheem Sterling is 'own goal' and both of Liverpool's next opponents Swansea (with Wilfried Bony) and Newcastle (Papiss Cisse) have forwards with better goal tallies. Perhaps an answer, albeit a temporary one until Daniel Sturridge is fit again, would be to deploy Balotelli, who it must be noted was better than he has been, alongside Rickie Lambert in a front two.

'When Sturridge comes back you will see the confidence because of his movement and he is dynamic', explained Rodgers.

'But he isn't fit and hasn't been for a long time. So we have to work without him and while we are doing that, we are staying up and around the top end of the table.' As Rodgers knows, however, to stay up there permanently, they need a cutting edge.

SUPER STAT: This is only the second time in 13 games against Hull that Liverpool have failed to score.

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Mignolet 7; Manquillo 7, Skrtel 7, Lovren 6.5, Moreno 6.5; Can 6 (Henderson 75min, 6), Gerrard 7.5, Allen 6 (Coutinho 61, 7); Sterling 7, Balotelli 6.5, Lallana 6 (Lambert 61, 7.5). Subs not used: Jones, Johnson, Toure, Markovic.

Booked: Henderson, Sterling, Balotelli. HULL (3-5-2): Jakupovic 8; Bruce 7.5, Chester 7, Davies 7; Elmohamady 6.5, Huddleston 6, Livermore 6.5, Diame 7.5 (Meyler 86), Brady 7.5; Ben Arfa 7 (Aluko 71, 6), Hernandez 6 (Ramirez 71, 5.5). Subs not used: Watson, Rosenior, McShane, Quinn.

Booked: Ben Arfa, Huddleston. Referee: Neil Swarbrick 7. Man of the match: Eldin Jakupovic.

# The Daily Telegraph

Bruce: Balotelli is like Cantona

Liverpool 0

Hull City 0

Att: 44,591

With Liverpool asking how they will ever make the signing of their PS16 million Italian work, maybe they should take inspiration from history.

How about commissioning another one of those

fly&#x2013;on&#x2013;the&#x2013;wall documentaries? "Being: Mario" would sell so well they could make a profit on the deal, after all.

It was the turn of Hull manager Steve Bruce to talk all things Mario after his side's draw at Anfield.

Bruce was asked what he thought of Balotelli's performance, during which the striker worked considerably harder than in recent weeks and could have been the match&#x2013;winner but for a couple of fine saves from Hull's third&#x2013;choice goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic. Bruce evoked generous comparisons with Eric Cantona.

"Cantona was big, but let me tell you, he was a maverick, but the dressing room accepted him straight away," Bruce said.

"He was a bit different. But he was also dedicated. Balotelli has been unfairly criticised, in my opinion, because he has got this look he doesn't care.

"That's always part of his make&#x2013;up, it's easy to pick on because of his body language. When you sign someone like Mario, you understand, a bit like me taking Hatem Ben Arfa, there's a lot of nonsense written about them.

"You take them, and the one thing they ain't going to do is change. You have to find a way of getting the best out of them without changing them."

Brendan Rodgers may slightly disagree as there were at least some encouraging signs, on the pitch at least, that Balotelli is changing a bit.

His application, touch and movement was much improved, but you still could not leave this game without asking how long it will be before Daniel Sturridge is fit.

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## THE INDEPENDENT

Bruce: Anfield needs to help Balotelli fit in

That Steve Bruce has emerged as one of Mario Balotelli's more passionate defenders should not come as a surprise. This is, after all, a man who shared a dressing room with Eric Cantona.

The comparison is an interesting one. Both Cantona and Balotelli were thought unmanageable when they signed. However, at Old Trafford, Sir Alex Ferguson turned the Frenchman - who had defeated such managerial talents as Michel Platini, Guy Roux and Franz Beckenbauer - into the catalyst for Manchester United's transformation into English football's dominant force. The reason, said Bruce, was that the Old Trafford dressing room accepted him and Ferguson did not try to change him.

"He came into a team that was ready to accept his maverick ways," said Bruce after seeing his side keep Balotelli at bay in Saturday's goalless draw at Anfield. The Hull manager thought the Italian was Liverpool's best player.

When he brought the midfielder Hatem Ben Arfa, who had also been thought unmanageable at Newcastle, to Humberside, Bruce said he realised "the one thing he isn't going to do is change. You have to find a way of managing them without changing them.

"Balotelli has been unfairly criticised, in my opinion, because he has this look that he doesn't care. It is easy to pick on him because of his body language.

"When you sign a maverick, you always know there is something you have to protect them [against]. Cantona was a maverick. He was also dedicated, he carried a bag with vitamins well before anyone else did. He did it to make sure he was physically right.

"He came into the team and we all liked him. So, when he turns up in flip-flops and baggy jeans to a civic reception there is only him that can get away with it. I questioned Fergie about it and he said: 'Tell the rest of the team if they all play like Cantona they can all wear baggy jeans and flip-flops.'"

Cantona was both liked and respected at Old Trafford. It is hard to know how true that is of Balotelli at Anfield. Ferguson indulged Cantona. Manchester City's English contingent thought their former manager, Roberto Mancini, overindulged Balotelli.

At Liverpool, the complaint has been that he has simply not produced. "He is getting everything," said his manager, Brendan Rodgers. "The fans, the players and the staff will back every new player."

If former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher, now a television pundit, can be said to speak for his close friend, Steven Gerrard, then the view of the home dressing room at Anfield could be summed up in his comment that Balotelli is a "passenger".

That Balotelli played better against Hull than he has done since arriving on Merseyside is a consolation but, once Daniel Sturridge returns to full fitness, Rodgers will have the opportunity to do to Balotelli something Ferguson never dared do to Cantona - drop him.

## DAILY MIRROR

ERIC COULD... MARIO CAN'T

AS Mario Balotelli stood over the ball, sizing up an improbable freekick from fully 40 yards, his captain quietly intervened.

Steven Gerrard cast a long, disbelieving sideways look at the Italian, and gestured for him to get into the penalty box.

In that moment, you had, crystallised, the essence of the Italian's Liverpool experience so far.

The Reds haven't bought into the Super-Mario mythology, that much is painfully clear from their on-field body language. Every false move he makes, every exasperated breath he takes, is greeted with visible disdain.

There is more than a suspicion they don't quite believe in him. Perhaps that's why it simply isn't working. According to Hull boss Steve Bruce (right), if ever a player like Balotelli is going to succeed, then it is because he is embraced.

"When you sign someone like Mario, you understand, a bit like me taking Ben Arfa, there's always a lot of nonsense about them. You take them and the one thing they ain't going to do is change. You have to find a way of getting the best out of them without changing them."

Bruce calls Balotelli a "maverick". He should know. He was captain of Manchester United when the ultimate maverick arrived, to transform that club's fortunes in the early 90s. Mario may be the little prince, but there was only one King of the mavericks. Eric the Red.

Cantona (top, with Bruce) was a catalyst, the missing ingredient. Crucially he was recognised as such. "Cantona was big and let me tell you, he was a maverick, but the dressing room accepted him.

"He was also dedicated, a magnificent specimen physically. And we all liked him - which helps the manager.

"So when he turns up in flip-flops and baggy jeans at a civic reception, there is only him that can get away with it, let me tell you!! I remember as captain I questioned Fergie about it, and he said, 'Tell the rest of the team if they all play like him, then they can all wear raggy jeans and flip-flops'."

Balotelli is different, in part, because he's not really a striker in the true sense of the word.

No doubt. But a real, ope. After watching n for Liverpool, and d Hull side, it is the can draw.

He's an athlete, yes. No doubt. But a real, instinctive striker? Nope. After watching him perform all season for Liverpool, and here against a depleted Hull side, it is the only conclusion you can draw.

And someone who isn't a true striker, can't lead the line alone. Balotelli himself has admitted as much, but for evidence, you merely needed to witness this contest. He tried bless him. There really was more effort than normal. As his manager says, he wants to perform. Yet he doesn't really know how, and there you have the crux of why Liverpool are struggling so badly right now.

They would have won this game had the Italian taken two incredible chances, one a header, the second with the final kick of the game - from a position four yards out - that a natural striker would have converted with his eyes closed. He didn't look like scoring either.

Worse, perhaps, is the fact he can't provide the two other things this Liverpool system needs - demands - from their centre-forward. Movement, both wide and in behind, and pressing.

That's what Luis Suarez had, and Daniel Sturridge has, but poor Mario doesn't have much of a clue about.

So why persevere with him in that position, when even his teammates' body language suggests they don't believe he can do it? First, most obviously, because they have very few other options. Second, because Brendan Rodgers has perhaps the best track record of any young coach in developing players, even ones like Balotelli who Bruce believes is unteachable.

Rodgers was in turn exasperated and defensive of his centre-forward. He knows those misses cost the game, he knows with Sturridge in the side they would have won against a Hull team limited by five injuries and with a third-choice keeper, as well as he performed.

Does the manager truly believe he can develop Balotelli, just as he did Suarez?

"Yes. He probably is a player that likes to drift and open up spaces for others and get opportunities from that. Tactically, I think he can play a number of positions. He is 6ft 3in, quick and strong. You look to play to players' strengths.

"You are never too old to learn. The key is if you want to learn. And I think Mario does. He will be disappointed because he had two big chances. The header was one. The ball comes into the box...I could see John Aldridge there. It was a great opportunity.

"Then there was the one at the end, but it wasn't to be. It just didn't fall for him. He wants to do it though, he's out there on the training pitch, and he's getting into the positions. It will come."

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### Reds must rewind to peaks of last season

Never mind the clocks going back an hour. Brendan Rodgers must wish Liverpool could rewind to the start of the year. Last season's heroics continue to seem a lifetime away as the Reds lurch unconvincingly from one damaging result to the next. While it wasn't quite the damp squib of Wednesday night, Anfield was left disappointed once again as Liverpool's shortcomings were made painfully apparent. This time, though, it wasn't the European Champions. It was Hull City. Despite enjoying plenty of possession, the Reds ultimately couldn't find a way through the visiting defence in a frustrating goalless draw.

If something of a novelty – it was the first such stalemate since the Anfield derby in May 2013 – the manner in which it was achieved was all too familiar for the increasingly disgruntled support. The Reds just aren't at it right now; the midfield misfiring, the attack ailing. At least there was the consolation of a morale-boosting clean sheet, only their second in 19 games and just their third since March, the previous two having both come against Tottenham Hotspur.

That, though, is clutching at straws somewhat.

Mario Balotelli capped a difficult week by spurning a gilt-edged chance to win the game in the final seconds during a frantic finale.

But while the Italian was much improved on his performance against Real Madrid, the same could not be said for too many of his team-mates.

Rodgers rightly spoke of his pride at their effort in response to defeat three days earlier. But while they huffed and puffed, Liverpool were undone by a lack of creativity and confidence. Only when the lively Philippe Coutinho emerged from the bench and Rickie Lambert provided much-needed assistance for Balotelli did the Reds truly threaten. But Hull, with draws at Newcastle United and Arsenal already under their belt, held firm for a deserved point. Eldin Jakupovic, their third-choice goalkeeper, barely had a save to make.

This was a subdued Anfield. Rather than the usual parade of colour, the Kop was littered before kick-off with black flags flown in protest against what many regard as the increased corporatism within the club. In case that wasn't sufficient, banners declaring "enough is enough" from "supporters not customers" hammered home the message. Outside the ground, though, the talk centred inevitably on Balotelli. The Italian's poor performances against Queens Park Rangers and Real – not to mention the shirt-swaps furore – had prompted calls for Lambert to be restored to the starting line-up.

Balotelli, though, continued to lead the attack. And up against a three-man Hull central defence, the Italian at least showed a far greater appetite than in recent outings, chasing down defenders, putting himself about and buying into the team ethic. He forced the only real save of the half from Jakupovic early on with an angled drive at the near post having been found by Raheem Sterling.

Balotelli was also close to capitalising on an underhit James Chester pass on 27 minutes shortly before a brilliant piece of skill to release Alberto Moreno down the left flank with a mid-air back flick brought an appreciative purr from the home crowd. The nearest Liverpool came to breaking the deadlock before the break was in the 10th minute. Dejan Lovren met Steven Gerrard's corner from the right with a powerful header but saw the ball nodded off the line by the alert Ahmed Elmohamady. As Hull struggled to properly clear their lines, Lovren then had a volley blocked before blasting well over the bar from range.

Joe Allen pulled a shot wide, but the Reds struggled to build up any concerted pressure, not helped by wayward passing and a general lack of conviction, particularly in the centre of the field. Indeed, Hull finished the half the stronger. Indecisive defending three minutes before the break allowed Hatem Ben Arfa to drift beyond two players, get to the byline, fall over and still cut the ball back for Jake Livermore, whose drive was grabbed by Simon Mignolet at the second attempt. Moments later, the diving Lovren headed a Elmohamady cross back to Tom Huddlestone for a shot that deflected narrowly wide off Martin Skrtel.

The Reds, with Gerrard twice going close, showed more urgency after the interval, which increased further when Lambert and Coutinho were introduced shortly past the hour.

It almost paid instant dividends. A corner from Coutinho was flicked on by Emre Can – making his first Anfield start – and after Balotelli helped the ball towards goal, Jakupovic stuck out a leg to clear before Gerrard could pounce and then clutched Sterling's follow-up attempt.

Lovren completely missed his kick when found by Balotelli eight yards out and Coutinho headed over at the far post after Jakupovic got the slightest of touches to Gerrard's free-kick delivery.

There was controversy moments later when Coutinho's cross was expertly flicked by Lambert into the path of Balotelli, who tumbled to the ground under the weight of Alex Bruce's tackle. Referee Neil Swarbrick, though, waved play on.

In injury time, Gerrard was hounded out as he broke into the box, Sterling almost caught out Jakupovic at the near post before the keeper turned over Coutinho's fierce rising drive.

And in the last seconds, Coutinho did brilliantly to race down the left and cross low into the box but Balotelli failed to connect with only Jakupovic to beat.

For the Italian and Liverpool, it has been that kind of week.

## HULL DAILY MAIL

### Hull City can 'hold heads up higher' than Liverpool

TO borrow the lyrics of Liverpool's famous anthem, Eldin Jakupovic has walked through a storm and held his head up high. At Anfield came his golden sky and an ovation from the Kop duly provided the sweet silver song of the lark.

In only his second league start for the club in 21 months, Jakupovic was the man to add a splash of romance to Hull City's stoic stalemate with Liverpool. Holding last season's Premier League runners-up at bay with a string of confident saves, the Tigers' forgotten man became only the fourth keeper to leave Anfield with a clean-sheet in all of 2014. On the full-time whistle Jakupovic turned to clap those behind the goal he had just defended and, in spite of their frustration, home fans on the Kop responded with applause of their own.

It was almost as if Liverpool's supporters had known the journey Jakupovic had endured. As an understudy to no fewer than four goalkeepers during his time at the KC Stadium – Ben Amos, David Stockdale, Allan McGregor and Steve Harper – the 30-year-old has grown accustomed to life in the City shadows.

A dozen appearances have been spread over two and a half years, meaning a loan spell at Leyton Orient last season was required just to keep him on a Premier League payroll. Fortune finally brought Jakupovic his chance when covering for the injured pair of McGregor and Harper and he did not disappoint when inspiring City's first-ever clean sheet at Anfield.

A historic maiden victory here eluded Steve Bruce's men but in trying circumstances, stripped of five key figures, City were rightfully thrilled with an 11th point of the campaign. None more so than Jakupovic.

"I work hard every day with my goalkeeper coach Gary (Walsh) so I have to prove every game to be a part of this team. I hope I have done that," he said.

"I try to make the decision for the gaffer difficult. I can just show him what I can do and finally it's his decision." Jakupovic may well be fighting a losing battle on that front with both McGregor and Harper well liked by Bruce, but the first signing of the City manager's reign back in July 2012 has at least dispelled any notion of a goalkeeping crisis blowing up at the KC. Showing he was ready to keep the gloves warm for the games with Southampton and Burnley that preceded the next international break, Jakupovic was a firm figure stood behind an outstanding defence. Try as they might, Liverpool could find no way through.

If a 2-2 draw at Arsenal seven days earlier had been the leading contender for City's best away performance under Bruce, the trip to Anfield found an immediate rival.

As well as being without their two favoured keepers, the Tigers were also unable to call upon the influential trio of Michael Dawson, Andy Robertson and Nikica Jelavic. Not quite bare bones, but diminished in key areas. Not that you would have known it. With the excellent Alex Bruce and Robbie Brady joining Jakupovic in seizing rare Premier League opportunities, City were a model of resilience on their way to another splendid point away from home.

Liverpool were routinely the more likely scorers, especially during a dominant final 30 minutes, but the Tigers refused to buckle at a venue where they had previously leaked 30 goals in just nine visits.

The headline writers craved for something, anything to come from the feet of Mario Balotelli, Liverpool's misfiring bad boy, at the end of a week that had seen him commit the heinous crime of swapping shirts with an opponent at half-time of a Champions League tie with Real Madrid.

City, though, refused to play ball. A compact 3-5-2 shape remained disciplined throughout. Brady marked the Reds' dangerman Raheem Sterling out of the contest and, in truth, denied the home team a genuine clear-cut chance until injury-time, when Balotelli failed to connect with a right-wing cross.

To have succumbed in stoppage-time again would have been harsh on Bruce's battlers. Once they had overcome Liverpool's bright start, one that saw Ahmed Elmohamady head off the line to deny Dejan Lovren and Balotelli work Jakupovic at the near post, the Tigers were relatively untroubled for an hour. City, in fact, had the best chance of the first half.

Hatem Ben Arfa, beginning to show those magic touches playing off Abel Hernandez, burst through two challenges and into the Liverpool box.

Even off balance and falling out of play he found Jake Livermore arriving into the area but a scuffed shot was straight at Simon Mignolet.

The Tigers were even beginning to believe in making Anfield history in front of 2,800 travelling fans, but hopes were reined in as a point soon became the height of City's ambitions.

Once Liverpool introduced Rickie Lambert to partner Balotelli in attack, City were pushed back and probed incessantly.

Moments of brief panic ensued but the three-man defence of Curtis Davies, Bruce and James Chester were without fault.

A hard-working midfield, led by Tom Huddlestone and supplemented by the power of Mo Diame and energy of Livermore, were also worthy of immense credit.

Brady cleared off the line again from Emre Can's near-post flick but Jakupovic effectively had the last word in stoppage time when tipping over Philippe Coutinho's sweet shot from distance.

No McGregor, Harper, Dawson, Robertson or Jelavic but no matter. City now have a squad to rival any team outside of a perceived top eight and the adversities of the last fortnight have delivered the proof.

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# THE INDEPENDENT

ON SUNDAY

## Balotelli late miss gives Rodgers sleepless nights

As Luis Suarez prepared for his comeback in Madrid, the man given the task of replacing him finished his match flat on his back staring up at the unforgiving heavens.

The pass from Philippe Coutinho was perfect, it required just a touch to turn it into the net beneath the Kop, but Mario Balotelli's touch had deserted him long before. Had it gone in, there would barely have been time for Hull to have kicked off.

The previous Saturday at Arsenal Hull had been denied victory by Danny Welbeck with virtually the last kick of the game. Welbeck, however, is a centre-forward who does not wonder what it must be like to score a goal.

When he brought the Italian to Merseyside, his manager, Brendan Rodgers, insisted Liverpool would not become "the Mario Balotelli show", but until his fate is settled most of their games will be shows with a cast list of one.

Nevertheless, this was a vastly improved display from the one that had seen him substituted at half-time against Real Madrid. "I thought he was their best player," said Hull's manager, Steve Bruce. "There is a lot wrote about him, he is not everybody's cup of tea, but he is a bit of a character, and when you sign a maverick, you have to treat him like a maverick.

"I saw him against Tottenham two months ago and I thought he was terrific. The lad is a talent. I only saw the highlights of the Real Madrid game because I couldn't get a ticket, but for me he was made the whipping boy for that game. Here, he was Liverpool's most effective player."

Rodgers remarked that Balotelli "probably did not expect to start this game", and given the storm swirling around the Italian's bleached Mohican head, Rickie Lambert must have wondered what he has to do to start a League match for Liverpool.

Lambert was brought on after an hour, when Liverpool were looking increasingly devoid of ideas. Thereafter, Hull were subjected to a pounding siege that became more menacing with every minute that passed

A lovely flick from Lambert found Balotelli virtually on the penalty spot before he went down under pressure from Alex Bruce. The stadium screamed for a penalty and Rodgers's voice might have been among them. However, when the Liverpool manager analysed the replay, he concluded that Balotelli had slipped.

Coutinho had a shot flicked over by Eldin Jakupovic, Hull's third-choice keeper, who picked quite a day to make his full Premier League debut at the age of 30. The lot of a third-choice goalkeeper must be one of the more surreal roles sport has to offer, and injuries to Allan McGregor and Steve Harper had pitched Jakupovic, born in Bosnia, brought up in Switzerland and brought to Hull via Greece, into the spotlight. His first save was a full-length dive to block Dejan Lovren's header and he rarely faltered amid the 14 corners Liverpool forced.

Hull managed just the one, which given how absurdly vulnerable Liverpool can be from set-pieces, would have disappointed their manager. This was Liverpool's first clean sheet at Anfield since Tottenham were thrashed 4-0 here in March and there was seldom any doubt that they would achieve it.

When Hull did break away, their counterattacks were too slow and ponderous to worry Liverpool's defence. Midway through the first half Bruce covered himself with his jacket as the Kop sang "Steve Bruce, he's got a big fat head" - a chant left over from his days at the heart of Manchester United's defence.

Bruce could afford to laugh. His record against Liverpool at clubs as diverse as Sunderland, Birmingham and Wigan is an excellent one.

When Rodgers came to examine last season's defeats that cost the club the chance of the title, the 3-1 reverse on Humberside would be one that stood out. For Rodgers, this result would have signified two more points dropped.

Fifty years ago this week, as the Tannoy reminded the crowd, Bill Shankly had introduced Liverpool's all-red kit. His successor this week admitted to finding himself in his kitchen at 4.30 in the morning pondering football problems, and last night he would have gone home wondering once more about Mario Balotelli. Liverpool (4-3-3): Mignolet; Manquillo, Skrtel, Lovren, Moreno; Allen (Coutinho, 61), Gerrard, Can (Henderson, 75); Sterling, Balotelli, Lallana (Lambert, 61). Hull City (4-2-3-1): Jakupovic; Chester, Bruce, Davies, Elmohamady; Livermore, Diam[c] (Meyler, 86); Huddleston, Brady, Ben Arfa (Aluko, 71); Hernandez (Ramirez, 71).

Referee: Neil Swarbrick.

Man of the match: Bruce (Hull)

Match rating: 6/10

## The Sunday Telegraph

Balotelli fails to take his chance again

Liverpool 0 Hull City 0 Att: 44,591

There is a process in a struggling player's career where the mood shifts from disapproval to sympathy. Mario Balotelli has reached that point earlier than most. As the Italian trudged off, having missed the injury-time chance to end this stalemate with Hull City, the judgment on his performance was more compassionate than critical. He did not score, created no goals, and if he has a T-shirt to display in readiness of his next celebration, it remains redundant.

For all that, this was not the fixture for snipers to take aim. It would take a leap of imagination that would make Terry Pratchett envious to describe it as a great performance - and his manager Brendan Rodgers might be more irritated than he suggested publicly that chances were missed - but compared to what has gone before, it might make the Liverpool manager release some party poppers.

Whatever happens, Balotelli cannot stop being the chief protagonist. You might want to talk about someone else, turn your gaze elsewhere, and then there he will pop up with the last kick of the game, just the goalkeeper to beat, the chance to be the hero. He should have been the match winner. You have to bow to the inevitable and make it about him. Again. He is the focus when he plays and the focus when he does not play - which he often manages to do simultaneously - but he was more involved than he has been for a while. His link-up play and application did not bewilder, but it met the compulsory standard for a striker of pedigree. His best opportunity came in the fourth minute of injury time when wing wizardry by Philippe Coutinho presented the Italian with what appeared the formality of tapping in. Instead, he fluffed his lines and Hull's third-choice goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic made the last of several crucial interventions.

The first signs of encouragement had arrived just three minutes in when Balotelli closed down Hull's James Chester. The Kop applauded. It was rather like the giddy excitement shown a child when he first learns to walk. Small acorns, giant oaks...

"He worked very hard today," said Rodgers. "Maybe he thought he wasn't going to play but you have to stay with it. He is working hard and at the moment doing his best. Unfortunately, that wee bit of confidence is lacking without a goal.

Goalscorers will tell you that is where they get their energy from - the ball hitting the net. He was working and pressing and today he was just a bit unlucky he did not get it. We just couldn't find that final touch." Balotelli was more effective in the final stages once Rodgers had introduced Rickie Lambert to work in partnership. This is not a scientific calculation, but it was probably the 30th tactical switch Rodgers has made this season. He must be averaging at least three a game, and herein lies another of Liverpool's problems.

Working out how to get the best out of this personnel is not so straightforward. It was similar last year, but Rodgers had Daniel Sturridge and Luis Suarez breaking deadlocks from 25 yards in those days. There is a certain irony that Liverpool's first Premier League clean sheet at Anfield this season came on the day they were all huff and puff without a lightness of touch in attack. For this, credit Hull. There will not be many sides facing Arsenal and Liverpool away in successive weeks and emerging unbeaten. There was not much attacking thrust, but Steve Bruce was swift and just to point out that for all the congratulation directed at Jakupovic, he was not overly exerted. "He made saves you would expect him to make," said Bruce. "But he stood up to the task and he will always remember he kept a clean sheet at Anfield." The Swiss keeper's best work booked the game; he produced a brilliant save to stop Dejan Lovren opening the scoring with a bullet header after 10 minutes and pushed a Balotelli drive wide three minutes later.

It was another 60 minutes before there was another home surge, when Jakupovic denied Coutinho and Balotelli in the closing minutes. In the meantime, Alex Bruce made a goal-saving challenge on Steven Gerrard. Hull's threat was minimal, but when it came it was down the flanks. Hatem Ben Arfa - several shirt sizes bigger than on his last appearance here for Newcastle - crossed for Jake Livermore after 42 minutes, but the shot at Simon Mignolet was tame.

Then Hull finally had what they had waited 45 minutes for - a corner against a team with a set-piece allergy. Ben Arfa stepped forward, the Kop held its breath, and the Frenchman played it short. There might be more brainless decisions this weekend, but that will definitely be in the shortlist. It would be Hull's only corner. Rodgers has been staying up until 4.30am trying to work out how to solve Liverpool's problems. The first thing he needs to do is get Sturridge back. Beyond that, at least he now has some video evidence of Balotelli engaging in the minimum requirement of not only keeping his shirt on for 90 minutes, but putting some sweat on it.

Liverpool (4-3-3): Mignolet 6; Moreno 7, Lovren 6, Skrtel 6, Manquillo 7; Gerrard 6, Allen 6 (Coutinho 61), Can 7 (Henderson 75); Sterling 6, Lallana 6 (Lambert 61), Balotelli 6. Subs Jones, Johnson, Toure, Markovic. Booked Sterling, Balotelli, Henderson.

Hull City (5-4-1): Jakupovic 8; Brady 7, Chester 7 Bruce 7, Davies 7, Elmohamady 6; Huddleston 7; Livermore 7, Ben Arfa 6 (Aluko 71), Diame 6 (Meyler 87); Hernandez 6 (Ramirez 71). Subs Watson, Rosenior, McShane, Quinn. Booked Huddleston, Ben Arfa.

Referee N Swarbrick (Preston).

Date: 25 October 2014 Opposition: Hull City Competition: League	BBC	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph	25 October 2014
	Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror	
	Mail	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Hull Daily Mail	



## THE SUNDAY TIMES

### Liverpool firing blanks

In its way, this was a more dispiriting result for Liverpool than the master class administered to them so painfully by the European champions in midweek. There were two consolations for the home team: first, they didn't lose and second, they kept a clean sheet for only the second time in 19 matches. But that was about the sum of the good news for Liverpool and with the return leg at the Bernabeu in 10 days followed by a visit from Chelsea, the league leaders, the horizon might only get darker.

That the match ended with Mario Balotelli spurning another chance in front of goal was a fitting summary of a frustrating week for everyone at Anfield. Brendan Rodgers had kept faith with the Italian after substituting him for the second half in the Champions League against Real Madrid and reprimanding him for swapping shirts at half-time.

The cheers when Balotelli's name was announced in the line-up at Anfield yesterday were muted, to say the least. But Balotelli's effort, for once, could not be faulted and the Kop were soon willing their PS16m striker to turn from villain to hero. But as the match wore on and Hull's confidence grew, the mood of both Balotelli and crowd became increasingly desperate.

In his defence, Liverpool are not quite sure what they are asking of Balotelli. Too often yesterday he was left isolated, asked to contend with Hull's three centre-backs on his own and to play with his back to goal, which is not his way. Only when Rickie Lambert joined him on the hour did Liverpool get up a head of steam and give the Kop a reason to roar. Philippe Coutinho, surprisingly left out of the starting line-up for Emre Can, also brought some energy and creativity to Liverpool's approach play.

Nor, as Rodgers pointed out, did Balotelli hide, though his struggles to score are starting to symbolise the disjointed nature of the whole team. "I've only worked with him a few months, but he's pushing himself every day in training and wants to improve," said Rodgers. "It's just not going for him at the moment."

Fed neatly by Raheem Sterling, Balotelli could have opened his Premier League account for the club inside the first quarter of an hour but his shot from an acute angle was well saved by Eldin Jakupovic, Hull's third-choice goalkeeper, who can be proud of his afternoon's work. Balotelli had several other half-chances before the final indignity seconds before the final whistle. In between, he was booked for a flailing elbow on Alex Bruce and executed a sublime backheel that set Alberto Moreno scampering down the left.

Hull never flinched and for good periods in the first half played some neat counterattacking football without ever seriously threatening Simon Mignolet. Their spirit was epitomised by Ahmed Elmohamady, who twice cleared off the line and as Liverpool pressed for the winner in a frenetic finale put in another match-saving tackle.

Surprisingly, the most vehement defence of Balotelli came from Steve Bruce. "For me he's the whipping boy and there's always one," said the Hull manager. "I thought he was their best player today. There's a lot of debate about him. He's a character and a bit of a maverick and when you sign a maverick you have to treat him like one. He's going through a sticky patch, but the kid's a talent."

Though Hull were certainly hanging on at the final whistle, Bruce has developed a muscular and resolute team, with Mohamed Diame a strong and skilful foil for Abel Hernandez and the odd flash of brilliance from Hatem Ben Arfa. Both sides had their maverick, but neither could produce a goal.

Liverpool: Mignolet 6, Manquillo 5, Skrtel 6, Lovren 6, Moreno 5, Allen 5 (Coutinho 61min), Gerrard 6, Can 6 (Henderson 75min), Sterling 6, Balotelli 6, Lallana 6 (Lambert 61min) Hull: Jakupovic 7, Bruce 7, Davies 6, Chester 6, Elmohamady 8, Huddleston 6, Diame 7 (Meyler 86min), Livermore 7, Brady 6, Ben Arfa 6 (Aluko 71min), Hernandez 6 (Ramirez 71min)

## The Observer

Date: 25 October 2014  
 Opposition: Hull City  
 Competition: League

BBC	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
Mail	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Hull Daily Mail

25 October  
2014



Mario Balotelli suffered another frustrating day as his Liverpool team were held at home by Hull City.

The striker missed an injury-time effort and had a shot saved, but remains without a Premier League goal since his £16m move from AC Milan.

Dejan Lovren had a header cleared off the line by Hull's Ahmed Elmohamady.

Jake Livermore wasted the Tigers' best chance, shooting at Simon Mignolet, but defeat would have been harsh on the hosts, who had 17 efforts at goal.

The best opportunity fell to Balotelli in the closing moments but, with only goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic to beat, the ex-Manchester City striker failed to connect with the ball from close range.

He had also seen an 11th-minute shot pushed wide by the third-choice Hull keeper as the Italian tried to repay Brendan Rodgers's faith in starting him.

But Balotelli, who had been criticised afterswapping shirts with Real Madrid defender Pepe at half-time in the Reds' 3-0 Champions League defeat, failed to score for the eighth consecutive game.

The result means Liverpool, Premier League runners-up in 2013-14, are eight points behind leaders Chelsea, who have played a game fewer.

But for Steve Bruce's workmanlike Hull it was another hard-earned point, their fifth draw of the season, after holding Arsenal 2-2 at Emirates Stadium last week.

They also had chances to steal a win and Livermore should have done better than shoot at home keeper Mignolet when unmarked in the penalty area.

Mohamed Diame, who had scored four times in five games after joining from West Ham, also dragged a shot off target, before Huddlestons' effort bounced off Martin Skrtel and narrowly wide.

Liverpool - coming off the back of successive league wins, despite their patchy early-season form - had the majority of the possession and chances, and were unlucky not to take an eighth-minute lead, when Elmohamady was well placed to clear Lovren's header off the line from Steven Gerrard's corner.

The Reds captain curled an effort wide after a one-two with Raheem Sterling and the teenage England winger had a low 20-yard shot saved by Jakupovic.

The hosts brought on Rickie Lambert, Philippe Coutinho and Jordan Henderson as they searched for a winning goal to match their second-half dominance, but could not make the breakthrough.

Sterling's injury-time effort was scooped wide by Jakupovic, who then made a stunning save to tip Coutinho's 20-yard effort over as Bruce's side held on for the draw.

Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers: "Performance wise we were excellent, particularly in the second half where we were outstanding.

"After a tough game in midweek it was a great effort from the players and we deserved to win the game. I thought it was just a matter of time until we scored, we created some opportunities and had 19 shots at goal. I can't ask for any more from the players, they've given everything."

On Mario Balotelli's last-minute chance, Rodgers added: "He will be disappointed with that. The cross came in, it was a perfect ball, he just opened his foot up too far and the chance was gone."

Hull City manager Steve Bruce: "We have been away at the Emirates and come here and put on another terrific show.

"In the first half we had probably the best opportunity when Hatem Ben Arfa played the ball into Jake Livermore.

"Liverpool got frustrated in the second-half and we came away with a thoroughly deserved point.

"We had four or five players missing today from the team that played Arsenal and everyone that came in put in a terrific performance."

Date: 25 October 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

BBC	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
Mail	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Hull Daily Mail

25 October  
2014



Full time Match ends, Liverpool 0, Hull City 0.  
90:00+4:08 Full time Second Half ends, Liverpool 0, Hull City 0.  
90:00+1:18 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Eldin Jakupovic.  
90:00+1:16 Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal.  
90:00+0:47 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Eldin Jakupovic.  
88:51 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by David Meyler.  
88:29 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by David Meyler.  
87:13 Attempt blocked. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.  
86:00 Substitution Substitution, Hull City. David Meyler replaces Mohamed Diamé.  
85:16 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool header from the left side of the six yard box is close, but misses the top left corner. Assisted by Steven Gerrard with a cross following a set piece situation.  
84:15 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.  
84:15 Foul by Mohamed Diamé (Hull City.  
82:17 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
82:17 Foul by Gastón Ramírez (Hull City.  
80:58 Booking Jordan Henderson (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.  
80:41 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool has gone down, but that's a dive.  
79:45 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.  
79:45 Foul by Alex Bruce (Hull City.  
79:32 Attempt saved. Sone Aluko (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Alex Bruce.  
78:25 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool.  
78:25 James Chester (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
77:49 Attempt missed. Martin Skrtel (Liverpool header from the centre of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Steven Gerrard with a cross following a corner.  
77:26 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by James Chester.  
77:24 Attempt blocked. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.  
76:53 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Robbie Brady.  
76:34 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
76:34 Foul by James Chester (Hull City.  
76:01 Foul by Rickie Lambert (Liverpool.  
76:01 James Chester (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
75:00 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
75:00 Foul by Gastón Ramírez (Hull City.  
74:25 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson replaces Emre Can.  
72:01 Javier Manquillo (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.  
72:01 Foul by Tom Huddlestone (Hull City.  
70:34 Substitution Substitution, Hull City. Gastón Ramírez replaces Abel Hernández.  
70:10 Substitution Substitution, Hull City. Sone Aluko replaces Hatem Ben Arfa.  
67:33 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Curtis Davies.  
67:28 Attempt missed. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Rickie Lambert.  
67:00 Attempt blocked. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Steven Gerrard.  
65:09 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool.  
65:09 Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
64:33 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool.  
64:33 James Chester (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
63:00 Attempt saved. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner.  
62:32 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Robbie Brady.  
62:03 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alex Bruce.  
61:59 Attempt blocked. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.  
60:43 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Rickie Lambert replaces Adam Lallana.  
60:28 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Philippe Coutinho replaces Joe Allen.  
59:46 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
59:46 Foul by James Chester (Hull City.  
59:02 Attempt missed. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Raheem Sterling.  
57:55 Attempt saved. Abel Hernández (Hull City left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Ahmed Elmohamady with a headed pass.  
57:49 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
56:21 Booking Mario Balotelli (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.  
55:58 Delay in match Alex Bruce (Hull City because of an injury.  
55:45 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool.  
55:45 Alex Bruce (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
55:22 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
54:37 Booking Raheem Sterling (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.  
53:59 Delay in match Robbie Brady (Hull City because of an injury.  
53:56 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool.  
53:56 Robbie Brady (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
53:23 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
53:23 Foul by Robbie Brady (Hull City.  
51:34 Dejan Lovren (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

51:34 Foul by Abel Hernández (Hull City.  
49:16 Booking Hatem Ben Arfa (Hull City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.  
49:08 Steven Gerrard (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.  
49:08 Foul by Hatem Ben Arfa (Hull City.  
47:48 Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.  
47:48 Robbie Brady (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
46:13 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Robbie Brady.  
46:11 Attempt blocked. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Joe Allen.  
45:00 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, Hull City 0.  
45:00+2:37 Half time First Half ends, Liverpool 0, Hull City 0.  
45:00+2:08 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ahmed Elmohamady.  
45:00+1:23 Javier Manquillo (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.  
45:00+1:23 Foul by Mohamed Diamé (Hull City.  
45:00+0:30 Javier Manquillo (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
45:00+0:30 Foul by Alex Bruce (Hull City.  
44:51 Corner, Hull City. Conceded by Martin Skrtel.  
44:49 Attempt blocked. Tom Huddlestone (Hull City left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.  
43:25 Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
43:25 Foul by Hatem Ben Arfa (Hull City.  
42:53 Foul by Mario Balotelli (Liverpool.  
42:53 James Chester (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
42:18 Attempt missed. Mohamed Diamé (Hull City left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Hatem Ben Arfa.  
41:09 Attempt saved. Jake Livermore (Hull City right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Ahmed Elmohamady.  
40:09 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool.  
40:09 Mohamed Diamé (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
39:26 Booking Tom Huddlestone (Hull City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.  
38:56 Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
38:56 Foul by Tom Huddlestone (Hull City.  
35:07 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Mohamed Diamé.  
31:17 Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.  
31:17 Foul by Jake Livermore (Hull City.  
29:02 Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.  
29:02 Foul by James Chester (Hull City.  
27:15 Attempt missed. Joe Allen (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.  
25:12 Offside, Hull City. Mohamed Diamé tries a through ball, but Abel Hernández is caught offside.  
22:35 Offside, Liverpool. Martin Skrtel tries a through ball, but Mario Balotelli is caught offside.  
19:07 Steven Gerrard (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
19:07 Foul by Hatem Ben Arfa (Hull City.  
15:03 Attempt blocked. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.  
14:12 Attempt missed. Mohamed Diamé (Hull City header from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Ahmed Elmohamady with a cross.  
12:24 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Eldin Jakupovic.  
12:23 Attempt saved. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the top right corner. Assisted by Raheem Sterling.  
11:14 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
10:29 Delay in match Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City because of an injury.  
9:47 Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high following a corner.  
9:43 Attempt blocked. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.  
9:34 Attempt blocked. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Steven Gerrard with a cross.  
9:05 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Robbie Brady.  
7:23 Hand ball by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool.  
5:51 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
5:07 Delay in match Emre Can (Liverpool because of an injury.  
0:23 Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.  
0:23 Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool.  
0:00 First Half begins.  
0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.