

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015

## THE TIMES

Balotelli in a frosty mood but Sunderland are the ones to be frozen out  
 Sunderland 0  
 Liverpool 1  
 Markovic 9  
 Referee CPAWSON Attendance 45,369

Mario Balotelli shrivelled into his Liverpool coat as he pushed through the glass doors at the Stadium of Light and into a blast of frigid north-east air. "This is the f\*\*\*ing coldest city I've ever f\*\*\*ing played in," the Liverpool striker muttered through chattering teeth and if that was an exaggeration, it scarcely felt like it. This was winter at its most bleak; a good day to get in and out and back into the comfort of the team bus.

When the final whistle was blown and jeers rang out, Steven Gerrard stood at the end of the players' tunnel, shaking hands, slapping backs and embracing his team-mates. The captain had been substituted at half-time, protecting a tight hamstring, and his gesture was an indication of what Liverpool have, what they will lose this summer and the meaning of a victory that was both merited and hard-won.

It will not be remembered for much -- Balotelli may recall the temperature -- and certainly not by Sunderland, whose performance was moribund, but Liverpool did what they had to do.

They should have done it with greater comfort, with a bigger buffer, but it was not the kind of game for finesse and Brendan Rodgers and his players took their leave of Wearside shivering but undefeated in their past seven fixtures in all competitions.

It was not the best timing from Gustavo Poyet, who wrote in his programme notes: "I think everything is coming together." On Saturday, Sunderland unravelled, standing off Liverpool for 45 minutes, failing to find any kind of urgency or propulsion, hitting the woodwork through Adam Johnson but mustering only a single shot on target. They remained in contention because their disadvantage was narrow, but the scoreline was fiction.

Sunderland, who are only one point off the bottom three, used to be known for their aggression, for getting in their opponents' faces. "No, that was the characteristics of one Sunderland team," Poyet countered, "the team of Kevin Phillips and Niall Quinn. The rest of the teams of Sunderland did not have any characteristics. They were rubbish. They were playing for relegation and suffering. I am trying something. But we are miles away to a point that it worries me a little bit."

There has been a solidity to Sunderland, who have secured 11 draws, but they could not summon a response when Lazar Markovic drove down the right to score his first league goal for Liverpool. Poyet pointed to a history of "bad decisions and suffering".

"We need to find a way together, making the team play in a certain way," he said. "We have to be better and more adaptable, more intelligent on the pitch as a team and we are not."

Markovic, the Serbia player, should have had a penalty and clipped the crossbar with a volley, but Liverpool's fluency dipped in Gerrard's absence and when Sunderland lost Liam Bridcutt -- harshly -- to a second yellow card, they dug in. "We knew it was going to be tough, especially with the conditions," Simon Mignolet, the goalkeeper, said. "We feel that there's a bit of momentum in the team now, but we're not looking back."

For Mignolet, who was dropped "indefinitely" last month but has since replaced the injured Brad Jones, backward glances are unhelpful. "If you play for a big club, there's always going to be pressure and you're going to have to deal with that, but I'm a positive character and I always try to do my best and show what I can do," he said.

There was little chance of that at Sunderland but, unlike Balotelli, he was not complaining.

Mario Balotelli the target as Juventus, the Italian champions, prepare bid to tempt Liverpool striker from Anfield

### RATINGS

Sunderland (4-1-4-1): C Pantilimon 6 -- S Vergini 4, J O'Shea 5, W Brown 5, P van Aanholt 5 -- L Bridcutt 4 -- A Johnson 6 (sub: M Mandron, 86min), S Larsson 6, J Gomez 5, E Giaccherini 5 (sub: W Buckley, 77) -- C Wickham 4 (sub: D Graham, 77). Substitutes not used: V Mannone, B Jones, R Alvarez, L Agnew. Booked: Vergini, Bridcutt. Sent off: Bridcutt.

Liverpool (3-4-2-1): S Mignolet 6 -- E Can 6, M Skrtel 6, M Sakho 6 -- L Markovic 7, J Henderson 6, L Leiva 6, A Moreno 6 -- S Gerrard 7 (sub: D Lovren, 46 6), P Coutinho 6 -- F Borini 6 (sub: M Balotelli, 67 6). Substitutes not used: D Ward, J Enrique, R Lambert, J Manquillo, J Rossiter. Booked: Henderson, Lovren, Borini, Coutinho.

## the guardian

Sunderland's Gus Poyet pleads for new personnel after Liverpool defeat  
 The moment Gus Poyet had been waiting for arrived when someone asked why his players had "stood off" Liverpool. Surely, continued the questioner, Sunderland are synonymous with getting in the faces of their opponents?

"No," said the manager, seizing an opportunity to drop his bosses a not so cryptic hint. "That was the characteristic of one Sunderland, the one with Kevin Phillips and Niall Quinn. The rest of the teams of Sunderland did not have any characteristics. They were rubbish. They were playing for relegation and suffering. I am trying something but we are miles away to a point that worries me."

If Roy Keane, Steve Bruce, Martin O'Neill and Paolo Di Canio may be less than delighted to see their endeavours at the Stadium of Light trashed so comprehensively, it is hard to believe Ellis Short, who has spent countless millions on the squad, will be overjoyed either.

The message Poyet is trying to convey to Sunderland's owner, not to mention Lee Congerton, the sporting director, is that he is the club's first manager since Peter Reid to attempt to introduce a defined playing philosophy. In order to create this clearly identifiable brand Poyet believes players capable of fulfilling his sweet-passing vision must be recruited.

A keen politician, he used a subsequent question asking him to quantify precisely how "rubbish" Sunderland are to reinforce the point that significant investment is required.

"I don't care. I'm just saying what I feel. We have to be realistic. Sunderland have been in the top-10 once in 15 years. The rest have been full of bad decisions and suffering. We need to find a way of playing a certain way. As a team we're not adaptable and not intelligent."

Brendan Rodgers would doubtless advise his Sunderland counterpart that every problem contains the genesis of a solution. Poyet once claimed that without Luis Suárez, Liverpool would merely be mid-table also-rans but after a difficult transition to life following the striker's transfer, Rodgers looks to be heading back towards the sunlit uplands.

With Daniel Sturridge still to return from long-term injury, Liverpool may yet achieve the top-four finish their manager craves. They have now lost once in their past 13 games and a side lacking not just Sturridge but also Raheem Sterling -- sunning himself on a long-planned break in Jamaica -- Adam Lallana and Glen Johnson should really have won by three or four more goals.

Sunderland simply could not fathom Rodgers's fluid 3-4-3 formation. Without the injured Lee Cattermole around to galvanise the Wearsiders, the fast improving Lazar Markovic was afforded space to shine and could have easily have added to his ninth-minute winner.

When Liam Bridcutt was sent off for a second bookable offence in the 49th minute it looked all over for Sunderland but perhaps taking advantage of Steven Gerrard's half-time withdrawal with a tight hamstring, Poyet's players staged a minor revival.

"We gave away 45 minutes," said a manager whose side have won one of their past 11 league games and look set for another relegation skirmish.

"After that we tried. I cannot ask for any more with the personnel we've got. We sorted things out at half-time but the disappointing thing was that I'd expected my team to be able to work things out for themselves. But there was confusion about Liverpool's system."

Short and Congerton are entitled to wonder what Rodgers might have done in Poyet's place. The Sunderland manager's first-half tactic of asking his full-backs, Santiago Vergini and Patrick van Aanholt, to mark Philippe Coutinho and Gerrard while demanding that his wingers, Adam Johnson and Emanuele Giaccherini, minded Markovic and Alberto Moreno, backfired disastrously.

Quite apart from being hugely ineffective defensively -- Coutinho, particularly, destroyed Vergini -- Johnson and Giaccherini were prevented from using their talents to hurt Liverpool. It was no surprise Poyet's team managed only one shot on target.

Perhaps it is simply down to vitamin D deprivation? Rodgers believes a holiday somewhere rather nearer the equator would do every Premier League footballer good at this time of year. If sending Sterling to the sun was an overriding priority -- "Raheem needed a rest, physically and mentally" -- there are several others at Anfield who would benefit immensely from a similar recharge.

"A winter break is something that must happen," Rodgers said. "People talk about tradition but is it a tradition to see your best players injured and out for long periods? We must be so clever here because the whole of Europe has a rest. It would absolutely benefit every player, mentally as well as physically."

Man of the match Lazar Markovic (Liverpool)

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015

## The Mail

Lazar Markovic scores first Premier League goal as Reds struggle against 10-man Black Cats

Lazar Markovic scored his first league goal for Liverpool as the club prepared for the post-Gerrard era with a win that keeps alive their top-four hopes and leaves Sunderland staring at a relegation battle.

Steven Gerrard's 25-year association with Anfield is not quite over yet, but this was the first match played since official confirmation that he will leave for MLS side LA Galaxy at the end of this season and, at 34, he will certainly not be playing every game until then. As if to underline his susceptibility, he was withdrawn at half-time yesterday as a precaution with a minor hamstring ailment.

Markovic, a 20-year-old Serb who cost £20million when bought from Benfica and various third parties last summer, was set up by a pass from Gerrard for the goal. The assist was symbolic as well as practical; it will be Markovic's generation who will now be required to step up and fill the void about to be created not just by Gerrard's technical contributions but his leadership.

Liverpool should have had a penalty before going ahead but referee Craig Pawson bafflingly failed to punish Wes Brown for bringing down Markovic. Liverpool later failed to punish 10-man Sunderland after Pawson gave a soft second yellow to Liam Bridcutt.

'I thought we were outstanding in the first half,' said Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers. He praised his team's 'control' and 'tempo' and pressing game. 'We should have had a clear penalty, we hit the crossbar and created other clear-cut chances,' he said.

Liverpool have lost just one game now in their last 13 matches in all competitions and one in nine in the Premier League. This win leaves them in eighth place, four points behind the coveted Champions League slots. They will, however, need to up their game if they are to mount a realistic challenge.

Rodgers can at least look forward to returning players, with Daniel Sturridge getting closer after thigh and calf problems and Raheem Sterling due back from a mid-season holiday. Rodgers has given Sterling, 20, some time off to rest and the player has been soaking up some winter sun on holiday in Jamaica. He will be back next week.

'In my two and a half years here, he has gone from youth team to full international,' said Rodgers, explaining the rationale for Sterling's break. 'I need to think of the kid for himself and for Liverpool in the long term. It was a good time to give him a rest and he'll be back fresh for the rest of the season.' Rodgers also had praise for Markovic, who he insisted will have a 'big, big future'. Things look less bright for Sunderland, with just one win in 11 league games — and that not since the start of October against Stoke.

This was the tenth league game of the season (out of 21) in which they have failed to score. 'The feeling is not good,' said manager Gus Poyet.

'We played poorly for 45 minutes of a very important game and, when you do that against a team like Liverpool, you'll get punished.'

He then implied criticism of referee Pawson, agreeing that 'by the rules' yellow cards should be handed out for certain actions that inhibit attacking play. This was a reference to Bridcutt's second booking, a soft card for the slightest contact with Emre Can.

Poyet then said that, by the rules, Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho should also have had two yellows.

'You referee by the rules or you referee by common sense,' he said, implying Pawson had not used common sense. Poyet also confirmed he would try to buy a striker in the transfer window to address Sunderland's chronic lack of goals.

'I'll not give too much information away,' he said. 'We'll try.'

Liverpool's goal came after a decent phase of interplay ended with Markovic running on to a ball from Gerrard and slotting past Costel Pantilimon. Liverpool dominated for long periods of the first half, limiting a poor Sunderland to set-pieces and speculative long-range efforts.

Sunderland (4-1-4-1): Pantilimon 5.5; Vergini 5, O'Shea 6, Brown 5.5, Van Aanholt 5.5; Bridcutt 5; Johnson 6 (Mandron 86), Larsson 6, Gomez 5, Giaccherini 5.5 (Buckley 7.7, 5.5); Wickham 5.5 (Graham 7.7, 6).

Subs not used: Jones, Alvarez, Agnew, Mannone

Booked: Vergini, Bridcutt

Sent off: Bridcutt 49

Manager: Gus Poyet

Liverpool (3-4-1-2): Mignolet 6; Can 7, Skrtel 6.5, Sakho 6.5; Markovic 7.5, Henderson 7.5, Lucas 7, Moreno 6.5; Gerrard 7 (Lovren 4.6, 6.5); Borini 6.5 (Balotelli 6.6, 6), Coutinho 8.

Subs not used: Ward, Enrique, Lambert, Manquillo, Rossiter

Booked: Borini, Coutinho, Lovren, Henderson

Goals: Markovic 9

Manager: Brendan Rodgers

Referee: Craig Pawson

Attendance: 45,369

Man of the match: Coutinho

## The Daily Telegraph

Markovic makes right sort of impression for Liverpool  
 Sunderland 0

Liverpool 1

Markovic 8 Att: 45,369

Liverpool are back. Not back to their peak, perhaps, although the last time Liverpool could call themselves the champions of England was almost a quarter of a century ago, but they are back to something like the best they have been under Brendan Rodgers.

Too many points have been lost, and too much ground conceded during their malaise since the departure of Luis Suarez for Liverpool to be part of the title race. That ambition remains unfulfilled, yet there is still much to play for: a Capital One Cup semi-final against Chelsea, an FA Cup campaign and the one worth the most money - a top-four finish and access to the Champions League pot of gold.

Rodgers is on firm ground again and he can argue with some validity that the best is yet to come from his side. The summer signings are starting to settle and the performances of Lazar Markovic, in particular, are more than just encouraging. The Serbian, 20, cost PS20million from Benfica, but his only previous headline-grabbing moment came when sent off for poking a Basel player in the eye in a crucial Champions League group game. Not any more. Markovic's powerful running, intelligent use of the ball and his first Premier League goal, finishing well after a razor-sharp passing move, were all highlights of the win here.

"It is nothing that we haven't seen before because he is a top young talent,"

Rodgers said. "It shows what a difficult league this is for any player to come in, let alone a very young player. Then add the fact that he is coming to one of the biggest clubs in the world.

"So it takes time, but a lot of our young players are starting to bed into our philosophy and the way we play. You will see them develop and come on a lot in the next six months. He has been pretty consistent. I had a chat with him a while ago about his aggression and he got sent off in the next game. But I want him to be aggressive with and without the ball. He is a talent."

This was a game in which Liverpool would have dropped points before Christmas because Sunderland are doggedly difficult opponents. They have a poor record at home and their manager, Gus Poyet, betrayed more than a hint of exasperation with his players after this defeat, but they are a difficult side to beat, nonetheless. Their problem is a lack of goals and, with Steven Fletcher absent through injury, Sunderland were both blunt and unimaginative in the final third. Poyet is desperate for a new striker in this transfer window, although he must also take some of the blame.

His five-man midfield gives Sunderland resilience, but because of it, they rarely attack in vast numbers and with Connor Wickham unable to hold the ball up at all against Liverpool, they made things far too easy for a suspect defence with a shaky goalkeeper, their former No1, Simon Mignolet, behind it.

The closest they came to an equaliser was when they were down to 10 men following Liam Bridcutt's sending off for a second bookable offence, Adam Johnson's swerving shot beating Mignolet, but not the crossbar.

Poyet was annoyed, but as he pointed out in mitigation, Sunderland are used to these sorts of problems at this stage of the season. It is why their manager harks back to the era which brought two top-six finishes.

"The characteristics of the Kevin Phillips and Niall Quinn side was that they were in people's faces," Poyet said. "The rest of the teams of Sunderland did not have any characteristics. They were rubbish. They were playing for relegation and suffering. I am trying something, but we are miles away to a point that it worries me a little bit."

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015



**Lazar Markovic breaks his Premier League duck to give Reds unconvincing win over 10-man Black Cats**

Sometimes it goes for you. Raheem Sterling spent Saturday on a beach in his shorts in Jamaica. His manager Brendan Rodgers was victorious in the bitter cold of the north east.

There will be many who never quite get their heads around the concept of footballers taking mid-season jollies, but yesterday it worked, and it worked far more comfortably than the scoreline suggests.

Rodgers knew it was a dangerous situation. It was not helped by the picture of his most skilful young player in sunglasses and a hat 24 hours before his side travelled north.

"Raheem will be back next week," said Rodgers. "It was something that was already planned from the summer. In my time here in two-and-a-half years he has gone from the youth team through to becoming a full international player. He is one of the best young players in European football. If I was selfish I would maybe have him here with me every single minute. He has been brilliant and I need to think of the kid.

"He has played over 100 games and he has just turned 20. I just felt this was a good period for him to have a rest. He missed the FA Cup tie and he missed the Sunderland game and he will rejoin us next week fresh and fit for the second part of the season."

He will be coming back to a happy camp. For that he might thank Steven Gerrard who, in his farewell to the North-east, was outstanding. He only played for 45 minutes before a hamstring tightened, according to his manager.

But that was more than enough to give a reminder of why there has been such a reaction to his decision to leave English football at the end of this season and head off to America. If he leaves Liverpool in the Champions League it will be some parting gift, and do not bet against them just yet.

It is one defeat in nine now and a season that was disintegrating a couple of months ago has life. They are just four points behind fourth placed Southampton and within five of their old rivals Manchester United.

Victory came in a dominant first half. Within three minutes the excellent Lazar Markovic was fouled inside the Sunderland penalty area by Wes Brown. For that referee Craig Pawson did nothing.

Then Gerrard went off injured and his absence was of more significance to anyone lying on a beach. Liverpool lost control, Liam Bridcutt picked up a second yellow card, for clipping the heels of Emre Can, and from there the game became disjointed.

Mignolet still did not have a save to make, but Adam Johnson crashed a shot off the crossbar. Gus Poyet was jeered for taking Johnson off in the 86th minute.

"The fans need to accept reality," Poyet said. "It's been going on for the last four or five years. They need to be more patient."

Liverpool finished strongly. There were two chances for Philippe Coutinho and even Mario Balotelli, who was dreadful, forced a save from Pantilimon from a narrow angle.

"We were outstanding," Rodgers said. "We had real control in the first half. "Defensively the players were excellent as well. It showed how strong we are. It was a very good result and a very good performance."

Sunderland: (4-1-4-1) Pantilimon; Vergini, O'Shea, Brown, Aanholt; Bridcutt; Johnson (Mandron 86), Larsson, Gomez, Giaccherini (Buckley, 77); Wickham (Graham, 77).

Liverpool: (5-3-2) Mignolet; Markovic, Can, Skrtel, Sakho, Moreno; Henderson, Gerrard (Lovren, 51), Leiva; Borini (Balotelli, 67), Coutinho.

Referee: Craig Pawson

Man of the match: Markovic (Liverpool)

Match rating: 5/10



Lazar Markovic's early strike secures win against ten-man Black Cats  
 Lazar guided Liverpool cruised to arguably the most one-sided one nil wins ever. Brendan Rodgers' side racked up their fifth win in seven games thanks to Lazar Markovic's first league goal for the Scousers.

It was a cruise control performance, dominant in midfield, and only spoiled by the lack of a second, third or fourth goal that their superiority merited.

Gus Poyet's side were anonymous, with just one shot on target, and one against the bar. They have only one win in 11 in the league and are in relegation danger.

Worse still was the lack of fight or bite they showed their home fans, as the players put in an astonishingly static display. Going down to ten men when Liam Bridcutt saw red was no excuse.

Serbian wing back Markovic finished a sweeping move that started in his own half an ended after a series of defensive blunders by Poyet's men.

The 20-year-old bundled the ball in after a pathetic challenge by Patrick Van Aanholt with Costel Pantilimon beaten through his legs.

Ex Sunderland loanee Fabio Borini opened up the defence with a lovely lay off, and was cluttered by John O'Shea in the process.

Liverpool were totally in charge from the off. Sunderland were dreadful.

Poyet's side had no battling qualities, didn't press Liverpool, and gave the ball away when they tried any forward move.

That meant a first half stroll for Rodger's side.

The visitors should have had an early penalty when Wes Brown ran across Markovic and sent him tumbling

Steven Gerrard had a free kick tipped over, and was substituted at half time.

There was a remarkable volley from Markovic, a kung fu kick from the edge of the area, that hit the bar and rebounded off Pantilimon's back fro a corner.

Borini, who had a great season at Sunderland, was sent through and rounded the keeper hitting the side netting.

Sunderland's hopes of a recovery after the break receded when Liam Bridcutt was sent off for two yellows.

His second came when he blocked off Emre Can on the touchline during a Liverpool breakaway. The first was for a foul on Gerrard.

But Adam Johnson rekindled hope with a fine dipping shot that hit the bar.

Sub Dejan Lovren was fortunate not to see red for a tackle on Van Aanholt.

Teams

Sunderland: Pantilimon, Vergini, van Aanholt, O'Shea, Brown, Bridcutt, Larsson, Gomez, Johnson (Mandron), Giaccherini (Buckley), Wickham (Graham)

Liverpool: Mignolet, Can, Skrtel, Sakho, Henderson, Moreno, Lucas, Gerrard (Lovren), Markovic, Coutinho, Borini (Balotelli)

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015



Lazar Markovic secures scrappy but deserved win for Reds  
 Lazar Markovic first Premier League goal for Liverpool secured a scrappy 1-0 victory over 10-man Sunderland at the Stadium of Light.  
 The £20million Serbian winger's early strike proved enough as Brendan Rodgers' side continued their push towards the Champions League spots.  
 The Reds should have been out of sight before half-time but after going in front they missed some glorious chances.  
 After a highly impressive opening 45 minutes, standards slipped in the second half with Liverpool unable to take advantage of Liam Bridcutt's dismissal.  
 The Black Cats threatened to restore parity with Adam Johnson striking the bar but the Reds held on to extend their unbeaten run in all competitions to seven matches.  
 Rodgers made two changes to the side which beat AFC Wimbledon in the FA Cup with Fabio Borini and Alberto Moreno replacing Rickie Lambert and Javier Manquillo.  
 The Reds flew out the blocks and they should have had a penalty inside three minutes.  
 Philippe Coutinho's pass released Markovic, who was upended in the box by Wes Brown's clumsy challenge. However, to the visitors' disgust referee Craig Pawson waved away their protests.  
 Unperturbed, Liverpool continued to boss proceedings and got the breakthrough in the ninth minute.  
 Pawson redeemed himself to a certain degree as he played a good advantage after Borini was brought down by Brown 20 yards out.  
 Markovic seized upon the loose ball and held his nerve to bundle it past Costel Pantilimon.  
 The Serbian continued to shine in the right wing-back role – getting forward with menace and also doing plenty of good work defensively.  
 Sunderland were comprehensively outplayed and the Reds should have added to their account before the interval.  
 Steven Gerrard's strike from the edge of the box was deflected behind and then from the ensuing corner Jordan Henderson picked out Gerrard, who miskicked when well placed.  
 Pawson issued a flurry of bookings with Borini's caution followed by yellows for Santiago Vergini, Liam Bridcutt and Coutinho.  
 Gerrard's curling free-kick was pushed over the bar by Pantilimon and then Markovic was just inches away from making it 2-0.  
 His stunning volley on the half hour mark hammered against the bar as the Black Cats survived.  
 The chances kept on coming. Gerrard fired into the side netting and then the captain was denied by Pantilimon's low save after being teed up by Borini.  
 Just before the break Borini was put through by Emre Can's perfectly weighted pass but after going around the keeper he failed to find the net.  
 Liverpool were forced into a change for the second half after Gerrard complained of tightness in a leg muscle. Rodgers brought on Dejan Lovren with Can pushed further forward.  
 Within four minutes of the restart the Reds had a numerical advantage.  
 Bridcutt foolishly cut across Can as he powered down the right and was shown a second yellow card.  
 However, rather than make their numerical advantage count, the Reds lost their way and Sunderland rallied.  
 Simon Mignolet was well beaten by Johnson's swirling 25-yarder which cannoned back off the bar. Martin Skrtel did well to get to the rebound before Patrick Van Aanholt could pounce.  
 Henderson and Lovren were both booked as the Black Cats continued to cause some nervy moments.  
 Rodgers introduced Mario Balotelli for the ineffective Borini and Liverpool slowly regained control.  
 Balotelli was thwarted by Pantilimon and then Pawson ignored pleas for a penalty when Van Aanholt appeared to handle in the box.  
 It all got very scrappy late on with Balotelli slipping and falling flat on his flat after getting away from John O'Shea.  
 But Liverpool ground it out and deservedly claimed maximum points.

## Sunderland Echo

Limp loss for dismal Black Cats  
 SUNDERLAND limped to a third defeat in four Premier League outings after a woeful display against Liverpool.  
 Lazar Markovic's early goal proved sufficient for Liverpool to come away with all three points at the Stadium of Light, yet the visitors could - and should - have triumphed by a far more comprehensive margin.  
 In the first half, particularly, Sunderland were dreadful; flat, pedestrian and careless, with only poor finishing and the woodwork preventing Liverpool from being out of sight.  
 Sunderland's task was made doubly difficult early in the second half when Liam Bridcutt was dismissed for a second yellow card, but the Black Cats arguably performed better with 10 men.  
 They could have drawn level, with Adam Johnson's long-range shot crashing against the underside of the bar, but that was the only occasion in which Sunderland put Simon Mignolet's goal under any pressure.  
 There was a surprise in the Liverpool line-up beforehand, with ex-Sunderland loanee Fabio Borini handed only his second Premier League start of the season. His former boss, Gus Poyet, made four changes to the Sunderland starting line-up with Wes Brown, Seb Larsson, Connor Wickham and Adam Johnson all back in the fold after last weekend's FA Cup third round win over Leeds United.  
 Ineligible on-loan Liverpool defender Sebastian Coates missed out, while Jack Rodwell and Steven Fletcher were both ruled out through injury.  
 And there was no place among the substitutes for Jozy Altidore - heavily linked with a return to America's MLS this week - who was absent due to illness.  
 Sunderland were fortunate to escape without conceding a penalty inside the opening three minutes as Patrick van Aanholt failed to intercept Philippe Coutinho's through-ball and it ran through to Lazar Markovic on the edge of the area.  
 Markovic knocked it beyond Wes Brown and looked to have been tripped by the Sunderland centre-half, but referee Craig Pawson waved play on.  
 But the reprieve was only temporary, as Markovic did break the deadlock in the ninth minute.  
 The Serbian collected the ball in space on the right flank, burst forwards and played it into the path of Steven Gerrard who got to it ahead of Brown and helped it into the path of Borini on the edge of the area.  
 Borini was taken out by John O'Shea, but Pawson waved play on as the ball ran into the path of Markovic who bundled it under Costel Pantilimon.  
 Liverpool utterly dominated the proceedings which followed against a flat, pedestrian and careless Sunderland.  
 Gerrard forced Pantilimon to tip over the bar in the 28th minute with an inswinging free-kick from the far left-hand side of the area.  
 Sunderland didn't clear their lines from the resulting corner and it bounced into the path of Markovic, 25 yards out, who hit a brilliant improvised half-volley which struck the bar, hit Pantilimon as it came down and then bounced behind. Gerrard fired marginally wide into the side netting seven minutes before the break after the Liverpool skipper was played in down the right-hand side of the area on the break, following a needless giveaway in midfield by Sunderland.  
 Borini then had a golden opportunity a minute before the interval when a brilliant long-range pass from the back by Emre Can sent the Italian in behind the Sunderland defence. Borini went round the advancing Costel Pantilimon, but from a narrow angle to the right of goal, he could only fire into the side netting.  
**HALF-TIME Sunderland 0 Liverpool 1**  
 Liverpool began the second half on the front foot, with Markovic blasting a couple of yards wide from the edge of the area after Giaccherini only partially cleared a corner. Sunderland's task then became doubly difficult in the 49th minute when Bridcutt was shown a second yellow card for clipping the legs of Can as he surged down the right-hand touchline, although there was minimal contact from the Sunderland man.  
 However, the Black Cats came desperately close to levelling three minutes later when Johnson was given too much space 25 yards out, steadied himself and let fly with a left-footed rocket towards goal.  
 The ball swerved viciously in the air, but with Mignolet beaten, it crashed back off the crossbar, hit the goalkeeper and then Liverpool managed to clear.  
 Liverpool remained a threat though; Coutinho whistling a low shot just wide after being given chance to pick his spot 20 yards out.  
 Substitute Mario Balotelli then went close in the 71st minute when he turned away from Brown down the left-hand side of area and fired a shot towards the near post which was beaten away by Pantilimon.  
**FULL-TIME Sunderland 0 Liverpool 1**  
**SUNDERLAND:** Pantilimon, Vergini, van Aanholt, O'Shea, Brown, Bridcutt, Larsson, Gomez, Johnson (Mandron 86), Giaccherini (Buckley 77), Wickham (Graham 77).  
 Subs not used: Jones, Alvarez, Agnew, Mannone. Booked: Vergini (28), Bridcutt (35). Sent off: Bridcutt (49)  
**LIVERPOOL:** Mignolet, Can, Skrtel, Sakho, Henderson, Moreno, Lucas, Gerrard (Lovren 46), Markovic, Coutinho, Borini (Balotelli 67). Subs not used: Ward, Enrique, Lambert, Manquillo, Rossiter. Booked: Borini (17), Coutinho (36), Henderson (54), Lovren (55)  
 Attendance: 45,369

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015



**Reds shine without star**

Sometimes it goes for you. Raheem Sterling spent yesterday on a beach in his shorts in Jamaica. His manager Brendan Rodgers was victorious in the bitter cold of the North-east.

There will be many who never quite get their heads around the concept of footballers taking mid-season jollies, but yesterday it worked, and it worked far more comfortably than the scoreline suggests.

Rodgers knew it was a dangerous situation. It was not helped by the picture of his most skilful young player in sunglasses and a hat 24 hours before his side travelled north.

"Raheem will be back next week," said Rodgers. "It was something that was already planned from the summer. In my two-and-a-half years here he has gone from the youth team through to becoming a full international player.

"He is one of the best young players in European football. If I was selfish I would maybe have him here with me every single minute. He has been brilliant and I need to think of the kid.

"He has played over 100 games and he has just turned 20. I just felt this was a good period for him to have a rest. He missed the FA Cup tie and he missed the Sunderland game and he will rejoin us next week fresh and fit for the second part of the season."

He will be coming back to a happy camp. For that he might thank Steven Gerrard who, in his farewell to the North-east, was outstanding. He only played for 45 minutes before a hamstring tightened, according to his manager.

But that was more than enough to give a reminder of why there has been such a reaction to his decision to leave English football at the end of this season and head off to America. If he leaves Liverpool in the Champions League it will be some parting gift, and do not bet against them just yet.

It is one defeat in nine now and a season that was disintegrating a couple of months ago has life. They are just four points behind fourth-placed Southampton and within five of their old rivals Manchester United.

Victory came in a dominant first half. Within three minutes the excellent Lazar Markovic was fouled inside the Sunderland penalty area by Wes Brown. For that referee Craig Pawson did nothing.

He was instrumental in the game-winning goal that came in the ninth minute. Liverpool swept forward down the right and Gerrard dumped cleverly to Fabio Borini, who fell. Pawson allowed the play to keep moving and Markovic pounced to poke the ball through the legs of Costel Pantilimon.

Markovic, like much of what Liverpool created in the first half, was a problem Sunderland could not solve. He smashed a superb volley off the Sunderland crossbar on the half hour. Pantilimon, for all his size, was nowhere near it.

By the time the half had finished, and the jeers had fallen on those in red and white from the home supporters, Gerrard had smashed a fine strike into the side-netting and Borini, after rounding the keeper, had done the same from a tight angle.

Then Gerrard went off injured and his absence was of more significance to anyone lying on a beach. Liverpool lost control, Liam Bridcutt picked up a second yellow card, for clipping the heels of Emre Can, and from there the game became disjointed.

Mignolet still did not have a save to make, but Adam Johnson crashed a shot off the crossbar. Gus Poyet was jeered for taking Johnson off in the 86th minute.

"The fans need to accept reality," Poyet said. "It's been going on for the last four or five years. They need to be more patient."

Liverpool finished strongly. There were two chances for Philippe Coutinho and even Mario Balotelli, who was dreadful, forced a save from Pantilimon from a narrow angle.

"We were outstanding," Rodgers said. "We had real control in the first half.

"Defensively the players were excellent as well. It showed how strong we are. It was a very good result and a very good performance."

Sunderland: (4-1-4-1) Pantilimon; Vergini, O'Shea, Brown, Aanholt; Bridcutt; Johnson (Mandron 86), Larsson, Gomez, Giaccherini (Buckley, 77); Wickham (Graham, 77).

Liverpool: (5-3-2) Mignolet; Markovic, Can, Skrtel, Sakho, Moreno; Henderson, Gerrard (Lovren, 51), Leiva; Borini (Balotelli, 67), Coutinho.

## The Sunday Telegraph

Liverpool finding their rhythm again

Sunderland 0

Liverpool 1

Markovic 8

Att: 45,369

Liverpool are not going to be title contenders again for a while, but they are back in contention for a Champions League place and, perhaps more importantly, are finally coming to terms with the end of their Luis Suarez love affair.

Liverpool have been gradually gathering momentum for weeks and are in striking distance of the top four again. They are not playing as well as they did 12 months ago, but they no longer pine for Suarez quite so much.

Brendan Rodgers's side have lost just once in their last 12 games and have regained the confidence drained during a poor start to the season, as the pain caused by Suarez's exit lingered and the quality of their new signings was questioned.

Encouragingly, although the loss of Suarez is still acutely felt, Liverpool have found a way to win without him and their new signings are starting to show why the club reinvested the PS80m Barcelona paid for the Uruguayan in them.

That is certainly true of Lazar Markovic. The Serbian will not be the last wide player to find English football a shock to the system, but Rodgers has been patient and is starting to see him shine.

Markovic might have won his side a penalty after just three minutes when he galloped on to a pass from Coutinho, although referee Craig Pawson decided not to award it despite the fact Wes Brown missed the ball and made contact with the player.

Liverpool did not have long to wait for a breakthrough as another rampaging run from Markovic was utilised by Steven Gerrard, whose flicked pass put him in behind the Sunderland defence. The youngster evaded John O'Shea's tackle and stabbed the ball past Costel Pantilimon.

Liverpool were cruising.

Sunderland were sluggish and unimaginative. They missed Lee Cattermole's presence in front of their defence, but missed Steven Fletcher even more.

Things did not get any better in the second half for Sunderland as Liam Bridcutt picked up a second yellow card. Booked in the first half for a robust tackle, he was sent off for tripping Fabio Borini, even though he tried hard to avoid making contact.

"You can referee by the rules, or you can referee with common sense," complained Poyet. "But what we want is consistency and if you are sticking to the rules, then Coutinho should have been booked three times."

Sunderland, though, were better with ten men than they had been with 11 and a moment of magic in an otherwise mundane performance from Adam Johnson almost produced an equaliser. Collecting the ball 30 yards from goal, Johnson advanced a few yards and hit a dipping shot that bamboozled Simon Mignolet, only for the ball to come back off the bar.

Liverpool could not find a second goal, as Coutinho dragged an effort wide, and they were given another scare when Sunderland captain John O'Shea failed to make proper contact as he tried to hook in a knockdown inside the six yard box.

"We have not won enough games at home and I understand the frustration of the supporters," added Poyet. "But I hope they are also realistic about the situation we are in."

Sunderland (4-1-4-1) Pantilimon 6 Vergini 5 O'Shea 6 Brown 6, Van Aanholt 5 Bridcutt 4 Johnson (Mandron 86), 7 Larsson 5 Gomez 6 Giaccherini 7 (Buckley 77) Wickham 2 (Graham 77) Subs Mannone, Jones, Alvarez, Agnew Booked Vergini, Bridcutt Sent off Bridcutt Liverpool (3-4-2-1) Mignolet 6 Can 7 Skrtel 6 Sakho 7 Markovic 8 Henderson 7 Lucas 6 Moreno 6; Gerrard 7 (Lovren 46), Coutinho 8 Borini 6 (Balotelli 67) Subs Ward, Enrique, Lambert, Manquillo, Rossiter Booked Borini, Coutinho, Henderson, Lovren Referee Craig Pawson (Yorkshire).

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015



## THE SUNDAY TIMES

### Gerrard savours victory

Dear Raheem, the weather is freezing, but we won. Wish you were here, Steven."

On Friday afternoon, Raheem Sterling posted a picture of himself on a Jamaican beach wearing mirrored shades and a coloured hat. At twenty to three yesterday, Steven Gerrard's hands were probably too cold to pen a postcard to his holidaying teammate.

He still stood at the top of the tunnel at the Stadium of Light until every one of those Liverpool players fighting to keep an unlikely hand on the coat-tails of the teams shooting for next season's Champions League had passed him.

Gerrard had spent the previous 45 minutes on the visitors' bench, having been substituted at half-time in this lunchtime kick-off because of a tightening hamstring. Even by northeast standards the weather, and the vicious wind, was harsh.

Still, after watching a dreadful second half, Gerrard stood and waited until Simon Mignolet, the much-criticised goalkeeper, ran towards him as the last Liverpool player to leave the field.

Gerrard burst into smiles, grabbed the former Sunderland player, who had kept a clean sheet, in a hug and ran down the tunnel with his arm around him. You cannot measure what is leaving Liverpool, but you should be able to get the gist. For the first half - when Gerrard was on the pitch - Liverpool were excellent. They could have scored five. Everywhere you looked there was energy and invention (and, admittedly, a quite dreadful Sunderland) and usually at its heart was Gerrard.

This was the first time he had played a Premier League game since announcing his summer departure for LA Galaxy. There had been two goals at Wimbledon in the FA Cup in a narrow victory, and yesterday, in a more advanced position, he ran things, or at least he did when he was on. In that period it was a mismatch. Sunderland have won once in the league at the Stadium of Light this season, giving an indication of the level of the opposition, but it was still a particularly destructive display from a Liverpool team that was missing Daniel Sturridge, Adam Lallana, Glen Johnson and of course, Sterling.

"It was something that was already planned from the summer," said Rodgers of Sterling's break. "He has been brilliant and I need to think of the kid. This was a good period for him to have a rest."

In the first half, Sterling was not missed. By the third minute, Liverpool should have had a penalty when Lazar Markovic was clearly tripped by Wes Brown. Six minutes later Markovic scored. A sweeping move down the right featured a Gerrard dummy that opened things up for Fabio Borini, who was fouled by John O'Shea. Referee Craig Pawson, who had missed the penalty, allowed a good advantage and Markovic went past Patrick van Aanholt and stabbed a shot between the legs of Costel Pantilimon.

Markovic almost added a spectacular second just before the half-hour when, from 20 yards, his acrobatic volley beat Pantilimon again, only to crash off the crossbar, clip the beaten Sunderland keeper on his elbow and bounce behind.

Sunderland could barely get out of their own half. Gerrard let fly with a superb strike in the 40th minute, his curling effort hitting the side netting of the home goal.

And a minute before halftime, Fabio Borini, who had spent last season on loan at the Stadium of Light, and repeatedly rejected a permanent move to the club in the summer, went round Pantilimon but from a tight angle found the same spot as Gerrard.

Then Gerrard went off. Four minutes into the second half, Liam Bridcutt was sent off for a second bookable offence when he clipped the heels of the marauding Emre Can. Sunderland head coach Gus Poyet had plenty to moan about yesterday, not least the jeering of his team's first-half performance and his substituting of Adam Johnson, but he conceded that, technically, the referee was correct to dismiss Bridcutt. "The fans need to accept reality," he said. "It's been going on for the last four or five years. They need to be more patient."

Poyet said Philippe Coutinho, who was booked for stopping a quick free kick in the first half, should have been sent off in the second. It would not have made much difference. Bridcutt's red card affected Liverpool more than Sunderland. It was no coincidence that it was also during Gerrard's absence.

Sunderland: Pantilimon 6, Vergini 5, O'Shea 5, Brown 5, Van Aanholt 6, Bridcutt 3, Johnson 6 (Mandron 86min, 2), Larsson 5, Gomez 6, Giaccherini 5 (Buckley 77min, 3), Wickham 4 (Graham 77min, 4) Liverpool: Mignolet 7, Can 7, Skrtel 6, Sakho 7, Markovic 8, Moreno 7, Gerrard 8 (Lovren h-t, 6), Lucas 6, Henderson 7, Coutinho 7, Borini 7 (Balotelli 67min, 2)

## The Observer

Date: 10 January 2015 Opposition: Sunderland Competition: League	Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph	10 January 2015
	Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror	
	BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo	



Liverpool's challenge for a top-four spot continued to gather pace as they claimed a third win in four league games by beating 10-man Sunderland.

Lazar Markovic poked in a shot to put the visitors in front.

A volley from the Serb also hit the crossbar, while Sunderland had Liam Bridcutt sent off for two bookings.

The home side's Adam Johnson hit the crossbar but Liverpool held on, despite losing skipper Steven Gerrard at half-time after he felt his hamstring.

It was only a sixth clean sheet in 37 games for Liverpool and they had to endure a nervous finish following their failure to turn their dominance and numerical advantage into more goals.

But, despite Sunderland carrying a greater threat with 10 men than 11, the Black Cats struggled to create chances and have managed just one home win in 11 top-flight outings so far this season.

The Stadium of Light side were given a reprieve in the opening minutes when a piercing Philippe Coutinho pass found Markovic, who went down under a Wes Brown challenge.

The Reds were furious at referee Craig Pawson's decision not to award a penalty, but were grateful when the official played advantage in the build-up to their intricate opener.

Fabio Borini appeared to have been fouled just outside the area, but Pawson allowed play to continue and Markovic slotted a shot past keeper Costel Pantilimon for his first league goal for the club.

Markovic almost added a spectacular second when he produced an acrobatic 20-yard volley which hit the crossbar and keeper Pantilimon before going wide.

Borini - who scored 10 goals on loan at Sunderland last season - latched on to a Emre Can pass only to send a shot from a tight angle into the side-netting.

Sunderland managed just one attempt on goal compared to Liverpool's eight in the first half and their cause was not helped when they had midfielder Bridcutt sent off for second yellow after a foul on Can.

Nevertheless, the home side rallied and came closest to an equaliser when a swerving 30-yard Johnson shot came back off the Liverpool crossbar.

Sunderland manager Gus Poyet:

"If you go by the rules then I can go with the referee because they are both yellow cards for Liam Bridcutt.

"Incredible. When you are 11 v 11 and have a better chance, sometimes you are a little bit too relaxed because you think it is even. Then when you find yourself down to 10 the players bring something extra. It is a shame that we didn't do that in the first half.

"We did practically nothing in the first half apart from wait for Liverpool to score. Then we had a go."

Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers:

"Our only disappointment against Sunderland was we didn't have the extra goals to show for our domination. We had real good control of the game.

"Offensively our game was very good. We got a very good goal and should have had a penalty - it looked a clear penalty and we had one or two other chances as well.

"Steven Gerrard just felt a bit tight in his hamstring. He has played a lot of games.

"He was outstanding in the first half. We don't need to risk it as we have got a big second half of the season coming up and he is very important for us."

Date: 10 January 2015  
 Opposition: Sunderland  
 Competition: League

Echo	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Mail	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Sunderland Echo

10 January 2015



Full time Match ends, Sunderland 0, Liverpool 1.

90:00+4:08 Full time Second Half ends, Sunderland 0, Liverpool 1.

90:00+2:50 Attempt blocked. Jordi Gómez (Sunderland right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

90:00+2:25 Corner, Sunderland. Conceded by Alberto Moreno.

90:00+0:31 Attempt missed. Mikael Mandron (Sunderland header from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by William Buckley with a cross.

89:32 Lazar Markovic (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

89:32 Foul by Jordi Gómez (Sunderland.

88:29 Attempt blocked. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

88:06 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

88:06 Foul by Wes Brown (Sunderland.

85:39 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Sunderland. Mikael Mandron replaces Adam Johnson.

83:56 Mario Balotelli (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

83:56 Foul by Wes Brown (Sunderland.

82:52 Hand ball by William Buckley (Sunderland.

82:15 Attempt blocked. Danny Graham (Sunderland right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Wes Brown.

81:15 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high from a direct free kick.

80:18 Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

80:18 Foul by John O'Shea (Sunderland.

78:38 Offside, Sunderland. Adam Johnson tries a through ball, but William Buckley is caught offside.

77:50 Attempt missed. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross.

77:00 Hand ball by Sebastian Larsson (Sunderland.

76:40 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Sunderland. Danny Graham replaces Connor Wickham.

76:33 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Sunderland. William Buckley replaces Emanuele Giaccherini.

76:10 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Lucas Leiva.

73:53 Corner, Sunderland. Conceded by Martin Skrtel.

73:31 Attempt blocked. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Emre Can with a cross.

71:24 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool.

71:24 Adam Johnson (Sunderland wins a free kick on the right wing.

70:34 Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Lazar Markovic.

70:09 Attempt saved. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from a difficult angle on the left is saved in the centre of the goal.

69:37 Attempt blocked. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

69:34 Attempt blocked. Mario Balotelli (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

68:23 Lazar Markovic (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

68:23 Foul by Jordi Gómez (Sunderland.

66:53 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Mario Balotelli replaces Fabio Borini.

66:03 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

65:06 Attempt blocked. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.

63:14 Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho with a cross following a corner.

62:47 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Patrick van Aanholt.

60:21 Corner, Sunderland. Conceded by Martin Skrtel.

59:23 Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

59:23 Foul by Adam Johnson (Sunderland.

58:18 Foul by Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool.

58:18 Sebastian Larsson (Sunderland wins a free kick in the attacking half.

54:19 Booking Dejan Lovren (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

54:13 Patrick van Aanholt (Sunderland wins a free kick in the attacking half.

54:13 Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool.

53:29 Booking Jordan Henderson (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

53:24 Adam Johnson (Sunderland wins a free kick in the defensive half.

53:24 Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool.

52:24 Offside, Sunderland. Adam Johnson tries a through ball, but John O'Shea is caught offside.

51:48 Corner, Sunderland. Conceded by Martin Skrtel.

51:41 Adam Johnson (Sunderland hits the bar with a left footed shot from outside the box. Assisted by Patrick van Aanholt.

48:29 Dismissal Dismissal Second yellow card to Liam Bridcutt (Sunderland for a bad foul.

48:21 Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

48:21 Foul by Liam Bridcutt (Sunderland.

45:46 Attempt missed. Lazar Markovic (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right following a corner.

45:18 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by John O'Shea.

45:00 Second Half begins Sunderland 0, Liverpool 1.

45:00 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Dejan Lovren replaces Steven Gerrard because of an injury.

45:00+2:04 Half time First Half ends, Sunderland 0, Liverpool 1.

44:39 Lazar Markovic (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

44:39 Foul by Connor Wickham (Sunderland.

43:11 Attempt missed. Fabio Borini (Liverpool right footed shot from a difficult angle on the right is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Emre Can with a through ball.

40:02 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Patrick van Aanholt.

38:53 Attempt saved. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Fabio Borini.

37:36 Attempt missed. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Fabio Borini following a fast break.

36:54 Hand ball by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool.

35:51 Booking Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.

35:12 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool.

35:12 Adam Johnson (Sunderland wins a free kick in the defensive half.

34:19 Booking Liam Bridcutt (Sunderland is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

34:15 Steven Gerrard (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

34:15 Foul by Liam Bridcutt (Sunderland.

32:58 Corner, Sunderland. Conceded by Jordan Henderson.

29:49 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Fabio Borini.

28:59 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Costel Pantilimon.

28:57 Lazar Markovic (Liverpool hits the bar with a right footed shot from outside the box.

28:21 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Costel Pantilimon.

27:27 Booking Santiago Vergini (Sunderland is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

27:25 Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

27:25 Foul by Santiago Vergini (Sunderland.

23:54 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool.

23:54 Adam Johnson (Sunderland wins a free kick in the defensive half.

23:47 Attempt blocked. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

23:04 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Patrick van Aanholt.

23:02 Attempt blocked. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.

16:46 Booking Fabio Borini (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

16:37 Emanuele Giaccherini (Sunderland wins a free kick in the attacking half.

16:37 Foul by Fabio Borini (Liverpool.

15:31 Corner, Sunderland. Conceded by Emre Can.

14:32 Foul by Fabio Borini (Liverpool.

14:32 Jordi Gómez (Sunderland wins a free kick in the defensive half.

13:25 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool.

13:25 Adam Johnson (Sunderland wins a free kick on the right wing.

12:56 Attempt saved. Sebastian Larsson (Sunderland right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal.

11:50 Foul by Steven Gerrard (Liverpool.

11:50 Liam Bridcutt (Sunderland wins a free kick in the attacking half.

8:01 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Sunderland 0, Liverpool 1. Lazar Markovic (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Fabio Borini.

0:00 First Half begins.

0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.