

Date: 29 November 2015
 Opposition: Swansea City
 Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
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THE TIMES

Milner's penalty keeps Liverpool on the rise

Liverpool 1 Milner 62 (pen) Swansea 0 Referee: A Taylor Att: 43,905

The presence of Brendan Rodgers's successor in the adjacent dugout offered Garry Monk, the under pressure Swansea City manager, an unwelcome reminder of managerial mortality, but it is the manner in which Jurgen Klopp has galvanised Liverpool that should concern him more. For all that stability can bring, a sixth win in seven games, albeit against a Swansea side of limited ambition, provided a strong argument that change can sometimes be for the better.

Taken in isolation, a 1-0 defeat to a rejuvenated Liverpool at Anfield is no reason for a manager to lose his job, particularly when Swansea were only denied a point by the award of a penalty that James Milner scored but which Swansea contested.

The problem for Monk is that this was a loss that fits in with a sequence of poor results. One win in ten league games is the kind of run which inevitably increases pressure on the man in charge and, regardless of Monk's appeal for perspective, he also recognises that a combination of poor form and a perilous league position makes him vulnerable. It was that reality that accounted for Rodgers, one of his predecessors at Swansea and a guiding light in his career, when Liverpool's standards dropped. The introduction of Klopp has acted as a catalyst for improvement in terms of results, even if performances are not yet of the kind of consistent quality that would allow the new Liverpool manager to buy into the sense of momentum that others are. "Maybe I should feel we have momentum, but I don't," he said. "We play again on Wednesday against Southampton and that's my problem. I would like to have a break to enjoy the win, but we don't have that. We have to fly to Southampton, then fly back and then fly to Newcastle. "We are on the road this week but everybody is limping in the dressing room." Importantly, Jordan Henderson and Daniel Sturridge, who both made their first appearances under Klopp as second-half substitutes, were not among those feeling the ill effects of a hectic run of games. "It is good news to have these two important players back after injury," Klopp added.

Significantly for Sturridge and Henderson, they have come back into a side that is on an upward trajectory having exited it during troubled times. Anyone who watched Liverpool toil against Swansea would be hard pressed to make a case for significant improvement having been made since Rodgers departed, but on a day when Swansea nullified their main threat -- the counter attack -- by sitting deep in a low block, this was a game when getting a result by whatever means necessary was all that mattered and Klopp's team achieved that objective.

The first half had such limited action that neither goalkeeper had a save to make, although Kyle Bartley, the Swansea defender, inadvertently shot against his own post when tackling Jordon Ibe.

The game turned after 62 minutes when Liverpool were awarded a penalty that ultimately proved decisive. Monk described the award as "soft" and he had a point but he did not go as far as to claim it was incorrect as Ibe's cross clearly struck Neil Taylor's outstretched right arm and Anthony Taylor, the referee, was within his rights to give a penalty on the advice of Simon Beck, his assistant.

Having scored from the spot against Bordeaux in midweek, Milner once again showed his assurance by waiting for Lukasz Fabianski to make his move before he calmly lofted the ball into the roof of the net. Milner had a chance to double Liverpool's advantage shortly afterwards but dragged a leftfoot shot wide. It was to prove to be their last significant opportunity as anxiety set in and Swansea ended the game on the front foot having spent most of it showing little inclination to attack. Clear-cut opportunities remained hard to come by for Swansea though, with Ashley Williams heading a corner comfortably wide and Jack Cork, the substitute, seeing a punt from distance miss the target after taking a deflection.

With gale-force gusts making Anfield a particularly inhospitable place to play -- Klopp afterwards described the wind as "the enemy of football" -- this was not a day to fall behind and make a desperate attempt to retrieve the situation, particularly for a team that had failed to score in three of its previous five fixtures. Liverpool were able to hold on and in doing so moved up to sixth place in the Premier League, just four points behind Arsenal in fourth and with Manchester City, the leaders, just two points more advanced. His club's decision to make a change is already being vindicated, particularly as Klopp is harnessing an ability to play exciting, expressive football away from home, most notably against City and Chelsea, with a knack of grinding out results at Anfield where Liverpool are less fluent at present. "Football is not a sport where you can only use one way," Klopp said. "The games against City and Chelsea can't be compared [with this one], because of the way your opponent plays. It was difficult with the influence of the wind but we had more of the possession and it was our best game in terms of defensive organisation. We deserved the win that's for sure, and that's all we should care about. In this moment we had to fight in difficult circumstances and that's what we did."

MATCH STATS LIVERPOOL SWANSEA POSSESSION 57.2% 42.8% TOTAL ATTEMPTS 5 4 ATTEMPTS ON TARGET 0 2 CORNERS 7 8 FOULS 12 6 OFFSIDES 0 1 RATINGS Liverpool (4-1-2-2-1): S Mignolet 5 -- N Clyne 7, M Skrtel 6, D Lovren 6, A Moreno 6 -- E Can 7 -- J Milner 7, A Lallana 6 -- J Ibe 7 (sub: K Toure, 90min), R Firmino 5 (sub: J Henderson, 64 6) -- C Benteke 5 (sub: D Sturridge, 71).

Substitutes not used: J Allen, D Origi, A Bogdan, C Randall. Booked: Milner, Skrtel, Bartley, Mignolet. Swansea City (4-1-4-1): L Fabianski 6 -- K Naughton 5, K Bartley 6, A Williams 7, N Taylor 6 -- L Britton 7 (sub: J Cork, 64 6) -- W Routledge 6 (sub: J Montero, 72), G Sigurdsson 6, Ki 6, A Ayew 6 -- Eder 5 (sub: B Gomis, 69 5).

Substitutes not used: K Nordfeldt, M Grimes, A Rangel, F Fernandez. Booked: Bartley.

HITTING THE SPOT Liverpool have been awarded and scored more penalties in the Premier League era than any team, putting to bed the myth that Manchester United are the team favoured by referees. Taken Goals (pens) Liverpool 135 103 Arsenal 126 94 Manchester Utd 121 92 Chelsea 116 101 Newcastle Utd 111 89

the guardian

James Milner spot on to guide Liverpool past Swansea and up to sixth

There was no lack of endeavour, cohesion or spirit from Swansea City but, crucially, no points either for Garry Monk. The under-pressure manager was condemned to unfortunate defeat as Neil Taylor's handball gifted Liverpool victory at a wind-swept Anfield. Jürgen Klopp, in stark contrast, has his players in the habit of winning.

Liverpool's sixth win in seven matches arrived courtesy of James Milner's second-half penalty and out of a performance to forget. Where Klopp's team had excelled at Manchester City last weekend they laboured against the struggling Welsh club. But their manager had little cause for concern given the end product was unchanged.

"Football is not a sport where you can only use one way," said Klopp. "The City and Chelsea [performances] can't be compared because of the way your opponent plays. I haven't seen the stats but I think we had about 70% possession today [it was 54%]. For most of the game we had the ball. We deserved the win, that's for sure, and that's all we should care about. We had to fight in difficult circumstances and that's what we did. Difficult game, a deserved win, 23 points. Very good."

Second-half substitute appearances from Jordan Henderson and Daniel Sturridge, their first outings since Klopp took charge following long-term injuries, increased the sense of gathering momentum at Anfield.

How Monk could do with a similar break. Swansea played for their young manager -- "Anyone who would suggest otherwise is very stupid," he said with undisguised disdain -- were organised, rarely troubled and unnerved Liverpool when they belatedly exerted pressure in the closing stages, albeit without testing Simon Mignolet. But they lacked the conviction that victory was achievable at Anfield and, as often happens to a team in the mire, the only contentious decision went against them. It is now one win in 11 for Monk's men with the top two, Leicester City and Manchester City, up next.

Advertisement

"It's my responsibility to get results, I understand that," the Swansea manager said. "But you can see it's only a matter of time before we get a result and are flying again. There's never any danger we will be in that relegation fight. That didn't look like a team in trouble. It didn't look like a team who's had the run of form we had. To come here and limit an attack minded team to pretty much nothing is impressive but to lose to an extremely soft decision is so disappointing. The players deserved a lot more than they got."

Neither side had a shot on target in the opening 45 minutes as Swansea's five-man midfield sat deep and Liverpool struggled to pick a way through.

As against Crystal Palace a fortnight ago there was a lethargy to Liverpool's play three days after a Europa League game. The absence of the Brazilians Philippe Coutinho and Lucas Leiva, to a hamstring injury and suspension respectively, also hindered the home side. The wind played havoc with both sides' distribution.

Liverpool went close to an early lead when the Swansea defender Kyle Bartley diverted the ball against his own post while challenging Jordon Ibe. The winger had been put clear by Adam Lallana after Milner pressed Leon Britton into a mistake and, though Liverpool denied the visitors time on the ball throughout, they rarely got behind the Swansea defence. Christian Benteke should have done when the impressive Emre Can sent a delightful ball over Bartley's head but the Belgium international's first touch was poor, and continued to be until he was replaced by Sturridge with 19 minutes remaining.

A dull game was decided by a correct penalty decision from the linesman Simon Beck. Not that Swansea will agree. The second half had also failed to ignite when Ibe crossed from the right wing. The ball struck Taylor's raised right arm as the left-back leapt to block and, while the referee, Anthony Taylor's, view was obstructed, his assistant immediately signalled for a spot-kick. Milner converted confidently, side-footing into the roof of the net after Lukasz Fabianski had dived to his right.

Monk argued: "It hits his elbow and Neil is facing the other way. I thought handball had to be intentional. It clearly wasn't intentional but the linesman had his flag up very quickly at the Kop end where everyone around him was howling for a penalty."

Henderson came on to a rapturous reception and created a decent opening for Milner, who shot wide of Fabianski's far post, while the substitute Bafetimbi Gomis went close from distance for the visitors. Sustained Swansea pressure spread anxiety around Anfield but Mignolet was under-employed.

Man of the match: Alberto Moreno (Liverpool)

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MILNER SPOT ON TO KEEP REDS RISING

LIVERPOOL walked on through the wind, to quote their famous anthem, at Anfield yesterday and took another step in the right direction under the mercurial Jurgen Klopp. Up to sixth place in the table. Six points behind leaders Manchester City. Six wins in seven games in all competitions.

At this rate, the biggest challenge Klopp will face in Premier League management will be managing expectations. It wasn't pretty compared to the spectacular way in which Liverpool swept aside City last weekend. A gutsy Swansea side and gusting conditions made sure of that. But Klopp's team proved that they can win ugly when required as James Milner's disputed second half penalty gave the German his first win at home in the league. 'Wind is the biggest enemy of football,' he said afterwards. 'It was really crazy, it changed all the time. You can't compare this game with City and you can't say that when we don't play like that we don't deserve a win. Tonight we are the deserved winners, for sure. That is the only thing we should care about. 'This wasn't our best performance, but it was our best performance with strong wind!' Liverpool opened brightly enough and it needed some desperate Swansea defending to prevent them from going ahead in the first 25 minutes. Kyle Bartley got a foot in to deny Jordon Ibe and was lucky to see the ball come back off his own post. Kyle Naughton made a similar interception on Christian Benteke, and Ashley Williams produced a fantastic block to keep out Adam Lallana's goalbound shot.

Swansea settled into the game after that and the frustration was growing among the home fans until Neil Taylor turned his back on Ibe's cross just after the hour mark. It hit his outstretched right arm and The Kop appealed in unison. Referee Anthony Taylor didn't appear as though he was going to give it until an assistant intervened. Milner never looked like missing, guiding his penalty straight and high into the net. 'It was an extremely soft penalty,' said Swansea boss Gary Monk. 'Handball has to be intentional and it clearly wasn't that.

'The linesman put his flag up quickly and with The Kop end appealing it made it very difficult. To lose the game on a decision that's out of our hands is very disappointing. 'From start to finish we limited a very good Liverpool side to nothing. We were never in any danger and the players didn't deserve what they got.' Swansea fought for a point without ever seriously testing Simon Mignolet in the Liverpool net and the home side left the pitch to the strain of 'The House of the Rising Sun', an apt choice given the remarkable revival under Klopp.

To complete the good news for the Anfield boss, he was able to introduce Jordan Henderson and Daniel Sturridge off the bench in the second half.

Henderson was making his first appearance since suffering a foot injury in mid-August, while Sturridge managed 20 minutes after Klopp had told the fragile England striker to distinguish between 'serious pain and what is only pain'.

'It's good news for the big Liverpool family,' he said yesterday. 'Two very important players for us are back in the race, and they did well for their situation, where they have come from after a long break.' Philippe Coutinho was not risked but will be available for Wednesday's Capital One Cup quarterfinal against Southampton. The only good news for Monk was that his team competed very well throughout, even though they have still won only once since August. Questions about his future persist.

Klopp joined the debate by saying that, on this evidence, Swansea would be wrong to consider making a change.

Monk, meanwhile, has no doubt whatsoever that his team are still playing for him.

'It's clear all through this period, it's never ever been a doubt,' he said. 'Anyone who suggests that would be very stupid. A stupid person.

'That doesn't look like a team in trouble. There's never any danger of them being in a relegation fight.

'It's my responsibility to get results, it's as simple as that. You can't continue not getting points. It's only a matter of time before we start to click again but we have to do it very quickly.' Klopp was pleased his side's momentum was not blown off course.

The German felt the football was affected by winds gusting up to 50mph but his side recorded their first Premier League home victory since he took over and their first at Anfield since September 26.

'In this time you cannot take this game and say "This is how football should be". Players can usually play better passes but it is not easy.

'I think it was our best game in defensive organisation. We made the goal and defended really well. Simon Mignolet had not that much work.

'We were deserved winners. In this moment we have to fight in really difficult circumstances and that is what the boys did and everyone can be proud.' Monk added: 'We could have done a bit more in the final third but I can't complain at all, I feel gutted for the players who were excellent today and deserved a lot more than they got.

'It has kind of been part of the problem in this period in that the decisions you need to go for you go against you but it isn't an excuse.

'I'm not looking for excuses. I accept full responsibility for this run of results.'

SUPER STAT: Only Aston Villa (1) have won fewer points from their last 10 Premier League games than Swansea (6).

The Daily Telegraph

Liverpool edge into contention

Liverpool 1

Milner 62

pen Swansea City 0

Att: 43,905

After a prolonged mid-table sabbatical Liverpool are back in the top six and reacquainting themselves with Champions League aspirations.

A scruffy win over Swansea City propelled Jurgen Klopp's side to within six points of the top with a limp rather than a swagger - they needed a contentious penalty to secure the German coach's first league win on home turf - but with six wins in the last seven games, plenty should be monitoring the emerging threat from Merseyside.

Mention a title challenge at Anfield and Klopp brings his own laughter track. Even those who dare suggest a top-four finish is realistic are urged to have a lie down. It is understandable given that Klopp has barely settled into his new office, but having arrived calling for doubters to become believers, swelling confidence is inevitable with successive wins.

Look at the Premier League table, see how the favourites keep avoiding meaningful statements, and it is clear why Liverpool have edged their way into contention.

If it was Klopp's availability that cast a formidable shadow over the Premier League's big hitters when this season started, it is his instant impact on English football that now has the top four's attention.

The return from injury of Daniel Sturridge and Jordan Henderson added to the significance of this victory: they played 20 and 24 minutes respectively as second-half substitutes. Liverpool were already taking scalps before the cavalry arrived. The performance was nowhere near as dynamic as the one at Manchester City last weekend, but what will they be like when they start playing well at home? It seems the Liverpool manager is too absorbed with the next task to overanalyse the possibilities. He said he has yet to sense the momentum.

"Maybe I should, but I don't, because we play again on Wednesday," he said. "I'd like to feel better and say, 'Come on, three days off, celebrate a good week', but we can't."

Nevertheless, he declared this win as satisfying as those previously, given the blustery conditions and opponents who arrived in damage-limitation mode. "It wasn't our best performance but it was our best performance in the wind," was Klopp's latest post-match quip.

"It was our best game in terms of defensive organisation" he said. "Simon Mignolet didn't have much work. It was an important goal."

Swansea were tame opposition in a sterile game settled by a debatable decision midway through the second half, when assistant referee Simon Beck said Neil Taylor had handled a Jordon Ibe cross. Referee Anthony Taylor took note and for the second consecutive game James Milner converted the penalty. As against Bordeaux on Thursday, Klopp chose not to watch, instead turning to watch the crowd's reaction.

Liverpool just about deserved it, given they were the only side trying to score for 75 minutes, although their fluency was lacking.

The Swansea manager, Garry Monk, under severe pressure and without key personnel, opted for caution over adventure and found fate against him with the penalty.

He saw this as an unlucky defeat against an in-form side, but the conservatism reflected his position. Only Liverpool anxieties threatened to get the better of them late on.

"From minute one, we were excellent today," Monk said. "We had great shape, and we kept good possession. I feel gutted for the players. They deserved a lot more. It was an extremely soft decision. To lose a game that was out of our hands is extremely disappointing."

Monk's problem was never going to be the nature of a defeat by Liverpool, but one win in the last 11 games.

"It's my responsibility to get results, I understand that, and you can't continue not to get points," he said. "But you can see it's only a matter of time before we get results, and there's never any danger we will be in that relegation fight."

After the Anfield tempests of the last 18 months, Klopp is leading his club into a period of much-needed serenity. Sadly for Monk, this was one of those games where he could not help but notice which way the wind is blowing.

Happy return Sturridge and Henderson back

Liverpool with Jordan Henderson Average goals per game against 1.1 Points per game 1.8 Without Henderson Goals per game against 1.5 Points per game 1.2 With Daniel Sturridge Goals per game for 1.6 Points per game 2.1 Without Sturridge Goals per game for 1.2 Points per game 1.4 Figures relate to Premier League since start of 2014-15 season

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Liverpool stumble through a storm to pile pain on Monk

It was emerging as one of those dank afternoons that Jrgen Klopp has already spoken out about; where Anfield dims to the point that those near enough can catch the flutter of litter from the stadium's fast-food kiosks whirling about the pitch, trapped in the angry gusts blowing in from the Irish Sea.

The conditions were probably worse than anyone watching appreciated. By the end, Liverpool were struggling to make distance with any of their clearances as they attempted to hang on for a positive result. It had been a fiesta of undercooked passes and others charred completely, forming a persuasive argument that it would have been fair to consider spectators as part of the possession stats.

Simon Mignolet, the Liverpool goalkeeper who was punished on Thursday night in their Europa League match for holding on to the ball for too long, was apprehended again, booked by Anthony Taylor for wasting time.

Here, Mignolet's action may have been a deliberate tactic: Liverpool had seized a lead via a penalty from James Milner before retreating almost immediately with the introductions of Jordan Henderson and then Daniel Sturridge, a pair who had not played for Klopp since the German's arrival on Merseyside.

With so many draws elsewhere this weekend, the manner of this victory - the first in five attempts immediately after a Europa League fixture this season - might not matter for Liverpool in the context of time, for they are gathering momentum and closing in on a top-four position.

Klopp has now secured six wins in seven matches and this outcome meant he was able to offer one of his humorous observations. "It wasn't our best performance but it was our best performance in strong wind!" he said.

More than anything, he was pleased with his players' acceptance of the circumstance. "It was really crazy," he added. "Sometimes there was no wind and then suddenly, whoosh! It was difficult. You cannot say this is how our football should be. But you have to accept all weather: rain or snow, even though it can be the biggest enemy of football. We did it OK."

Swansea did OK too but nothing more. Garry Monk, their manager, is under pressure and Swansea's board has already met to discuss what should happen if results do not improve soon.

Swansea have now won just one in 10 league games but Monk was adamant his team did not perform like one that is struggling, reasoning that it was his game plan to try to frustrate Liverpool before taking advantage later on, making bold substitutions when the tension inside Anfield inevitably became more audible.

The first half certainly followed a clear pattern: Liverpool attacking and Swansea defending, Liverpool's harassment impressive - their use of possession less so. It explained why Swansea managed to remain level for an hour.

Despite initial impressions that this was an opponent brittle enough to be beaten quite easily, Liverpool did not capitalise on their absolute control of the first 25 minutes when the visiting defence was carved up and chances were missed and, with that, Swansea's confidence increased.

Perhaps Jordan Ibe should have scored when he was freed by Adam Lallana, only for Kyle Bartley to catch up and, in making a tackle, strike the foot of the post.

Perhaps Lallana's pass was not quite as far in front of Ibe as it should have been. Perhaps the moment revealed another theme: strangely, Liverpool looked most dangerous in the seconds after surrendering the ball, a self-defeating cycle too regular for it to be constructive.

Anfield quietened and a sense loomed that if the mood were to change, it would take a mistake or an intervention from an official to make it happen. And so it proved: although referee Taylor did not see the block made by Neil Taylor from Ibe's cross, his assistant Simon Beck was closer and, in raising his flag, made the right decision.

Monk argued otherwise, claiming the left-back was not even looking at the ball but the manager was ignoring that Taylor's raised hand had blocked the delivery from entering the zone of uncertainty between goalkeeper and defence.

Milner's conversion from the resulting penalty was not a signal for Liverpool to dominate thereafter, though. Swansea's reaction was not of tempestuous proportions and rather, the arrivals of Henderson and Sturridge disrupted Liverpool's flow.

Swansea did not convince that they would equalise but the effort suggested players are trying for Monk. "There's never been any doubt of that," Monk insisted. "Anyone who thinks otherwise is pretty stupid. But, of course, results are the be-all and end-all. We have to get them very quickly. And I understand that."



BRIGHT & BREEZY; Hurricane Klopp has no time to enjoy Reds' awakening

JURGEN KLOPP insists he does not have time to enjoy the winds of change that are blowing across Anfield.

The Reds boss revealed his pride at a Liverpool display, in near-hurricane conditions, that saw his side scrap out an important victory over Swansea to move menacingly into the top six.

It was the German's sixth victory in his last seven games, and one he claimed was the most important because of the wind that made it almost impossible to play the brand of football he wants.

But Klopp (left) explained he simply cannot take in the transformation that he has performed since replacing Brendan Rodgers - because of an insane schedule.

Liverpool are within four points of the top four, six off the very summit, and are only two behind a Spurs side considered their main rivals for a top-four place. But he said: "It would be nice to enjoy the momentum we've had, but I don't!

"We have a game on Wednesday, and that's my problem. I would like to have a break to enjoy the win, but we don't have that, we have to fly to Southampton, we have to analyse them. Then we fly back and fly to Newcastle.

"We are on the road next week. Everybody is limping in the dressing room! So we can't enjoy it, but this was a very, very important victory."

It was certainly hard fought, and the Reds barely carved out a real opening against a Swansea side brilliantly marshalled by one-time Liverpool target Ashley Williams. Alongside Kyle Bartley, he snuffed out the threat of Christian Benteke

and Roberto Firmino. Even when Daniel Sturridge finally rose from his sick bed to put in a fleeting appearance in front of fans who have virtually forgotten him, there was barely a way through, until ref Anthony Taylor pointed to the spot after an hour.

It was given for handball when Neil Taylor raised an arm above his head to block a Jordan Ibe cross at close range, but visiting boss Garry Monk believes his side were cruelly denied a deserved point by the call.

"Unfortunately a decision that was an extremely soft penalty went against us. It hits his elbow, Neil's facing the other way," said the Swans boss. "I thought handball had to be intentional. It clearly wasn't intentional in my opinion, but the linesman had his flag up very quickly, and the crowd were howling. So it's tough."

By the letter of the law the officials got it right, but Swansea certainly deserved something for their brave play, which Monk insisted showed his side will not get embroiled in the relegation scrap and they are fighting for him too. "It's never been in doubt that the players are playing for me," he said.

"To suggest otherwise you'd have to be really stupid. If we perform like that, then there's absolutely no danger we'll get dragged into the relegation fight."

For Klopp, the win was a relief, because it was his first in the league at Anfield. He believes, in the conditions, it was a real show of intent from his side, even if his only other decent chance came when Bartley turned a ball on to his own post. They did, though, stop Swansea from having even one meaningful chance.

"You have to accept the circumstances. You have to take the conditions into account and play accordingly," he said.

"We know that we can't always be at our best at this moment, but we can fight.

We had lots to fight for, and we can be proud we had a difficult game and came through it with a win.

"One player in the dressing room had 20 knocks, and when we asked him where the pain was, he said everywhere. But it is how it is, and we will be OK tomorrow.

"We also got some minutes for Jordan Henderson and Daniel Sturridge, who are two big players for us."

d.maddock@trinitymirror.com THINGS WE LEARNT Sturridge is a quick healer At around 5pm last Thursday, the striker decided he wasn't fit enough to even sit on the bench against Bordeaux, but by mid-afternoon on Saturday, he had recovered to face Swansea Swans unsure if they are going to get out of trouble, surely they have to stick to what the players know and do best, which is to pass forward with intent... something they did well after going a goal down Ashley Williams a real key man He is such an accomplished defender, with vast knowledge and experience, and everyone at Anfield must still be wondering why he's not a Reds player Henderson return a huge moment Jordan is very much a Klopptype player with his energy and speed in pressing. He can also be creative too, an area where he is definitely underrated Dej is developing Dejan Lovren may have just had his best game for Liverpool, and looked far more like the player who was identified as the best defender in the Prem when with Southampton

Everybody is limping. But this was a very, very important win

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Resurgent Reds prove there is a gutsy side to Klopp's Anfield revolution

The winds of change are blowing through Anfield and here was proof that there are two sides to the Jurgen Klopp revolution.

Having hit the heights with their ruthless demolition of Manchester City, Liverpool maintained their ascent of the Premier League in very different fashion with a hard-fought victory over Swansea City.

After the awe-inspiring display of style and swagger at the Etihad, this was a desperately scrappy triumph based on a gutsy show of commitment and spirit.

As a contest it was instantly forgettable. But, crucially, on a weekend when so many of their rivals floundered, Liverpool sneaked home.

James Milner's second-half penalty proved enough to see off the struggling Swans as Anfield breathed a collective sigh of relief.

This was an afternoon when the outcome was always going to be infinitely more important than the manner in which it was achieved.

With a howling gale it was never going to be a classic but momentum was maintained as the Reds dug deep to win ugly.

It was the first time in five attempts this season that Liverpool had picked up maximum points in the league on the back of a midweek Europa League clash.

Breaking that hoodoo was vital and with Manchester United, Tottenham, Leicester City, Southampton, Everton and Arsenal all dropping points, Kopites no longer have to look at the league table from behind the sofa.

Victory lifted the Reds into the top six - just four points adrift of fourth placed Arsenal and only six behind leaders Manchester City.

With Klopp having also guided Liverpool into the last 32 of the Europa League and the quarter-finals of the Capital One Cup, hope springs eternal that a campaign which was wallowing in mediocrity just two months ago could yet reach a glorious conclusion.

The sight of the cavalry entering the fray midway through the second half will fuel the belief that the Reds have enough in the locker to maintain the momentum generated by six wins in their last seven games in all competitions.

Henderson returns to a different club

First, Anfield saluted the long-awaited return of captain Jordan Henderson, who got half an hour under his belt after three-and-a-half months on the sidelines with heel and foot injuries.

Considering just how much the landscape at Anfield has changed during that unwanted sabbatical, for Henderson it must have felt like a great deal longer.

When the England international hobbled away from the narrow home win over Bournemouth in August, Liverpool had six points out of six amid talk of Brendan Rodgers grasping his shot at redemption.

In Henderson's absence, the Reds nose-dived into a full on crisis, sacked Rodgers and embarked on the most remarkable of revivals under Klopp.

How Henderson relished the moment as his introduction from the bench was greeted with thunderous applause and Milner jogged across to hand over the armband. How Liverpool have missed their captain's energy and athleticism.

Henderson will undoubtedly need time to get back to where he was but what a timely boost to have him available for such a hectic period of the season.

His comeback was swiftly followed by the welcome sight of Daniel Sturridge pulling on a Liverpool shirt for the first time in eight weeks.

During an encouraging 25-minute cameo Sturridge, who replaced the tiring Christian Benteke, showed flashes of his undoubted talent.

Whether Klopp can count on him going forward, only time will tell.

But with his latest minor ailment having quickly cleared up, Sturridge must now prove he has the appetite as well as the quality to be central to what the new boss is trying to achieve. Having wrestled with an injury crisis from the start of his reign, Klopp now finds himself with the kind of competition for places that brings out the best in everyone. Philippe Coutinho could also return the Capital One Cup quarter-final at Southampton on Wednesday.

Attacking selection, but creativity lacking

Before kick-off supporters paid their respects to legendary Reds left-back Gerry Byrne, who passed away aged 77 on Saturday, with a minute's applause in his memory. Klopp sprung a surprise with his line up as he opted to play 4-1-4-1 with Emre Can the only holding midfielder in the absence of Lucas Leiva, who served a one-match ban. It looked like a bold move with the advanced quartet of Adam Lallana, Roberto Firmino, Milner and Jordan Ibe operating behind Benteke.

However, Liverpool failed to click as an attacking force during a dull opening 45 minutes. The atrocious conditions didn't help and neither did the white wall in front of the Reds as the under-pressure Garry Monk set Swansea up simply to contain and frustrate. Their central midfield trio of Ki Sung-Yueng, Leon Britton and Gylfi Sigurdsson rarely ventured out of their own half.

Liverpool dominated both possession and territory but failed to trouble Lukasz Fabianski. The only scare Swansea endured was of their own making as Kyle Bartley's sliding challenge took the ball off Ibe's toe and diverted it against the post. It was a rare occasion when Liverpool got in behind Swansea. For the most part the hosts' passing was too pedestrian and too predictable.

The atmosphere was as flat as the action on the field but Can did his best to keep the Reds on the front foot as he pulled the strings in front of the back four.

The Germany international produced two pin-point deliveries into Benteke's feet but the big frontman's touch let him down.

When Eder threatened to break clear, Can was alert to the danger and got back to make a commanding covering tackle. In the second half there was more urgency. Ibe's low drive was clawed behind by Fabianski before Liverpool got the stroke of luck they craved just past the hour mark.

Ibe's cross hit Neil Taylor's hand and Milner gleefully hammered home from the spot. Rather than cruise to the finish line, Liverpool got increasingly edgy as anxiety levels in the stands were cranked up.

Swansea belatedly showed some ambition as they threw caution to the wind but the Reds weathered the late storm. Rather than wilt, they stood tall. Liverpool's transformation under Klopp continues apace.

Match facts

Liverpool: Mignolet, Clyne, Skrtel, Lovren, Moreno, Can, Milner, Lallana, Ibe (Toure 90), Firmino (Henderson 65), Benteke (Sturridge 71)

Not used: Bogdan, Allen, Origi, Randall

Swansea: Fabianski, Naughton, Bartley, Williams, Taylor, Britton (Cork 65), Ki Sung-Yueng, Sigurdsson, Routledge (Montero 72), Ayew, Eder (Gomis 69).

Not used: Nordfeldt, Rangel, Fernandez, Grimes

Referee: Anthony Taylor **Attendance:** 43,905 **Goals:** Milner 62

Bookings: Milner, Skrtel, Bartley, Mignolet

Man of the match: Emre Can. Shone in the absence of Lucas Leiva as he impressed in the holding midfield role.



Encouragement for Garry Monk, but Swans must still be better

THE declaration about no relegation may have raised eyebrows given Swansea City's recent form. But it was easy to see why Garry Monk was in such bullish mood in the wake of Sunday's defeat at Liverpool.

There is only so much satisfaction to be taken from a game which brings no points. Yet in the circumstances, Swansea's defiant display at Anfield was the type which offered plenty of encouragement. There are various theories doing the rounds about what exactly has gone wrong for Swansea over three miserable months since they humbled Manchester United. But based on the evidence which was on display at Anfield, the one about Swansea's players losing faith in their manager does not hold water. Swansea looked short on goal threat at Liverpool, hence Monk's claims about a "complete" performance were debatable.

But his upbeat view was understandable. Because amid these trying times for Swansea and their young boss, what went on against Liverpool — a side who had demolished Manchester City the previous weekend — at least offered hope.

The fact is that Swansea remain in a scrap to find some form.

They have now managed only one win, against bottom club Aston Villa, since the end of August. There have been seven defeats during that period — including one at Hull in the Capital One Cup — and three draws, at home to Everton, Tottenham and Bournemouth 10 days ago. It is a miserable sequence, one which few saw coming and one which has prompted ever-increasing concerns about the possibility of Swansea dropping back into the Championship next year.

Monk is adamant that his team have nothing to worry about.

And to an extent, he can point to their performance at Liverpool to back up his argument. Swansea played with heart, spirit and desire, smothering Liverpool even as the Reds piled on the pressure in the first quarter of the game.

In the build-up, Monk's side were given no chance of getting anything against an ever-improving Liverpool team. Even their own fans — who travelled in impressive numbers to Merseyside — went north with little or no confidence about Swansea's hopes of getting a result. Yet ultimately, the only thing which denied Monk's team what would have been a highly creditable point was a penalty they felt should never have been given. Ibe's spot-kick was one of only two shots Liverpool had on target all afternoon, and the other was a long-ranger that Lukasz Fabianski dealt with comfortably enough.

Swansea have been undone all too easily on too many occasions in recent months, but there was nothing soft about their defending at Liverpool.

If that resilience was one major plus for Monk, another was the greater quality Swansea showed in possession. As well as the sloppy goals conceded, a hallmark of Swansea's barren run has been a lack of pace and precision in their passing game. But with Leon Britton influential — particularly in the first half — Swansea moved the ball around with quality and tempo.

And if they can do that against a Liverpool side who are built to press under Jurgen Klopp, Swansea should be able to use the ball better against anyone they face in the Premier League. The one big thing missing for Swansea on Sunday afternoon was a threat going forward.

Liverpool created very little, and their opponents created even less.

Of course, that is an area where Swansea need to improve if Monk's claims about relegation not being an issue are to be proved correct.

The Liverpool blank means Swansea have not scored in three of their last four games. Having netted seven goals in the first four league games of 2015-16, Swansea have scored only seven more in their last 10 top-flight outings.

Bafetimbi Gomis scored in each of the opening four fixtures, but has not registered since.

Date: 29 November 2015

Opposition: Swansea City

Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	S Wales Evening P
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Clearly, the absence of a goalscorer — or at least one who is in form — is a problem for Monk.
But all of the blame for Swansea's lack of menace cannot be placed on Gomis. Having finally been handed a starting chance in the last two games, Eder has displayed a willingness to work but there has been little sign of him finding the target.
Striker is clearly an issue as Swansea look to the transfers which lie ahead, but Monk also needs some others to come to the party.
Ki Sung-Yueng scored eight times for his club last season.
This term he is yet to get off the mark.
Gylfi Sigurdsson notched up nine Swansea goals in 2014-15. This season he has only two, and one of those was a penalty.
Jonjo Shelvey is another who has offered little in terms of goal threat up until now, and the same can be said of Jefferson Montero and Wayne Routledge.
All these players need to chip in at the very least.
If they can do that, Swansea's fortunes will soon improve.
Even if his team were left with 14 points from 14 games, there was much for Monk to be pleased about after Liverpool.
But more is required in the final third if Swansea are to pull themselves clear of the bottom third of the table.



Jurgen Klopp picked up his first league win at Anfield as James Milner's second-half penalty gave Liverpool the points in a stale game against Swansea. Milner converted after Swans full-back Neil Taylor was penalised for handball. Liverpool - so impressive in their win at Manchester City last week - were flat for large periods but did see captain Jordan Henderson return from injury as a substitute.
Swansea have now won once in 10 league games since August.
Garry Monk's side failed to record a single effort on target in 90 minutes and face the top two in Leicester and Manchester City in their next two games.
Klopp's Reds struggling for style at home?
Liverpool's last two Premier League games away from home have seen them record hugely impressive wins at champions Chelsea and leaders Manchester City, with Klopp's preferred 'gegenpressing' style well suited to winning the ball back quickly and hurting teams on the break.
But in three league games at home, the Reds have scored just three times under Klopp and remain a work in progress.
Despite a bright opening spell, during which Jordan Ibe forced defender Kyle Bartley to clear against his own post, the hosts soon ran out of steam and did not have an effort on target until the 52nd minute, when Ibe's tame shot was saved by Lukas Fabianski.
In truth, they were grateful to referee's assistant Simon Beck for the decisive moment when he awarded a penalty as Taylor blocked an Ibe cross with his arm. Milner lifted the spot-kick high into the net to give Liverpool a sixth win in seven games in all competitions, which lifted them up to sixth in the table.
With former captain Steven Gerrard watching from the stands, perhaps the biggest pluses Liverpool fans can take from the win are the returns of Henderson and Daniel Sturridge.
Henderson - missing with a broken foot since the second game of the season in August - was handed the armband when he came on for the final 25 minutes, while Sturridge had a 19-minute run out for his first appearance since Klopp replaced Brendan Rodgers in October.
Monk under increasing pressure?
If Liverpool looked uninspiring in attack, Swansea's failure to test Simon Mignolet at all will give manager Monk plenty to ponder.
More worryingly it was the second time in the last three Premier League matches that Swansea failed to hit a single effort on target - also registering no attempts in the 1-0 defeat at Norwich.
Monk - who took charge in February 2014 - guided Swansea to their highest Premier League finish of eighth last season.
When they beat Manchester United at the end of August the Swans were in fourth but they have won only once since, scoring seven goals in 10 matches.
Monk can point to a harsh handball decision which settled the game but, in attack, his side offered precious little threat.
Centre-forward Eder was often isolated and replacement Bafetimbi Gomis has lost the spark which saw him score in each of the opening four games of the season.
With testing games against Leicester and Manchester City to come a four-point gap to the relegation zone is a real concern.
'Difficult circumstances'
Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp told BBC Sport: "It was really difficult for both teams, the wind was in the stadium more than the stands.
"Swansea defended very well. They had some problems in the last few games but they were more compact. I am proud of the lads. It is a good result in difficult circumstances."
Man of the match - Emre Can
What next?
Liverpool face a trip to Southampton on Wednesday for a League Cup quarter-final, before facing Newcastle at St James' Park next Sunday.
Life does not get easier for Swansea as they host Jamie Vardy's Leicester next Saturday, and then travel to leaders Manchester City the week after.

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Full time Match ends, Liverpool 1, Swansea City 0.
90:00+5:29 Full time Second Half ends, Liverpool 1, Swansea City 0.
90:00+5:01 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Kolo Touré.
90:00+4:40 Foul by James Milner (Liverpool).
90:00+4:40 Kyle Naughton (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
90:00+4:01 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Kolo Touré replaces Jordon Ibe.
90:00+2:56 Booking Simon Mignolet (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.
90:00+1:51 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Emre Can.
90:00+1:50 Attempt blocked. Bafétimbi Gomis (Swansea City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Ashley Williams.
89:20 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Kyle Bartley.
86:23 Jordon Ibe (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
86:23 Foul by Neil Taylor (Swansea City).
81:35 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Nathaniel Clyne.
81:15 Delay over. They are ready to continue.
80:31 Delay in match Kyle Bartley (Swansea City because of an injury.
79:52 Attempt missed. Ashley Williams (Swansea City header from the centre of the box misses to the right following a corner.
79:49 Attempt blocked. Jack Cork (Swansea City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
79:21 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Martin Skrtel.
78:22 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Nathaniel Clyne.
78:02 Attempt blocked. Bafétimbi Gomis (Swansea City right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked. Assisted by André Ayew.
76:37 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Nathaniel Clyne.
76:30 Attempt blocked. Jefferson Montero (Swansea City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Bafétimbi Gomis.
75:21 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).
75:21 André Ayew (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
74:01 Attempt missed. James Milner (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.
71:49 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Swansea City. Jefferson Montero replaces Wayne Routledge.
70:17 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Daniel Sturridge replaces Christian Benteke.
69:38 Booking Kyle Bartley (Swansea City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
69:32 James Milner (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
69:32 Foul by Kyle Bartley (Swansea City).
68:19 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Swansea City. Bafétimbi Gomis replaces Eder because of an injury.
65:41 Delay over. They are ready to continue.
64:54 Delay in match Eder (Swansea City because of an injury.
64:31 Booking Martin Skrtel (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
64:28 Foul by Martin Skrtel (Liverpool).
64:28 Eder (Swansea City wins a free kick on the left wing.
64:11 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Swansea City. Jack Cork replaces Leon Britton.
63:56 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson replaces Roberto Firmino.
61:58 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Liverpool 1, Swansea City 0. James Milner (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the high centre of the goal.
60:59 Penalty conceded by Neil Taylor (Swansea City with a hand ball in the penalty area.
60:54 Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Nathaniel Clyne.
59:36 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).
59:36 Kyle Naughton (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
59:20 Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
59:20 Foul by Kyle Naughton (Swansea City).
56:44 Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross.
56:15 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Leon Britton.
56:14 Attempt blocked. Christian Benteke (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked.
54:02 Foul by Jordon Ibe (Liverpool).
54:02 André Ayew (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
53:19 Delay over. They are ready to continue.
52:33 Delay in match Eder (Swansea City because of an injury.
52:02 Attempt missed. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Adam Lallana with a cross following a corner.
51:20 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Lukasz Fabianski.
51:18 Attempt saved. Jordon Ibe (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.
50:06 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ashley Williams.
49:06 Attempt missed. Ki Sung-yueng (Swansea City left footed shot from outside the box is just a bit too high. Assisted by Gylfi Sigurdsson.
45:00 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, Swansea City 0.
45:00+1:07 Half time First Half ends, Liverpool 0, Swansea City 0.
45:00+0:42 Attempt missed. Eder (Swansea City right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Leon Britton.
44:21 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Kyle Bartley.
41:55 Attempt missed. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is too high from a direct free kick.
40:47 Christian Benteke (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

40:47 Foul by Kyle Bartley (Swansea City).
37:40 Delay over. They are ready to continue.
36:54 Delay in match Kyle Bartley (Swansea City because of an injury.
36:45 Foul by Christian Benteke (Liverpool).
36:45 Kyle Bartley (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
26:36 Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.
24:55 Booking James Milner (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
24:48 Foul by James Milner (Liverpool).
24:48 André Ayew (Swansea City wins a free kick on the left wing.
24:16 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ashley Williams.
24:10 Attempt blocked. Jordon Ibe (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross.
23:09 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ashley Williams.
21:40 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Gylfi Sigurdsson.
20:45 Attempt blocked. Adam Lallana (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Nathaniel Clyne.
19:04 Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
19:04 Foul by Eder (Swansea City).
18:02 Foul by Martin Skrtel (Liverpool).
18:02 Eder (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
8:06 Foul by Christian Benteke (Liverpool).
8:06 Kyle Naughton (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
7:22 Attempt missed. Eder (Swansea City header from the right side of the six yard box misses to the right. Assisted by Kyle Naughton with a cross.
6:41 Foul by Christian Benteke (Liverpool).
6:41 Ki Sung-yueng (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
6:28 Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
6:28 Gylfi Sigurdsson (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.
6:08 Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool).
6:08 Eder (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
3:50 Offside, Swansea City. Kyle Bartley tries a through ball, but Eder is caught offside.
0:00 First Half begins.
0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.