

Competition: Europa League

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Then Henderson, possibly offside, went down the right and lifted a ball in. It looked a routine clearance for Carrick but he directed it straight at Lallana. Liverpool's No 20 stayed so composed, so focused. He picked out Firmino, whose finish gave De Gea no chance.

Klopp's players took far more responsibility on the ball and when they lost possession they gave everything to get it back. These are the occasions when a team needs sturdy characters and aside from one moment early on, when Klopp angrily berated Alberto Moreno for not closing down quickly enough, there was a vibrancy about the home team that made it difficult for their opponents to settle. The noise might have been doused inside the opening 15 seconds if Rashford, too raw for an occasion of this significance, had not wasted a chance to open the scoring before most of the players had even touched the ball. Thereafter, United seldom troubled Simon Mignolet in Liverpool's goal and the home team went ahead after 19 minutes when Firmino clipped a beautifully weighted pass into Nathaniel Clyne's path and the Spanish referee, Carlos Velasco Carballo, decided Memphis Depay had tripped the player inside the penalty area. Sturridge beat De Gea with the penalty despite the goalkeeper getting his fingertips to the ball and, with the noise intensifying, Van Gaal talked afterwards about his players failing to cope with the atmosphere. When he was asked a follow-up question on the same subject, the Dutchman then denied saying it. His performance in the press conference, describing Fellaini as one of the outstanding performers, was almost as bizarre as his team's lethargy. Klopp spoke about Anfield sounding just as he had imagined it when he took the job and, after 73 minutes, the noise reached its peak. Carrick had the chance to clear but could only scuff the ball straight to Lallana. Firmino was waiting to Lallana's left and scored with a rising shot in front of the Kop. Liverpool ought to have won by more and they will have seen nothing to make them fear Old Trafford.

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10 March 2016

The Mail

FIRMINO KOPS it to united; Liverpool in control after Brazilian's strike and Sturridge penalty

ROBERT FIRMINO put this match beyond Manchester United, maybe even this tie, too. They need a 3-0 win to progress from here and Louis van Gaal's team do not seem the type to score three times against opposition with resilience and high energy. Liverpool are far from the finished article, but they have both of those qualities, certainly against these opponents. The sight of United inspired them to one of their best performances under Jurgen Klopp, the winning margin flattering United considerably. If Van Gaal is to see in his third season, he needs to make a statement in the return leg. This is exactly the type of game he was employed to win. Instead, he was outwitted by Klopp and his players simply steamrollered by Liverpool. Michael Carrick was brought on at half-time to oversee a switch to a defensive three, but ended up making the mistake for the second goal. His touch was poor, cutting out a Jordan Henderson cross. Adam Lallana cut the ball back and Firmino finished at the near post. There were 17 minutes remaining but by then Anfield was at a crescendo, United clinging on. They could have been out of it entirely were it not for an outstanding performance from David de Gea, and wasteful Liverpool finishing. Just four minutes before Firmino's goal, Lallana had cut the ball back to Henderson, perfectly positioned, unmarked before the Kop, just in the right place to put Manchester United to bed. Steven Gerrard one imagines, would have had a fair crack at bursting the net. Henderson is not Gerrard, and these teams are not the Liverpool and Manchester United of old. Henderson opened his body, opened his stance and sliced it wide of the goal. And so Manchester United lie to fight another Thursday, just. They shouldn't, by rights. If Real Madrid's fax machine had worked in the summer and Liverpool had a little of the quality of past eras in Europe, this could have been won by a five-goal margin. Of course, Old Trafford will be equally passionate in six days' time -- but will Van Gaal's team? They were bloodless here, at times, unable to rise to what was a vibrant, noisy occasion. Anyone who played down the importance of this game should have been standing on the pavements around Anfield as the Liverpool bus came through. For the first time since the heady days under Brendan Rodgers when Liverpool seemed set fair for the title, the fans lined the streets to cheer the team into battle. There were banners and songs, reprised in full volume inside the ground as kick-off neared. The United contingent did their best to keep up their own chorus when You'll Never Walk Alone was sung but it was an unequal fight: much like the first half. For United it was all downhill after 14 seconds. That was the time on the clock when Memphis Depay sped down the left, skinned Nathaniel Clyne and crossed deep into the Liverpool penalty area. The defenders should have mopped it up, but failed, a development that came as a surprise to Marcus Rashford. He was perfectly positioned to give United the best start imaginable, but seemed startled by the ball's arrival and it rebounded awkwardly off a knee. And that was it, pretty much, from United until the interval. Louis van Gaal wants his team to dominate possession but they were given no chance here. The pace was furious, and dictated by Liverpool. High tempo suits them more and it showed. If Van Gaal had hoped to counter with brawn in Marouane Fellaini and Morgan Schneiderlin, it was an uneven contest. Liverpool were livelier, hungrier, often angrier. Henderson was booked for a crude challenge within two minutes, giving rise to fears that referee Carlos Velasco Carballo of Spain would apply La Liga rules to an old-fashioned English tear-up and end up with five-a-side. Maybe he realised that, too. By the interval he had only booked two more -- Depay for giving away the penalty, and Rashford for a clumsy challenge on Alberto Moreno. ashford ge Depay's yellow could have been given for foolishness as much as anything else. Liverpool had dictated uld r h MANCHESTER have failed the game but without much success around goal, when he committed the foul that handed them the lead. of their last games home in competition, five drawing e ne Depay allowed Clyne to get goal side of him and, played in, placed a restraining hand on his shoulder and tangled legs. ced ed legs. Either would have been sufficient to justify the penalty award that followed. Daniel Sturridge stepped up, just as he didn't do in the Capital One Cup final, introduced a little stutter to his run and stuck the ball to De Gea's right. De Gea got a hand to it, but it was not enough. Sturridge had his first European goal for Liverpool. And it would not have been his last were it not for the resilience of De Gea. Before half-time he made three world-class saves to stop Liverpool t r t six knockout away from European losing times and once. T afte putting the tie beyond reach, with three quarters of it remaining. The first came after a weak shot from Sturridge that served as a far-post cross. Coutinho got there, but went for the ball with his wrong foot and succeeded only in clipping it back into the path of the recovering De Gea. C there we In the 31st minute, Chris Smalling almost comically misjudged a clearance, going for the ball with what ended up as a diving header, missing it completely and leaving Sturridge one on one with De Gea. He moved to smother the danger swiftly, as always, and the shot was blocked by the top of his legs. As the only player in the team able to use hands and arms, it is incredi-ble how many times he uses his walking limbs to save. With four minutes remaining before half-time, Lallana was met with an outstanding opportunity in front of goal, but once again De Gea's reflexes won the day.

LIVERPOOL: Mignolet, Clyne, Lovren, Sakho, Moreno, Henderson, Can, Lallana, Coutinho, Sturridge (Allen 64), Firmino (Origi 84).

Booked: Henderson. Lovren. Coutinho. Goals: Sturridge 20 pen. Firmino 73.

MAN UTD: De Gea, Varela, Smalling, Blind, Rojo, Fellaini, Mata (Ander Herrera 79), Schneiderlin (Schweinsteiger 79), Martial, Rashford (Carrick 46), Depay. Booked: Depay, Rashford, Fellaini. Referee: C Carballo (Madrid).

The Daily Telegraph

Liverpool ease to victory as United fail to catch fire

Liverpool 2 Sturridge 20 pen, Firmino 73 Manchester United 0 Att: 43,228

A European exit too painful to contemplate for either of these two deeply entrenched English football tribes, but a tie that will require all the ingenuity Louis van Gaal can summon if Manchester United's embattled manager is to rescue a place in the Europa League quarter-finals. The United midfielder Marouane Fellaini could well be banned for the second leg after being caught on camera elbowing Emre Can in the face after the two clashed outside the home team's area. Never has Europe's rebranded second tier trophy meant so much to two English clubs in recent years, and it will be the same again in the second leg on Thursday at Old Trafford, when the outside world, the Champions League and all those clubs more successful than Liverpool and United will fall away again. All that will be left will be the very raw, potent enmity of last night when, amid the red smoke flares and the traded insults, it was Jurgen Klopp's team who rose to the occasion. A first half penalty from Daniel Sturridge, and then a second half goal from Roberto Firmino means that Van Gaal's team will have to make all the running at Old Trafford to salvage the tie. It is by no means over, but the first European encounter between the two most successful English clubs in history will surely be settled in Liverpool's favour if they can claim one away goal in Manchester. Were it not for David De Gea, especially in the first half, United would have been much further adrift and Van Gaal's radical attempts to reconfigure his team at half-time made little difference. Lose to West Ham in the FA Cup on Sunday and his season could go up in flames in the space of nine days. De Gea's interventions in the first half meant that although United reached the break on the back foot, and opened up more times than they cared to remember, they were only one goal down and still very much in the game, never mind the tie. The United goalkeeper made three significant saves in the first half, all of them after Sturridge had given Liverpool the lead from the penalty spot on 20 minutes. Following that, a game low on quality and brimming with players determined to cover as much ground as quickly as possible, swung in Liverpool's favour and it was up to United's Spanish goalkeeper to stop them scoring more. Sturridge's penalty was won by the right-back Nathaniel Clyne when he ran into the right channel of the United box and was pulled back, just having crossed the line, by Memphis Depay. The Spanish referee Carlos Velasco Carballo gave himself the benefit of a very long look at the decision before calling it in Liverpool's favour. De Gea went the right way for the penalty but not soon enough to reach it. With their tails up and the usual roar behind them, Liverpool should have scored more before half-time. If the quality of the game was very much Europe's silver standard then the atmosphere was a notch above. The insults traded inevitably got worse but if you could put that to one side, then it was a fine night for noise and tension, one in which the tourists had their camera phones on and wore expressions of disbelief at how long the pre-match sing-off between the two sets of supporters lasted.

De Gea's first big save of the first half, and perhaps his best, was a scrambled recovery to get down to a shot from close range from Philippe Coutinho that the Brazilian tried to steer in with the outside of his right foot. Liverpool had worked the ball well from right to left and Sturridge, always dangerous, had been hard for the United defence to keep tabs on before he dragged the ball across the box. In midfield, Liverpool passed the ball quickly and with a greater accuracy than United, especially Coutinho and Firmino. When Chris Smalling was two inches short of getting his head to a ball on 31 minutes it dropped to Sturridge at the back post. De Gea flung himself at the shot and managed to get his legs behind it. The last big save of the half was four minutes before halftime when the Spanish goalkeeper pushed Adam Lallana's flick over the bar.

Bravo to the goalkeeper, but at the other end, it looked pretty basic from United. Fellaini, a defensive midfielder, was the target at setpieces. Juan Mata, in the No 10 role, never got United moving. On 30 minutes he deceived Mamadou Sakho in the area and might have gone down under the clumsy challenge that followed but instead kept his feet. Marcus Rashford was deployed on the right wing, primarily to stop Alberto Moreno getting forward, it seemed. Not the best use of a goal poacher and the teenager scarcely managed to get himself in the Liverpool area before the break. Rashford did not come out for the second half, a decision that will have been hard to take for the young man, played so far out of position. Especially given how little Depay had contributed on the other wing, but then Van Gaal had big plans for his United team. Michael Carrick came on for Rashford and was put in the centre of an adapted three-man defence with Smalling and Marcos Rojo. Daley Blind was asked to play as a left wing-back. Morgan Schneiderlin took on the defensive work in midfield and that freed Fellaini to get himself further up the pitch. On 64 minutes, Klopp saw fit to substitute Sturridge, who had run out of energy, or will, or both to chase down the United defence and he was replaced with Joe Allen, with Coutinho pushed forward.

The second goal was a howler from Carrick who stopped Henderson's cross from the right and gave the ball straight to Lallana. He rolled the ball into Firmino's path for a simple goal. Most of United's efforts went straight through Fellaini, and by the end it was Van Gaal's team who were hanging on to the two-goal deficit.

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THE

INDEPENDENT

Clever Liverpool seize control as Scholes fumes at woeful United

Advantage Liverpool, and a healthy one at that, yet it would have been game, set and match against Manchester United but for the heroics of goalkeeper David De Gea. Daniel Sturridge's questionable first-half penalty and a close-range strike by Roberto Firmino, following an awful mistake by United's Michael Carrick, ensured that Liverpool will travel to Old Trafford for next Thursday's Europa League round-of-16 second leg with a commanding 2-0 lead.

But it could have been five or six, had it not been for De Gea's catalogue of crucial saves on a night when the poverty of Louis van Gaal's United was exposed by a confident and energetic Liverpool. Paul Scholes, in the TV studio as a pundit for BT Sport, was scathing about United's performance afterwards describing it as a "shambles". "That's the worst Man Utd performance I've ever seen," the former United midfielder said. "They're destroying the Man United legacy now... I don't think the manager knows how big this game is." Scholes then turned on the players: "I don't want them saying sorry on social media. Stop talking and start playing the game." United mustered just one shot on target all night, but Liverpool's failure to convert at least one more of their chances means that they will travel to Manchester with the tie still alive - if only just.

There have clearly been more significant encounters between these two clubs since the first of 194 previous meetings in April 1894.

Liverpool and United have fought out FA Cup and League Cup finals, battled for points at the business end of the league and almost contested a Champions League final in Moscow in 2008, when only a narrow Chelsea victory against Liverpool in the last four prevented English football's traditional superpowers facing each other in the biggest game of all.

So a last-16 meeting in the Europa League was some way down the pecking order, but with both clubs attempting to emerge from periods of transition, the outcome of this tie will only boost the victors and leave the losers searching for answers and a route back to the glory days. Perhaps a yearning for the days when they were kings prompted Liverpool to turn their pre-match soundtrack into some kind of 1980s party, with "Eye of the Tiger" and "The Final Countdown" being boomed around Anfield. If only the likes of Souness, Dalglish, Hansen and Rush could be dusted off and wheeled out too, Jrgen Klopp's plans for a Liverpool revolution would be far further down the line. The same applies to United under Van Gaal.

Mounting injuries and poor summer recruitment left the Dutchman turning once again to youngsters Guillermo Varela and Marcus Rashford in a contest which has always been about giants of the game at the peak of their powers, rather than callow kids with nothing more than raw promise.

To that end, Van Gaal restored a fit-again Marouane Fellaini to the starting line-up for the first time in over a month, simply to add brawn and muscle to an otherwise timid team. But, for all of Fellaini's nuisance qualities, he is no creator and United lacked the cutting edge and guile to trouble Liverpool in a first half dominated by the home side.

Rashford's volley over the crossbar at the Kop end from Memphis Depay's cross after just 14 seconds was as close as United came during the opening period.

At the other end Liverpool were left to curse De Gea for keeping the score down after Sturridge's 19th-minute penalty opener.

Spanish referee Carlos Velasco Carballo took his time before pointing to the spot following Depay's tug on Nathaniel Clyne, but it was a soft penalty. Sturridge calmly beat De Gea to give Liverpool the lead.

The opener raised the decibel levels inside Anfield, with the home fans sensing the opportunity to urge their team to a crucial second. Liverpool poured forward and Sturridge picked out the unmarked Philippe Coutinho at the far post on 23 minutes, only for De Gea to smother the Brazilian's close-range shot.

Then on 31 minutes a slip by Chris Smalling gifted Sturridge a chance to score his second. Once again De Gea came to United's rescue, as he did when producing a point-blank save from Adam Lallana four minutes before half-time.

United's season has been disappointing enough with the Spaniard in their ranks, so it does not bear thinking about how badly it may have turned out had his aborted move to Real Madrid gone through last summer.

With United finding it so difficult to threaten Liverpool, Van Gaal reverted to 3-5-2 at the start of the second period, withdrawing Rashford and installing Carrick at centre-half. Daley Blind moved to left wing-back, with Marcos Rojo occupying the left side of the back three, a move which gave United more purpose down that side of the pitch. But Liverpool were able to keep United away from Simon Mignolet's goal, with Morgan Schneiderlin's 20-yard effort - saved by the Belgian keeper - the best of their chances early in the second half. Liverpool continued to play with greater efficiency going forward and United were indebted to De Gea yet again on 55 minutes when he produced a fingertip save to push Coutinho's powerful strike from long range over the crossbar. United attempted to wear Liverpool down with their possession game, but while it gave them greater control of the centre of the pitch, Mignolet continued to watch on largely untroubled, only needing to race off his line to punch a Varela cross away from the head of Anthony Martial. De Gea was at least proving his worth, if many of his team-mates were not. The keeper palmed away a swerving Clyne shot on 66 minutes as Liverpool turned the screw, but his resistance was finally broken on 74 minutes by Firmino. Carrick's heavy first touch from Jordan Henderson's cross let the ball bounce to Adam Lallana, who picked out Firmino and the Brazilian scored

from six yards. It could have been an even worse night for the visitors as Fellaini appeared to elbow Emre Can in the face in the final minute, for which he would have been sent off if the referee had seen it. The victory was no more than Liverpool deserved and Anfield exploded in celebration - and probably a realisation that this United team will not be able to turn it around at Old Trafford.

DAILY

Mirror

LVG IS LEFT FELINE SICK; United not up to scratch but cat-like De Gea gives them hope

LIVERPOOL 2

MANCHESTER UNITED 0

Sturridge 20 pen, Firmino 73

LOUIS VAN GAAL ought to have a cat in hell's chance of progressing to the Europa League quarterfinals after this battering.

Fortunately for the Manchester United manager, he possessed a cat in hell last night - as the feline reflexes of David De Gea at least saved his side from mortal damage at Anfield.

A Daniel Sturridge penalty and a Roberto Firmino strike should still give Liverpool enough of a buffer to sustain them in next Thursday's return leg at Old Trafford, as Jurgen Klopp's men produced a performance which somehow twinned manic collective workrate with pure individual artistry.

If last week's destruction of Manchester City had been Klopp's best Anfield night to date, this was far better. A classic European night at the old Colosseum.

If the Brazilian duo of Firmino and Philippe Coutinho were breathtaking, then England's Adam Lallana looked even more Brazilian still as United were thoroughly outplayed.

And yet De Gea, with five saves out of the top drawer, kept Van Gaal's men in with a sniff as the celebratory flares burned in the Merseyside air.

Spanish Dave's eardrums may have been knackered by the din of an Anfield crowd determined to make this a hellish experience for the visitors - but every sinew in his pipe-cleaner frame was used to repel Liverpool.

Fixtures between these two are normally lunchtime affairs, so a rare floodlit clash was greeted with lubricated vocal cords for songs of passion and pride from the home support, menace and spite from United's.

'You'll Never Walk Alone' had not been belted out with such fervour and length for some time, and both sets of players, feeding off it, began at full pelt.

Marcus Rashford squandered a glorious chance within seconds, only connecting with his knee when left unmarked from a Memphis Depay centre.

Liverpool skipper Jordan Henderson was booked for a recklessly high challenge on Morgan Schneiderlin but then, on 19 minutes, Klopp's men were ahead.

Coutinho's pass did the damage, leaving Nathaniel Clyne goal-side of Depay, who brushed him over.

Sturridge strode up, hesitated and nervelessly pinged the ball into the corner past David De Gea. Ninety per corner past Dav cent of Anfield went ballistic, sensing an end to Liverpool's miserable run of four straight defeats against their bitterest rivals.

It ought to have been two within minutes when a rapid passing move ended with Sturridge crossing to mS Coutinho at the back stick, only for the Brazilian to scuff his shot and De Gea to sprawl and claw away.

The hosts were vibrant, United were rocking and when Firmino centred, Chris Smalling completely missed an attempt at a headed clearance, leaving Sturridge a clear sight of goal, only for De Gea to smother his effort.

Smalling could only have argued that it was too loud to think inside Anfield.

United could only be thankful for the sound mind and safe hands of De Gea, who next pulled off a point-blank stop from Lallana.

Van Gaal, whose side were in danger of being overrun, chose to shore things up at the break, sacrificing Rashford for Michael Carrick who slotted into a back three.

Coutinho was correctly booked for diving but soon let rip from the edge of the area, De Gea tipping over the bar.

The keeper then pushed out a swerving shot from Clyne, and Henderson missed a clear chance before the second arrived on 73 minutes.

Henderson crossed from the right, Carrick failed to clear and Lallana shifted the ball to Firmino who tucked home.

This time even De Gea couldn't keep it out. But heaven knows where United would be without him.

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LIVERPOOL

ECHO

Fans and players create unstoppable force to embarrass fierce rivals
Payback was achieved in style. Bullish words were backed up by a Liverpool performance to cherish.
Manchester United weren't just beaten but they were embarrassed on an emphatically one-sided night at Anfield.
Forget all the talk about it only being half-time in this Europa League last 16 tie, Jurgen Klopp's men have taken a giant leap towards the quarter-finals.
The Reds will head for Old Trafford next Thursday with a commanding 2-0 lead. They will also make the short trip on the back of a week's rest and with belief sky-high after the manner in which they comprehensively outfought and outplayed Louis van Gaal's men. There was never any danger of Liverpool succumbing to an unprecedented fifth successive defeat at the hands of United. Not with the Reds in this kind of mood. The only regret was that they didn't have more than Daniel Sturridge's spot-kick and Roberto Firmino's close range finish to show for their efforts. But for the heroics of David de Gea, Liverpool would already be out of sight. The scoreline flattered United massively but crucially they were denied the prized away goal which would have changed the balance of the tie considerably. The sick chants about Hillsborough from the away end were rammed back down their throats in the best possible fashion. United had asked their fans to create a 'Wall of White' after dishing out free shirts but by the end raising a white flag would have been more fitting as they sat there stoney faced. They know it's a long way back from here. As Van Gaal's reign limps to a sorry conclusion, Klopp is only just getting started. These are two clubs heading in different directions. Liverpool played with a swagger and a vibrancy that a pitiful United side simply couldn't live with. Firmino was outstanding as he continued his hot streak but there were dominant displays in all departments.
Two teams going in separate directions
This was the finest Anfield night of Klopp's blossoming tenure. Fans and players united together as one unstoppable force. The Reds boss had urged supporters to crank up the volume and they delivered emphatically. The Kop created a wall of noise. Among the array of banners was one that read: 'Liverpool FC Support & Believe'. Another simply: 'European Elite'. This may have been Europe's second tier competition but there was nothing second rate about the sense of occasion. The spine-tingling rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone was laced with emotion and Klopp's men fed off that electric atmosphere. There was a scare when Alberto Moreno misjudged Memphis Depay's cross but Marcus Rashford failed to hit the target. This may have been a very English affair but Spanish referee Carlos Velasco Carballo made it clear early on that it would be officiated by his continental standards. There was no leeway with Jordan Henderson straight into the book for a strong but fair challenge on Morgan Schneiderlin.
The cards kept on coming with six in the book by the end. How Marouane Fellaini remained on the pitch will remain a mystery. The opening stages were predictably frenetic. Moreno got a flea in his ear from an enraged Klopp after he shirked a challenge on Rashford in front of the technical area. The message was clear – don't retreat, don't allow United to settle, ruffle their feathers.
When Simon Mignolet caught an in-swinging free-kick from Juan Mata there was a roar of approval. Similar followed when Sakho shrugged off the little Spaniard like he was dealing with an annoying wasp.
Momentum built for the home side
Momentum was building. Firmino's clever movement and classy touch tormented United, while the tireless Adam Lallana drove at them menacingly. Philippe Coutinho kept on demanding possession and kept on picking holes as the visitors chased shadows. In the 20 minute Liverpool grabbed the lead they craved.
Firmino's incisive pass picked out the run of Nathaniel Clyne, who was tripped by Depay. Carballo pointed to the spot and Sturridge stepped up to score his sixth goal of the campaign. With the noise levels cranked up still further, Liverpool threatened to run riot. De Gea repeatedly kept United in the tie.
Coutinho looked destined to score when Sturridge's bobbling cross-shot dropped kindly to him at the back post but he scuffed it and that allowed the United keeper to claw it away. Liverpool's only problems were of their own making.
Mamadou Sakho's mis-kick sparked panic inside the box and he nearly compounded the error by diving in on Mata but Moreno came to the rescue with a covering tackle. That moment aside, Sakho was impressive with Dejan Lovren shining again alongside him. Just past the half hour mark Chris Smalling's blunder presented a golden chance to Sturridge. However, his fierce left-footer was blocked by De Gea. The away end kept themselves amused with a succession of chants which were instantly drowned out by the other 41,000 inside Anfield.
Van Gaal reacted - but Anfield erupted it continued to be one-way traffic with Lallana forcing another smart stop after turning Firmino's cross goalwards.
Van Gaal took action at the break – brining on Michael Carrick for the rookie Rashford and going to three at the back. The extra man in midfield enabled United to briefly gain a foothold in the tie with Schneiderlin belatedly testing Mignolet. The Belgian keeper didn't have much to do but what he did was faultless. Mignolet was off his line smartly to punch clear off the head of Anthony Martial. Coutinho's spectacular strike was tipped over by De Gea but Klopp could see that the initiative had been lost. His response was to take off Sturridge and

bring on Joe Allen with Firmino pushed further forward. Briefly, there looked to be a danger of Liverpool dropping off and looking to hold on to what they had. They were inviting pressure. Incensed, Klopp raced to the touchline, demanding they continued to take the fight to United. The warning was heeded as the Reds stepped up a gear and finished with a flourish. Clyne's piledriver was turned away before Henderson fired over from Lallana's pull-back.
With 17 minutes to go the dominant Reds finally found a way past De Gea. Carrick made a hash of dealing with Henderson's low cross. Lallana pounced and squared for Firmino to gleefully convert. Anfield erupted. Revenge was sweet. Liverpool have one foot in the quarter-finals.
MATCH FACTS
Liverpool: Mignolet, Clyne, Lovren, Sakho, Moreno, Can, Henderson, Lallana, Coutinho, Firmino (Origi 84), Sturridge (Allen 64).
Not used: Ward, Toure, Benteke, Allen, Smith, Ojo
Manchester United: De Gea, Varela, Smalling, Blind, Rojo, Schneiderlin (Schweinsteiger 79), Fellaini, Memphis, Mata (Herrera 79), Martial, Rashford (Carrick 45). Not used: Romero, Darmian, Riley, Weir.
Referee: Carlos Velasco Carballo Attendance: 43,228
Goals: Sturridge 20, Firmino 73.
Bookings: Henderson, Depay, Lovren, Rashford, Coutinho, Fellaini.
Man of the match: Roberto Firmino. Scored the second and caused United problems throughout.

Manchester Evening News

Manchester United put in pitiful performance against Liverpool under Van Gaal
If Louis van Gaal really wants us to stop living in the past then he is going to have to deliver some up-to-date memories to get excited about.
Memories are definitely not made of this.
Yesteryear is only romantic when there is precious little to take your mind off the here and now.
United have hardly created the kind of mental images that would relegate modern successes in the memory bank.
Even if there was no Champions League stirring anthem and no UEFA's elite competition livery plastered around Anfield this was still the kind of occasion that could create new dreams.
But it was just another pitiful performance.
Van Gaal and this set of players know enough about this grudge match that if you are going to have a cat in hell's chance of surviving in the cauldron then grit, determination, hunger and desire are must ingredients.
Liverpool and Jurgen Klopp knew it and that is what they delivered.
The Reds, however, were flimsy, showed little heart save nothing of some imagination.
The recent four-match upsurge of hope has now faded. The signs were there against Watford and stared you in the face at West Bromwich Albion.
Adidas's cynical promo attempt to create a wall of white at Anfield by donating free shirts to the travelling Reds went down like a lead balloon and there was certainly no wall of white on the pitch either.
Thank goodness that David de Gea was not on the Champions League stage 24 hours earlier in Madrid for Real against Roma and thank goodness for Spanish fax machines.
Had it not been for the Spanish keeper the second leg next Thursday would have been a complete non-event even before we could reach the interval.
While his outfield colleagues were being outfought and overrun he was once again the saviour.
Not much he could do about Daniel Sturridge's 20th minute penalty but he did plenty to ensure there is still interest and hope at Old Trafford next week.
Van Gaal and his backroom team did recognise finally at half time that if you didn't have much fight then at least get some numbers in midfield where the Reds lost the first half big style.
But fatally the switch involved bringing Michael Carrick into a back three and in the 73rd minute United's most experience European campaigner critically and woefully flapped a foot at a clearance and Liverpool seized the moment and Firmino scored.
In the end Van Gaal didn't go down in the United history books as the only Reds boss to win five consecutive competitive games against Liverpool and some will be grateful for that.
The fact his side never looked close to keeping that run going says it all.
2-0 down after 90 minutes but can you really imagine this United team cooking up a three goal recovery at Old Trafford next Thursday?
Well they did it against Barcelona in 1984 famously but there we go again living in the past!

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	Independent	Mail	BBC		

BBC

Liverpool took control of their Europa League last-16 tie as they swept aside a desperately poor Manchester United at Anfield.

Jurgen Klopp's side dominated this first European meeting between the two Premier League giants in a thunderous atmosphere - and the German manager's only disappointment will be that the tie is not already settled. Daniel Sturridge gave Liverpool a 20th-minute lead from the spot after Memphis Depay fouled Nathaniel Clyne and Roberto Firmino added a second from close range with 17 minutes left. United did not create a single chance and only the brilliance of goalkeeper David de Gea has kept Liverpool in range as he produced a succession of magnificent saves.

De Gea spares United humiliation

Liverpool have the destiny of this tie in their own hands now - and Manchester United fans might have been trying to offload their tickets for next week's second leg if it was not for the outstanding De Gea. The Spain international was world-class and it was only his constant interventions that kept Liverpool's lead anywhere near manageable for Louis van Gaal's side. De Gea saved superbly at the far post from Coutinho in the first half when many would have given up and showed brilliant athleticism to keep out the Brazilian in front of The Kop in the second half. He also blocked Sturridge when Chris Smalling missed a simple defensive header in Liverpool's opening surge and demonstrated his reflexes to stop Adam Lallana, as well as punching away Nathaniel Clyne's powerful drive after the break. In other words, the only reason United have any interest in that second game at Old Trafford is because of De Gea - and if they somehow pull this around it will be down to this virtuoso display.

Second-class European clash?

The fact two of the Premier League's superpowers had their first meeting on this stage in the Europa League is an indicator of the fact they have fallen out of the elite group contesting the Champions League. But was this a second-class atmosphere in a second-class competition? Not a chance.

Anfield was crackling two hours before kick-off and The Kop's version of You'll Never Walk Alone evoked memories of Champions League semi-finals rather than this stage of Europe's second-tier tournament.

The prize of a place in next season's Champions League for the Europa League winners is a massive incentive - but so was the old rivalry between two clubs who argue over their respective European pedigrees. Liverpool's fans revelled in the manner in which they over-ran the old enemy and red smoke from a flare swirled around a cacophonous Anfield after Firmino scored their second.

It may not be the competition these two clubs want to be in - but as Liverpool fans celebrated at the final whistle that complaint will have fallen on deaf ears. United's fans will need to create a similar environment next week if they are to have any chance of reaching the last eight.

Shambolic Manchester United

This was an opportunity for United to show there is some life left in Van Gaal's regime - but they were a tactical shambles and off the pace all over the pitch, De Gea apart. Anthony Martial got no service worthy of the name and sympathy goes to teenager Marcus Rashford, dumped in an unfamiliar position on the right flank and removed at half-time when Van Gaal introduced Michael Carrick and went to three at the back. And the symbol of all United's struggles was the hopeless figure of Marouane Fellaini, taunted for his Everton connections and fortunate to stay on the pitch after being a consistent offender all night, even ending the game by appearing to lay out Emre Can in an aerial challenge. United were dismal - the only consolation being that despite this harrowing night, they still have a semblance of a chance in the second leg. In contrast, Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool showed signs of becoming exactly what he wants them to be at Anfield.

The Reds simply pressurised United into submission, much to the delight of the manager who was an advocate of the high-intensity "Gegenpressing" system with former club Borussia Dortmund.

They gave United no time on the ball, constantly robbing them in possession and forcing mistakes by being simply too quick and too mobile for Van Gaal's side.

Man of the match: David de Gea (Manchester United)

David de Gea produced key stops to deny Adam Lallana, Philippe Coutinho and Daniel Sturridge - ensuring his side still have a fighting chance of reaching the last eight

The stats you need to know

Manchester United have not won any of their past six away games in the knockout stages of European competition, losing five.

United have kept just one clean sheet in their past 10 trips to Anfield in all competitions.

Daniel Sturridge has scored five goals and assisted one in his past seven games against United in all competitions.

United faced eight shots on target against Liverpool, the joint-most they have had to defend in a single game this season.

Roberto Firmino has scored in three consecutive games for Liverpool for the first time.

What's next for both sides?

Liverpool's next match is the second leg at Old Trafford on Thursday, 17 March, while Manchester United host West Ham in the FA Cup quarter-finals on Sunday.

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Match ends, Liverpool 2, Manchester United 0.
90'+2' Second Half ends, Liverpool 2, Manchester United 0.
90' Hand ball by Divock Origi (Liverpool).
87' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Michael Carrick.
87' Attempt blocked. Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked.
86' Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
86' Foul by Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United).
85' Attempt missed. Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Bastian Schweinsteiger with a cross.
84' Hand ball by Divock Origi (Liverpool).
84' Substitution, Liverpool. Divock Origi replaces Roberto Firmino.
83' Offside, Liverpool. Dejan Lovren tries a through ball, but Philippe Coutinho is caught offside.
83' Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from more than 35 yards misses to the right from a direct free kick.
82' Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
82' Foul by Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United).
80' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
80' Foul by Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United).
79' Substitution, Manchester United. Bastian Schweinsteiger replaces Morgan Schneiderlin.
79' Substitution, Manchester United. Ander Herrera replaces Juan Mata.
79' Foul by Joe Allen (Liverpool).
79' David de Gea (Manchester United wins a free kick in the defensive half.
78' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Michael Carrick.
76' Joe Allen (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
76' Foul by Morgan Schneiderlin (Manchester United).
73' Goal! Liverpool 2, Manchester United 0. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the top right corner. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
72' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Marcos Rojo.
71' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
71' Dangerous play by Marcos Rojo (Manchester United).
69' Offside, Manchester United. Daley Blind tries a through ball, but Memphis Depay is caught offside.
69' Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
67' Attempt saved. Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Emre Can.
65' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).
65' Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United wins a free kick on the left wing.
64' Substitution, Liverpool. Joe Allen replaces Daniel Sturridge.
63' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
63' Foul by Morgan Schneiderlin (Manchester United).
62' Offside, Manchester United. Daley Blind tries a through ball, but Anthony Martial is caught offside.
60' Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
59' Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
59' Foul by Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United).
58' Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
58' Dangerous play by Morgan Schneiderlin (Manchester United).
54' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by David de Gea.
54' Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
54' Attempt blocked. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
54' Offside, Manchester United. Marcos Rojo tries a through ball, but Memphis Depay is caught offside.
51' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
51' Foul by Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United).
51' Attempt saved. Morgan Schneiderlin (Manchester United right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Juan Mata.
49' Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.
49' Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool has gone down, but that's a dive.
48' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Memphis Depay.
47' Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
47' Foul by Marcos Rojo (Manchester United).
46' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).
46' Juan Mata (Manchester United wins a free kick in the defensive half.
46' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
46' Foul by Marcos Rojo (Manchester United).
Second Half begins Liverpool 1, Manchester United 0.
45' Substitution, Manchester United. Michael Carrick replaces Marcus Rashford.
45'+1' First Half ends, Liverpool 1, Manchester United 0.
45' Marcus Rashford (Manchester United is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
45' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
45' Foul by Marcus Rashford (Manchester United).
43' Offside, Liverpool. Alberto Moreno tries a through ball, but Daniel Sturridge is caught offside.
43' Dejan Lovren (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.
42' Attempt missed. Marcos Rojo (Manchester United left footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Morgan Schneiderlin.
42' Attempt saved. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a cross.
38' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Daley Blind.

36' Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).

36' Marcus Rashford (Manchester United wins a free kick in the defensive half.

36' Attempt missed. Memphis Depay (Manchester United right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right from a direct free kick.

34' Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool).

34' Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United wins a free kick in the attacking half.

34' Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).

34' Guillermo Varela (Manchester United wins a free kick in the defensive half.

31' Hand ball by Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool).

31' Attempt saved. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

30' Hand ball by Marouane Fellaini (Manchester United).

25' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

25' Foul by Daley Blind (Manchester United).

24' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

24' Dangerous play by Morgan Schneiderlin (Manchester United).

24' Attempt saved. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.

23' Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the six yard box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Daniel Sturridge.

23' Attempt missed. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Adam Lallana.

22' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Marcos Rojo.

20' Goal! Liverpool 1, Manchester United 0. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool converts the penalty with a left footed shot to the bottom left corner.

19' Memphis Depay (Manchester United is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

19' Penalty Liverpool. Nathaniel Clyne draws a foul in the penalty area.

19' Penalty conceded by Memphis Depay (Manchester United after a foul in the penalty area.

17' Foul by Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool).

17' Chris Smalling (Manchester United wins a free kick on the right wing.

8' Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool).

8' Guillermo Varela (Manchester United wins a free kick on the right wing.

7' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).

7' Juan Mata (Manchester United wins a free kick in the attacking half.

5' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).

5' Marcus Rashford (Manchester United wins a free kick in the defensive half.

2' Jordan Henderson (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

2' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).

2' Morgan Schneiderlin (Manchester United wins a free kick in the attacking half.

1' Attempt missed. Marcus Rashford (Manchester United right footed shot from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Memphis Depay with a cross.

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.