

Date: 5 May 2016
Opposition: Villarreal CF
Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo		5 May 2016
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THE TIMES

Anfield roars as Sturridge and Lallana sink Villarreal
Liverpool 3 Bruno 7 (og), Sturridge 63, Lallana 81 Villarreal 0 Liverpool win 3-1 on agg

The inspirational, charismatic Jurgen Klopp has got Liverpool on the trail of glory again. As Anfield chanted his name again and again, Klopp showed again how he has galvanised Liverpool, guiding them towards the Europa League final in Basle where they will face Seville, the winners in 2014 and 2015. Klopp strode on to the field at the end, standing in the centre-circle, punching the air as Anfield responded wildly. They love this man. Klopp got his tactics right last night with Daniel Sturridge superb up front and ably supported by Roberto Firmino, Philippe Coutinho and Adam Lallana. Emre Can put in a tireless shift in deep midfield, stopping Villarreal counters and launching Liverpool attacks. Klopp's impact on his players is huge and seen clearly in Sturridge's hunger to score and work, and Lallana's constant running and pressing while Firmino was immense. Villarreal have many admirers but in the home of The Beatles, the Yellow Submarine sunk without trace. Villarreal had run into a wall of sound. A gospel choir sang You'll Never Walk Alone, which the Kop continued towards the opening whistle when the noise rose higher It was as if Anfield had not paused for breath since that wild night when Borussia Dortmund were vanquished here in the quarter-finals. Villarreal had also run into Klopp's fired-up team. Liverpool began this game as they ended the Dortmund one, hustling hard and hunting goals, putting in 20 crosses in the first half alone. Sturridge seized his starting chance, showing his touch and adventure in tight areas. Nathaniel Clyne was flying forward and tracking back, tackling and creating, demonstrating why he is challenging Kyle Walker so hard for England's starting right-back slot at Euro 2016. Dejan Lovren made some strong interceptions. Liverpool still had to survive an early scare when Mario Gaspar controlled Roberto Soldado's lay-off and sent in a low strike that Simon Mignolet saved. Jonathan dos Santos then shot over but these were rare ripostes against the general theme of Liverpool control. Klopp's side were excellent and the only frustration was that they led only 1-0 at the break, leaving the tie evenly balanced. Made to attack the Kop end, which they prefer to do in the second half , Liverpool were ahead within six minutes. Can was dictating operations from in front of Liverpool's back four, and he calmly stroked an angled pass to Clyne, who was making one of his speedy overlaps down the right. The right back drilled the ball across the six-yard area and the Villarreal goalkeeper, Alphonse Areola, pushed it away from the danger area. Or so he thought. Villarreal's defence, usually so well prepared, were caught out by the speed of the surge and Firmino was first to the loose ball. The Brazilian immediately played it back in to the box towards the lurking Sturridge, whose scuffed touch caught Bruno Soriano and found the net. Sturridge celebrated as if it were his 12th goal of the season but Uefa quickly credited it as a Bruno own goal. Klopp celebrated in his usual animated fashion, punching the air. Liverpool were winning the ball quickly and instantly attacking. A fine sliding tackle by Lovren on Cedric Bakambu triggered a swift break culminating in Lallana shooting just wide. Lallana has responded to Klopp's management, raising his tempo and influence, and he was soon nicking the ball off Jaume Costa. All around were signs of Liverpool's class. Lovren put in a superb tackle on Denis Suarez. James Milner whisked the ball around Costa and the Kop almost responded with "ole". Milner then lifted in a corner, met by Lovren but Areola was equal to it. Lovren was then brought to earth by the sneaky Soldado, who grabbed the defender's leg, pulling him over. Villarreal's jack-in-the-box coach, Marcelino, signalled outrage that anybody could perceive Soldado guilty. Soldado was beginning to wind-up Anfield with his play-acting. Clyne caught him with a robust challenge and Soldado's over-reaction deceived the referee, Viktor Kassai, who booked Clyne. Can was so annoyed that he punched the loose ball back towards the scene of the alleged crime and, much to Anfield's delight, it accidentally hit Kassai on the head. Victor Ruiz immediately tried to get Can cautioned. Villarreal are a good side but charmless. Soldado was finally brought to account for a scissors-tackle on Coutinho. He risked a red with his splenetic response towards Kassai. Villarreal's supporters were far more appealing; at half-time, they held up a yellow flag with "96" on it to a thunderous ovation from Liverpool supporters. Liverpool chased that second goal. Milner guided in Coutinho on the left but Areola saved. Liverpoolwere getting closer and closer. Sturridge raided in from the right and was also denied by Areola. Anfield believed. The Kop was in full voice. The players were responding to the demands of the fans and Klopp, who ushered them forward again and again. They broke through after 63 minutes as Anfield threatened to break the sound barrier set against Saint-Etienne, Olympiacos, Chelsea and Dortmund. Firmino controlled the ball on the edge of the area and cleverly slipped it through to Sturridge who found the net via a slight deflection off Areola. As Anfield celebrated, Marcelino rejigged, removing the stropky Soldado for Adrian Lopez. Liverpoolhad to beware the counterattack and the concession of an away goal. They stayed calm, focused, determined, mobile with Kolo Toure's name being sung loudly after a couple of timely interceptions. Liverpool's task appeared to become easier when Ruiz, already booked for dissent, caught Lallana and was shown another yellow card. He took a while to leave, first being serenaded with "cheerio" and then mass cries of "adios". Liverpool survived another worrying moment when Suarez fell under Alberto

Moreno's challenge but Kassai was unmoved. With eight minutes remaining, Liverpool made their numerical advantage pay. Firmino powered in from the left, and cut the ball back. Sturridge scuffed his shot but it carried through to Lallana, who flicked coolly past Areola. Sturridge almost grabbed a fourth with four minutes remaining, racing in from the right with Villarreal's defence in disarray. Areola saved, pushing the ball away and Joe Allen just failed to turn it in. Still the Kop chanted Klopp's name. With two minutes left, Klopp took off Firmino, who departed to a standing ovation for a performance of skill and subtlety. Basle awaits. Klopp has Liverpool on the trophy trail again.

the guardian

Liverpool push past 10-man Villarreal and into Europa League final
Liverpool stand defiant in the face of Spain's dominance of Europe. The Champions League is destined for Madrid but Jürgen Klopp's brand of "emotional football" denied La Liga guaranteed success in the Europa League as Villarreal were swatted aside at Anfield. A fourth triumph in the competition and a ticket back to the Champions League will be Liverpool's should Sevilla fall the same way on 18 May.

Anfield has been revitalised by Klopp, and the manager turned cheerleader after the final whistle to whip up celebrations from all four sides of the stadium. He has had the same effect on Liverpool's players. The club's 200th win in European competition was achieved in commanding, comfortable style as a Bruno Soriano own goal quickly levelled the tie on aggregate before Daniel Sturridge and Adam Lallana capped a dominant semi-final display.

"It will be much more difficult for Villarreal than they imagine in this moment," Klopp had said on the eve of the second leg. But it was Liverpool's tactics, industry and quality that caused the fourth best team in Spain to fold. Lallana, Emre Can, Roberto Firmino and Dejan Lovren, to name just four players who have improved immeasurably under Klopp, excelled in following their manager's instruction to play "emotional football while using your brain". The result is a second final only seven months into the Klopp era and the Premier League's first representation in the Europa League final since Chelsea's victory under Rafael Benitez in 2013. What a pity therefore, or more accurately a disgrace, that the finalists receive merely 10,000 tickets apiece for the showdown in Basel.

Klopp was thumping his chest during the warm-up, such was the intensity of the occasion. The atmosphere was charged not only by the frenzied welcome that the Liverpool team bus received as it inched along Anfield Road but also last week's verdicts from the Hillsborough inquests. A mosaic reading "96 – The Greatest Football Family" covered three sides of the ground before the first home game since it was concluded the 96 were unlawfully killed. The night fulfilled Anfield's expectations.

Liverpool tore into Villarreal from the start, gave them no time to build from the back or through their assured captain, Soriano, and punished them to level the tie inside eight minutes. It helped that Marcelino's bizarre rotation policy with his goalkeepers resulted in Alphonse Aréola starting in place of Sergio Asenjo. His unconvincing opening spread almost as much anxiety through the visiting defence as Liverpool's front four.

Poor crossing undermined Liverpool in the first leg, Klopp had claimed, but the flaw was remedied quickly in the return. The fit-again Can released Nathaniel Clyne and when his dangerous cross arrowed in from the right, Aréola parried the ball into the path of Firmino. It was the second of three slips by the Villarrealkeeper in the opening 10 minutes. Firmino turned the ball back into a crowded six-yard area where Sturridge failed to connect cleanly but his effort struck Soriano and sailed over the line.

Villarreal were visibly unnerved. They were dangerous when they broke out but were rarely able to do so. Simon Mignolet saved well from Mario Gasper and Jonathan Dos Santos blazed over when Cédric Bakambu's run presented him with an excellent chance seconds before the opener. But with Adam Lallana relentless in his pressing – the watching Dirk Kuyt would have been impressed – Can and James Milner dominant in central midfield and with Firmino a constant distraction, Villarreal could not disrupt Liverpool's control.

The one concern for Klopp at half-time, and hope for Marcelino, was the aggregate scoreline. Liverpool had dictated the rhythm and flow of the game but remained vulnerable to the away goal without a commanding lead. It arrived moments after their manager had implored the crowd to raise their game having quietened at the start of the second half, and Firmino released Sturridge behind the Villarreal defence with a fine pass. Controlling Lallana's cross on his chest, the Brazilian took out three yellow shirts with a first-time ball into Sturridge and the recalled striker converted off the inside of a post. His celebrations marked a release after starting the three previous Europa League ties on the bench. Villarreal's night deteriorated further when the defender Víctor Ruiz was sent off for a second offence. Booked for dissent in the first half, he went after a late foul on Lallana and the visitors' exasperation increased when Alberto Moreno escaped with a push on Denis Suárez inside the Liverpool area. But they could not dispute the outcome. Firmino, having earlier deceived Mario Gasper with an outrageous trick, left Mateo Musacchio trailing to set up Sturridge at close range. The striker miscued but Lallana steered home the loose ball from a yard and was kept outside by Musacchio on the by-line. Anfield erupted, thoughts turning to Basel.

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The Mail

DAN'S THE MAN for jurgen; Sturridge puts Reds on road to the final before Lallana sees off 10-man Villarreal

LIVERPOOL 3 Soriano 7 (og) Sturridge 63 Lallana 81 VILLARREAL 0 (Liverpool win 3-1 on aggregate)

Tinside of goalkeeper Alphonse Areola's leg, the inside of the post, rolled along the goal-line and finally took the smallest right turn into the net.

They used to say The Kop sucked goals in at Anfield, but this was at the opposite end. Maybe there are other forces at work in this of all years.

Daniel Sturridge sprinted off towards the corner flag in joy and no little vindication. Excluded from the first leg, here he was with the goal that would take Liverpool to the Europa League final -- and maybe to the Champions League, too. Beat Sevilla and, along with the trophy, that is the prize. It would be a huge achievement in Jurgen Klopp's first fragment of a season. They have done it the hard way, throughout. Not just chasing games but with the route they have taken to Basle. In the last three rounds they have been paired with the toughest opponents. Manchester United, simply for the emotional charge of the fixture, then Borussia Dortmund, now Villarreal. English clubs have a dismal record against La Liga opponents of late, but Liverpool swept them off the park, overturning a 1-0 deficit from last week and overwhelming them, physically and technically, too. They were the better side in every aspect -- but most strikingly in terms of athleticism. This was everything Manchester City in the Bernabeu on Wednesday was not. Sturridge's goal was the clincher, even if a third from Adam Lallana made certain of victory. It came after a lovely little pass from Roberto Firmino which left the striker one-on-one. He got a bit of good fortune, true, but it was not undeserved. Liverpool were the best team on the night, there is no question of that. Once central defender Victor Ruiz was sent-off for a second bookable offence -- deliberately stepping on Lallana's foot, a stupid and needless foul -- it was all over. After 81 minutes, Lallana made sure. Firmino, happier when not played as a central striker, broke down the right, cut the ball back, Sturridge couldn't get a clean connection, but Lallana could, flicking the ball in from just in front of Areola as Villarreal appealed in vain for offside. They were done, the Yellow Submarines sunk. Justice has a different meaning to this club but, in simple football terms, this was it done. Sevilla, already back-to-back Europa League winners, are a special force in this competition, but this is a special year for Liverpool, too. A lot is made of the atmosphere at Anfield on European nights, and a lot was made of the wall of noise that Villarreal would face, as if it would be beyond their realm of experience. Playing in a league that takes them to the Bernabeu, the Nou Camp as well as Atletico Madrid's Estadio Vicente Calderon, and the south to play Sevilla, that is unlikely.

What they were not prepared for, however, was the intensity of Liverpool's football. Lively stadiums are one thing but Villarreal will not have had too many teams in Spain coming at them the way Liverpool did. Jurgen Klopp is creating a monster here, have no doubt of that, one that will only become more intimidating as he introduces more of his own men.

For now, he is working with what he inherited -- and getting an outstanding level of performance from them, too. The first half here was quite exceptional. High tempo, high energy, ferocious and just the right side of legal. It was a physicality that Villarreal were clearly not used to, though, their protests to Hungarian referee Viktor Kassai becoming ever more dramatic.

It was no Tottenham-Chelsea, but it did spark memories of previous clashes of culture in Europe. Everton versus Bayern Munich, in the European Cup-Winners' Cup semifinal, for instance -- the Germans banging on the dug-out roof in fury at the battering handed out by Andy Gray.

It wasn't like that night with Everton's aerial bombardment, but Villarreal were not used to being hassled the way Liverpool hassle. The speed, the intensity, no time on the ball, it unsettled them. Marcelino, Villarreal's manager, chased the fourth official down the sidelines at one time, but in the middle Kassai remained unmoved. The first name in the book was a Villarreal defender, Victor Ruiz, and when Nathaniel Clyne was ultimately cautioned it was only because Robert Soldado had exaggerated his pain with a succession of dramatic forward rolls. It was almost an act of appeasement, rather than discipline. More comical was a clash between Soldado and Dejan Lovren in front of the dug-out. Clipped, accidentally, by Lovren's arm in a tussle, Soldado fell dramatically. He then clutched Lovren's shin, and the Liverpool player tumbled. He wouldn't make it at Widnes, that much is certain. Ultimately, though, Villarreal's indiscipline couldn't continue and with five minutes to go before halftime, Soldado kicked Philippe Coutinho long after the ball had gone and was deservedly shown the card he had been so hotly recommending for others. The irony was that, despite Liverpool's domination, it was the visitors who forged the first chances of the game, and the first save. It came from Simon Mignolet after Soldado had chested the ball down to right-back Mario Gaspar. His low shot took a dangerous little deflection but Mignolet was equal to it, pushing the ball out to his right.

A minute later, good work from Denis Suarez -- and a frivolous penalty appeal -- ended with Jonathan Dos Santos shooting over. It proved a false dawn. A minute later Liverpool were ahead. It was Clyne who set up the move with a cross from the right, flicked out by goalkeeper Alphonse Areola, but only to Robert Firmino, who sent the ball back across goal in the direction of Sturridge. It wasn't struck cleanly and the Liverpool striker couldn't make contact but his marker, a rattled Bruno Soriano. did and the Villarreal captain turned the ball into his own net.

James Milner, outstanding in the first leg, was in similar form here and after 14 minutes played a superb ball through to Adam Lallana, who should have done better but screwed his shot just wide. Villarreal were taken aback by the early onslaught, none more so than young goalkeeper Areola, on loan from Paris Saint-Germain, but first choice this season. He missed the first leg and looked as if he would have preferred to miss this one, too, uncomfortable with the pressure and the athletic challenge of Liverpool's front line. He was lucky when, jumping high to collect a lofted pass, he clipped his own player and dropped the ball on impact with the ground. Referee Kassai presumed a foul and awarded a free-kick to the jittery Areola, sparing embarrassment. Dead balls remained a problem, though, and when Areola and his central defenders missed a Milner corner after 24 minutes, Tomas Pina just got his head in with Emre Can looking to convert at the far post. Lovren tested Areola with a header from another Milner corner seven minutes later, but this was tamer fare, as was a shot from Milner after a sweet reverse pass from Firmino soon after half-time.

The Daily Telegraph

Liverpool race into final after sinking 10-man Villarreal

The great heavy-metal football exponent from Germany who has transformed Liverpool into a thrilling cup side in the space of just seven months, is just one Europa League final from lifting some heavy metal of his own.

Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool are in the Europa League final and they did so the having staged the Anfield Comeback II, another pulsating victory where the initiative was seized, the pressure applied and the noise and emotion of the ground was harnessed in formidable style. First Borussia Dortmund in the quarter-finals, now Villarreal, both dispatched in a fierce Anfield atmosphere and a classically Kloppist high-octane press. For all their inconsistencies over the league season, this was a magnificent performance from Klopp's team, not least the Brazilian Roberto Firmino who the best player on a night when the standard was high indeed.

Klopp selected Daniel Sturridge for the first time in the last four Europa League games and the Englishman rewarded his manager with the critical second goal that changed the course of the tie. There were other big performances too, with James Milner coming to the fore and Nathaniel Clyne demonstrating why he should be England's firstchoice right-back at Euro 2016.

Villarreal ended the game with 10 men, their centre-half Victor Ruiz dismissed for a second yellow, and the club who still seek their first major trophy just went to pieces. An own goal from Bruno Soriano on seven minutes, a late third from Adam Lallana and the team in yellow were just waiting for the final whistle.

The 11th European final in Liverpool's history will be against Sevilla who eliminated Shakhtar Donetsk in the other semi-final and are currently seventh in La Liga, three places and 12 points behind Villarreal. However, they are the winners of this competition for the past two seasons and Klopp's side will face a very good cup team if they are to win the eighth European trophy in their club's history. The crowd were certainly intent on making it a big Anfield night and the emotion of the first home game since the unlawful killing ruling from the Hillsborough inquest fed that mood, but in the end it required the players to generate the pressure that would unsettle Villarreal. Klopp's team did that brilliantly at times, an exhausting, lung-bursting full-press that made you wonder how long they could keep it up. They got better at that over the course of the first half although it was Villarreal who had the best early chance with just five minutes played. It would have changed the mood if the right-back Mario Gaspar had got an away goal with his early shot but that was saved by Simon Mignolet and within two further minutes, Liverpool had the lead.

The goal came from down the right where Clyne tried to overlap all half, set free by Emre Can's tendency to drop in between the two centre-halves when Liverpool were in possession. Clyne's cross was pushed away by Alphonse Areola but Firmino got it back into the penalty area. Sturridge tried to get to the ball over the line but it was Bruno who had the final touch.

A messy goal but one which saw Villarreal buckle under the strain of the numbers that Klopp's side managed to get into the away side's final third of the pitch. There were times when they forced more mistakes from Villarreal but they could never get the decisive touch in the penalty area, especially with Sturridge's reluctance to attack the back post. Lallana had arguably the best chance when Milner's ball snapped down the right channel on 13 minutes, and with Villarreal starting to sway, fell into the former's path. Lallana let it come past him and tried to strike it on the way but never got the connection that was needed.

For the most part, this looked like a Klopp team working the way Klopp wanted them to, with a fierce press from the front led by the likes of Philippe Coutinho, Lallana and Firmino but underpinned by another relentless shift from Milner. He refused to come off after one heavy blow and just kept going until, it seemed, the pain faded. That was a moment from the captain that did not go unnoticed by his teammates. With Can back in the side following his recovery from ankle injury, Liverpool looked solid down the middle. Certainly it takes quite something for Roberto Soldado to lose his cool, but he did five minutes before the break when he kicked Coutinho and was booked. He had slapped Dejan Lovren's leg a few minutes earlier, the sort of silly thing less experienced referees might have reacted to. The second goal, from Sturridge, came 18 minutes into the second half when at last Liverpool kicked into gear and launched their best attack of the half. That was the move that led to the corner from which they scored, when Lallana and Sturridge combined on the counterattack and the latter's fierce shot was

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LIVERPOOL

ECHO

Jurgen Klopp reawakens a giant as the Reds head to the Europa League final

A roar ripped through Anfield at the final whistle. The giant has been reawakened. [Liverpool's](#) remarkable season will reach a thrilling crescendo in the Europa League final against Sevilla at Basel's St Jakob-Park on May 18. There was no late drama this time. No thrilling European fightback to tell the grandkids about. Instead the Reds booked their trip to the land of cheese and chocolate with glorious ease as Villarreal were ruthlessly brushed aside. A first European trophy for 11 years and a golden ticket into next season's Champions League is now just 90 minutes away. How fitting that a beaming Jurgen Klopp should take on the role of conductor as he accepted the acclaim from the stands.

The Kop chanted his name vociferously and rightly so. This was his triumph. Here was the fruits of his labour over the past seven months. The spirit, the unity, the organisation, the belief and the tactical nous he has instilled within the squad he inherited. Klopp has proved a master at harnessing the most powerful support in football and on nights like this it makes Liverpool an irresistible force.

How lucky the Reds were to secure the services of a man capable of making the hopes and dreams of Kopites come true. He has energised both the stands and the dressing room. There was no pressure he told his players pre-match, simply an opportunity to achieve something special. To a man they grasped that chance with a show of force which made a mockery of Villarreal's premature celebrations after the first leg. Bruno Soriano's early own goal was followed by second-half strikes from Daniel Sturridge and Adam Lallana. The Reds' cause was aided by the dismissal of Victor Ruiz but by then they were already cruising.

When Klopp arrived back in October, Anfield was a place where the expectation weighed heavily on players' shoulders. Now it only strikes fear into opponents. It was a night laced with emotion. From the bedlam on Anfield Road which greeted the arrival of the team coaches to the spine-tingling rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone as mosaics in memory of the 96 read: 'The Greatest Football Family'. Marcelino had insisted his players would be galvanised rather than intimidated by the atmosphere. The Villarreal boss was wide of the mark.

During a frenetic opening period it was Liverpool who grasped the initiative, while those in yellow resembled rabbits caught in headlights. Liverpool started at a tempo and an intensity the rattled La Liga outfit simply couldn't handle. They were first to everything and they led inside seven minutes. Alphonse Areola palmed Nathaniel Clyne's low cross into the path of Roberto Firmino, who expertly turned it back across goal. As Sturridge challenged, the ball bounced in off Soriano from close range. Anfield erupted. Adrian Lopez's late strike in the first leg had been swiftly cancelled out. Klopp was bold with his team selection – starting both Sturridge and Firmino and it paid off handsomely as each of them excelled. Firmino was outstanding. Combining breathtaking skill with workrate, there were shades of Luis Suarez about him.

Not since the Uruguayan was lighting up Anfield have Kopites seen a performance combining such inspiration and perspiration .

Liverpool continued to boss proceedings. Philippe Coutinho was forced off with a sickness bug at El Madrigal, this time he just made Villarreal feel queasy as he weaved his magic. Lallana, Firmino and James Milner buzzed around with intent behind Sturridge. They helped set the tone with their relentless pressing as Marcelino's men were never allowed to settle.

Lallana was just inches away from converting Milner's cross, while Dejan Lovren's header was kept out by Areola. Lovren, the hero against Dortmund, was a rock once again and his perfectly timed tackle on dangerman Cedric Bakambu was greeted by the sight of Klopp punching the air in delight.

The only time Bakambu stole half a yard on the Croatian all night, Villarreal's 22-goal top scorer scuffed tamely at Simon Mignolet.

Outfought and outplayed, the Spaniards lost their discipline. The play-acting and the theatrics were unseemly as was the manner in which they harangued Hungarian referee Viktor Kassai. Roberto Soldado, fortunate not to be carded for a whack on Lovren, finally followed Ruiz into the book after a petulant swipe at Coutinho. Amidst the mayhem, there was ice cool Emre Can – a picture of composure on his return to the side. The German midfielder, who hadn't kicked a ball in anger for three weeks, slotted straight back in. Can oozed class as he gave Liverpool a platform to dominate. The second half brought more of the same with the Reds on the front foot and Villarreal camped inside their own half. It was defence against attack. Coutinho's strike was beaten away by Areola before Milner fired tamely at the keeper.

The only scare came when Soldado nodded wide having conned a free-kick by backing into the impressive Kolo Toure and taking a tumble.

On the rare occasions Villarreal committed players forward, Liverpool dealt with the danger and then hit them at pace on the counter. Lallana's through ball released Sturridge, who darted past Mateo Musacchio but was thwarted by Areola. Something special was required and it arrived just past the hour mark.

Man of the Match

Firmino pounced on the edge of the box and threaded a delightful pass through to Sturridge. The Reds striker had time to pick his spot and found the net via a deflection off Areola and the post. The manic celebrations laid bare just what it

meant to Sturridge after two injury-plagued campaigns.

Still an away goal would have dumped Liverpool out but there was never any hint of them relinquishing control. Klopp's men simply surged forward in search of greater reward. The Reds were given a helping hand by the stupidity of Ruiz with 19 minutes to go as the defender got a second yellow for a challenge on Lallana. 'Adios,' chanted the gleeful Kop. Hearts were in mouths when a nudge from Moreno sent Denis Suarez sprawling in the area but the killer blow soon followed. Firmino did brilliantly down the left and his pull-back picked out Sturridge. He scuffed goalwards and Lallana turned it home. Liverpool could and should have had more but it mattered little. This was emphatic. Next stop Basel.

MATCH FACTS

Liverpool: Mignolet, Clyne, Toure, Lovren, Moreno, Can, Milner, Lallana, Firmino (Benteke 89), Coutinho (Allen 81), Sturridge (Lucas 90). Not used: Ward, Skrtel, Ibe, Smith.

Villarreal: Areola, Gaspar, Musacchio, Ruiz, Costa, Pina (Trigueros 60), Soriano, Dos Santos (Bonera 73), Suarez, Soldado (Lopez 68), Bakambu.

Not used: Asenjo, Samu, Castillejo, Rukavina

Referee: Viktor Kassai (Hungary) **Attendance:** 43,074 **Goals:** Soriano OG 7, Sturridge 63, Lallana 81 **Bookings:** Ruiz, Soldado, Clyne, Suarez. **Red card:** Ruiz (second yellow)

el Periódico

Mediterráneo

El Liverpool y el árbitro dejan ‘KO’ al Villarreal

No pudo ser. A la cuarta tampoco fue la victoria. El Liverpool fue mejor que el Villarreal, pero se encontró con la ayuda de un árbitro húngaro al que le vino muy grande el partido. Permisivo con el juego al límite de los reds, generoso para enseñar dos amarillas a Víctor Ruiz y dejar en inferioridad al Villarreal... y sibilino para no señalar un claro penalti sobre Denis Suárez, que hubiera podido cambiar el signo de la eliminatoria. Al Liverpool no le hacía falta la colaboración de un colegiado nefasto y que se dejó impresionar por el terrible ambiente de Anfield. El conjunto de Marcelino dijo adiós a Europa con un excesivo 3-0, pero lo hizo con orgullo y con la cabeza alta. Habrá una quinta vez. Seguro.

El Liverpool exhibió una versión totalmente diferente a la del Madrigal. Anfield rugió con más fuerza que nunca. El ambiente era el de las grandes noches de los reds. La salida en tromba del equipo de Klopp fue terrible, dirigiendo el balón a una velocidad de vértigo e imprimiendo una intensidad máxima en cada acción, más allá del límite del reglamento. El árbitro fue un aliado para los locales, con una permisividad absoluta y ofreciendo la sensación de pretender dirigir el partido sin complicación alguna. El húngaro fue el juez idóneo para la agresividad de los ingleses.

TRANSFORMACIÓN ‘RED’ // Klopp planteó el encuentro de una manera distinta a la de la ida, como si el Liverpool hubiese cambiado de técnico en una semana. El Villarreal fue el mismo, con matices de índole individual, con el cambio en la portería y en el eje de la zaga, con las entradas de Areola y Musacchio. A los reds se les puso de cara el partido muy pronto. Un remate de Sturridge tropezó en Bruno y, a los seis minutos, la ventaja del gol de Adrián ya había pasado a mejor vida.

El Submarino lo pasó muy mal durante el primer cuarto de hora. Fútbol a la inglesa: canalización a las áreas y centro al área. La presión red era asfixiante y privaba a los amarillos de su bien más preciado: el balón. Pero el Villarreal, pese a sufrir, y mucho, aguantó el ciclón que se le echó encima, se rehizo y se mantuvo metido en el partido. Era un duelo a cara de perro y los de Marcelino no perdieron en ningún momento el pulso frente a un Liverpool imperial que, anoche, se puso su mejor traje. El Villarreal se vio superado, pero aguantó el tipo a base de garra y orgullo. Los amarillos fueron a remolque y no tuvieron el esférico, pero aguantaron el bombardeo constante, con una seguridad defensiva que logró mantener la eliminatoria viva.

Al Submarino le faltó un poco más de fútbol. La batalla en la medular se decantó del lado del Liverpool. Bruno no fue Bruno y eso se notó en el primer tiempo.

EL CAMBIO // El Villarreal entró mejor al partido en la segunda parte, con las líneas más juntas y con menos sufrimiento, logrando frenar a un Liverpool en versión premium, pero no le daba para llegar al área inglesa con cierto síntoma de hacerle daño al rival. Se necesita balón para construir e inquietar a Mignolet. Marcelino se jugó la baza de Trigueros, aun consciente de que el Submarino perdería solidez en la parcela ancha. No hubo casi tiempo para que los amarillos se asentarán y se adueñaran del balón. Un error en cadena del Villarreal desencadenó en el 2-0, con un remate certero de Sturridge. En ese instante, el Villarreal se quedaba contra las cuerdas y fuera de la final.

No hubo reacción. El Liverpool continuaba mandando frente a un Submarino encogido, que no conseguía hacer daño a un adversario crecido y poderoso. Y si el panorama se presentaba complicado, llegó la expulsión de Víctor Ruiz, en el minuto 71. Al permisivo colegiado húngaro no le tembló la mano para mostrar la roja al central amarillo. Con 10 y dos goles en contra, la final de Basilea ya quedaba muy lejos.

AL LIMBO // Pero el Villarreal no hincó la rodilla. En inferioridad numérica, se lanzó a por el Liverpool. Y dispuso de su gran oportunidad, pero Viktor Kassai fue un amigo para el Liverpool y no quiso ver un claro penalti de Alberto Moreno a Denis Suárez, que hubiera podido cambiar el curso de la eliminatoria. Los amarillos continuaron peleando, pero anoche se enfrentaron a un equipo

Date: 5 May 2016

Opposition: Villarreal CF

Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Telegraph	Mediterraneo
Independent	Mail	BBC

poderoso, ambicioso y que, escoltado por Anfield, volaba hacia Basilea, al dejar visto para sentencia el pase a la final con el 3-0, a nueve minutos para la conclusión, con el tanto de Lallana.

Con tres goles en contra, y un jugador menos, se necesitaban varios milagros de Sant Pasqual para que los amarillos disputaran la primera final de su historia. Con todo, el Villarreal cayó con la cabeza muy alta.

BBC

Jurgen Klopp remains on course for silverware in his first season in charge after Liverpool beat Villarreal to reach the Europa League final. Trailing 1-0 from the first leg, Liverpool levelled the tie on aggregate after Bruno Soriano's early own goal. Daniel Sturridge, left out of the team in Spain, then put the hosts in command with a low finish after good work from the excellent Roberto Firmino. After Villarreal's Victor Ruiz was sent off, Adam Lallana made the win safe. Ruiz received a second booking after stepping on Lallana's foot in a game where Liverpool's energetic pressing ruffled their opponents.

Klopp, who took over from Brendan Rodgers in October and celebrated wildly with supporters after the final whistle, has now taken the Reds to a second final of the season, following defeat by Manchester City in the League Cup final. They will face Europa League holders Sevilla in Basel on 18 May, after they beat Shakhtar Donetsk 3-1 to win their semi-final 5-3 on aggregate.

Despite sitting nine points and 19 goals behind fourth-placed Manchester City in the Premier League, Liverpool would qualify for next season's Champions League should they win in Switzerland, representing a fine return for Klopp in such a short spell in charge.

Anfield enjoys another sparkling European night

On another memorable night at Anfield, Liverpool reached their first European final since losing the 2007 Champions League showpiece to AC Milan.

While it was less dramatic than the quarter-final win over Klopp's former team Borussia Dortmund, the players seemed galvanised by an electric rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone before kick-off as home fans paid tribute to those who died in the Hillsborough disaster, following last week's inquest verdict where 96 fans were found to be unlawfully killed. The early opener came after Nathaniel Clyne crossed to the back post and Firmino put it back into the danger area. Sturridge missed the ball, but Bruno nudged into his own net. Boosted by the goal, the hosts pressed Villarreal to distraction with James Milner, Philippe Coutinho and Lallana indefatigable in midfield. Added to the poise offered by the returning Emre Can, who has been out injured for the past three weeks, and the trickery of Firmino, the visitors could not cope. Sturridge, who has finally been able to enjoy a run of games after a shocking injury record, scored what appeared to be his most important Liverpool goal to put Klopp's side ahead in the tie. Lallana then sparked more renditions of Liverpool's famous anthem when he tucked in from close range after more enterprise from Firmino.

Yellow Submarine sinks under pressure

Villarreal, who have already reached next season's elite European competition by securing fourth place in La Liga, came up against a pacy team which did not let them settle. Marcelino's side are well drilled and operate in a 4-4-2 formation, but they were overwhelmed in midfield and began to lose their tempers as Liverpool's superior numbers started to count. Former Tottenham striker Roberto Soldado reacted to one Dejan Lovren challenge by swiping the Liverpool defender's feet away, and was later booked for chopping down Coutinho. Former Manchester City forward Denis Suarez was lucky not to follow him after berating referee Viktor Kassai and, when Ruiz received a second booking, there appeared no hope for a side who were only promoted back to La Liga three seasons ago.

Once Simon Mignolet parried Mario Gaspar's early shot and Jonathan dos Santos fired over, the Liverpool goalkeeper had little to do. Villarreal, who had been on a 12-game unbeaten run in the competition, have now reached three Europa League semi-finals, previously losing twice to the eventual winners.

Liverpool will hope they can continue the Spanish side's unfortunate record.

Man of the match: Roberto Firmino

What they said

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, speaking to BT Sport: "Wonderful night, brilliant game from my side. What a performance. The first half an hour was a big emotion. It was great. The last 15 minutes of the first half we lost patience. The second-half plan was to keep going with the emotional football but using the brain a bit more and in the end, brilliant. "Everyone spoke a lot about this team before I came here. It was all about quality and not good transfers. I came here because I thought they had a nice squad and now we are in the final."

Villarreal boss Marcelino: "Things didn't work out how we had planned them. It hit us hard conceding that early goal, it was a hammer blow.

"It was tough against an opponent who played with a huge amount of intensity, maybe on the margins of the rules at times, but it was allowed.

"Liverpool played better than us but for all their superiority they didn't create too many chances. When we got to the sending off it was pretty much game over by then."

Stats you need to know

Liverpool have only failed to score in one of their 21 home Europa League games (0-0 v Braga in December 2010) Daniel Sturridge has scored in four of his past five appearances at Anfield in all competitions Only James Milner (14) has more assists in all competitions for Liverpool this season than Roberto Firmino (9)

The Reds will face Spanish opposition in a European final for the third time, having played Real Madrid in the 1981 European Cup Final (won 1-0) and Alaves in the 2001 UEFA Cup (won 5-4 after extra-time) Villarreal have lost each of their four major European semi-finals

What next?

Liverpool are at home to Watford in the Premier League on Sunday as they aim to secure a place in the Europa League, at least, next season.

Date: 5 May 2016 Opposition: Villarreal CF Competition: Europa League	Times	Mirror	Echo		5 May 2016
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	Independent	Mail	BBC		

Match ends, Liverpool 3, Villarreal 0.
90'+4' Second Half ends, Liverpool 3, Villarreal 0.
90'+3' Denis Suárez (Villarreal is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
90'+3' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
90'+3' Foul by Denis Suárez (Villarreal.
90'+3' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alphonse Areola.
90'+3' Attempt saved. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the top right corner. Assisted by Joe Allen.
90'+2' Substitution, Liverpool. Lucas Leiva replaces Daniel Sturridge.
90'+1' Attempt saved. Joe Allen (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Daniel Sturridge.
90' Foul by Joe Allen (Liverpool.
90' Mario (Villarreal wins a free kick in the defensive half.
89' Substitution, Liverpool. Christian Benteke replaces Roberto Firmino.
88' Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool.
88' Manu Trigueros (Villarreal wins a free kick in the defensive half.
87' Attempt missed. Joe Allen (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box misses to the left.
87' Attempt saved. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Nathaniel Clyne with a through ball.
86' Attempt saved. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by James Milner.
86' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
86' Foul by Denis Suárez (Villarreal.
84' Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool.
84' Denis Suárez (Villarreal wins a free kick on the right wing.
82' Substitution, Liverpool. Joe Allen replaces Philippe Coutinho.
81' Goal! Liverpool 3, Villarreal 0. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from very close range to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Daniel Sturridge.
81' Attempt blocked. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
80' Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
80' Foul by Mario (Villarreal.
80' Attempt missed. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool right footed shot from a difficult angle on the right misses to the right. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.
79' Attempt missed. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left. Assisted by Nathaniel Clyne.
77' Corner, Villarreal. Conceded by Alberto Moreno.
76' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.
76' Mario (Villarreal wins a free kick in the defensive half.
74' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alphonse Areola.
74' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top right corner. Assisted by James Milner.
73' Substitution, Villarreal. Daniele Bonera replaces Jonathan dos Santos.
73' Offside, Liverpool. James Milner tries a through ball, but Alberto Moreno is caught offside.
73' Attempt blocked. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
71' Second yellow card to Víctor Ruiz (Villarreal for a bad foul.
71' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
71' Foul by Víctor Ruiz (Villarreal.
69' Substitution, Villarreal. Adrián replaces Roberto Soldado.
65' Attempt missed. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.
64' Corner, Villarreal. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.
63' Goal! Liverpool 2, Villarreal 0. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a through ball.
62' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alphonse Areola.
62' Attempt saved. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the top right corner. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
60' Offside, Liverpool. Nathaniel Clyne tries a through ball, but Roberto Firmino is caught offside.
60' Substitution, Villarreal. Manu Trigueros replaces Tomás Pina.
59' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Jaume Costa.
56' Attempt missed. Roberto Soldado (Villarreal header from the centre of the box is close, but misses the top right corner. Assisted by Jonathan dos Santos with a cross following a set piece situation.
55' Foul by Kolo Touré (Liverpool.
55' Roberto Soldado (Villarreal wins a free kick on the right wing.
53' Attempt missed. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left following a corner.
53' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Víctor Ruiz.
52' Attempt saved. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
50' Attempt saved. James Milner (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
48' Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from a difficult angle on the left is saved in the top left corner. Assisted by James Milner.
48' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Mateo Musacchio.
48' Attempt blocked. Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool left footed shot from a difficult angle on the left is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.
46' Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
46' Foul by Mateo Musacchio (Villarreal.
46' Attempt blocked. Cédric Bakambu (Villarreal right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Roberto Soldado with a headed pass.
Second Half begins Liverpool 1, Villarreal 0.
45'+1' First Half ends, Liverpool 1, Villarreal 0.
45' Attempt saved. Cédric Bakambu (Villarreal right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Soldado.
44' Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool.
44' Jaume Costa (Villarreal wins a free kick on the left wing.
40' Roberto Soldado (Villarreal is shown the yellow card.
38' Kolo Touré (Liverpool.
38' Alphonse Areola (Villarreal wins a free kick in the defensive half.
37' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Mateo Musacchio.
37' Attempt blocked. James Milner (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.
35' Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.
35' Foul by Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool.
35' Roberto Soldado (Villarreal wins a free kick in the defensive half.
34' Offside, Liverpool. Alberto Moreno tries a through ball, but Adam Lallana is caught offside.
33' Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool.
33' Roberto Soldado (Villarreal wins a free kick on the left wing.
31' Attempt saved. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by James Milner with a cross.
30' Víctor Ruiz (Villarreal is shown the yellow card.
30' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Víctor Ruiz.
30' Attempt blocked. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
29' James Milner (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.
29' Foul by Roberto Soldado (Villarreal.
28' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Mateo Musacchio.
26' Offside, Villarreal. Mario tries a through ball, but Cédric Bakambu is caught offside.
25' Attempt blocked. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.
24' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Tomás Pina.
24' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Víctor Ruiz.
22' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.
22' Tomás Pina (Villarreal wins a free kick in the attacking half.
18' Attempt blocked. Bruno (Villarreal header from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Jonathan dos Santos with a cross.
18' Corner, Villarreal. Conceded by Kolo Touré.
13' Attempt missed. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by James Milner.
13' Attempt blocked. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Daniel Sturridge with a headed pass.
11' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool.
11' Víctor Ruiz (Villarreal wins a free kick in the defensive half.
7' Own Goal by Bruno, Villarreal. Liverpool 1, Villarreal 0.
6' Attempt missed. Jonathan dos Santos (Villarreal left footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Cédric Bakambu.
5' Attempt saved. Mario (Villarreal right footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Soldado.
2' Dejan Lovren (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
2' Foul by Cédric Bakambu (Villarreal.
First Half begins.
Lineups are announced and players are warming up.