

Date: 12 August 2017

Opposition: Watford

Competition: League

Mail	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Watford Observer

12 August 2017

THE TIMES

Money won't help Klopp coach defending

Watford 3 Okaka 8, Doucoure 32, Britos 90+3 3

Liverpool 3 Mane 29, Firmino (pen) 55, Salah 57

Referee A Taylor Attendance 20,407

Track one of Jurgen Klopp's third album and no sign of a departure from his "heavymetal" stylings -- the soundbite with which, despite attempts at disownment, he has become synonymous. In this chaotic draw, Liverpool's attacking threat was plugged in, and amplified by the addition of Mohamed Salah, but the overwhelming noise generated by this performance was a deafening feedback screech. This was a bad day for Liverpool's defence and it unleashed a blizzard of condemnation of the club's failure to purchase a truly top-quality centre back in the summer transfer window. "Virgil van Dijk is better than what they've got, that's why they should go out and get him," said Jamie Redknapp on Sky Sports, a view typical of the consensus. Certainly, it was difficult to watch Liverpool concede three goals to a Watford side who finished last season on a streak of five blanks in six matches and not conclude that they would be improved by a commanding centre back in the mould of Southampton's Dutchman. It was hard not to see those familiar poses of defensive disarray -- arms aloft appealing vainly for an offside flag, bodies prostrate on the floor as a striker taps in, mouths contorted in yells at the concession of an inexplicable goal -- as a rebuke to Klopp's comment that his side do not need more than the four centre backs they have. Those are not the only issues though. Through the lens of the transfer window, every aspect of underperformance becomes a personnel matter, players such as Van Dijk become imagined panaceas, and failure to open the chequebook is the only managerial failing that matters. Remove the lens though and there are pressing issues for Klopp the coach -- a manager justifiably considered one of the world's best -- as opposed to Klopp the glorified personal shopper.

Such as: Liverpool's predilection for conceding set-piece goals. The goals scored from corners by Stefano Okaka and Miguel Britos in this match were Liverpool's 30th and 31st set-piece goals conceded since Klopp took over. Among the big six, the next worst is Arsenal, with 27. Liverpool have conceded only four fewer than Chelsea and Tottenham combined. Being bad at defending set pieces is a weakness that suggests failings of system, failings of preparation, failing to learn from mistakes. Failures, in other words, of coaching.

On Match of the Day, Alan Shearer displayed cognitive dissonance in spending a couple of minutes dissecting the wrongs of Liverpool's zonal-marking approach before suggesting that "they need leaders" -- diagnosing a training-ground problem and proffering a transfer-market cure. A player such as Van Dijk might get his head on a few more balls, but a new signing alone cannot be expected to erase the fundamental problem.

Klopp himself understands that this is a problem best solved with the Xs and Os of the chalkboard, not the 000000s of the chequebook. "It's not about the player," he said. "One player cannot sort out the set-piece problem for Liverpool. Of course it's about positioning -- do the right thing in the right moment on the right position." Constructing a tight defence is not a simple addition equation. Plug in a new player and you do not necessarily plug the holes. It is about scheme, about balance. "We did wrong and what do I want to do to sort it? Buy a new player in that position? I'm not sure if that really makes sense," Klopp said. "We have to work on it." If Liverpool do not end up signing Van Dijk -- and despite the player's apparent desire to come to Anfield, that must be considered a possibility -- their fans should not despair. You might be thinking, "But they'll never win the title with Joel Matip and Dejan Lovren at centre back." Well, maybe not, but were Wes Morgan and Robert Huth, or Cesar Azpilicueta, David Luiz and Gary Cahill anyone's idea of a title-winning central defensive unit? The past two titlwinning defences were triumphs of coaching, not marquee names.

From a Liverpool perspective, the great shame of this performance was that it dynamited any positivity about the Matip-Lovren pairing, a partnership that has actually done a lot to inspire confidence. In the 18 games that they started together last season, Liverpool won 11, drew six and lost one (including four straight clean sheets to finish the season), conceding just 13 goals at an average of just 0.72 per game. Great defences can be built as well as bought and, while a Van Dijk would be nice, Klopp is not working with substandard raw materials. What this match showed once again is that Liverpool's vulnerabilities have a lot to do with the way the team plays, often leaving the centre backs exposed.

That this match was their umpteenth poor result against midtable opposition, while their record against the rest of the big six is excellent, suggests that their gung-ho attacking is inextricable from their defensive fallibility. Finely recalibrating the balance of their play without compromising their explosive attack is a much more delicate, holistic task than simply inserting an expensive defender, but it may be equally effective in the long run.

For now, Liverpool have a crucial Champions League play-off first-leg tie away to Hoffenheim on Tuesday to focus on. The destiny of their European campaign is on the line in the sort of high-stakes match that will necessarily train Klopp's focus on short-term problem-solving rather than long-term squad-building. Sometimes, a manager just has to work with what he's got.

RATINGS

Watford (4-2-3-1) H Gomes 5 -- D Janmaat 6 (sub: K Femenia 18min, 6), M Britos 7, Y Kaboul 6, J Holebas 7 -- N Chalobah 6, A Doucoure 8 -- N Amrabat 6, T Cleverley 7, R Pereyra 6 (sub: Richarlison 49, 6) -- S Okaka 7 (sub: A Gray 63, 6).

Substitutes not used C Pantilimon, S Prodl, B Watson, E Capoue.

Liverpool (4-3-3) S Mignolet 5 -- T Alexander-Arnold 5 (sub: J Gomez 91), D Lovren 6, J Matip 5, A Moreno 4 -- E Can 6, J Henderson 5, G Wijnaldum 5 -- M Salah 6 (sub: J Milner 86), R Firmino 7 (sub: D Origi 81), S Mane 7. Substitutes not used L Karius, M Grujic, R Klavan, D Solanke. Booked Mignolet, Alexander-Arnold, Mane.

the guardian

Liverpool left to rue Miguel Britos's offside equaliser for Watford

The expression on Jürgen Klopp's face as Watford celebrations broke out all around him said it all. A testing 24 hours for Liverpool, dominated by Philippe Coutinho's emailed transfer request, ended with the sort of injury-time equaliser that drives managers insane. Miguel Britos, looking at least a yard offside, bundled the ball home from a corner in the 93rd minute, denying Liverpool the victory that would have brought some much-needed respite during the Coutinho saga.

Looking on with a mixture of incredulity and bemusement, Klopp could have been forgiven for thinking that the world was conspiring against him as a spirited Watford side found parity. The fact that the goal should not have stood and also arrived from a corner -- Liverpool's achilles heel last season and also the source of Watford's opener -- deepened the sense of frustration.

Two points slipped through Liverpool's fingers in the process on an afternoon when Klopp's team missed a commanding figure in central defence much more than their absent Brazilian playmaker. What a difference someone like Virgil van Dijk -- one of Liverpool's prime transfer targets -- could have made in a defence that never looked comfortable throughout. "We know we can do better and we have to do better," Klopp said of the goals Liverpool conceded.

Stefano Okaka exposed those all too familiar shortcomings with Watford's first, the striker's free header from close range flashing beyond Simon Mignolet, and the defending in the lead-up to the second goal, shortly after Sadio Mané had equalised with a superb solo effort, was every bit as calamitous. New season, same old Liverpool rather sums it up in that respect.

The good news for Klopp is that Liverpool looked menacing at the other end of the pitch once they got their act together in the second half, scoring two goals in as many minutes to turn the game on its head. Roberto Firmino got the first via the penalty spot to haul Liverpool level after Mohamed Salah was brought down, and those two also combined for the third, with the Egyptian marking his debut with a goal.

Liverpool were dominant in that period and had enough chances to put the game to bed, yet their failure to take one of them -- Alberto Moreno and Dejan Lovren were denied by Heurlho Gomes either side of Joël Matip heading against the bar -- proved costly when Britos plundered that equaliser.

Klopp, understandably, was reluctant to criticise his players too heavily, making the point that the opening day of the season was no time to look for perfection. He admitted, though, that he was disappointed with the way that Liverpool were second best to Watford physically in the first half, and also with the lack of direction in his team for spells.

Watford deserve credit for starting so well. Okaka, in particular, caught the eye during a bright period from Marco Silva's side. Snapping into tackles, they denied Liverpool the time and space to impose themselves and took the lead after only eight minutes. José Holebas delivered an inswinging corner from the right and the shortcomings of Liverpool's zonal marking system were there for all to see as Okaka, with Lovren caught in no-man's land, drifted into the six-yard box to head home.

Although Liverpool were struggling to play with any fluency, their equaliser was a beauty. Moreno, who was given his first Premier League start for 10 months, swapped passes with Mané on the edge of the area before sliding a low ball into the feet of Emre Can. Mané ran in behind, adroitly stepping over the ball before accepting Can's first-time lay-off and curling a splendid shot into the far corner. It was a moment of brilliance that should have had a calming effect on Liverpool, yet 161 seconds later Mignolet was picking the ball out of the back of the net again. Tom Cleverley got away from Jordan Henderson in the inside-right channel and delivered a low centre that pinballed between Trent Alexander-Arnold and Matip, gifting Abdoulaye Doucouré Watford's second.

The pattern of the game changed after the restart as Liverpool attacked with much more conviction. Firmino dispatched his spot-kick with the minimum of fuss after Salah, racing on to the Brazilian's pass, was clumsily brought down by Gomes. When Salah nudged the ball over the line moments later following a lovely piece of skill from Firmino, Liverpool were in total control, yet victory was snatched from them courtesy of that controversial Britos goal. "Offside," said Klopp. "That's really not fun."

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The Mail

THE JURY IS OUT ON KLOPP'S DEFENCE

WATFORD 3 Okaka 8, Doucoure 32, Britos 90 LIVERPOOL Mane 29, Firmino 55 pen, 3 Salah 57

AS JURGEN Klopp turned his thoughts towards Hoffenheim, he confessed there were no guarantees about ending the set-piece chaos which is blighting Liverpool. The same old problem was there at Watford when two goals were conceded from corners, including the last-gasp equaliser. It sparked another inquest on the perils of zonal marking and the need for better defenders.

'It happened to us last year,' said Klopp. 'It's not about one player. One player cannot sort out the set-piece problem for Liverpool.'

'We have to defend better. Yes, we did wrong and what do I want to do to sort it? Buy a new player? I'm not sure if that makes sense.' Despite last season's fourth place and a return to the Champions League, doubts are beginning to surface about the substance behind Klopp's charisma.

The start of this season may mark the end of the Klopp honeymoon as football's high-profile Scousers sharpen their criticism.

Two-one down, and Jamie Carragher branded the defending a 'shambles'. 'You've had pre-season and nothing's changed,' he said. 'What have they worked on?' Joey Barton told radio listeners he was 'not buying the Klopp aura' and dismissed him as a 'giant German cheerleader'.

Watford boss Marco Silva has certainly found Liverpool's weakness and others will study his success as they seek to do the same.

At Hull, Silva beat Liverpool 2-0 in February: one from a corner and another on the break as Klopp's team over-committed in search of a way back. On Saturday, his team scored from two corners. Stefano Okaka bullied the visitors in the first half, burying a header without challenge. Miguel Britos equalised with a header in the third minute of added time, which should have been ruled out for offside but wasn't. Watford's other goal, the second, scored by Abdoulaye Doucoure, came via a throw-in on the right. Again, there was a case for offside. Again, the defending was careless. Again, Liverpool's defenders were devoid of protection. Going forward, they have pace, energy and creative force even with Daniel Sturridge and Adam Lallana injured, and the uncertain future of Philippe Coutinho.

Sadio Mane struck first, Roberto Firmino converted a penalty and Mohamed Salah had a tap-in.

Success this season will hinge on Klopp's ability to solve the problems at the back, however, and provide the solidity to ensure the efforts of his attacking stars are not wasted. The next game comes quickly, a Champions League playoff at Hoffenheim tomorrow.

SUPER STAT: Sadio Mane has scored five goals in his last seven Premier League games. **WATFORD** (4-2-3-1): Gomes 5; Janmaat 5.5 (Femenia 18min, 5), Kaboul 6, Holebas 5.5; Doucoure 7, Chalobah 6; Amrabat 6.5, Cleverley 6.5, Pereyra 6.5 (Richarlison 49, 6.5); Okaka 7 (Gray 63, 5). Subs not used: Pantilimon, Prodl, Capoue, Watson.

Scorers: Okaka 8, Doucoure 32, Britos 90. **Manager:** Marco Silva 6. **LIVERPOOL** (4-3-3): Mignolet 5; Alexander-Arnold 6 (Gomez 90), Lovren 6, Matip 5, Moreno 5; Can 6.5, Henderson 6, Wijnaldum 6; Mane 7, Firmino 7.5 (Origi 81), Salah 7 (Milner 86). Subs not used: Karius, Grujic, Klavan, Solanke.

Scorers: Mane 29, Firmino 55 pen, Salah 57. **Booked:** Mane, Alexander-Arnold, Mignolet. **Manager:** Jurgen Klopp 6. **Man of the match:** Roberto Firmino. **Referee:** Anthony Taylor 5.5.

Attendance: 20,407.

The Daily Telegraph

Klopp admits concerns over defensive failings

Never mind the mockery pouring from the home stands, never mind the telling light it shines on the absurdity of continuing the transfer window a month into the season, never mind the endless inquisition, it is not the probable departure of Philippe Coutinho that will be worrying Jurgen Klopp most.

"Did something happen in the match?" the Liverpool manager joked when asked the inevitable question about the future prospects of his Brazilian playmaker. "If not, then nothing has changed."

The truth is Coutinho's absence was barely noted as Liverpool's forward line began the season by scoring three delightful, imaginative goals. At times in the second half, Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah - who marked his debut by scoring and earning a penalty - interchanged and passed with a speed of thought and imagination that would unlock many more elevated sides than Watford. With Adam Lallana and Daniel Sturridge to come back in, creativity is not in short supply around Anfield; indeed watching this, Coutinho must have wondered whether he would get a game if he stayed.

No, Klopp's problems are all at the other end of the pitch. In his 100th match in charge of Liverpool, here was ample evidence as to why he has registered only 50 victories, a strike rate significantly less effective than that of his predecessor Brendan Rodgers. There is only so often the tactic of 'it doesn't matter how many you score, we'll score more' pays off. Here Liverpool saw their excellent attacking work cancelled out by the concession of three scrappy goals.

Two of them may have come from an offside position, but how easily the visitors' defence buckled in the build-up to the goals pointed to a fault line which will compromise titlewinning ambition. Though Klopp did not believe that simply splurging some of the money made by selling Coutinho on a centreback who understands the zonal marking system - Virgil van Dijk for instance - is the solution.

"We have to defend better," he said. "We did wrong and what do I want to do to sort it? Buy a new player in that position? I'm not sure if that really makes sense.

We have to work on it. We did well in pre-season in this situation. One player cannot sort out the set-piece problem for Liverpool. Of course it's about positioning - do the right thing in the right moment on the right position.

Today we conceded but we also did a lot of good things, so we cannot only focus on one thing. I don't feel comfortable, but I know what to do."

Whatever it is, he needs to do it fast. Because here, in his first game in charge of Watford, Marco Silva was able easily to exploit Liverpool's congenital failings. Employing the muscular Italian Stefano Okaka to bully the visitors' centre backs, his aim was to spread panic through the Liverpool backline. And, as Miguel Britos, who scrambled home the last-second equaliser after the visitors yet again failed to snuff out danger, admitted, that was done by focusing all attacking effort on the set-piece. After all it is a weapon anyone who plays Klopp's side knows they can use to their advantage.

"Yes we knew," Britos said.

"Last season they conceded some goals from set-pieces. Maybe it is their weak point."

Sitting in the stands at Vicarage Road, the scouts from Hoffenheim, who Liverpool play in the Champions League qualifier tomorrow, will have noted how easily first Okaka, then Britos bundled their way through to connect with set-piece deliveries. They will not be alone; putting it in the mixer will become the default tactical plan for Liverpool's opponents. Perhaps Klopp, if he really wants to help his beleaguered defenders, should spend some of the cash accrued from selling Coutinho on supplying them with tin helmets.

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THE INDEPENDENT

Klopp says Liverpool are still trying to strengthen

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has admitted that the club are working hard to sign a new defender before the transfer window slams shut on 31 August, after an abject defensive display saw them fail to beat Watford on the opening weekend of the new Premier League season.

Liverpool have been tipped as potential title contenders this season, but the three goals they conceded to Watford in Saturday's 3-3 draw all came as a result of defensive mishaps. Two were from Jose Holebas corners, while Abdoulaye DoucourA[c] took advantage of some slack marking before firing home from close range

The club have been persistently linked with Southampton defender Virgil van Dijk this summer, with the Southampton defender submitting a written transfer request to Mauricio Pellegrino ahead of the new season, and Klopp has admitted that the Liverpool board are "in talks" over strengthening their squad.

"We are still working on all parts," Klopp said. "We are in talks and we work on all parts of the game. The squad at the moment is not too wide for a lot of games. That's it."

It was a case of brand new season but same old problems for Liverpool, as the club's much discussed defensive frailties once again proved their undoing. Dejan Lovren and Joel Matip's slack man-marking was repeatedly punished, while Alberto Moreno and Trent Alexander-Arnold both struggled down the flanks. Klopp acknowledged that Liverpool's defending was not up to scratch, although also stressed that the club will not be able to solve all of their problems in the transfer market.

"We have to defend better," he admitted. "Of course we know it's an important thing. I don't feel comfortable but I know what to do.

"We got things wrong and what do I want to do to sort it? Buy a new player in that position? I am not really sure if it makes sense. We have to work on it because we did well in pre-season in this situation."

The former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher appears to agree with that assessment, and he claimed after Liverpool's draw that even signing Van Dijk from Southampton wouldn't be enough to immediately rectify the problems with the club's back line.

"It's down to the manager and one man won't change Liverpool's defence -- on average they concede almost fifty goals a season," he said on Sky Sports.

"Their set-pieces are the worst in the league. You see the same thing year in, year out. It's not rocket science, set-pieces and counter-attacks."

But when Carragher's comments were put to him after the match, Klopp insisted that defending set-pieces was not a glaring problem for his side.

"We defend most of them well," he added. "We prepare for the games and I knew the formation of Watford -- a very defensive formation -- and we still allowed them two free headers. That will always happen. Of course it's about positioning - do the right thing in the right moment on the right position."

DAILY MIRROR

CALLING VIRGIL ..WE NEED INTERNATIONAL RESCUE; Liverpool clearly require a commander like Van Dijk.. even if Klopp doesn't agree
 WATFORD 3

Okaka 8, Doucoure 32, Britos 90

LIVERPOOL 3

Mane 29, Firmino 55 pen, Salah 57

JURGEN KLOPP is not convinced Virgil van Dijk is the answer to solving the Keystone Kop's enduring frailty at set-pieces.

But as Liverpool head for their Champions League qualifier in Hoffenheim, Klopp's zonal marking paralysis remains a glaring, unsolved weakness.

At Vicarage Road, his team looked the whole nine yards at one end of the pitch - and the whole knacker's yard at the other. And if they like crash test dummies against Hoffenheim - ard defend ummies heim - but with tadium hey will in population 3,300 a Bundesliga stadium holding 30,000 - they be the only prey the village.

If fugitive Philippe Coutinho wants to go to Barcelona, Liverpool should drive him to the airport, bank PS100million and have done with it.

Then they should make Southampton an offer they can't refuse for long-time defensive target Van Dijk and recruit world-class goalkeeper t a per who actually commands his box. Since Klopp's arrival at Anfield in 2015, no Premier League club has conceded more than the 27 goals Liverpool have leaked from set-pieces. If they want to be serious title contenders, this cannot go on.

Watford's first goal was an embarrassment: Corner, unmarked header four yards out, bang.

The second was a tribute to pinball in the box, pure Hackney Marshes on a Sunday morning.

And even if Miguel Britos was marginally offside when he bundled in the Hornets' 93rdminute equaliser, Liverpool defended the corner from Jose Holebas atrociously.

Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and debutant Mohamed Salah's goals should have been enough to take away all the swag, yet Keystone Klopp (left) still does not think a dominant centrehalf is the solution. He claimed: "In all the spaces we have all debuta goa enou sw le do half clai sp the right people, but it can still happen that someone loses connection for one second and is free in the air.

"One player cannot sort out the set-piece problem for Liverpool. It's about positioning - do the right thing in the right moment on the right position.

"We have to defend better and, yes, we did wrong, but what do I want to do to sort it - buy a new player in that position? I'm not sure if that really makes sense.

"We have to work on it, and in pre-season we did well in this situation."

Mane refused to use Coutinho's tactical sulk as an alibi for Liverpool's criminal waste of two points, admitting: "We are all professionals, this can happen in football and with due respect to Watford, we should have won.

"No excuses - everybody is fit. We should have defended better in this kind of game but we'll accept it, forget it and try to be ready for the next game."

Britos revealed Watford had made special provision for the visitors' all-too-familiar flaw, saying: "Yes, we knew about Liverpool. Last season they conceded some goals from setpieces and maybe it is their weak point.

"I'm not surprised because it is not easy to work well, particularly when you mark a zone - and they mark a zone.

"It was very nice, especially at home, to score in the last minute and get a point against a very good team."

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Reds pay the price for shambolic defending again
Liverpool paid the price for some shambolic defending as they had to settle for a 3-3 draw in their Premier League opener against Watford.

The Reds were on the cusp of a hard-fought victory at Vicarage Road but Miguel Britos bagged a dramatic equaliser deep into stoppage time.

Richarlison struck the bar and Britos knocked it over the line with Liverpool appealing forlornly for offside.

It was a desperately disappointing end to a rollercoaster afternoon for Jurgen Klopp's side, who had been rocked on the eve of the new season by Philippe Coutinho submitting a transfer request.

Watford deservedly led at the break after goals from Stefano Okaka and Abdoulaye Doucoure were sandwiched by Sadio Mane's strike.

However, Liverpool raised the bar in the second half with Roberto Firmino equalising from the spot before £36.9million new boy Mohamed Salah put the visitors in front.

The Reds had chances to kill off the Hornets but didn't take them and ultimately their defensive frailties were exposed.

Klopp handed a debut to club record signing Salah and there was a first Premier League for 10 months for Alberto Moreno, who got the nod at left-back ahead of Andy Robertson and vice-captain James Milner.

Liverpool started poorly and fell behind inside eight minutes in painfully familiar circumstances.

Jose Holebas swung in a corner and Okaka took advantage of some woeful marking to power home a header from four yards out.

The sloppy Reds were second to everything as they lost battles all over the park. However, just before the half hour mark they created an equaliser of real quality. Moreno and Emre Can combined to release Mane, who took a touch to steady himself and fired clinically beyond Heurelho Gomes.

Liverpool's joy was shortlived as within two minutes they shot themselves in the foot.

ADVERTISEMENT

More wretched defending enabled Watford to regain the lead as they failed to deal with Tom Cleverley's low cross and Doucoure converted from close range.

The Reds should have quickly restored parity but Salah blazed over and then Mane's header dropped agonisingly wide.

The mood in the away end was transformed by two goals in the space of three minutes early in the second half as Salah came to life.

First, the Egypt international burst into the penalty box and got to the ball ahead of Gomez, who clipped his heels.

It was a nailed on penalty and Firmino made no mistake from the spot.

Firmino then turned provider as the Brazil international latched on to Lovren's lofted pass. His first touch was exquisite and he lofted the ball over the stranded Gomes.

It was drifting wide but Salah followed up to poke it home.

Finally, Liverpool started to play with some belief and they threatened to add to their tally.

Moreno and Lovren were both denied by Gomes, while Joel Matip's header bounced back off the bar.

Watford looked a spent force but in the third minute of stoppage time they stunned the Reds.

Once again a set-piece proved Liverpool's undoing as two points were frittered away.

Watford: Gomes, Janmaat (Femenia 18), Kaboul, Britos, Holebas, Chalobah, Doucoure, Amrabat, Cleverley, Pereyra (Richarlison 49), Okaka (Gray 63)

Not used: Pantilimon, Prodl, Watson, Capoue

Liverpool: Mignolet, Alexander-Arnold (Gomez 90), Lovren, Matip, Moreno, Henderson, Can, Wijnaldum, Mane, Firmino (Origi 81), Salah (Milner 86).

Not used: Karius, Klavan, Gomez, Grujic, Solanke

Referee: Anthony Taylor

Goals: Okaka 8, Mane 29, Doucoure 32, Firmino 55, Salah 57, Britos 90+3

Bookings: Mane, Alexander-Arnold, Mignolet

Man of the match: Sadio Mane.

Watford Observer

Miguel Britos strikes late as Watford claim share of the spoils in topsy-turvy Premier League opener against Liverpool

Miguel Britos scored a dramatic injury-time equaliser as Watford claimed a 3-3 draw in a thrilling Premier League opener against Liverpool at [Vicarage Road](#). Watford took a 2-1 lead into the half-time break after strong first half showing, which saw Stefano Okaka and Abdoulaye Doucoure score either side of Sadio Mane's leveller.

The game turned in Liverpool's favour early in the second half as Roberto Firmino's penalty and a debut goal for Mohamed Salah put the visitors ahead. With time all but up, Britos forced the ball over the line after a Richarlison's effort had cannoned back off the bar to snatch a point at the death.

Watford will look to build on the result when they travel to Bournemouth for the maiden away outing of the campaign next Saturday.

Liverpool's preparation for the season opener was marred somewhat by the ongoing transfer speculation surrounding Philippe Coutinho, who has been the subject of a reported £90 million bid from Barcelona and has asked to leave Merseyside.

Watford, meanwhile, have enjoyed an altogether more productive week with the arrival of Brazilian Richarlison and a record £18.5m capture of Andre Gray.

The former Burnley man had to make do with a place on the bench as Marco Silva opted to start with Okaka in a lone striking berth.

His decision would pay off with less than 10 minutes on the clock as the burly centre-forward bundled the hosts into the lead from a corner.

Okaka had been involved in winning the set piece, sending Roberto Pereyra clear before the winger's shot deflected wide for a corner.

The resulting delivery from Jose Holebas was perfect in its execution and found Okaka at the near post to head beyond Simon Mignolet from close-range.

It was the standout moment of a performance full of power and purpose from the 28-year-old who looked intent on making an impression from the off.

What little Liverpool had managed to muster had been propelled with ease by Watford until just before the half hour when an incisive move cut their defence open. Mane worked the ball out wide, continued his run towards the right channel and received a delicate flick round the corner from Emre Can.

With just Heurelho Gomes to beat the winger opened up his body and curled into the far corner with consummate ease.

Parity would last only a matter of minutes, however, as Watford went back ahead through Doucoure. The midfielder was involved throughout the move and played a neat through ball into Tom Cleverley on the right wing. With Okaka closing in, Cleverley's low cross was only partially cleared and broke to Doucoure, who had made a smart run to the back post, to pass into an empty net.

The lead was no more than the hosts deserved for a strong first half showing, which had seen Silva's men outfight Jurgen Klopp's across the park.

Liverpool went within inches of wiping out the advantage on the stroke of half-time, but Mane, who was the Reds best player in the first 45 minutes, could only glance a header wide from Roberto Firmino's corner.

The second half brought with it an early blow for Watford as Pereyra pulled up with what appeared to be a groin injury.

He made way for Richarlison, who showed some bright sparks during his first outing in Watford shirt.

All of Watford's fine work was undone within the space of two second half minutes as Liverpool struck twice to go ahead.

The first came from the spot after Gomes brought down Salah to allow Firmino to calmly slot into the bottom left corner from 12 yards.

Firmino turned provider moments later after simple lofted ball bypassed the Hornets' defence and sent the Liverpool number nine clear.

The Brazilian lifted a delicate chip over the onrushing Gomes and Salah tapped in from under the crossbar.

Watford were clearly shaken by the double blow and could easily have slipped further behind as Liverpool began to control proceedings.

The Anfield club went close from two corners as Trent Alexander-Arnold's fine delivery proved effective.

Firstly the Reds rattled the bar and then it took a fine stop from Gomes to deny Dejan Lovren's glancing header.

Watford's attempts to get back into the game saw Gray introduced from the bench and more numbers committed forward late on.

They rewarded for their endeavour in the third minute of injury time when a near post corner fell to Richarlison and he fired at goal.

His effort was off target but Simon Mignolet inadvertently turned onto the bar, and Britos was on hand to score and lift the roof off the Vic on a pulsating opening day.

Watford: Gomes (C); Janmaat (Femenia 18), Britos, Kaboul, Holebas, Doucoure, Chalobah, Cleverley, Pereyra (Richarlison 48), Amrabat, Okaka (Gray 63)

Subs not used: Pantilimon; Prodl, Watson, Capoue

Liverpool: Mignolet; Alexander-Arnold, Lovren, Matip, Moreno, Henderson (C), Wijnaldum, Can, Salah (Milner 86), Firmino (Origi 80), Mane.

Subs not used: Karius; Gomez, Grujic, Klavan, Solanke

Date: 12 August 2017

Opposition: Watford

Competition: League

Mail	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Watford Observer

12 August 2017



THE INDEPENDENT

ON SUNDAY

Liverpool gift Watford a point in thrilling draw

If Liverpool really are to challenge for the Premier League title this season, as both their owners and their fans demand that they do, Jurgen Klopp has some serious work to do both on the training field and in the transfer market. An all too familiar defensive horror show gifted Watford a point in the club's first game of the Premier League season, to deny Jurgen Klopp victory in his 100th competitive game in charge of the club.

Three times Liverpool's defence was found wanting, as Watford twice led before Miguel Britos snatched a valuable point at the very death. Dejan Lovren and Joel Matip's centre-half partnership looked anything but stable, while Alberto Moreno and Trent Alexander-Arnold both had their respective weaknesses exposed by Liverpool's expansive 4-3-3 formation.

Fortunately for Liverpool, their recently renovated front-line was on hand to bail them out of trouble, as Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and record-signing Mohamed Salah grabbed a goal apiece to give the side the lead after goals from Stefano Okaka and Abdoulaye Doucoure. But they did not have to rescue Klopp for a third time, as Britos nodded the ball in from a Jose Holebas corner which Liverpool failed to clear.

It had taken Liverpool's front three a while to click into this place, and the club's less than convincing backline almost threw this game away before they had the chance. Lovren and Matip found the burly Stefano Okaka far too hot to handle in the opening exchanges, and the pair were nowhere to be seen when the Italian thumped a powerful header beyond a rooted Simon Mignolet to hand his side the lead.

The goal was no more than Watford deserved. They started this match superbly, with Roberto Pereyra -- recently returned from injury and cheered with the gusto of a new signing at the start of the match -- unlucky to see an early shot deflected wide by Dejan Lovren, and Nordin Amrabat terrorising Alberto Moreno down the wing.

The Spanish full-back, little more than a bit-part player last season, was especially poor: lightweight against the physical heft of a marauding Amrabat and ponderous in attack. It made Klopp's decision to exclude a fit Andrew Robertson, signed this summer from Hull for [pounds sterling]8m, all the more peculiar.

It took a moment of utter genius from Mane to drag Liverpool back into the game. The forward -- who was dropping deeper than usual in an attempt to spark his side into life -- skipped into space and exchanged neat passes with Moreno, before running onto Emre Can's cute flick and curling the ball around Heurelho Gomes.

However, his goal was not to be the moment that sparked Liverpool into life. Less than five minutes later and Watford led again, Abdoulaye Doucoure taking advantage of Trent Alexander-Arnold's comical fall while attempting to clear a low cross, and slotting the ball into the bottom corner of the net.

Herein Liverpool's problem lies. For all their considerable talent going forward, their defence looks just as rosy as it did last season. If the club really are to mount a title challenge this season, they surely have to invest in another defensive player before the window swings shut.

Klopp has his front line to thank for dragging Liverpool back into this match, and in particular Mohamed Salah. After a quiet first-half, the winger sprung into action in the second, and made his first significant contribution when he nicked the ball ahead of Gomes in the box, before drawing the foul. Firmino converted for his first goal of the season, and Liverpool were level.

Seconds later and the roles were reversed, as Firmino turned provider. Racing onto a long Lovren punt forward, the Brazilian caught Gomes in no-man's-land with a deft chip across the face of goal. Gomes was stranded, and Salah smartly ran in behind him to bundle the ball home from all of two yards.

Liverpool looked on course for victory, and Salah had more than one chance to double his tally and put the away side out of sight. But once again, the club's defence was to prove their undoing.

In the fourth minute of additional time at the end of the match, Holebas whipped in a corner which Liverpool failed to clear. Georginio Wijnaldum inexplicably booted his clearance directly at Amrabat, who squeezed a shot on goal from a tight angle. The effort beat Mignolet before bouncing back off the crossbar, with centre-back Britos on hand to nod in the rebound.

It was a fitting end to a depressingly familiar Liverpool performance. The club must urgently address the issues with their back line if they are to have any hope of challenging for silverware this season.

The Sunday Telegraph

Britos exposes Liverpool's timid defence

Watford 3 Okaka 8, Doucoure 32, Britos 90

Liverpool 3 Mane 29, Firmino 55 pen, Salah 57 Att: 20,407

Whatever it was the Premier League defenders were doing over the summer it was not improving their defending.

After Friday's seven-goal opener to the season came another six at Vicarage Road. And had Franco Baresi, Paolo Maldini or Fabio Cannavaro been in attendance as the self-proclaimed finest league in the world got under way, the great Italian defenders would have wondered what on earth had happened to the dark art of keeping a clean sheet.

For Liverpool, seemingly heading back north with three points banked from their first away encounter of the season, this was a particularly calamitous defensive performance.

The nadir came in the third minute of injury time. Watford, a goal down and time running out, won a corner after Miguel Britos's sharp shot had been saved by Simon Mignolet. Jose Holebas sent what looked to be a wasteful set-piece short into the Liverpool area. But as Georginio Wijnaldum flailed at the ball, it fell into the path of Nordin Amrabat, who scooped it goalwards for Britos, apparently well offside, to bundle home.

Standing in his technical area Jurgen Klopp looked utterly crestfallen. His side had been undone by incompetence, snatching a draw from the teeth of victory. It might be a new season, but some things do not change.

"We know we can do better. We have to do better," Klopp said.

The home supporters had warmed up for the match with a loud chorus of "Where is Coutinho?" But the absence of the transfer-seeking Brazilian, sidelined with a convenient back strain, could not be blamed for the chaotic way Liverpool started. After all, the diminutive playmaker has never been the first line of protection at a corner. And here those charged with defending their line seemed to lose all sense of responsibility. After just nine minutes Joel Matip, Dejan Lovren and Roberto Firmino all appeared rooted to the turf as Stefano Okaka steamed in to head home.

In truth, the red defence was not isolated in its sluggishness. All round the pitch Liverpool began the game second to the ball, bullied by a Watford side epitomised by Italian striker Okaka.

Mohamed Salah, making his debut on the right of the Liverpool attack, found himself initially smothered by Holebas. Tom Cleverley and Nathaniel Chalobah, the former loanees now making their first appearance together as full-time signings, were running the midfield for Watford. Liverpool looked undercooked and underwhelming all over the pitch. "I was not happy with the first half," Klopp admitted. "It was very physical and Watford was too often the winner."

Whatever Liverpool's frailties, however, any side with Sadio Mane in it is always likely to have its moments. He scored a superb equaliser, exchanging a deft series of passes with Firmino before stealing into the Watford penalty area and steering the ball expertly past Heurelho Gomes. But parity was not maintained for long. Five minutes later, Cleverley won the ball all too easily in midfield, strode forward and steered a bending cross into the Liverpool box. It might have been cleared, but it wasn't. The ball fell to the excellent Abdoulaye Doucoure, who stabbed it home.

Klopp must have worked furiously at half-time, applying an alarm clock to his dozing players. Because, aided by Watford being obliged to replace two players with injuries, as first Daryl Janmaat then Roberto Pereyra crumpled to the turf clutching their shins, within moments of the restart Liverpool were back in it. In a sequence of passing that might well become a staple of their tactical approach this season (especially if Coutinho does leave for Barcelona) Mane found Firmino, who sent Salah tearing into the Watford box. Gomes seemed slow to note the danger. And by the time the goalkeeper arrived at the forward's ankles, the ball had gone and the forward was sent flying. A penalty was rightly awarded, which Firmino expertly converted.

No more than two minutes later, Liverpool were in the lead. Lovren released Firmino, whose beautifully judged chip to the far post was perfectly guided into the net by Salah.

Klopp's tactical approach of if you score two we'll score three seemed to have achieved its aim. With Chalobah and Cleverley fading in their influence, Liverpool began to exercise control. In the away stand the visiting fans were running through their songbook. But then, with seconds left, came the corner Klopp must have been dreading.

"When you analyse your opponents, you analyse the moments you can achieve something more," said Marco Silva, the Watford manager. "Every setpiece makes a difference."

He was right there. And while aesthetics might have been challenged, while the equalising goal might have redefined the word scrappy, it was enough to spark wild celebrations. Relief can be an intoxicating brew.

For Klopp there was only disappointment. Plus the certainty that ahead of the Champions League qualifier on Tuesday, he will need to do some work on defending corners.

"At the moment we have only one point," he said. "I wait for the moment when I will feel better about that."

Date: 12 August 2017
 Opposition: Watford
 Competition: League

Mail	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
BBC	Sun Telegraph	Independent	Watford Observer



THE SUNDAY TIMES

Familiar flaws haunt Liverpool

WATFORD 3
 Okaka 8, Doucoure 32, Britos 90+3
 LIVERPOOL 3
 Mane 29, Firmino 55pen, Salah 57

Scrambled defending, sudden outbreaks of brilliant attacking, the whole gamut from hope to despair, from farce to joy, and back and forth again: it did not take Liverpool long. Before lunchtime was over on 2017-18's opening Saturday, Jurgen Klopp's team wanted to pack in every element of a typical season for their club. The outcome? A scatterbrained draw.

The away support choked their victory songs and several streamed for the buses home the moment Miguel Britos equalised in the third minute of stoppage time. Could you blame those fans? They have lived this too often before, and that Britos was offside when he scored deepened the angst of a 24 hours that also involved Philippe Coutinho's transfer request. This was no less manic than Arsenal's 4-3 win against Leicester on Friday. In 2016-17, Liverpool won the most points from losing positions and were among the teams who relinquished the most points from winning positions. And so they went from 0-1 to 1-1 to 1-2 to 3-2 to 3-3 yesterday, suggesting that they have lost none of the hot-bloodedness that -- perhaps for good and bad -- seemingly stems from their manager.

Klopp was annoyed that Britos' strike stood, declared Watford's second goal offside too, and said too much is made of Liverpool conceding from set-pieces. He argued that Watford's first, a fine Stefano Okaka header from a wonderful Jose Holebas delivery, was down to great opposition play and their others were down to refereeing, but the fact is two corners and a throw-in preceded Watford's three goals. "We have to work on it," Klopp did eventually admit, while Watford's Marco Silva said he analysed Liverpool and saw set-pieces, from an opposition point of view, as "a time you can achieve something more".

Klopp must hope for improvement in Germany on Tuesday when, in a Champions League qualifier, Liverpool face the aerial challenge of Hoffenheim, one of Europe's tallest sides.

Mohamed Salah, their record signing, epitomised Liverpool's day of strengths and flaws. Salah scored and yet was full of imperfections. The Egyptian converted just one of his chances and it was the easiest. You could see the attributes that made Klopp pay PS39.5m for him but you could also recall why he did not succeed at Chelsea.

Watford should be encouraged by their new signings, particularly Richarlison. The Brazil Under-20 forward, who cost PS11.5m from Fluminense, replaced the injured Roberto Pereyra early in the second half and was prominent in the late surge that Liverpool allowed his team by dropping back. A corner, again, panicked Klopp's rearguard. The ball fell to Richarlison, who lashed a shot from close range and Britos seemed just ahead of the Brazilian, making him offside as he stood in front of Simon Mignolet. Mignolet saved but the ball cannoned into Britos and dropped for the centre-back to convert from on the line.

Watford, already playing more football under Silva, especially from the back, deserved something. They were the better side in the first half, and Okaka shocked Liverpool after eight minutes, running off Firmino and behind Joel Matip to glance home Holebas' inswinging corner. When Liverpool levelled, Watford took just 165 seconds to reassert themselves. This time it was a throw-in that sowed schoolboy fear in Klopp's team, Doucoure eventually converting. Liverpool's equaliser, scored by Mane, was their one moment of true early class.

They emerged better after half-time, a delicious piece of Can control speaking of their renewed self-assurance. Salah earned a penalty from which Firmino scored for 2-2. Two minutes later, Lovren lobbed the ball through, Firmino beat Watford's offside trap and, with great technique and vision, lobbed to Salah touched the ball in. Matip hit the bar with a header from a corner, Gomes saved well from Lovren and Moreno, and Salah and Gini Wijnaldum fluffed opportunities. Liverpool were to pay for this profligacy. They must keep Coutinho but you can also see why Klopp still wants Virgil Van Dijk.

Star man: Jose Holebas (Watford) Yellow card: Liverpool: Mane, Mignolet, Alexander-Arnold Referee: A Taylor Attendance: 20,407 Watford: Gomes 7, Janmaat 5 (Femenia 18min, 6), Kaboul 6, Holebas 8, Britos 7, Amrabat 6, Cleverley 6, Chalobah 7, Doucoure 7, Pereyra 5 (Richarlison 49min, 7), Okaka 7 (Gray 63min, 6) Substitutes: Pantilimon, Prodl, Gray, Capoue, Watson Liverpool: Mignolet 6, Alexander-Arnold 6 (Gomez 90min, 5), Lovren 6, Matip 6, Moreno 6, Can 6, Wijnaldum 5, Henderson 6, Salah 6 (Milner 86min, 5), Mane 8, Firmino 7 (Origi 81min, 5) Substitutes: Karius, Grujic, Klavan, Solanke

The Observer

Date: 12 August 2017

Opposition: Watford

Competition: League

Mail	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
Echo	Sun Independent	Guardian	Mirror
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12 August 2017



Miguel Britos scored a controversial 93rd-minute equaliser for Watford as Liverpool were held in a thrilling game at Vicarage Road.

The Reds, without [Barcelona target Philippe Coutinho](#) due to a back injury, fell behind to Stefano Okaka's header.

Sadio Mane equalised with a clinical finish only for Abdoulaye Doucoure to restore the lead from close range.

Roberto Firmino's penalty made it 2-2 before Mohamed Salah thought he had won it only for Britos to bundle in.

In Jurgen Klopp's 100th competitive game as Reds boss, Liverpool wasted a string of chances before Uruguay defender Britos headed over the line from point blank range following a ricochet.

Watford keeper Heurelho Gomes, who conceded the penalty after hauling down Salah, denied Alberto Moreno with a fingertip save.

Joel Matip also hit the bar and Dejan Lovren forced another good save as the Reds dominated the closing stages until Watford's late leveller.

The six-goal thriller came on the back of Friday's opening match of the 2017-18 campaign which produced [seven goals](#) as Arsenal beat Leicester 4-3.

Familiar frailties on show for Liverpool

It was a case of new season but same old Liverpool on the opening Saturday of the campaign.

As good as Liverpool were at going forward, their defensive frailties - all too evident last season - came back to haunt them.

Southampton defender Virgil van Dijk has been [linked with a move to Anfield](#) and Liverpool's performance at Watford will only serve to increase Klopp's urgency to strengthen his defence.

Liverpool were behind after failing to defend the first corner of the match, unmarked Italian striker Okaka allowed to power home Jose Holebas' delivery.

Media playback is not supported on this device

In the space of 161 first-half seconds, the Reds went from outstanding at one end of the pitch to atrocious at the other.

They equalised with a sumptuous finish by Mane, the Senegal forward collecting a lovely flick by Emre Can before scoring from an angle.

It was Liverpool's first serious attack of the game yet moments later they were trailing again after more awful defending.

The Reds' defence made a hash of trying to clear Tom Cleverley's low ball across the box and Doucoure slotted home from five yards - his second goal since joining Watford from Rennes in 2016.

A clumsy foul by Gomes on Salah allowed Firmino to make it 2-2 from the spot before the Brazilian turned provider with a delicious lob which enabled Salah, a [£34m signing from Roma](#), to put his side ahead on his league debut.

It should have been the winner yet Liverpool's defence failed to deal with another Holebas corner, allowing Britos to score three minutes into added time.

'Watford's equaliser was offside'

Klopp said Watford's dramatic equaliser should not have counted because he believed it to be offside.

Britos was stood immediately in front of keeper Simon Mignolet when substitute and new signing Richarlison put the ball across goal.

"It's obvious because the linesman is on the line. He needs to see it," said Klopp.

Jurgen Klopp was not happy that Watford's late equaliser was allowed to stand

"I cannot change it. We would have had defensive areas we need to work on if we'd won 3-2. We were the better team, we should have won."

Watford boss Marco Silva said he had not seen whether his side's equaliser was offside.

Battling Watford show spirit under Silva

Silva's side were minutes away from losing a seventh successive Premier League match before Britos had the final say in the former Hull City manager's first league game in charge of the Hornets.

Seven of the side that started against Liverpool were part of the team that was crushed [5-0 at home](#) to Manchester City on the final day of last season.

Yet the Hornets produced an encouraging performance under their new Portuguese boss which suggests they could finish higher up the table than last season's 17th-placed finish.

Midfielder Nathaniel Chalobah was the only one of Silva's six summer signings to start - [club record £18.5m buy](#) Andre Gray beginning life on the bench and coming on in the second half.

Man of the Match - Roberto Firmino (Liverpool)

Philippe who? Roberto Firmino coolly dispatched his penalty before turning provider with a lob which allowed Mohamed Salah to score as Liverpool went from 2-1 down to 3-2 ahead in the space of two minutes

Post-match reaction

Watford manager Marco Silva said: "I think it's a fair result. We had a very good first half, a good intensity like I wanted.

"I didn't like the first 25 minutes of the second half. We expected a good reaction from Liverpool but we needed to be better. We made mistakes. But we reacted well.

"Our fans pushed our players on. We had some small injuries. We need to show this attitude and commitment in all our games."

Media playback is not supported on this device

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said: "The first half I wasn't too happy with. We passed but couldn't see what we actually wanted.

"The second half was a lot better. We forgot to close the game. We defended a little deep. We have to push up. Both teams struggled with 90 minutes, it's the first game. That's normal."

Defender and deadly goal provider... the stats

No defender has provided more assists in the Premier League since the start of last season than Jose Holebas (five).

Liverpool's Sadio Mane has netted five goals in his past seven Premier League appearances.

Mane has scored with his first shot on target in the Premier League in both the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons.

Firmino has both scored more and assisted more Premier League goals than any other Liverpool player since the start of 2015-16 (22 goals, 15 assists).

Salah is the 12th different player to score on his Premier League debut for Liverpool.

Only Jose Fonte (five) has given away more penalties in the Premier League than Heurelho Gomes (four) since the start of 2015-16.

What's next?

Liverpool will hope for a better defensive performance when they face Hoffenheim in Germany on Tuesday in a Champions League play-off (19:45 BST).

Watford have a week to prepare for an away game at Bournemouth on 19 August (15:00 BST).

Date: 12 August 2017

Opposition: Watford

Competition: League

Mail	Sunday Times	Times	Telegraph
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12 August 2017



Match ends, Watford 3, Liverpool 3.

90'+9' Second Half ends, Watford 3, Liverpool 3.

90'+8' Attempt blocked. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Joseph Gomez with a cross.

90'+7' Delay over. They are ready to continue.

90'+5' Delay in match Richarlison (Watford because of an injury.

90'+5' Attempt missed. Richarlison (Watford header from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Nordin Amrabat with a cross.

90'+3' Goal! Watford 3, Liverpool 3. Miguel Britos (Watford header from very close range to the centre of the goal following a corner.

90'+3' Attempt missed. Richarlison (Watford right footed shot from the right side of the six yard box misses to the left following a corner.

90'+3' Corner, Watford. Conceded by Simon Mignolet.

90'+3' Attempt saved. Miguel Britos (Watford left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Abdoulaye Doucouré with a headed pass.

90'+2' Foul by Joseph Gomez (Liverpool.

90'+2' Richarlison (Watford wins a free kick on the left wing.

90'+1' Substitution, Liverpool. Joseph Gomez replaces Trent Alexander-Arnold.

88' Simon Mignolet (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.

86' Substitution, Liverpool. James Milner replaces Mohamed Salah.

86' Attempt missed. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

81' Substitution, Liverpool. Divock Origi replaces Roberto Firmino.

79' Delay over. They are ready to continue.

78' Delay in match Younes Kaboul (Watford because of an injury.

77' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

76' Attempt missed. José Holebas (Watford left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right.

74' Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool.

74' Nordin Amrabat (Watford wins a free kick in the defensive half.

71' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is too high. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.

70' Attempt saved. Dejan Lovren (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Trent Alexander-Arnold with a cross.

69' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Younes Kaboul.

68' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

68' Foul by Younes Kaboul (Watford.

67' Foul by Mohamed Salah (Liverpool.

67' José Holebas (Watford wins a free kick on the left wing.

65' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

65' Foul by Nordin Amrabat (Watford.

65' Joel Matip (Liverpool hits the bar with a with an attempt from the left side of the six yard box. Assisted by Trent Alexander-Arnold with a cross following a corner.

64' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Heurelho Gomes.

64' Attempt saved. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top left corner. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

63' Substitution, Watford. Andre Gray replaces Stefano Okaka.

61' Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

61' Foul by Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool.

61' Richarlison (Watford wins a free kick on the left wing.

57' Goal! Watford 2, Liverpool 3. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from very close range to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

57' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Dejan Lovren.

55' Goal! Watford 2, Liverpool 2. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool converts the penalty with a right footed shot to the bottom left corner.

54' Penalty Liverpool. Mohamed Salah draws a foul in the penalty area.

54' Penalty conceded by Heurelho Gomes (Watford after a foul in the penalty area.

52' Joel Matip (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

52' Foul by Stefano Okaka (Watford.

50' Offside, Watford. Stefano Okaka tries a through ball, but Richarlison is caught offside.

49' Substitution, Watford. Richarlison replaces Roberto Pereyra because of an injury.

49' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool right footed shot from the right side of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum.

48' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

48' Foul by Nordin Amrabat (Watford.

48' Delay over. They are ready to continue.

47' Delay in match Roberto Pereyra (Watford because of an injury.

Second Half begins Watford 2, Liverpool 1.

45'+5' First Half ends, Watford 2, Liverpool 1.

45'+4' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

45'+4' Foul by Abdoulaye Doucouré (Watford.

45'+4' Alberto Moreno (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

45'+4' Foul by Nordin Amrabat (Watford.

45'+3' Attempt missed. Sadio Mané (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a cross.

45'+3' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Younes Kaboul.

45'+2' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

45'+2' Foul by Abdoulaye Doucouré (Watford.

45'+1' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

45'+1' Foul by Nordin Amrabat (Watford.

41' Corner, Watford. Conceded by Jordan Henderson.

40' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.

40' Stefano Okaka (Watford wins a free kick on the right wing.

40' Hand ball by Nordin Amrabat (Watford.

39' Dejan Lovren (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

39' Foul by Nordin Amrabat (Watford.

38' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is too high.

37' Sadio Mané (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

36' Attempt missed. Nathaniel Chalobah (Watford right footed shot from more than 35 yards misses to the right. Assisted by Abdoulaye Doucouré.

34' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.

34' Roberto Pereyra (Watford wins a free kick in the attacking half.

32' Goal! Watford 2, Liverpool 1. Abdoulaye Doucouré (Watford right footed shot from very close range to the bottom left corner.

29' Goal! Watford 1, Liverpool 1. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box to the top right corner. Assisted by Emre Can.

28' Dejan Lovren (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

28' Foul by Stefano Okaka (Watford.

27' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool.

27' Roberto Pereyra (Watford wins a free kick in the defensive half.

25' Offside, Watford. Nordin Amrabat tries a through ball, but Stefano Okaka is caught offside.

22' Offside, Liverpool. Georginio Wijnaldum tries a through ball, but Mohamed Salah is caught offside.

20' Foul by Sadio Mané (Liverpool.

20' Kiko Femenía (Watford wins a free kick in the defensive half.

18' Substitution, Watford. Kiko Femenía replaces Daryl Janmaat because of an injury.

16' Delay over. They are ready to continue.

15' Delay in match Daryl Janmaat (Watford because of an injury.

13' Offside, Watford. Tom Cleverley tries a through ball, but Nordin Amrabat is caught offside.

8' Goal! Watford 1, Liverpool 0. Stefano Okaka (Watford header from very close range to the top right corner. Assisted by José Holebas with a cross following a corner.

7' Corner, Watford. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.

7' Attempt blocked. Roberto Pereyra (Watford left footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Stefano Okaka with a through ball.

3' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

3' Foul by Daryl Janmaat (Watford.

1' Foul by Stefano Okaka (Watford.

1' Simon Mignolet (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.