

Date: 29 November 2017

Opposition: Stoke City

Competition: League

	Times	Telegraph	Sentinel
	Guardian	Mirror	Echo
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29 November  
2017

## THE TIMES

Salah double lifts Liverpool

Stoke City 0

Liverpool 3

Mane 17, Salah 77, 83

Just when Stoke City looked like they might force an equaliser last night, midway through the second half, Jurgen Klopp turned to his bench and told Mohamed Salah it was time. The Premier League's leading goalscorer had been kept in reserve but he took off his tracksuit, braved the cold and proceeded to score another two goals, the first a beauty, to give this Liverpool win a distinctly one-sided look.

Mark Hughes and his Stoke team will argue it should never have been so, complaining that the Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet should have been sent off for denying Mame Biram Diouf an obvious goalscoring opportunity late in the first half.

Liverpool's opening goal arrived after 17 minutes, though Hughes and the home crowd were aggrieved, complaining that the ball was out of play before Joe Gomez pulled it back towards Dominic Solanke. Television replays suggested that Stephen Child, the assistant referee, was right to keep his flag down. As Stoke's defenders hesitated, Solanke produced a neat touch to set up Mane, who calmly dinked the ball over the advancing Lee Grant. Hughes's real complaint, when he watches it again, will be over his players' lack of alertness, particularly Eric Choupo-Moting, who failed to track the run from Gomez.

Stoke had a genuine -- and serious -- grievance over the incident involving Simon Mignolet six minutes before half-time. Liverpool's defence had been slow to respond to a Peter Crouch flickon, with Diouf getting away from Joel Matip. Diouf touched the ball past Mignolet, only to find himself hacked by the goalkeeper's challenge. A red card looked certain, given that, while there were defenders racing back to cover, Diouf's touch had kept the ball close to his feet and that he was in a central position with the goalkeeper grounded. To Hughes's fury, a yellow card was shown.

That was harsh on Stoke, but the halftime deficit was not. Even with Philippe Coutinho and Salah left out of the starting line-up, the speed and fluency of the visiting team's attacks looked too much for Stoke. Solanke's contribution, as he started a Premier League game for the first time since his summer move from Chelsea, was encouraging. He combined well with Roberto Firmino, exchanging passes with the Brazilian before seeing an effort saved by Grant.

Solanke played another excellent pass to send Mane clear of Stoke's offside trap. It was the type of situation that Mane would usually relish, but he seemed to hesitate, opening his body as if to shoot to Grant's left, then shooting to the goalkeeper's right and shaving the outside of the post.

Three minutes into the second half, Stoke went close. Gomez did well to get to a dangerous cross from Xherdan Shaqiri, but the defender's header dropped to Joe Allen, racing into the penalty area. Allen struck his shot without breaking stride, but Dejan Lovren deflected it off target.

Liverpool seemed to have lost momentum. Not only were they attacking far less frequently, but Mignolet was being called upon to deal with a succession of crosses -- not his speciality, but he was coping well.

Klopp responded by making two changes, replacing Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and Solanke with James Milner and Salah. Stoke's threat was growing. From an Erik Pieters cross, Crouch climbed well to nod the ball into the penalty area, where Allen again timed his run well but shot over.

That was as close as Stoke came to an equaliser. On 77 minutes Mane wriggled his way to the byline and crossed to the far post, where Salah struck the most delightful left-volley past Grant to double Liverpool's lead. It was not the most difficult goal he will score, not for a player blessed with such wonderful technique, but there was a sort of beauty to it.

Salah's second soon arrived, a calm finish after a dreadful mistake from Pieters. Could he do it on a freezing cold November night at Stoke? Yes he could, even if restricted to playing a quarter of the game. Stoke should be thankful for that small mercy, if little else right now.

Stoke City (3-4-2-1): L Grant 6 -- K Zouma 6, R Shawcross 5, B Martins Indi 5 -- M B Diouf 7, D Fletcher 6 (sub: C Adam 85min), J Allen 6, E Pieters 5 -- X Shaqiri 5, M Choupo-Moting 5 (sub: Jese, 74) -- P Crouch 6. Substitutes not used J Haugaard, K Wimmer, I Affelay, Ramadan. Booked Martins Indi. Liverpool (4-4-2): S Mignolet 6 -- J Gomez 7, J Matip 7, D Lovren 7, A Moreno 7 -- A Oxlade-Chamberlain 7 (sub: J Milner 67, 6), G Wijnaldum 6, E Can 6, S Mane 7 (sub: J Henderson 89) -- R Firmino 7, D Solanke 7 (sub: M Salah 67, 8). Substitutes not used L Karius, T Alexander-Arnold, P Coutinho, D Sturridge. Booked Mignolet, Can, Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Mane. Referee M Atkinson.

## the guardian

Sadio Mané and Mohamed Salah see Liverpool past limited Stoke

This will not rank alongside Liverpool's most memorable wins of the season. Some of their victories have been devastating displays of attacking football, the sort that make you glad to be a fan. This 3-0 victory against a desperate [Stoke City](#) side was not much more than efficient, earned by goals from Sadio Mané and a brace from the substitute Mohamed Salah, but it might end up being among their most satisfying three points.

"It was well deserved, but it was hard work," said Jürgen Klopp after the game, which might be a little charitable to their opponents, who hardly presented the most fearsome and doughty foes. But it will nonetheless be encouraging for [Liverpool](#) that they looked pretty comfortable throughout against a team that set out to frustrate them.

It could have been different had the referee Martin Atkinson sent off Simon Mignolet in the first half, though. Mignolet rushed out of his goal and hacked down Mame Biram Diouf as the forward tried to round the keeper just outside the area but, as the whole stadium prepared themselves for the sight of a red card, only a yellow emerged.

The rules around sendings-off in those circumstances were relaxed last year, meaning not all such fouls should be automatically considered as red cards. But even though Diouf's run was angled slightly away from goal and there were defenders roughly in the same postcode, had Mignolet's boot not intervened he would have had an open goal.

Predictably enough, Klopp had few complaints, but Mark Hughes did. "That's the key moment in the game," the Stoke manager said. "I just don't understand why the officials didn't see it for what it was. At that point it would've been 1-1 and game on. Usually in those situations the home team gets the benefit of the doubt, but we didn't get that many times this evening."

Hughes's complaints might have carried a little more weight if his team had not been so poor, and he should probably have been more irked about their defending than the officials, but Stoke undoubtedly had the rough end of things.

Liverpool's opening goal was not without controversy, either. The Stoke fans were already unhappy that Alberto Moreno had not been penalised for a challenge on Xherdan Shaqiri, but their ire was raised further when the referee's assistant ruled that Joe Gomez had kept the ball in on the right byline. Replays suggested at least 9/10ths of the ball had crossed the line, so they may have had a point, but they should be more angry with the way their defence stood still when Solanke neatly laid off the cross to Mané, who delicately lifted it over Lee Grant and into the net. "The one thing you want is for the referee to get the key decisions right, and in my opinion he didn't," Hughes said.

Ultimately any refereeing controversy was rendered moot by Stoke's profligacy and Liverpool's ruthlessness. Joe Allen missed two fine chances in the second half, one perhaps unluckily deflected wide but the second hoofed way over the bar from around 10 yards out.

Aside from those chances Liverpool were broadly in control, not necessarily because of their own brilliance (afterwards Klopp said they should have done more with the ball and been tighter at the back), but more due to Stoke's inadequacies.

With 13 minutes remaining, Liverpool scored again. Mané made Ryan Shawcross look foolish on the right side of the area, zipping around him like a speedboat circling an oil tanker, before clipping a cross to the substitute Salah, who set himself perfectly and hammered an unstoppable volley into the roof of the net. It was 3-0 a few minutes later. More deeply questionable defending saw Erik Pieters woefully misjudge a header back to Grant, then Salah leapt on the ball and tucked it home with the confidence of a man in the form of his life. Which, as it happens, he is.

All that was left to do was for Hughes to bring on Charlie Adam, as if to remind Liverpool that their team have not always been about lightning fast, dynamic young colts. The away fans spent the remainder of the game merrily singing Christmas songs and suggesting that relegation is on the cards for Stoke. On this evidence, they might be right.

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## The Mail

MIGNOLET ESCAPES RED

STOKE CITY 0 LIVERPOOL 3

EVEN in the biting cold, this was a Liverpool display to make Jurgen Klopp sweat, but in the end he secured a win that keeps his side in the race for Champions League spots. Liverpool had clear chances to make this an even easier victory against difficult opponents and were fortunate to play the final 50 minutes with 11 men.

Simon Mignolet should have seen red before half-time for taking out Mame Biram Diouf as the last man. A decision that angered Stoke boss Mark Hughes.

'It is clearly a goalscoring opportunity, they would be down to ten men and it is a completely different game, he said. 'From that point, we are trying to get back into the game and we had to take risks. 'Overall we are disappointed, but we got back into the game after a slow start.' Liverpool led thanks to Sadio Mane's first Premier League goal since August early on, then he added the second with 13 minutes to go.

Mane did superbly, wriggling free and chipping back to substitute Mohamed Salah, who thumped in a volley for his 11th Premier League goal of the season. Salah then grabbed his 12th, nicking a long ball ahead of Stoke full-back Erik Pieters and finishing coolly beyond Lee Grant.

Stoke counter-punched and should have been facing ten men from the 39th minute. Diouf reached a bouncing ball quicker than Joel Matip and nudged it round an onrushing Mignolet, who took out the Stoke player with a flailing leg. It was outside the box but Diouf faced an easy tap-in and a red card should have followed.

Klopp disagreed with Hughes on the incident.

'I don't think it was lucky with Simon Mignolet, there were two defenders around the situation and he is not the last man,' claimed the Liverpool boss.

'That was a proper away game. Really difficult. Thank you is all I said to Mohamed Salah, it is nice to come on in a situation like this.

'We have a lot of work to do, with Peter Crouch on the pitch it make it difficult and they are good on the ground but we have to keep fighting for the second ball.

'It was very deserved and we are very happy.'

## The Daily Telegraph

Yes, Salah can do it on a cold Wednesday in Stoke

Stoke City 0 Liverpool 3 Mane 17, Salah 77, 83 Att: 29,423 Mohammed Salah struck a devastating double off the bench to ultimately bury Stoke City after Liverpool had a first-half scare.

The Egyptian striker grabbed his 16th and 17th goals in 21 games in all competitions this season in a deadly six-minute spell in the second half, 10 minutes after replacing Dominic Solanke. But prior to Salah's twogoal blast, which took his tally to 12 in the Premier League, Liverpool, who led through Sadio Mane, rode their luck as goalkeeper Simon Mignolet was allowed to stay on the field after bringing down Mame Diouf. There appeared to be only one decision that referee Martin Atkinson could make when the goalkeeper came charging out of his penalty area and tripped Diouf who was clean through.

Diouf went sprawling but bizarrely, Atkinson, who has issued the equal lowest amount of cards of any Premier League official this season, chose only to brandish a yellow. The game got off to a slow start but exploded into life in the 17th minute when Liverpool took the lead in controversial circumstances. Stoke fans complained that right-back Joe Gomez had allowed the ball out of play before crossing to Dominic Solanke to tee up Sadio Mane for a dinked finish over Lee Grant for his fifth goal of the season. But replays suggested that all of the ball had not crossed the line.

It took Liverpool's goal to sting Stoke into action. Sparked by the impish skills and promptings of Xherdan Shaqiri, they eventually emerged from their shells.

Before the half-hour mark, Stoke switched from a 3-4-3 formation to 4-4-2, and with Peter Crouch the target for numerous inviting crosses alongside Diouf. Perhaps fired by a sense of injustice, they looked more determined and tried to respond through Darren Fletcher. The midfielder unleashed a thunderous effort that was charged down on the edge of the box, before Shaqiri fired horribly wide from the loose ball.

But things could have got worse for Stoke before half-time. Bruno Martins Indi played Mane onside and the Senegal attacker raced clean through, but with only Lee Grant to beat, side-footed against the base of the post.

Stoke tried to seize the initiative following the restart. Shaqiri, so often the fulcrum of their attacks, floated a dangerous ball into the box, and when Matip headed away, former Liverpool midfielder Joe Allen's placed side-foot shot clipped the foot of Dejan Lovren and sailed inches wide of the far post.

The next flashpoint came in the 66th minute when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain squared up to Martins Indi and shoved the Portuguese de-fender. But again Atkinson showed his lenient side by booking both players. Jurgen Klopp, the Liverpool manager, raced from his technical area and grabbed the former Arsenal winger to prevent any further altercation, and immediately substituted him, clearly concerned he could have been sent off.

Stoke should have equalised in the 69th minute - and it was a classic ex-Liverpool connection that combined. But Joe Allen blazed over after Crouch headed down Erik Pieters's deep cross.

Liverpool punished Stoke in devastating fashion - and it was Salah who struck. The Egyptian wasted little time grabbing his 11th of the season in the 77th minute. Salah started the move with a fortunate bounce off Ryan Shawcross, but was perfectly placed at the far post to meet Mane's cross with a left-foot volley that gave Lee Grant no chance. He added further gloss to Liverpool's victory when he added his second and his team's third.

Erik Pieters twice failed to deal with Alberto Moreno's long diagonal ball over the top, first mis-controlling then under-hitting a back pass and Salah did the rest, slotting under Grant.

Stoke (3-4-3): Grant 6; Zouma 5, Shawcross 5, Martins Indi 5; Diouf 6, Fletcher 6 (Adam 85), Allen 7, Pieters 5; Shaqiri 6, Crouch 6, Choupo-Moting 6 (Jese 74). Subs Haugaard (g), Wimmer, Berahino, Affelay, Ramadan. Booked Martins Indi.

Liverpool (4-3-3): Mignolet 6; Gomez 7, Matip 7, Lovren 7, Moreno 7; Oxlade-Chamberlain 7 (Milner 67), Can 7, Wijnaldum 7; Firmino 7, Mane 8 (Henderson 89), Solanke 7 (Salah 67). Subs Karius (g), Coutinho, Sturridge, Alexander-Arnold. Booked Mignolet, Can, Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Mane.

Referee Martin Atkinson (West Yorkshire).

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## THE INDEPENDENT

### Mane and Salah heap pressure on Hughes

Liverpool made the most of some moments of controversy to kill off Stoke City and return to winning ways with Mohamed Salah again taking centre stage.

The Egyptian substitute took just six second-half minutes to score twice and take star billing after Sadio Mane had opened the scoring for Jurgen Klopp's men.

Stoke were furious, however, that Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet was not red-carded late in the first half for a professional foul, having complained already that Mane's goal should not have stood.

But some poor defending allowed Salah to cash in after stepping off the bench as Liverpool responded well to squandering leads to Sevilla and Chelsea in their previous two games.

The opening stages were blighted by poor passes, needless fouls and poor decisions that removed any possibility of flow from the game.

So the nature of the opening goal, complete with controversy and skill, enlivened an otherwise uneventful spell.

Joe Gomez chased a ball into the corner having raced forwards from right-back, but Stoke were adamant the England defender had failed to stop it crossing the byline.

The officials, however, ruled that the ball was still in play and Gomez crossed for Dominic Solanke, whose inventiveness created the chance.

He produced a neat flick into the path of Mane that left Stoke's defenders dumbfounded, and Mane then came up with a delicate chip past goalkeeper Lee Grant.

Stoke's response was not immediate and Grant had to make a routine save from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, but when they did get into the game it was through Xherdan Shaqiri.

The Switzerland forward found space regularly on the right and his invention brought some moments of promise.

The first Stoke chance came courtesy of Mame Diouf's overhead kick and a drive by Darren Fletcher that was blocked by Dejan Lovren and the second was from Shaqiri's clever movement, but his cross was misdirected.

A cross from Joe Allen for Stoke was then guided wide by Peter Crouch, making his first league start of the season.

Solanke should have doubled the visitors' lead with a shot that Grant saved after the Liverpool striker had swapped passes with Roberto Firmino.

But then came the contentious moment that left Stoke seething as Mignolet raced from his penalty area to trip the advancing Diouf.

Referee Martin Atkinson awarded a free-kick but allowed Mignolet to escape with a yellow card when the case for a red appeared clear with Shaqiri blasting the free-kick into the wall.

Mane should then have added to the anger when he raced clear of a ragged Stoke defence but struck the base of the woodwork with only Grant to beat.

Stoke ought to have been level just three minutes into the second half when Shaqiri caused more problems with an inswinging cross that Liverpool struggled to deal with.

Matip cleared it partially under pressure from Crouch but it dropped invitingly for Allen, whose low shot struck a grateful Lovren and skimmed behind for a corner, which the visitors cleared.

But the hosts struggled to follow up that near-miss as Liverpool's composed play kept Hughes's men at arm's length from Mignolet's goal.

Stoke finally had some joy when the visitors failed to spot Allen's run from midfield to the byline, with the Welshman forcing a corner.

But the flag-kick was cleared by the Reds who caused problems on the break, with Stoke forced to clear hurriedly away from their six-yard box after a pass from Alberto Moreno.

The Potters claimed another free-kick on the left but the inswinging delivery from Darren Fletcher was punched clear by Mignolet.

There was more anger with 23 minutes remaining when Stoke defender Bruno Martins Indi produced a crude block with his arm on Oxlade-Chamberlain, who reacted by shoving the Dutchman in the chest.

Both men were booked and, in the aftermath, Stoke should have drawn level.

A cross by Erik Pieters was headed down by Crouch for Allen, who blasted over from 12 yards.

With 13 minutes remaining Liverpool ended any doubts about the win as Mane crossed from the right and Salah volleyed home.

Six minutes later Salah added the third when he beat Pieters to a diagonal ball, raced clear and fired low past Grant.

Stoke (3-4-3): Grant; Zouma, Shawcross, Martins Indi; Diouf, Fletcher (Adam 85), Allen, Pieters; Shaqiri, Crouch, Choupo-Moting (Jese 75). Subs not used:

Haugaard, Wimmer, Berahino, Afellay, Ramadan. Booked: Martins Indi.

Liverpool (4-4-2): Mignolet; Gomez, Matip, Lovren, Moreno; Oxlade-Chamberlain (Milner 67), Can, Wijnaldum, Mane (Henderson 89); Solanke (Salah 67), Firmino.

Subs not used: Karius, Coutinho, Sturridge, Alexander-Arnold. Booked: Mignolet, Can, Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Mane.

## DAILY MIRROR

### KLOPP WILL BE SALAH-VATING!

MO SALAH climbed off the bench to seal victory for Liverpool with a stunning late double.

The Egyptian attacker was left out of the starting line-up against Stoke as Jurgen Klopp juggled his squad for the rigours of December.

But he showed how priceless he is with two classy strikes in seven minutes after replacing Dominic Solanke in the 66th minute.

Klopp was getting nervous as his side came under second-half pressure from Stoke after taking a 17th-minute lead through Sadio Mane.

But Salah (above) made the points safe, first crashing in a spectacular volley from Mane's 77th-minute cross and then coolly sliding home Liverpool's third after 84 minutes.

Earlier Stoke were left raging, claiming Simon Mignolet should have been red-carded for a first-half challenge which floored Mame Diouf.

Klopp's stars have a formidable record against teams in the bottom half of the table and, with Stoke lying 15th at kick-off, they were in Liverpool's cross hairs.

And it took the visitors less than 20 to stamp their mark the game with an opening goal which had Stoke fans howling in protest.

England youngster Joe Gomez, establishing himself as a reliable right-back, attacked the by-line and pulled the ball back, with home supporters claiming it had gone out.

His pass found Solanke, making his first Premier League start for Liverpool since his summer move from Chelsea.

The 20-year-old smuggled the ball through to Mane who cleverly clipped it over Lee Grant to give Liverpool the perfect start.

It was the Senegalese striker's fourth League goal of the campaign and his first in six games, bringing an end to his longest drought since joining from Southampton.

Liverpool's 4-4-2 system worked well and, after Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain had seen a shot saved by Grant at the second attempt, Potters boss Mark Hughes ditched his 5-4-1 formation.

Diouf linked with former Liverpool man Peter Crouch in attack and Stoke began to look far more dangerous.

But despite a greater City threat it was Liverpool who almost went further ahead with a sweet back-heel from Solanke giving Roberto Firmino a clear sight of goal but the Brazilian's low shot was well saved by Grant.

Then came the controversy with referee Martin Atkinson in the firing line.

Diouf muscled his way in behind Liverpool's defence and, as he prepared to shoot, keeper Mignolet wiped him out with a wild challenge on the edge of the box.

The fans waited for Atkinson to flash red but instead he only booked the Liverpool keeper, triggering fury from home fans.

From the free-kick Xherdan Shaqiri saw his effort deflected wide with Hughes still raging at the officials.

After the break Stoke upped the ante in a bid to draw level, but hopes of a comeback were shattered by that man Salah.

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Reds dig deep as Klopp's squad repays his faith with a Potteries job well done

This was a triumph to warm the cockles on a bitterly cold night in the Potteries. [Jurgen Klopp's](#) faith was repaid as [Liverpool](#) returned to winning ways in style. The test of their mettle was passed with flying colours as they delivered a performance which showcased the depth of Klopp's squad. Six changes, no problems, as the Reds put the frustration of those recent stalemates with Sevilla and Chelsea firmly behind them. They had to dig deep after Sadio Mane's ice-cool finish had broken the deadlock. But rather than wilt under pressure like they have done of late, they stood tall and repelled Stoke's advances.

The Reds got a slice of good fortune when [Simon Mignolet](#) somehow escaped with a booking after chopping down Mame Diouf when he was clean through.

But they made the most of it and the introduction of [Mohamed Salah](#) off the bench provided a thrilling finale. The sight of the Egyptian winger struck fear into Stoke's tiring backline and they will be seeing him in their nightmares.

Salah extended his lead in the race for the Premier League Golden Boot and took his tally for the season to 17 goals in all competitions with a deadly late double.

It was the first time Salah hadn't started in the league since August but even being reduced to a cameo role couldn't stop him from taking centre stage. He's playing with a swagger and shows no signs of slowing up. The jubilant travelling Kop paid homage to their hero, who is taking the fast-track to iconic status.

Mane and Salah aside, there was plenty else to admire about the much changed Reds. [Dominic Solanke](#), who created the opener, led the line impressively on his full Premier League debut, while Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain continues to grow in stature. Dejan Lovren also impressed on his return to the starting line up as Liverpool kept their first away clean sheet in the league since May.

It's a balancing act for Klopp as he tries to negotiate such a gruelling schedule but this was a job well done on a night when Philippe Coutinho wasn't even required. As well as a significant change in personnel, Klopp also tweaked the formation with Roberto Firmino playing just off Solanke in a 4-4-2 with Mane and Oxlade-Chamberlain providing the width. It was a system which worked well at West Ham earlier this month and there were parallels with that contest as Liverpool grew into it after a sluggish start. With Mane's pace, Stoke were asking for trouble with such a high defensive line but it took the Reds time to exert some control on proceedings. Quality was conspicuous by its absence before Liverpool came to life and made the breakthrough with a slick team move on 17 minutes.

[Joel Matip](#) found Oxlade-Chamberlain on the right and he picked out the intelligent run of Joe Gomez. The young defender did brilliantly to wrap his boot around the ball and cut it back to Solanke, who flicked it through for Mane.

The Reds winger coolly dinked beyond Lee Grant for his first Premier League goal since August. Stoke raged at the officials, arguing that it had gone out of play before Gomez crossed but their complaints fell on deaf ears.

Liverpool threatened to add to their account with Grant spilling Oxlade-Chamberlain's low drive but recovering before Solanke could pounce on the rebound. Hughes took action as he switched to a four-man backline and pushed Diouf up front. Unrest in the stands was growing but the change did the trick as Stoke finally started to make a game of it. Gini Wijnaldum did well to block Darren Fletcher's piledriver before the ineffective Xherdan Shaqiri fired high and wide.

There were howls for a spot-kick when Peter Crouch claimed he was man-handled by Lovren but Martin Atkinson wasn't interested.

Solanke shone throughout as he occupied defenders and provided a focal point in attack. All that was missing was a goal. The England striker should have made it 2-0. He expertly turned Ryan Shawcross but after latching on to Firmino's return pass he fired tamely at Grant. Within seconds Liverpool enjoyed a huge let-off at the other end. Matip's blunder left Mignolet exposed and the keeper had little option but to chop down Diouf just outside the box. It was a nailed on red card but to Mignolet's relief and Hughes' disgust, Atkinson only brandished a yellow.

The home fans fumed and the boos continued after Shaqiri's free-kick was deflected wide off the wall. Liverpool should have rubbed salt into gaping wounds just before the break. Solanke's cute pass sent Mane scampering clear but he struck the post and the Potters survived. Stoke rallied in the second half with Allen's strike deflected behind off Lovren. They were given a helping hand by Liverpool's sloppiness in midfield. Emre Can and Wijnaldum were both booked after chasing back trying to rectify their own mistakes. When Can gave it away cheaply again soon after, Klopp put his hands on his head in disbelief.

They could have killed Stoke off on the counter but they weren't clinical enough. Mignolet did well to punch clear under pressure from Shaqiri's free-kick before tempers flared again. Oxlade-Chamberlain was cynically blocked off after knocking it past Bruno Martins Indi and reacted angrily as he shoved the defender in the chest. Klopp wisely waded in to drag his £35million signing away and the manager soon rung the changes. Salah and James Milner replaced Oxlade-Chamberlain and Solanke as the manager sought an injection of energy.

Allen wasted the chance to restore parity when he blazed over from Crouch's nod down and Salah soon made him pay. Thirteen minutes from time the points were secure. Mane skipped away from Fletcher and picked out Salah, who unleashed a thunderous left-footed volley past Grant.

Salah kissed the turf in celebration before accepting the adulation of the Kopites in front of him. Stoke were beaten but Salah wasn't finished yet. Chasing a long punt forward, he nipped the ball away from the hapless Pieters and slotted home. Can Liverpool do the business on a cold Wednesday night in Stoke? You bet they can.

MATCH FACTS

Stoke City : Grant, Martins Indi, Shawcross, Zouma, Pieters, Allen, Fletcher (Adam 85), Diouf, Choupo-Moting (Jese 75), Shaqiri, Crouch.

Not used : Haugaard, Wimmer, Berahino, Afellay, Ramadan.

Liverpool : Mignolet, Gomez, Matip, Lovren, Moreno, Wijnaldum, Can, Oxlade-Chamberlain (Milner 67), Mane (Henderson 89), Firmino, Solanke (Salah 67).

Not used : Karius, Alexander-Arnold, Coutinho, Sturridge.

Referee : Martin Atkinson Attendance : 29,423 Goals : Mane 17, Salah 77, Salah 83.

Bookings : Martins Indi, Mignolet, Can, Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Mane.

Man of the match : Dominic Solanke. Could be proud of his full Premier League debut.

## THE SENTINEL

Potters crash after refereeing blunder

**Stoke City 0, Liverpool 3 Mane (17), Salah (77,83)**

WHO knows if it would have made any difference, but events in the 39 minute did nothing to help Stoke avoid a second damaging defeat in four days.

Simon Mignolet should have walked for tripping Mame Diouf and so preventing a certain equaliser that would have given Stoke genuine hope against their superior visitors. But against 11, and with their defence still creaking under pressure, Stoke were eventually taken apart in the closing stages as Mohamed Salah stepped off the bench to score his 11 and 12 Premier League goals.

It was a harsh scoreline on a Stoke side also aggrieved – with far less justification – when Sadio Mane opened the scoring amid shouts that a cross had gone over the by-line. Defeat now shifts the spotlight and the pressure on to Saturday's home game against Swansea when the consequences of another defeat at HQ just don't bear thinking about. Stoke, showing two changes after recalling Bruno Martins Indi for Kevin Wimmer and Peter Crouch for Ramadan, knew they were playing for high stakes after kicking off just three points above the drop zone.

The atmosphere was decidedly muted early on as Stoke's recent form, together with Liverpool's prolonged possession, appeared to suck the enthusiasm out of the home crowd. The noise levels rose decidedly in the 17 minute, in angry protest, as the home crowd was convinced a goal kick should have been awarded seconds before Mane opened the scoring.

But replays suggested the linesman was right to keep his flag down as Joe Gomez clipped the ball in from the Liverpool right for Dominic Solanke, in his first Premier League start, to control and flick through for an unchallenged Mane to dink past a diving Lee Grant. In or out, there was no excuse for the ease with which a couple of passes dissected Stoke's fragile and evidently distracted defences.

There remained a worrying tenseness about Stoke's play entering the second quarter and Grant was fortunate there was no luminous orange shirt lurking close by when he needed two attempts to save Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's low shot. Stoke's first effort on goal finally arrived in the 28 minute when Mame Diouf's miscued overhead kick was missed by a Liverpool player to leave Darren Fletcher belting goalwards, but his shot hammered into Georgina Wijnaldum and the visitors were possibly relieved. Xherdan Shaqiri was trying to enliven the home side, and the home crowd, but his passing was too awry to encourage either heading past the half-hour. At least there was a belated purpose about Stoke's play, however, while the officials were playing their part in rousing the faithful with some of their decision-making. But it was Liverpool very nearly doubling their lead on 38 when Firmino's back heel slid in Solanke for a low shot well held by Grant. It was then Grant's opposite number in the thick of the action when Mignolet was tempted just out of his area to trip Diouf – converted earlier from wing back to striker - just as he was sidestepping the goalkeeper and likely to roll into an empty net. But the decision was a yellow card to go with the free-kick by way of scant reward for the home side's efforts. The knife was twisted further when Shaqiri's subsequent free-kick was deflected for a corner from which a Liverpool head sent the flag kick skidding across the face of Mignolet's exposed goal. It wasn't long before the action switched during this breathless finale to the first period as Solanke played in Mane for a free run on goal that ended with his shot beating Grant's dive to his right and striking the outside of the post.

Stoke were both relieved and angry at the same time as the scoreline somehow remained 0-1 by the interval. The home side were first out of the traps as Shaqiri's early second-half cross was headed down by a defender for Joe Allen, probably his side's best player to that point, to strike goalwards and see his shot deflect agonisingly wide of the keeper's right-hand post.

Stoke's luck had to change in such areas, surely, but at least it changed at the other end when Oxlade-Chamberlain left Kurt Zouma for dead and saw his low cross from the left ricochet off a couple of boots before being scrambled clear. Stoke were still alive. And Allen was their heartbeat as he invariably remained nearest to the main action. Clear chances were few and far between, however, and that explains the disappointment when Diouf crashed a loose ball into Can after Mignolet had punched clear Shaqiri's free-kick into the danger zone.

But that was nothing compared to the disappointment felt in the home ranks in the 69 minute when an Erik Pieters cross was nodded down by Crouch for Allen's raised boot to hoist over from scoring range.

Date: 29 November 2017

Opposition: Stoke City

Competition: League

	Times	Telegraph	Sentinel
	Guardian	Mirror	Echo
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Stoke could ill afford to squander such rare rich pickings, while at the other end the re-union of Ryan Shawcross and Martins Indi at centre half was holding pretty firm heading towards the final 15. But it was all over in the 77 minute when Mane out-manoeuvred a forgivably tiring Darren Fletcher to cross deep from the right for Salah to volley home superbly for 2-0. Stoke's agony didn't end there, either, as Emre Can's long ball over the top left Pieters all of a flutter as he misjudged the flight, then his attempted pass back, to leave the rampant Salah skipping clear to finish past a helpless Grant for 3-0. And just when you thought Stoke's night couldn't get any worse, they were denied a late consolation when Diouf hit the woodwork with only the keeper to beat and Crouch mis-kicked the loose ball. Mignolet must have been laughing all the way back to his dressing room.



Mohamed Salah came off the bench to score twice and secure an ultimately comfortable away victory for Liverpool at Stoke that moves Jurgen Klopp's side up to fifth in the Premier League.

Senegal winger Sadio Mane gave the Reds a controversial early lead, dinking the ball into the net after a marginal linesman's call.

Stoke believed Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet should have been sent off for a challenge just outside the box on their striker Mame Biram Diouf.

Mark Hughes' side applied more pressure after the break but Egypt forward Salah gave his side a two-goal cushion with a searing volley from Mane's cross.

The in-form forward then sealed victory by scoring the third with a composed finish when he was gifted a clear run on goal.

Liverpool overtake Spurs into fifth and are two points behind fourth-placed Arsenal, while Stoke - with just one win in their last seven league games - are three points above the drop zone at the other end.

Salah delivers value and goals

A study [by the CIES Football Observatory in September](#) rated Salah as the most under-valued purchase in the summer transfer market, estimating he was worth about double the initial £34m Liverpool paid Roma in July.

For once, the algorithms have been borne out on the pitch.

The Egyptian reclaimed sole possession at the top of the Premier League scoring charts with his 11th and 12th league strikes of the season, goals that have arrived at a rate of one every 87 minutes.

Unleashing his pace and freshness off the bench in the 67th minute demonstrated the increased strength in depth of Klopp's squad this season.

Salah duly made a swift and decisive impact, thumping home Mane's cross - after the former Southampton man had raced past Darren Fletcher on the right - before latching on to a weak Erik Pieters back pass and slotting home his side's third.

Klopp's starting line-up - with his biggest goal threat left on the bench, along with Philippe Coutinho - was brave, but the German was vindicated by his side achieving a good result at a difficult venue while giving Salah a rest with the festive period looming.

Atkinson bears brunt of Stoke frustration

While Salah was the key figure by the end, for much of the game it had been referee Martin Atkinson.

The official left the pitch at the end of the first half surrounded by security staff and the focus of camera lenses and jeers from the home crowd.

His interpretation of a string of midfield tussles and his dismissal of a Peter Crouch penalty appeal irritated the Stoke fans - but it was two key decisions that had escalated the mood to rage.

Firstly, Joe Gomez's cross, which led to Liverpool's opener, was delivered with most, if not all, of the ball having already crossed the byline.

With repeated replays unable to show whether the ball was out, it was an almost impossible call in real time.

Then Mignolet lunged recklessly outside his penalty area and sent Diouf tumbling six minutes before the break.

[Stoke's Twitter account](#) was certain it should have been a red card, given the Senegal striker was heading round the Belgium goalkeeper towards a goal-scoring opportunity.

"I just don't understand why the referee and the officials couldn't see that for what it was - a clear goal-scoring opportunity."

Klopp took a different view. "There were two covering players in our shirt. That's the reason, that's the rule," he said.

Hughes under the microscope

Klopp's side surrendered leads against Sevilla and Chelsea in their last two matches and Stoke gave the German a second half to mostly endure rather than enjoy. With Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting and Diouf joining Crouch in a sky-scraping forwardline, the visitors' suspect defence often creaked under an aerial attack. Liverpool kept their structure and their heads, though, to claim a first away clean sheet of the league season.

The Reds were grateful for old boy Joe Allen's profligacy, however, as the Wales midfielder twice dragged shots off target from prime positions in the penalty area after the break.

Hughes will point to those fine margins and the first-half's tight calls, but the direct style that has been successful in recent seasons now has the Potters perched perilously above the drop zone.

With just two points from their last four games and back-to-back defeats, Hughes could find he is the next manager under the microscope if the Potters' nine-season stay in the top flight becomes seriously threatened.

Man of the match - Joe Gomez

'They've got away with one' - analysis

Former Liverpool midfielder Danny Murphy on Match of the Day: "It should be a sending off for Mignolet. Diouf is ahead of Joe Gomez and he would have put the ball in an empty net. They've got away with one."

Former Arsenal and England striker Ian Wright on Match of the Day: "It's absolutely a sending off for Mignolet. It's a sending off."

"I am worried about Stoke, they are not getting any luck. I am concerned for Mark Hughes, it's very precarious for managers at the moment."

Liverpool rotate to find winning combination - match stats

Liverpool have now made 48 changes to their starting XI this season in the Premier League, 11 more than Everton - the next most-changed side.

Liverpool have lost just one of their last 10 Premier League games, winning five and drawing four.

Mane scored for first time in six Premier League games for Liverpool, ending a five-game top-flight goal drought - the longest he has endured for the Reds.

Salah has had a hand in 14 goals in his 14 games for Liverpool in the Premier League (12 goals, 2 assists).

What's next?

Stoke meet Swansea at home at 15:00 GMT on Saturday, with Liverpool travelling to Brighton at the same time.

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Match ends, Stoke City 0, Liverpool 3.

90'+4' Second Half ends, Stoke City 0, Liverpool 3.

90'+3' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Joe Allen.

90'+3' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Bruno Martins Indi.

90'+1' Offside, Stoke City. Jesé tries a through ball, but Mame Biram Diouf is caught offside.

90'+1' Attempt saved. Jesé (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal.

90' Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).

90' Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

90' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

89' Substitution, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson replaces Sadio Mané.

88' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Lee Grant.

88' Attempt saved. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal.

87' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

87' Foul by Charlie Adam (Stoke City).

86' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.

85' Substitution, Stoke City. Charlie Adam replaces Darren Fletcher.

84' Offside, Stoke City. Ryan Shawcross tries a through ball, but Mame Biram Diouf is caught offside.

83' Goal! Stoke City 0, Liverpool 3. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner following a fast break.

82' Attempt missed. Sadio Mané (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is close, but misses the top right corner. Assisted by Mohamed Salah with a cross following a corner.

82' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Erik Pieters.

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

78' Foul by Peter Crouch (Stoke City).

77' Goal! Stoke City 0, Liverpool 2. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the high centre of the goal. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

75' Attempt missed. Joe Allen (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right following a set piece situation.

74' Substitution, Stoke City. Jesé replaces Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting.

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

74' Foul by Sadio Mané (Liverpool).

74' Joe Allen (Stoke City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

73' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Darren Fletcher.

73' Attempt blocked. James Milner (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

72' Offside, Liverpool. Roberto Firmino tries a through ball, but Georginio Wijnaldum is caught offside.

69' Attempt missed. Joe Allen (Stoke City right footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Peter Crouch with a headed pass.

67' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Kurt Zouma.

67' Substitution, Liverpool. Mohamed Salah replaces Dominic Solanke.

67' Substitution, Liverpool. James Milner replaces Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

66' Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.

65' Bruno Martins Indi (Stoke City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

65' Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

65' Foul by Bruno Martins Indi (Stoke City).

64' Attempt missed. Mame Biram Diouf (Stoke City header from the right side of the box is high and wide to the right following a set piece situation.

64' Attempt blocked. Mame Biram Diouf (Stoke City right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked.

63' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

63' Foul by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool).

63' Erik Pieters (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.

62' Foul by Joel Matip (Liverpool).

62' Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.

61' Attempt blocked. Alberto Moreno (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

61' Attempt blocked. Bruno Martins Indi (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

61' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Joseph Gomez.

56' Emre Can (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

55' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).

55' Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

52' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Bruno Martins Indi.

52' Attempt blocked. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

50' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Joseph Gomez.

49' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.

48' Attempt blocked. Joe Allen (Stoke City left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked.

47' Foul by Sadio Mané (Liverpool).

47' Joe Allen (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

46' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Erik Pieters.

46' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ryan Shawcross.

Second Half begins Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1.

45'+2' First Half ends, Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1.

45'+1' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

43' Sadio Mané (Liverpool hits the left post with a right footed shot from the centre of the box. Assisted by Dominic Solanke with a through ball following a fast break.

42' Offside, Stoke City. Erik Pieters tries a through ball, but Ryan Shawcross is caught offside.

41' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Joel Matip.

41' Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Dominic Solanke.

41' Attempt blocked. Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

39' Simon Mignolet (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

39' Foul by Simon Mignolet (Liverpool).

39' Mame Biram Diouf (Stoke City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

39' Attempt saved. Dominic Solanke (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

38' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

38' Foul by Darren Fletcher (Stoke City).

32' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).

32' Darren Fletcher (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

28' Attempt missed. Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City left footed shot from the right side of the box is high and wide to the left.

28' Attempt blocked. Darren Fletcher (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Mame Biram Diouf.

26' Attempt saved. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the bottom right corner.

25' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Erik Pieters.

17' Goal! Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Dominic Solanke.

15' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).

15' Ryan Shawcross (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

14' Joseph Gomez (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

14' Foul by Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting (Stoke City).

12' Offside, Liverpool. Georginio Wijnaldum tries a through ball, but Sadio Mané is caught offside.

11' Joseph Gomez (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

11' Foul by Erik Pieters (Stoke City).

7' Offside, Stoke City. Kurt Zouma tries a through ball, but Peter Crouch is caught offside.

6' Hand ball by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool).

5' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

5' Foul by Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City).

4' Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

4' Foul by Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting (Stoke City).

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.