

Date: 13 December 2017
 Opposition: West Bromwich Albion
 Competition: League

	Times	Telegraph	Echo
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13 December
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THE TIMES

Reshuffled Liverpool firing blanks

Liverpool 0
West Brom 0

Alan Pardew had just seen West Bromwich Albion record the worst sequence of results in their 139-year history and yet it speaks volumes that Jurgen Klopp was the one who departed Anfield forlorn and frustrated.

The visitors created unwanted history as a run without a victory stretched to 16 matches, but the point they gleaned was enough to lift them out of the relegation zone and the resolute manner in which it was achieved will offer hope that they can stay there.

For Liverpool there was, for the second time in four days, only regret laced with a sense of injustice fuelled by more controversy.

Klopp had been left seething when Dejan Lovren was judged to have planted an arm in the back of Dominic Calvert-Lewin for Everton's penalty in last Sunday's Merseyside derby stalemate.

Here, it was the ruling that the substitute Dominic Solanke had used his hand in converting an 82nd-minute cross that irritated. A centre from Joe Gomez was diverted off the toe of the excellent Ahmed Hegazi to Solanke, the ball striking his chest and then his arm before ending up in the back of the net.

"For me it was twice deflected and I am still not sure if the hand was to the ball or not," said Klopp, who was more philosophical than he had been at the weekend.

"For me it looked like the chest. After seeing a few replays there was an arm, but I am not sure if he touched the ball with his arm. It must be a really good assistant to make this decision and he will be happy probably if there was a hand involved."

While Klopp saw it as a moment conspiring once more against Liverpool, Pardew viewed the call as one his players deserved after a stubborn, resilient performance which brought only a third clean sheet in 27 away league matches. "Solanke has swung his arm and it has gone in," the West Brom manager said. "It's a brave call for an assistant referee to make in of the Kop. I thank him as it the right decision, but still a brave decision."

There had been signs from the very outset -- Philippe Coutinho letting afrom Dejan Lovren roll under his foot, Sadio Mane's radar proving skew-whiff -- which suggested this would turn into a grind for Liverpool. So it proved.

Klopp lamented the inability to marry possession with pizzazz; his side's passing predictable as they struggled to penetrate the visitors' massed ranks.

Bournemouth may provide opponents more willing to play on the front foot on Sunday, but there will need to be a collective raising of standards from the past week if that visit to the south coast is not to turn into another slog.

What permutation Klopp plumps for then is becoming difficult to guess. His decision to shuffle his pack once again resulted in six changes, the vaunted quartet of Coutinho, Mohamed Salah, Mane and Roberto Firmino restored, taking the number of tweaks he has applied to Liverpool's starting line-ups to 65 in 17 league games.

It is hard to say whether that has affected rhythm, but West Brom were in no mood to offer an easy route to goal and the ability to follow orders left Pardew buoyed after the demoralising defeat by Swansea last weekend.

Grzegorz Krychowiak was efficiency personified in midfield and Jonny Evans and Hegazi provided the sort of assured base from which they will now seek to push on.

Liverpool had their moments. When Salah collected Mane's flick after 17 minutes and delivered a left-footed pass that dissected the penalty area and eluded the panicked Allan Nyom, the West Brom full back was fortunate that when Firmino ghosted behind him and applied a left-footed touch, it rolled across the face of the goal and just wide.

In the second half, Salah wasted Trent Alexander-Arnold's excellent cross with a header that drifted wide, and seconds after the disallowed goal Solanke saw another effort cleared off the line by Hegazi. The difficulty for Pardew will be making his side more expansive, but the expected return of Nacer Chadli for Sunday's home game against Manchester United should provide Salomon Rondon with a little more ammunition.

Hal Robson-Kanu landed a chipped attempt on the top of the crossbar of Loris Karius, selected ahead of Simon Mignolet who had a swollen ankle but had declared himself fit to start, before the Liverpool goalkeeper tipped away a header from Claudio Yacob,

"Every point is gold dust really and this is a really important point for us," said Pardew. "It took us out of the relegation zone and those psychological things are important. It is a building block for us."

Liverpool, nearer the relegation zone than the summit in terms of points, need to rediscover their scoring touch.

Liverpool (4-4-2): L Karius 7 -- T Alexander-Arnold 7 (sub: J Gomez 80min), D Lovren 6, R Klavan 6, A Robertson 6 -- S Mane 5 (sub: D Solanke 76), G Wijnaldum 6 (sub: A Oxlade-Chamberlain 76), E Can 6, P Coutinho 6 -- R Firmino 6, M Salah 6. Substitutes not used S Mignolet, J Milner, J Henderson, D Ings. Booked Can.

West Bromwich Albion (4-5-1): B Foster 6 -- A Nyom 6, J Evans 8, A Hegazi 7, K Gibbs 7 -- H Robson-Kanu 6 (sub: J Rodriguez 71), J Livermore 7, C Yacob 7, G Krychowiak 8 (sub: C Brunt 79), J McClean 6 -- S Rondon 6. Substitutes not used B Myhill, O Burke, G McAuley, S Field, N Ferguson.

Referee P Tierney.

theguardian

Jürgen Klopp brings back Liverpool's top brass but West Brom leave with a point

The reaction to Jürgen Klopp's rotation may have differed -- "this time you can't blame me for it, or maybe you will," he said -- but there were unmistakable echoes of the Merseyside derby in Liverpool's stalemate with West Bromwich Albion. Frustration was chief among them on the night Albion set an unwanted club record of 16 games without a win while climbing out of the relegation zone. For the second time in four days Liverpool were held at home by a well-drilled defensive unit and Klopp confronted a referee on the final whistle. His team had been on the wrong end of a crucial call once again, with Dominic Solanke having a late goal disallowed for handball, although the Liverpool manager confirmed he approached the referee, Paul Tierney, to complain about the amount of injury time as well as to discuss the substitute's 82nd-minute effort. Dejan Lovren penalty outrage it was not.

Solanke thought he had scored his first Liverpool goal when Joe Gomez's low cross deflected off Ahmed Hegazi, struck him on the chest and then a raised arm en route to Ben Foster's goal. Tierney and his assistant decreed otherwise, and rightly so. Alan Pardew's side rode their luck on occasion but worked tirelessly and defended expertly for a point on the night they set the longest winless streak in the club's 139-year history.

"I looked along the line and the assistant didn't move, which usually says something is amiss," the Baggies new manager said. "After it has hit Ahmed, Solanke has swung an arm, it's hit him and gone in. It is a brave call for an assistant referee to make that in front of the Kop; the right decision but still a brave decision. Maybe it was the slice of luck we deserved."

Klopp claimed the ball had struck Solanke's chest but was unsure about the arm. The Liverpool manager said: "I've seen a few replays, there's an arm, but I'm not sure he touches the ball. I'm not sure. I'm sure it's not on purpose. It must be a really good assistant that made the decision. He will be happy if there was a hand involved. That's another moment where we had no luck."

A Solanke shot that was cleared off the line by Hegazi moments later was another although, to use Klopp's words, this was a "stiff" and "static" Liverpool performance. Their "rotated four" -- Philippe Coutinho, Roberto Firmino, Emre Can and Georginio Wijnaldum -- were back in the starting line-up after being benched against Everton. The rest did not inspire an urgent or incisive display and Klopp spent much of the first half imploring his front two, Firmino and Mohamed Salah, to switch places more frequently to break an Albion defence marshalled superbly by Jonny Evans. Alongside him Hegazi was also commanding. Salah pierced Pardew's back-line with an exquisite diagonal ball across the Albion penalty area towards Firmino. Allan Nyom's failure to intercept offered the Brazilian a clear sight of goal but his first-time shot sailed beyond both Foster and the far post. That was as close as Liverpool came to breaking the deadlock before half-time. Salah was a foot away from connecting with an inviting cross from Trent Alexander-Arnold that sailed behind Hegazi, his international team-mate, and Coutinho shot straight at Foster from distance.

Otherwise Liverpool's attacking play lacked its usual urgency and rhythm with Sadio Mané struggling to get involved. Albion, though reverting to a back six at times, did not sit deep for the entirety of the contest and struck the bar when Hal Robson-Kanu curled a 25-yard effort over Loris Karius, deputising for Simon Mignolet, who suffered a swollen ankle against Everton.

The visitors were also a threat from Grzegorz Krychowiak's set-pieces. Claudio Yacob forced Karius to save well with a glancing header from a corner by the impressive Poland midfielder -- "he showed his international class," said Pardew -- and Hegazi should have done better with another delivery to the back post.

Thereafter it was back to absorbing Liverpool pressure for Albion. Klopp's team built up ominous momentum in the second half but the all-important breakthrough eluded them. Their manager was more resigned than incandescent this time.

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The Mail

Fab Four's reunion so out of tune; pardew frustrates kop
LIVERPOOL 0 WEST BROM 0 SHOOT! Move! No matter how much the home fans screeched, it didn't make a difference. Here was another of those games that are driving Jurgen Klopp to distraction. After all the suffering he endured at the hands of Everton three days earlier, when the neighbours batted down the hatches, Liverpool's manager took drastic action and let his 'Fab Four' of Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah, Philippe Coutinho and Roberto Firmino loose against West Bromwich.

It made no difference. For all the possession, for all the huffing and puffing, once again Liverpool came across a blue and white house they could not blow down and two more points were frittered away.

Not even a grandstand finish, when substitute Dominic Solanke had a goal disallowed for handball and a shot kicked off the line, ruffled the composure of a West Brom team who were supremely organised by Alan Pardew and worked relentlessly to get a draw.

Klopp made six changes to the side who drew 1-1 against Everton, taking his tally for the domestic campaign to 65, but the one that was most anticipated -- a break for Salah -- did not materialise.

While it was not quite as contrary as the time Rafa Benitez picked 99 consecutive different Liverpool teams then named an unchanged side for the 100th match, it was a little incongruous to see Salah, Mane, Firmino and Coutinho line up for duty on a seemingly mundane night such as this.

West Brom arrived here winless since August 22, so why select this particular quartet now when Klopp felt they were not needed for the showdown Chelsea at Anfield or the Merseyside derby? Whatever his thinking, it did not have a galvanising effect on the team or the crowd. The atmosphere was flat and impatient.

Pardew set up his team to frustrate, to break up the contest and play it on West Brom's terms. They took their time at every free kick and defended stubbornly.

The onus, as was the case against Everton, was for Liverpool to be creative and in the 17th minute they nearly found a way through when Salah guided a pinpoint cross through a forest of legs to Firmino. The Brazilian, however, pulled his shot wide of the advancing Ben Foster.

But that was as good as it got for Liverpool before the break. They saw lots of the ball, moved it from one side of the pitch to the other, but never at pace to disrupt West Brom. Too many, most notably Mane, were short of the required standard.

It gave West Brom a sense that they may be able to pilfer something and in the 30th minute, a shot from Hal Robson-Kanu caused great alarm when it dipped over Loris Karius but clipped the top of the crossbar.

It made Anfield tetchier. There was a telling exchange not long after when The Kop growled at Karius to release the ball quicker but he turned around, scowled and urged them to be patient.

Patience, though, is in short supply here. Liverpool needed to start the second half with tempo, purpose and clarity, but, if anything, they were even less assured than before.

All West Brom needed to do was exploit one set piece. Pardew thought that was about to happen in the 50th minute but, twice, his team were denied by Karius.

The first was when an inswinging free kick from Grzegorz Krychowiak caught everyone by surprise and forced the German keeper to backpedal furiously to tip the ball over the bar. From James McClean's corner, Jonny Evans tested him with a bullet header but again Karius stood firm.

Pardew spun on his heels to indicate another chance might not arrive. Liverpool, he anticipated, would not continue to be so bad and in the 57th minute they should have found a breakthrough, only for Salah to head wide from a glorious Trent Alexander-Arnold cross.

Liverpool continued to press but just when they thought they had salvation, a brilliant spot by referee Paul Tierney ensured Solanke did not get the breakthrough.

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Karius 7; Alexander-Arnold 7.5, Lovren 6, Klavan 6, Robertson 6.5; Wijnaldum 6 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 76min), Can 6, Coutinho 6; Salah 7, Firmino 7, Mane 6 (Solanke 76). Subs not used: Mignolet, Milner, Gomez, Henderson, Ings.

Booked: Can. Manager: Jurgen Klopp 6.

WEST BROMWICH ALBION (4-5-1): Foster 7; Nyom 7, Hegazi 7, EVANS 8, Gibbs 7; McClean 6.5, Livermore 6.5, Yacob 7, Krychowiak 7.5 (Brunts 79), Robson-Kanu 6.5 (Rodriguez 71, 6); Rondon 6. Subs not used: Myhill, Burke, McAuley, Field, Ferguson.

Booked: None. Manager: Alan Pardew. 7 Referee: Paul Tierney 7. Attendance: 53,243.

The Daily Telegraph

Fruitless night for Liverpool as Klopp rotates squad again

Liverpool 0 West Bromwich Albion 0 Att: 53,243 The full-time march from the touchline to referee is becoming frustratingly familiar to Jurgen Klopp. If a contentious penalty decision irked him after Sunday's Merseyside derby, a handball ruling to deny Dominic Solanke his first Liverpool goal left him cursing another home draw.

It is difficult to know who had most trepidation at the final whistle at Anfield: referee Paul Tierney as the Liverpool manager sought his attention; or TV interviewers seeking Klopp's assessment. In fairness to West Bromwich Albion, they were deserving of their point and would have been considered unlucky had Solanke's 83rd-minute strike stood. Replays showed the ball bounce off the striker's chest and then appear to divert past Ben Foster off his arm. Tierney consulted with his assistant before awarding a free-kick. "Brave but right," was Alan Pardew's observation, echoing the words of Sam Allardyce after a similarly debated call four days ago.

"For me, it's twice deflected and I'm still not sure if the hand was with the ball. It looks like chest," said Klopp. "In the game it looked 100 per cent like chest.

Afterwards I had a few replays, there's an arm but not sure if he touches the ball. Is it a penalty in the other box? I'm not sure, it's not on purpose.

"It must be a really good assistant that made the decision. He will be happy probably if there was a hand involved. That's another moment where we had no luck, because if he doesn't see it, or he's not sure, as he obviously was, it's a goal."

It should be noted Klopp was more exasperated than furious with the officials' intervention, although the greater cause of his bewilderment was that only four minutes of added time - one in the first half, three in the second - was afforded to his increasingly desperate side.

The focus on the key incident deflects from West Brom's excellence in not only nullifying Liverpool's attacking quartet, but showing more enterprise going forward than previous Anfield visitors.

Hal Robson-Kanu came closest to a winner when he struck the crossbar in the first half, and Loris Karius - surprisingly preferred to Simon Mignolet - made two excellent saves at the start of the second, the latter from Claudio Yacob.

Liverpool looked more threatening in the final stages as Mo Salah, Sadio Mane and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain spurned opportunities, and Roberto Firmino somehow struck wide early on. But most of the evening was a vindication, rather than undermining, of Klopp's rotation policy. The game was a replica of the Merseyside derby in terms of attack versus defence, but the personnel so craved over the weekend faced the same obstacles. Having been accused of rotating too much against Everton, there were another six changes here. Philippe Coutinho and Firmino returned and Salah, who was told he will be rested soon, continued. Sadio Mane looked like he needed a break.

Pardew repeated and embellished the Allardyce master plan, dropping his defenders so deep goalkeeper Foster was in danger of playing beyond them. Yet it was not all a rearguard action, even if Jonny Evans and Ahmed Hegazi shone.

Salomon Rondon was alone but diligent up front and the rarely used Grzegorz Krychowiak looked a class act in possession.

"It has made me feel a lot better than I was feeling last night," said Pardew, acknowledging the psychological importance of moving out of the relegation zone.

"Since we have come in, we have had a great reaction from the players. We sensed we were in a great place before Swansea. It did not come out in the game, but tonight it did. We gain a lot of confidence. There were great individual displays." West Brom look better than a bottom-three team, while Klopp's Premier League ambitions for the foreseeable future are focused on returning to the top four.

His side have extended their unbeaten run to 11 games. They are a good team that rarely loses - possibly the most underrated side in recent Liverpool history - but keep losing momentum with draws.

The most immediate concern for Klopp is some of his players appear to be feeling the effects of their schedule. Rotation is not the problem.

The ceaseless Anfield cycle of excellence followed by deflation is. Liverpool (4-4-2) Karius 7; Alexander-Arnold 7 (Gomez 80), Lovren 6, Klavan 6, Robertson 6; Coutinho 6, Can 6, Wijnaldum 6 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 76), Mane 5 (Solanke 76); Firmino 6, Salah 6. Subs Mignolet (g), Milner, Henderson, Ings. Booked Can. West Bromwich Albion (4-5-1) Foster 7; Nyom 7, Evans 7, Hegazi 7, Gibbs 7; McClean 6, Yacob 7, Livermore 7, Krychowiak 7 (Brunts 79), Robson-Kanu 6 (Rodriguez 71); Rondon 7. Subs Myhill (g), Burke, McAuley, Field, Ferguson. Booked Field.

Referee Paul Tierney (Lancashire).

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THE INDEPENDENT

Liverpool held as late Solanke goal ruled out

For the second time in the space of four days, Jurgen Klopp saw his players drop two points at home and again, he may leave with complaints about what might have been.

After more than 80 barren minutes of few decent opportunities for either side, Dominic Solanke thought he had finally found a breakthrough and his first Liverpool goal. West Bromwich Albion's stubborn resistance looked as though it had been broken.

Referee Paul Tierney disagreed, however, judging the youngster to have handled while bundling the ball across the line. After the late penalty call that denied Klopp's side victory over Everton on Sunday, it was another debatable decision that the Liverpool manager would be sure to point to in his post-match analysis.

The truth is though that, even after restoring Philippe Coutinho and Roberto Firmino to the starting line-up alongside Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, his 'Fab Four' were not so fantastic and simply did not do enough to break down a team whose last victory in any competition came against Accrington Stanley in August. For the visitors, even after that long barren run without a win, this point will feel like three. Alan Pardew's side arrived knowing that deep, resolute defending may just be enough to frustrate their hosts and they were proved right.

A quiet start to proceedings was reflected by a flat atmosphere in the stands and the home side failed to lift Anfield in an uninspiring first half. Pardew, taking charge of his third West Bromwich game, is not known for sending out well-drilled and organised defensive outfits but he inflicted the first defeat of Klopp's Liverpool career with a stubborn Crystal Palace team on his last visit here, and his new players set up in much the same manner.

Klopp had to wait until a quarter of an hour had passed before his side had their first clear sight of goal and Firmino should have undone the visitors' early hard work by breaking the deadlock. The Brazilian was found free at the far post after Salah's cross had cut a beeline through the West Bromwich defence but under pressure from Allan Nyom, he cut his shot wide, across the face of the gaping goal.

Pardew's side showed little attacking intent of their own but their direct passing against a weakened and unfamiliar Liverpool defence posed a threat nevertheless. Hal Robson-Kanu provided their one first-half warning shot, bouncing the ball off the top of the crossbar from range after the hosts had failed to deal with the fall-out from Ben Foster's long, lofted free-kick.

Salah came inches away from an opener towards the end of the half but Trent Alexander-Arnold's teasing cross from the right had too much on it for the Egyptian, who could not quite get close enough to prod the ball into an open goal. Shortly after, Firmino showed invention to skip around Nyom and Robson-Kanu then shoot but his effort was blocked, as was Salah's follow-up. Liverpool went back down the tunnel frustrated.

For all their control, they had failed to fashion enough clear-cut opportunities and West Bromwich sought to make them pay with a string of set pieces once play had restarted. Of all three efforts to test Karius, Claudio Jacob went closest with a header the Liverpool 'keeper had to delicately tip over the crossbar.

Klopp's side responded with another couple of half-chances. Sadio Mane on the peripheries for much of the night, opened his body up too much for one off-target attempt and Salah should have done better a few moments later with a free header. Instead, he directed it into the ground and wide.

With Pardew's side seeming to have an answer to every attack and Klopp reluctant to make a change, an error on the visitors' part began to look like Liverpool's best hope of an opener. Foster almost granted them one by scuffing a routine punch then bizarrely failing to gather the loose ball. Georginio Wijnaldum was yards from the goalline waiting to pounce, but the 'keeper recovered in the nick of time.

Liverpool upped the ante in the closing stages but only truly threatened with the move that saw Solanke's effort chalked off. The former Chelsea youngster saw Joe Gomez's cross from the right roll up off his chest, skim his arm and cross the line. Anfield celebrated, then suddenly noticed Tierney pointing for a free-kick. It was not long before another chance fell to Solanke but while Foster was attempting to find his feet, he hesitated, allowing Ahmed Hegazi to position himself and clear the resulting attempt off the line. Tierney left the pitch to jeers at the final whistle but the blame was not his. This was performance lacking in ideas that did not deserve three points.

DAILY Mirror

KLOPP'S REDS IN A DIZZY SPELL

LIVERPOOL'S old failings returned to haunt them at Anfield as they were held to a painful draw for the second time here in four days.

This time it was West Brom who took away a valuable point on the bus they had parked in front of their goal for his points much of a frustrating evening for the Kop.

And there was more controversy too, just as there was in Everton's comeback in the derby at the weekend, when sub Dominic Solanke had a goal ruled out for handball in the dying seconds. The former Chelsea striker also saw a shot cleared from the line moments before the final whistle as Liverpool piled on late pressure. But in truth they were too easily contained by organised visitors, who will take heart from an improved performance in their fight against relegation.

The problem with rotation is that it can eventually make you dizzy. Liverpool last night reverted to their Fab Four forward line against West Brom after breaking up the band for the derby, but there was no magical mystery tour for the reunion. Against spirited and organised visitors - do teams employ any other tactics at Anfield nowadays? - the Reds looked to be still affected by the fall-out from Sunday's Merseyside derby.

Manager Jurgen Klopp is spot on when he says he can't keep picking the same team, not given such a gruelling season, but after dropping points in the two matches following a 7-0 European triumph, he must wonder if he himself has halted Liverpool's momentum by continually changing his line-up.

After making changes again - 63 now to his starting line-up in the Premier League - Klopp saw his side once again dominate possession, but it was the visitors who had the best chance when Hal Robson-Kanu hit the bar. And for all their pressure in the second half, Klopp's side rarely got a sight of goal.

A Roberto Firmino miss in the first half and a poor header from close range by goal-crazy Mo Salah in the second were their best moments.

In the end, Liverpool were left to apply pressure in the hope of a mistake from visitors, who looked well-drilled and confident in what they were doing and it almost came when keeper Ben Foster punched poorly and then dropped the rebound.

But the goal never came, and now Liverpool must regroup and work out just why their old failing against defensive opponents has suddenly returned just when it seemed they had finally solved the puzzle.

Tony Pulis may be gone but Alan Pardew also knows how to manoeuvre those buses into the parking garage, and his side performed their defensive duties in some comfort during a dull first half.

Only a cross from Trent Alexander-Arnold that just evaded the lunge of Salah, and a chance for Firmino that was blocked, offered any respite from home frustration. West Brom, for their part, hinted at a later ambition when they broke swiftly, and Robson-Kanu chipped an effort onto the top of the crossbar.

With successive home games against Everton and West Brom, followed by Saturday's visit to Bournemouth, Liverpool fancied a nine-point haul to maintain mid-winter momentum. But in the space of three days it has all gone sour for the Reds.

Liverpool fans have long since given up on the title race with Manchester City away in the distance, but now they are fretting over a top-four slot.

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Reds serve up a performance as flat as the Anfield atmosphere
 It was two years to the day since Liverpool last drew with West Brom at Anfield. On that occasion [Jurgen Klopp](#) and his players held hands and took a bow in front of the Kop. [The Reds](#) boss was ecstatic after Divock Origi's dramatic last-gasp equaliser. This time a share of the spoils against the Baggies was greeted in very different fashion. Applause was conspicuous by its absence.

There was no polishing this one, no clinging to positives. Liverpool fell a long way short of their recent high standards on a dour night at Anfield.

The Reds endured the hangover from hell in the wake of last weekend's derby day frustration against Everton. Both on the pitch and in the stands lethargy ruled. So much for rotation and fresh legs ensuring that momentum would be maintained. Instead just when it looked like Liverpool had hit peak form, they have stumbled. Four points have been thrown away and they have lost their place in the top four. Liverpool's performance against West Brom was as flat as the atmosphere as Alan Pardew's strugglers escaped with the point they came for.

It was the first time the Reds had fired blanks since the visit of Manchester United two months ago. After the final whistle Klopp was deep in conversation with referee Paul Tierney, who was booed off after disallowing Dominic Solanke's late goal for handball. Just like against Everton, a big decision had gone against Liverpool. Tierney gave the goal initially before taking the advice of his assistant. Klopp's anger was understandable given the circumstances, but there was no injustice here. The ball bounced off Solanke's chest and on to his arm before flying past Ben Foster. The manic celebrations were curtailed. The England striker's wait for a first Liverpool goal goes on. There was also no point bemoaning West Brom's negativity. They were always going to park the bus. It was down to Klopp's men to find a way around it but there was little spark or guile.

You've got more chance of getting five numbers and the bonus ball than predicting a Liverpool starting XI at the moment. Having vowed to keep on rotating after controversially resting Philippe Coutinho and Roberto Firmino for the Merseyside derby, Klopp unleashed all of his Fab Four against the lowly Baggies.

Firmino led the line with Mohamed Salah for company with Coutinho on the left and Sadio Mane on the right of a potent looking 4-4-2.

The fresh legs of Emre Can and Gini Wijnaldum in midfield had been anticipated, less so Loris Karius' recall in goal. Simon Mignolet had been nursing an ankle problem since Sunday but was available for selection and desperate to play. Instead the Belgian was consigned to bench duty as Karius made only his second league appearance in the space of 12 months.

The opening 45 minutes were instantly forgettable. Liverpool were way off the pace. West Brom got 10 men behind the ball and challenged the hosts to break them down. The Reds enjoyed 70% possession in the first half but did precious little with it. There was an alarming lack of creativity and composure in midfield as the central axis of Can and Wijnaldum failed to fire.

The one golden chance Liverpool created was spurned. Salah did brilliantly to dart away from Jonny Evans and whip a glorious cross to the back post, but somehow Firmino turned it wide. For the most part, the Reds' build up play was far too ponderous. They allowed the Baggies to get organised. It needed to be slicker and quicker. West Brom grew in confidence and Hal Robson-Kanu struck the top of the bar with a dipping 25-yarder.

Karius had that covered but the German keeper endured some uncertain moments. Some of his distribution left much to be desired and he felt the wrath of the Kop behind him. Coutinho skipped inside before hammering a right-footer straight at Foster before Trent Alexander-Arnold's quality cross just eluded the on-rushing Salah. Building momentum wasn't easy with the Baggies slowing proceedings down at every opportunity. Foster's time wasting was cynical.

On the one occasion that Liverpool did find some fluency just before the break a lightning quick counter broke down.

Salah shrugged off Jake Livermore and released Coutinho, whose lofted pass picked out Mane. The winger tried to guide it into the path of Salah but his touch let him down. Liverpool were horribly sloppy early in the second half as passes went astray and they were fortunate not to fall behind.

Karius misjudged Grzegorz Krychowiak's free-kick and ended up turning it over the bar. He quickly atoned by reacting well to keep out Claudio Yacob's near post header. Another let-off when Ahmed Hegazi powered a header over the bar belatedly brought Klopp's men to life.

Changing to 4-3-3 helped with Coutinho more involved in a central role as Salah moved out to the right. For a man who scored twice in the Champions League rout of Spartak Moscow a week earlier, Mane looked strangely out of sorts and devoid of confidence. Maybe that bad miss against Everton was still playing on his mind. He should have banished that memory when he latched on to Firmino's pull back, but sliced it wastefully wide. Alexander-Arnold did his best to lift the tempo as the teenager tore down the right and provided some impressive service.

However, the young full-back's efforts went unrewarded as Salah headed past the post and then Firmino failed to convert. With 14 minutes to go Klopp finally summoned reinforcements with Solanke and Oxlade-Chamberlain on for Mane and Wijnaldum. Solanke thought he had broken the deadlock when Hegazi turned Joe Gomez's cross against him, but his joy proved shortlived.

Foster then saved at the feet of Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain as Hegazi hacked Solanke's effort off the line. It far all too little, far too late.

MATCH FACTS

Liverpool: Karius, Alexander-Arnold (Gomez 80), Klavan, Lovren, Robertson, Wijnaldum (Oxlade-Chamberlain 76), Can, Coutinho, Mane (Solanke 76), Salah, Firmino. Not used: Mignolet, Milner, Henderson, Ings.
 West Brom: Foster, Nyom, Hegazi, Evans, Gibbs, Robson-Kanu (Rodríguez 71), Livermore, Yacob, Krychowiak (Brunt 79), McClean, Rondon.
 Not used: Myhill, Burke, McAuley, Field, Ferguson.
 Referee: Paul Tierney Attendance: 53,243 Goals: none. Bookings: Can
 Man of the match: Trent Alexander-Arnold. Kept fighting throughout.

BIRMINGHAM DAILY MAIL

The Klopp strop song, 'ballboy' booked and other things you might have missed

It's easy to get a little carried away with a goalless draw at Anfield, particularly in West Brom's current plight. Yet the irony is, that as Albion broke a truly unwanted record against Liverpool - that being the extension of their winless run to 16 in all competitions, a club record - it was perhaps the most pleasing result of that sequence. The final whistle was greeted by cheers and roars of encouragement from the away end. It's understandable; while Albion are yet to score under Pardew in three games, they've come within a whisker of keeping as many clean sheets and had little trouble in keeping the Reds' "fab four" out.

On an encouraging evening on Merseyside, which prompted an impressive collective display and a deserved point, we take a look at a handful of observations that suggest that the mood in the camp is good - and that baby steps are being made.

Sam Field

Field dropped to the bench having started the previous four, but was out with experienced pair Chris Brunt and Gareth McAuley warming up in front of the hardened Albion following in the first half. That aforementioned fan-base, in an enthusiastic mood as the Baggies kept their hosts at bay, chanced their arm in provoking a response from the teenager with a chant of "do you hate the Wolves, Sammy?" Field took no time in turning round and offering a grin, and a thumbs up. He certainly endeared himself further when, in stoppage time at the end of the game, with Albion intent on seeing the game out, Field held onto the ball when it came his way for perhaps a little longer than he ought to have.

Dispossessed of it by a frustrated Philippe Coutinho, referee Paul Tierney arrived on the scene and showed Field a yellow card - despite not being on the pitch! "Sammy Field, he's one of our own."

The touchline

We're getting used to the Albion manager these days being suited and booted, rather than top to toe in tracksuit.

Alan Pardew cut a largely thoughtful figure on the touch-line, beside a frantic and desperate Jurgen Klopp, who appealed every decision.

Noteпад in hand and, at the start of the second half, a coffee in the other, Pardew marshalled his side thoroughly.

He realises, quite obviously, that Albion must start scoring goals, but he offered a triumphant fist pump to the away end at the final whistle - this was a well earned point and shut-out.

Yet while Pardew opts for a coat (requiring a hood when the heavens opened after half-time) his number two John Carver is like Tony Pulis, minus the trademark cap and specs.

The tracksuit -and the boxfresh white trainers - live on. Sort of.

The bench

It was Pardew's third game in charge - and for the third successive game, he named a different teenager for an experience they're unlikely to forget.

Against Crystal Palace, it was young defender Max Melbourne.

For the trip to Swansea, it was the turn of 16-year-old attacker Rayhaan Tulloch. And at Liverpool, 17-year-old centre-half Nathan Ferguson featured in the match-day squad.

In the absence of Tyler Roberts, Jonathan Leko and Kane Wilson who are all out on loan, there is a generation on the horizon who make Field look like a seasoned pro.

The away end

What great voice Albion's fans were in last night.

They offered a bit of everything; support to their team and plenty of jibes towards their hosts.

"Jurgen Klopp, he's having a strop" could be heard as the frustrated German argued with the officials over certain decisions.

The Baggies support also thoroughly enjoyed telling their Reds counterparts to "sit down, shut up" when Dominic Solanke's 'goal' was eventually ruled out.

"Wolverhampton, we're waiting for you" got another airing, then when Pardew decided against giving the away end a wave while concentrating on the match, there was even a cheeky rendition of "you're getting sacked in the morning"! Thankfully, for all the problems on the M6 on the journey north, the Albion players gave their heartened supporters something to go home with and they reciprocated the applause at the final whistle.

Date: 13 December 2017
 Opposition: West Bromwich Albion
 Competition: League

	Times	Telegraph	Echo
	Guardian	Mirror	Bham Daily Mail
	Independent	Mail	BBC

13 December
2017



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said his side could not complain after failing to unpick a stubborn West Brom's defence in a frustrating stalemate at Anfield. "That was not our best game tonight but I think we had enough chances to win," said the German.

"We didn't use them and we have to accept the result."

Roberto Firmino screwed a side-foot finish narrowly wide before Trent Alexander-Arnold's cross eluded Mohamed Salah in the first half.

The Baggies came just as close before the interval, however, with Hal Robson-Kanu's measured curling shot from distance flicking the bar.

Liverpool pressed further forward in the second with Salah mis-timing a header with the net gaping.

Substitute Dominic Solanke, who added another attacking focal point off the bench for the hosts, had a goal disallowed for handball and a shot cleared off the line in the final 10 minutes as West Brom's defence remained unbreached.

It was a worryingly familiar feeling at the full-time whistle for the Reds after Everton's rearguard action earned a point on Sunday, and [Manchester United](#) and [Burnley](#) deployed similar tactics with similar success earlier this season.

The Reds are behind Tottenham and outside the top four on goal difference. At the opposite end of the table, a hard-earned point takes Alan Pardew's side out of the bottom three.

'Fab Four' reunion falls flat

Jurgen Klopp refused to entertain what-might-have-beens in the wake of the derby but his team selection was telling.

By picking Salah, Firmino, Sadio Mane and Philippe Coutinho from the start he trained Liverpool's four biggest attacking threats - a prospect the Toffees had been spared - on the West Brom defence.

The full weight of the hosts' attacking quality stressed and strained the West Brom rearguard but ultimately could not force a breakthrough.

Frustratingly for a team that had 71% of possession, the Reds often posed most threat when West Brom were on the ball in the first half.

One jet-heeled counter attack, sprung from a West Brom corner, floundered on Mane's heavy touch as the Baggies found themselves out of position, while another culminated in Alexander-Arnold's cross just away from Salah's stretching boot.

Solanke and Oxlade-Chamberlain added energy and guile off the bench late on, but the relief around Anfield when the former bundled into the net in the 82nd minute proved short-lived as referee Paul Tierney rightly blew up for an accidental handball.

Pardew starts to turn the tanker

West Brom have conceded only two more goals than Liverpool in the Premier League, but scored 22 less than the hosts.

Pardew, only three matches into his reign at the Hawthorns, has promised more ambition in attack to right that lop-sided statistic.

But this match, following defeat by bottom side Swansea at the weekend, was not the one to start implementing that longer-term vision.

Instead, despite James McClean and Robson-Kanu's initial eagerness to support to lone frontman Salomon Rondon, it owed more to the qualities instilled by Pardew's predecessor Tony Pulis.

For the most part, McClean and Robson-Kanu tucked back to shore up a bank of five men in front of the defence.

That flexible formation gummed up Liverpool's fluid attack, without entirely blunting West Brom's threat going forward.

A string of swirling Grzegorz Krychowiak deliveries into the Liverpool box after the break caused Loris Karius, in the Liverpool goal for Simon Mignolet, some real discomfort.

With the late pressure piling on and a visit from Manchester United to come however, the visitors gladly took the point.

Man of the match - Trent Alexander-Arnold

West Brom's winless run reached record levels - match stats

This was just the fifth time Liverpool have failed to score in a Premier League home game under Jurgen Klopp - they had scored at least once in 38 of their previous 42.

The Reds are unbeaten in their last eight games in the Premier League (winning five and drawing three); their longest run without defeat in the competition since November 2016 (11 games).

However, Klopp's side have drawn five of their last seven games at Anfield in the Premier League (winning two), including each of the last three.

West Brom have not won any of their last 16 games in all competitions (drawing eight and losing eight); the longest winless run in the club's history.

Similarly, the Baggies are winless in 15 games in the Premier League - their only longer such run in the competition came between February 2006 and August 2008 (16 games).

Fourteen points is West Brom's worst haul after 17 games of a Premier League season since 2008-09 (12 points), when they were relegated after a 20th-place finish.

'You need a bit of luck' - match quotes

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp on Solanke's disallowed goal: It is for sure chest and then I am not sure if handball. We cannot take the decision back so all good, it is like this.

"First half we were a little bit stiff, the passing and movement was not so good but even then we had two or three chances. The second half we changed the system two or three times.

"We can do better and we have to do better but on a night like this when you are not at your best you need a bit of luck."

West Brom boss Alan Pardew: "We were so disappointed to lose at Swansea, we didn't think we deserved to, but you have to earn your right and we were excellent in all aspects of our defending today.

"We are growing with defensive confidence. It is looking a little bit brighter tonight."

What's next?

Liverpool travel to Bournemouth on Sunday with West Brom at home to Manchester United on the same afternoon.

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13 December
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Match ends, Liverpool 0, West Bromwich Albion 0.
 90'+4' Second Half ends, Liverpool 0, West Bromwich Albion 0.
 90'+3' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ahmed Hegazi.
 90'+2' Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool).
 90'+2' Salomón Rondón (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 90'+2' Sam Field (West Bromwich Albion is shown the yellow card.
 88' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).
 88' Claudio Yacob (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 87' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 87' Salomón Rondón (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 86' Attempt saved. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Dominic Solanke.
 85' Offside, West Bromwich Albion. Ben Foster tries a through ball, but James McClean is caught offside.
 84' Attempt blocked. Dominic Solanke (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked.
 83' Attempt missed. Chris Brunt (West Bromwich Albion left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left. Assisted by Jake Livermore.
 82' Hand ball by Dominic Solanke (Liverpool).
 81' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Jay Rodriguez.
 80' Substitution, Liverpool. Joseph Gomez replaces Trent Alexander-Arnold.
 79' Substitution, West Bromwich Albion. Chris Brunt replaces Grzegorz Krychowiak.
 78' Dangerous play by Mohamed Salah (Liverpool).
 78' Jonny Evans (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 76' Substitution, Liverpool. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain replaces Georginio Wijnaldum.
 76' Substitution, Liverpool. Dominic Solanke replaces Sadio Mané.
 73' Foul by Sadio Mané (Liverpool).
 73' Jake Livermore (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 71' Mohamed Salah (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 71' Foul by Jake Livermore (West Bromwich Albion).
 71' Substitution, West Bromwich Albion. Jay Rodriguez replaces Hal Robson-Kanu.
 71' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Ragnar Klavan.
 69' Loris Karius (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 69' Foul by Hal Robson-Kanu (West Bromwich Albion).
 68' Emre Can (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.
 68' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 68' Hal Robson-Kanu (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 66' Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool).
 66' Salomón Rondón (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick on the left wing.
 65' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Allan Nyom.
 65' Attempt blocked. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Emre Can.
 65' Attempt blocked. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool right footed shot from very close range is blocked.
 64' Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner.
 63' Sadio Mané (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 63' Foul by Ahmed Hegazi (West Bromwich Albion).
 57' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool header from the centre of the box misses to the left.
 56' Attempt missed. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
 54' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 54' Foul by Hal Robson-Kanu (West Bromwich Albion).
 51' Attempt missed. Ahmed Hegazi (West Bromwich Albion header from very close range is too high. Assisted by Grzegorz Krychowiak with a cross following a corner.
 51' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Loris Karius.
 51' Attempt saved. Claudio Yacob (West Bromwich Albion header from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Grzegorz Krychowiak with a cross.
 50' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Loris Karius.
 49' Foul by Ragnar Klavan (Liverpool).
 49' Salomón Rondón (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick on the left wing.
 48' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Sadio Mané.
 47' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Andrew Robertson.
 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, West Bromwich Albion 0.
 45'+2' First Half ends, Liverpool 0, West Bromwich Albion 0.
 45' Offside, West Bromwich Albion. Jonny Evans tries a through ball, but James McClean is caught offside.
 45' Foul by Sadio Mané (Liverpool).
 45' Jonny Evans (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 43' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Allan Nyom.
 43' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 43' Foul by Salomón Rondón (West Bromwich Albion).
 42' Attempt blocked. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked.
 42' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Dejan Lovren.
 40' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 40' Claudio Yacob (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 40' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Georginio Wijnaldum.
 34' Offside, West Bromwich Albion. Allan Nyom tries a through ball, but Ahmed Hegazi is caught offside.
 33' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).
 33' Grzegorz Krychowiak (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick on the left wing.
 31' Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box

is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Emre Can.
 30' Hal Robson-Kanu (West Bromwich Albion hits the bar with a right footed shot from outside the box. Assisted by Grzegorz Krychowiak.
 29' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).
 29' Hal Robson-Kanu (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick on the right wing.
 29' Offside, West Bromwich Albion. Allan Nyom tries a through ball, but Hal Robson-Kanu is caught offside.
 25' Corner, West Bromwich Albion. Conceded by Trent Alexander-Arnold.
 24' Attempt blocked. Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
 22' Attempt missed. Claudio Yacob (West Bromwich Albion header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Allan Nyom with a cross following a set piece situation.
 22' Dangerous play by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool).
 22' Claudio Yacob (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick on the right wing.
 21' Mohamed Salah (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 21' Foul by Ahmed Hegazi (West Bromwich Albion).
 19' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Jake Livermore.
 19' Attempt blocked. Andrew Robertson (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked.
 17' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the six yard box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Mohamed Salah with a through ball.
 12' Attempt blocked. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.
 10' Attempt blocked. Salomón Rondón (West Bromwich Albion right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Ben Foster.
 10' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).
 10' Claudio Yacob (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 7' Foul by Andrew Robertson (Liverpool).
 7' Hal Robson-Kanu (West Bromwich Albion wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 4' Offside, Liverpool. Georginio Wijnaldum tries a through ball, but Sadio Mané is caught offside.
 First Half begins.
 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.