

Date: 22 January 2018
 Opposition: Swansea City
 Competition: League

	Times	Telegraph	Wales Online
	Guardian	Mirror	Echo
	Independent	Mail	BBC

22 January 2018

THE TIMES

Van Dijk error helps Swansea to stun 'Goliath'

Jürgen Klopp must be sick of the sight of Swansea City. Just when the German is starting to make Liverpool look unstoppable, up pop the team from south Wales to remind them that they are far from the finished article. One year and one day since Swansea ended Liverpool's 17-match unbeaten home run, they put paid to the Merseyside club's latest impressive sequence of 18 matches without defeat in all competitions.

The men in white gave blood, they gave sweat, and the only tears inside the Liberty Stadium were ones of joy among the home support at the sound of the final whistle.

Carlos Carvalhal's team, written off by many, gave their fans every reason to think they can pull off a great escape as the Premier League's bottom-placed club earned a deserved victory with a clinical and tactically disciplined performance. It was not the full league debut that Virgil van Dijk had in mind. The world's most expensive defender failed to head clear a routine corner and Alfie Mawson, a centre back by trade, showed the kind of predatory instinct reserved for the most acclaimed strikers by sweeping the ball past Loris Karius without hesitation.

It was not the night that Federico Fernández imagined either. The Swansea defender had to endure the embarrassment of stripping down to his underpants on the touchline to replace his white shorts and shirt, which had been bloodied after he clashed heads with Mike van der Hoorn in the celebrations. The Argentinian needed two stitches to his nose. "He's OK," Carvalhal said. "I have brave boys."

It was not the night that Klopp had envisaged either, not after his men had ended the most impressive unbeaten run in Europe by defeating Manchester City eight days earlier. Swansea are still in 20th position, but they have belief and the gap to safety has been narrowed to only three points.

Liverpool, on the other hand, lacked confidence in their ability, particularly in the opposing box, and are within fifth-placed Tottenham Hotspur's sights.

Their profligacy came as something of a surprise given that they are the second-highest scorers in the league behind Pep Guardiola's irresistible Manchester City. Liverpool had chance after chance to kill this game, one of the biggest mismatches of the season on paper.

Carvalhal, meanwhile, has a habit of using complicated metaphors in the media. The Portuguese screwed up a battered £20 note to make a point about the value of his squad during his time at Sheffield Wednesday, and since moving to Swansea, he has tried to explain his transfer strategy by talking about "sardines" and lobsters". But he hit the nail on the head when he described his team's meeting with Liverpool as a "David against Goliath" clash.

For example Van Dijk, Liverpool's £75 million centre back, cost £4 million more than Carvalhal's starting XI. At times he showed why Liverpool paid such a handsome fee for his services. Defensively, he did not put a foot wrong in the first half hour, and he even played a delightful chip into Mohamed Salah's path, but the Egypt forward fired over the crossbar first time.

Van Dijk made two big errors, however, one at either end of the pitch. The first came when he headed wide from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner. For the second, he failed to use his head properly too, this time in his own box. The centre back's meek attempt to clear a Martin Olsson corner ricocheted off Fernández and bounced into Mawson's path. The Swansea centre back swept the ball home first time, sparking wild celebrations. Van der Hoorn's head collided with Fernandez's, bloodying the latter's nose and forcing a change of kit.

Van Dijk was not the only Liverpool player to miss chances. Klopp's team had 19 attempts, some of them tested Lukasz Fabianski in the Swansea goal, others did not. Sadio Mané volleyed Salah's cross wide as another chance went begging in first half stoppage time.

"The performance in the first half was not even close to what we want to do," said Klopp, who sent his team out early for the second period.

They had much work to do, but it was the same old story for the visitors. One chance came and went as Kyle Naughton dispossessed Andrew Robertson as he was about to pull the trigger. The Scot sent a low ball across the box but no one was on hand to tap in. Salah turned Mawson and put Roberto Firmino through but Fabianski bravely dived at his feet.

The Swansea goalkeeper pulled off the best save of the match to tip over Salah's dipping free kick, before Mané went down in the box with the slightest of touches, but Neil Swarbrick, the referee, waved play on.

Klopp threw on Adam Lallana and Danny Ings but neither could beat Fabianski. Nothing summed up Liverpool's impotence like Firmino's chance in injury time.

The Brazil forward timed his run into the box perfectly to meet Van Dijk's cross. He hung in the air and headed the defender's delivery towards goal but the ball struck the post. Lallana cleared the bar with the rebound and the game was over.

Swansea City (5-3-2): L Fabianski 7 — K Naughton 7, M van der Hoorn 8, F Fernández 8, A Mawson 8, M Olsson 7 — S Clucas 7, L Fer 7, Ki Sung-yueng 7 — N Dyer 7 (sub: T Carroll 64min, J Ayew 7 (sub: W Bony 79)). Substitutes not used K Nordfeldt, K Bartley, R Mesa, L Narsingh, O McBurnie. Liverpool (4-3-3): L Karius 6 — J Gomez 6, J Matip 7, V van Dijk 6, A Robertson 7 — A Oxlade-Chamberlain 7 (sub: A Lallana 68, 7), E Can, G Wijnaldum (sub: D Ings 73) — M Salah 7, R Firmino 6, S Mané 6. Substitutes not used S Mignolet, T Alexander-Arnold, J Milner, R Klavan, D Solanke.

Booked Matip, Robertson. Referee N Swarbrick.

the guardian

Alfie Mawson has lowly Swansea singing after denting Liverpool's high hopes

For Liverpool it is jarring anomalies like these that have blighted their attempted transition into title contenders. Jürgen Klopp's side badly lacked mojo on a night when they lost their 18-match unbeaten run against Swansea City, the Premier League's bottom club.

Carlos Carvalhal had said his team must make do with buying sardines and not lobster at the start of this month but this courageous performance, to earn only their fifth league win of the season, threw Liverpool behind the trawler.

After four minutes of injury time, during which Roberto Firmino headed against a post, the sound of relief in south Wales was deafening. For Swansea, with the season already six months old, perhaps this is lift-off. Alfie Mawson's first-half goal from Sam Clucas's corner handed Swansea victory and at the same time destroyed the myth that Liverpool's set-piece woes would end with the arrival of Virgil van Dijk, who made his league debut, in defence.

Swansea remain bottom but a result that moves them to within three points of safety enhances their fight for survival. They are six points off 10th-placed Watford.

There was a minute's applause before the kick-off in memory of Jimmy Armfield and Cyrille Regis after which Swansea began brightly but Liverpool, who had a light training session along the M4 at Port Talbot Town on Monday morning, took 45 minutes to find their stride. It was Emre Can who instigated their first threat when his diagonal pass found Sadio Mané, who had crept in behind Mike van der Hoorn. But by the time Mané latched on to the ball, Lukasz Fabianski smothered the danger. Swansea issued their own warning, when Jordan Ayew, who left the field to a standing ovation, lashed home but only after running the ball out of play.

Swansea were organised defensively but Carvalhal also demanded his full-backs, Martin Olsson and Kyle Naughton, to fly forward. But when Mawson tugged at Mohamed Salah's shirt 25 yards from goal, one could forgive the home support for shuddering. From the resulting corner Van Dijk put a header just wide. It was role reversal a moment later when the Dutchman lofted the ball over the Swansea backline, only for Salah, first time, to volley over. Van Dijk's centre-back partner, Joel Matip, then rampaged forward unchallenged, playing a give-and-go with Salah, but the defender got himself in a tangle.

If that was an unfamiliar sight, then the moment Mawson steered home only the seventh league goal Swansea have scored at home this season was almost as unexpected. Van Dijk's headed clearance from Clucas's corner cannoned off Federico Fernández to Mawson, who swivelled and squeezed the ball beyond Loris Karius.

Klopp was not drawn into changing personnel at half-time but his team's intentions altered. They were camped inside Swansea's half for much of the second period, leading to Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain flighting a superb ball in for Firmino, who wrestled in between van der Hoorn and Fernández before the Swansea captain hacked the ball away. Liverpool dominated possession as the hosts lost sight of the ball altogether, retreating further and further. Robertson twice found space and would have shot goalwards but for Naughton's magnificently-timed interception.

When Ki Sung-yueng clumsily upended Mané, Swansea surrendered a free-kick 20 yards from goal. Liverpool formed a five-strong queue around the ball but it was Salah whose curling effort brought a fingertip save from Fabianski. Swansea, understandably, were a nervous wreck but continued to fight their corner relentlessly.

As Carvalhal paced the touchline, Klopp sought changes in the shape of Adam Lallana and Danny Ings. The latter jinked away from Van der Hoorn before blasting at Fabianski, who cradled the ball in his arms. Then Van Dijk and Salah fired over and wide respectively. Van Dijk was not finished, teeing up Firmino in the fourth minute of added time. Unmarked at the back post, his header rattled the other one before Lallana forced the ball goalwards in a six-yard box skirmish. Mawson cleared his effort off the line and Swansea survived.

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The Mail

Swansea 1-0 Liverpool: Alfie Mawson gives hosts shock victory after Virgil van Dijk's first half error

With each passing minute, the noise got louder and louder. On each side of the ground, they chanted and sang and, for the first time in an age, were together as one. The Liberty Stadium has offered Swansea no freedom this season. It has been oppressive, occasionally poisonous, but when it mattered most, they locals were unified and the outcome, against the odds, was a result and performance to give hope that all is not lost. True, they were assisted by Liverpool being Liverpool. A week after beating the champions-elect, they surrendered what had been an impressive 18-match unbeaten run to the team that has spent the last 23 days propping up everyone else. They were wretched and Jurgen Klopp made no excuse. Yet to put this result, secured by Alfie Mawson's 40th minute strike, down solely to Liverpool's failings would do Swansea a great disservice. Carlos Carvalhal likened his team's position to being 'in hospital' but they are ready to fight for survival. Compared to how they looked when the sides last faced each other on Boxing Day – a spiritless, shambolic mess who were thrashed 5-0 – Swansea have made giant strides under Carvalhal. They were organised, defiant and, from the first whistle, not cowed by the challenge.

What Carvalhal needed was maximum concentration from his players and the new manager, as he tried to impart his orders, was a persistent, fidgeting presence on the touchline, demanding they stay compact to keep the door closed to Liverpool, who he knew would dominate possession.

'I told the players that Liverpool were like a Formula One (car),' Carvalhal colourfully explained. 'But a Formula One car at 4pm in traffic on the streets of London does not have great speed. I told my players to put Liverpool in traffic.' Stuck in the gridlock of persistent tackling, Liverpool lacked the ingenuity and speed that saw them torpedo Manchester City's unbeaten run eight days earlier. This, arguably, was as ineffective as Mo Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane have been all season. The closest Liverpool came to finding a way through was when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain whipped a corner in the 23rd minute onto the head of Van Dijk, who had climbed above Fernandez but could not direct the ball into the corner of Fabianski's net. Van Dijk, starting his first Premier League game for Liverpool, had looked all class. He was efficient with his clearances, crisp with his passing and his huge physical presence screamed authority; he missed nothing in the air, either, so it was a shock when another header led to the opening goal. Swansea had struggled to create a clear opportunity but in the 40th minute they took the lead. Van Dijk met Martin Olsson's corner but his header bounced off Federico Fernandez's legs and Mawson, who had been left unmarked, swept in a crisp finish. They have been looking to catch a break like this for some time but what Fernandez could not have expected was his nose being broken in the celebrations: as he hugged Mawson, Mike Van Der Hoorn leapt onto his back, jolting the captain's face into Mawson. Fernandez needed two stitches.

His absence from the playing field, as Swansea's medical staff sprayed and bandaged the wound, could have had costly ramifications but in a quick break in first half injury time, Mane fired wide when charging into the space Fernandez would have been to meet a cross from Salah.

Klopp sent Liverpool out early for the second half and, soon enough, his anxiety about the deficit they had to retrieve could be seen in his actions: pointing, whistling, bickering with the fourth official and assistant referee when things failed to go his side's way.

Having failed to keep a Premier League clean sheet since December 9, nullifying the second highest scorers in the country was going to take a huge effort but it was one which Swansea were keen to undertake, the five-man defence giving Liverpool's attack no space to breathe.

For all that Liverpool passed and probed, they kept being pushed down blind alleys. Carvalhal, who had initially been jumpy, exuded calm as he watched feet being put in and heads thrown in the way. It said everything a free-kick from Salah, superbly saved by Fabianski, was Liverpool's biggest chance until added time.

There would be one more, in the 94th minute, when Van Dijk clipped a ball to the back post but Firmino's header crashed against the woodwork and Adam Lallana was blocked as he tried to follow up.

'Swansea needed our help,' Klopp lamented. 'And we helped them. We could have got a point but I would still not have been happy with the performance.' And as the ball was cleared, it elicited the bigger cheer of the night. They enjoyed this one. To clamber away from peril, they need many more like it.

MATCH STATS, PLAYER RATINGS AND MATCH ZONE

SWANSEA (3-5-2): Fabianski 8; Van der Hoorn 7, Fernandez 7, Mawson 7.5; Naughton 7, Clucas 6, Fer 7, Ki 6, Olsson 7; Ayew 6, Dyer 6 (Carroll 64mins 6)

Subs not used: Nordfelt (GK), Bony, Narsingh, Carroll, Bartley, Mesa, McBurnie
Goals: Mawson (40) Manager: Carlos Carvalhal 8

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Karius 6; Gomez 6, Van Dijk 6.5, Matip 6, Robertson 6; Oxlade-Chamberlain 5.5 (Lallana 68mins 6), Can 5.5, Wijnaldum 6; Salah 6.5, Firmino 6, Mane 5.5

Subs not used: Mignolet (GK), Milner, Klavan, Lallana, Ings, Solanke, Alexander-Arnold Booked: Robertson, Matip Manager: Jurgen Klopp 6

Referee: N Swarbrick 7

Man-of-the-Match: Lukas Fabianski

The Daily Telegraph

Swansea withstand Liverpool siege to lift survival hopes

Swansea City 1 Mawson 40 Liverpool 0 Att: 20,886

This time last year Swansea City beat Liverpool at Anfield and gained the belief that saved them from Premier League relegation. Here they defeated Liverpool once more with Hymns and Arias, the fans' anthem that has sadly not echoed around the Liberty Stadium much of late, sung joyously at the final whistle.

It was a final whistle after which Liverpool's frustrations boiled over with pushing and shoving. They had spurned chances, been denied by some astonishingly resolute defending and, with just seconds to go, Roberto Firmino thumped a header against a post from close range. Firmino surely had to score and Liverpool will have felt they had to win as they fight to finish in the top four. Instead, their 18-match undefeated run in all competitions has come to a spectacular end against a Swansea side who are still 20th in the league but are not cut adrift.

In fact, they are three points from safety and the belief this result gave them under their Carlos Carvalhal, their new manager, was palpable. He later laid out in his inimitably colourful style: the patient - the team - were in intensive care when he took over, relegation appearing a certainty, but they are now "well enough to accept visitors".

There are signs of life; they have a fighting chance.

For Liverpool this was sickly. It was a far cry from the lively performance they had delivered in beating Manchester City in their last league fixture, and their next home encounter is against fifth-placed Tottenham Hotspur, who remain just two points behind instead of the expected five.

The fury of Jurgen Klopp, the manager, was clear. Having beaten the leaders they have now, in their very next game, lost to the side who sit rock-bottom. This is not what was expected of a team with Liverpool's juggernaut momentum. Carvalhal had an alternative description to juggernaut. For him, Liverpool are a racing car - and he needed to slow them down. "When we studied Liverpool, and started to prepare the game, I talked to my players," he said. "And I said 'this is a very strong team. They are like a Formula One car but a Formula One car at 4pm in London in the traffic is a car like any other. We have to put them in the traffic in London and not open the roads.'"

The football equivalent of creating traffic is blanket defending and Carvalhal, unashamedly for a usually front-foot manager, played five at the back, parked his defence five yards outside the penalty area and challenged Liverpool to break them down. To use a phrase coined by his fellow Portuguese Jose Mourinho, he parked the bus.

Could Liverpool beat that? They had the chances even in a stodgy first half and - three times - they went close with Virgil van Dijk, on his Premier League debut for Liverpool, heading narrowly wide from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner and Mohamed Salah volleying wildly over from Van Dijk's clever, lofted pass. Then, on half-time, Salah broke down the right and crossed for Sadio Mane, who volleyed wide, wasting the kind of chance he usually gleefully takes.

By then Liverpool were behind and, for them, it was an infuriatingly familiar concession. Yet again it was from a set-piece. Swansea won a corner which was dealt with weakly by Van Dijk, whose header bounced into the turf, close to goal. Ki Sung-yueng challenged for it and, as the ball ran to Alfie Mawson, he swivelled and swept it low into the net, just inside the post.

The celebrations were so wild Federico Fernandez received a bloody nose and had to change his lily-white kit. The defender also had two stitches in his nose.

Klopp sent his team out early for the second half. He would have demanded, and expected, a reaction. Salah shot wide and only a fine, lastditch challenge by Kyle Naughton denied Andrew Robertson before Lukasz Fabianski flicked a Salah free-kick over the bar.

Liverpool's desperation grew. Shots were snatched at from distance - tellingly, from defenders - and substitutes Adam Lallana and Danny Ings were introduced, the latter snatching at a chance. Again Fabianski saved.

It was increasingly frantic and, late on, Liverpool spurned a hat-trick of chances with Emre Can volleying over, Salah firing high and wide and then came Firmino's header. Even then there was a scramble as Lallana tried to reach the rebound. But Swansea blocked that, also. They remained defiant. Three hundred and sixty-six days after that memorable victory at Anfield, they had another win over Liverpool. Is it the start of another revival? Time will soon tell. The engine is revving while, on this occasion, it was Liverpool again who stalled.

Swansea City (5-3-2) Fabianski 7; Naughton 7, Van der Hoorn 7, Fernandez 7, Mawson 8, Olsson 7; Fer 7, Ki 7, Clucas 6; Dyer 7 (Carroll 64), Ayew 9 (Bony 79). Subs Narsingh, Nordfeldt (g), Bartley, Mesa, McBurnie. Liverpool (4-3-3) Karius 6; Gomez 5, Matip 5, Van Dijk 5, Robertson 7; Oxlade-Chamberlain 5 (Lallana 68), Can 6, Wijnaldum 5 (Ings 73); Salah 6, Mane 5, Firmino 6. Subs Milner, Klavan, Mignolet (g), Solanke, Alexander-Arnold. Booked Robertson, Matip. Referee Neil Swarbrick (Lancashire).

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THE INDEPENDENT

Mawson takes advantage of Liverpool's familiar faults
 SWANSEA Mawson 40 1 LIVERPOOL 0

Virgil van Dijk's Premier League debut ended in a defeat for the Dutchman who was meant to solve his club's defensive frailties. The £75m defender was at fault when he failed to clear a corner that enabled Swansea's Alfie Mawson to score the only goal. It was the kind of error Jürgen Klopp had grown accustomed to before Liverpool's record signing arrived from Southampton: a cross into a central area which a shaky defence failed to deal with.

The result meant Swansea closed the gap to safety to three points and with one defeat in six games in all competitions under new manager Carlos Carvalhal, they may find the momentum to escape relegation for a second successive season.

The omens had not been encouraging for Swansea as they sought a first home win in the Premier League under Carvalhal. Liverpool were unbeaten in 18 matches in all competitions. More damning was the fact Carvalhal was their fifth different manager since they last faced Liverpool at the Liberty Stadium in October 2016.

It was Van Dijk who created Liverpool's The number 6 points 11 teams from first opportunity when his long ball found Sadio Mané in space but the striker was unable to bring the ball properly under control SWANSEA under pressure from Lukasz Fabianski. The danger signs were there again in the 13 minute when a ball whipped in from the left by Andrew Robertson ricocheted around the Swansea goalmouth, only for Roberto Firmino to be penalised for handball Liverpool's first alarm came in the 17th minute when Joe Gomez over-committed trying to intercept and Jordan Ayew was set free by Sam Clucas. Ayew took the ball wide before cutting back along the goalline to fire past Loris Karius, but the referee had correctly blown for a corner. The pattern of Liverpool dominating possession with Swansea content to sit deep resumed and when they forced a corner, Van Dijk came close to a goal on his league debut with a glancing header than drifted wide.

They had a better chance on the half-hour when Van Dijk elegantly chipped the ball forward to Mo Salah, who volleyed first-time from eight yards but fired over the bar. Just when it appeared Liverpool would soon take the lead, the bottom-placed club exposed old failings in the middle of the Liverpool defence to take the lead against the run of play in the 41st minute.

A sweeping move ended with a deep cross from Martin Olsson and a nervy Van Dijk miscued a rushed clearance away for a corner. Liverpool dealt with that one, but conceded a second and from that kick the Swans took their unlikely lead through Mawson. Clucas swung the ball in, Van Dijk's poor header struck Federico Fernandez and Mawson showed impressive goalscoring instincts to sweep the ball past a stranded Karius for the defender's third goal of the season.

Klopp looked aghast with another soft goal conceded in the centre of his defence, a reminder of the kind of faults Van Dijk was supposed to remedy. But the home fans celebrated wildly as if they suddenly believed their long haul to climb out of the relegation zone had begun.

It was not just Klopp who appeared rattled as Liverpool pair Robertson and Joel Matip were shown yellow cards in quick succession. Robertson was booked for kicking out at Ayew as he lay over the ball after a foul and Matip went into the book for scything down Clucas. But there was still time before the break for Salah to serve the ball on a plate for Mané with the last move of the half, only for the striker to wastefully volley wide from a tight angle.

Liverpool pressed for an equaliser throughout the second half, but were guilty of failing to take their opportunities, or were denied by an inspired Fabianski. The Polish keeper was alert and showed his shot-stopping ability with two superb saves. The first denied Salah when he tipped over the Egyptian's free-kick with acrobatic save on the hour mark. Then, Fabianski dived low to deny Liverpool substitute Danny Ings late on as Klopp's side laid siege.

In the dying moments, Firmino hit the post in a scramble, but Adam Lallana failed with the rebound.

Fabianski Mawson Van der Hoorn Fernandez Naughton Olsson Sund-yeung Dyer Fer Clucas Ayew Firmino Mane Salah Oxlade-Chamberlain Wijnaldum Can Robertson Van Dijk Matip Gomez Karius Liverpool Subs: Swansea Carroll (Dyer, 64), Bony (Ayew, 79); Liverpool Lallana (Oxlade-Chamberlain, 68), Ings Wijnaldum, 73).

Booked: Liverpool Matip, Robertson. Man of the Match Mawson.

Rating 7/10. Possession: Swansea 28% Liverpool 72%. Attempts on target:

Swansea 2 Liverpool 4. Referee Neil Swarbrick (Lancashire). Attendance 20,886.

DAILY Mirror

FAB KEEPS OUT THE FAB FOUR

JURGEN KLOPP cut a frustrated figure on the touchline - probably wondering how it is possible for Liverpool to go from one extreme to another.

The brilliant thrill-a-minute victory over Manchester City eight days ago to the lame, disorganised surrender against the Premier League's bottom club.

Hard to fathom, impossible to understand and a serious setback despite it being their first defeat in 19 games, as all the old doubts will come back to haunt them. Fragile at the back, the defender signed for £75million made the mistake which led to Swansea's goal, Virgil van Dijk's poor clearance opening the door for Alfie Mawson's unlikely winner.

It still took a string of terrific saves from Lukasz Fabianski to defy Liverpool, but Klopp's men were decidedly off colour, vulnerable at the back and weak in midfield.

It was an incredible upset, only Swansea's fifth win in the Premier League this season and, even though they remain bottom, it will give them a glimmer of hope. Liverpool know the neck-and-neck race for a place in the top four means every setback will be seen as a disaster and Klopp will be worried his players just could not summon up an answer.

He gave Emre Can the armband, which could be seen as a charm offensive to try to persuade the Germany midfielder to stay, with his contract up at the end of the season.

But otherwise Klopp made only one change - Van Dijk for Dejan Lovren, who was ill.

It was a night the defender will probably want to forget, as he was off key at both ends of the pitch.

Liverpool made a painfully slow start, positively pedestrian compared to Klopp's self-styled rock and roll football in their last outing - the 4-3 win over City.

They were a world away from that intensity and struggled to get going.

They have lost their momentum and are in serious danger of dropping points in the fierce battle for a top-four finish. The Reds were sluggish and wasteful up front, Van Dijk glancing wide from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's corner and Mohamed Salah then volleying over when clean through.

Swansea boss Carlos Carvalhal looked surprised there was no offside flag and repeatedly made a sign for the VAR to be used, even though there was no video ref for this game.

Having weathered the storm, the home side began to grow in confidence and Liverpool looked vulnerable in defence.

Swans left-back Martin Olsson swung over a cross, Van Dijk sliced his clearance and the ball spun up and went just over the Reds crossbar. If Van Dijk was hoping in to lift confidence in Klopp's defence he was having the opposite effect. Shortly afterwards a Sam Clucas corner was only half cleared by Van Dijk and Federico Fernandez cushioned the ball to set up Mawson to smash home.

The Liberty Stadium could barely believe what they were watching - then exploded in delight.

Fernandez celebrated so wildly he got a bloody nose when the players jumped on top of each other.

Liverpool defenders Joel Matip and Andrew Robertson were booked for fouls borne out of frustration and Klopp looked strangely subdued, seemingly unable to inspire his men.

They did raise their game after the break but Fabianski was equal to everything, tipping a Salah free-kick over the bar, rushing off his line at the first hint of danger and commanding his box to great effect.

Klopp threw on Adam Lallana and Danny Ings in a roll of the dice to try to salvage something from the game, but Liverpool just could not find a way past Swansea's brave resilience.

Fabianski grew in confidence and stood firm as Liverpool frantically searched for an equaliser with time running out.

He was unbeaten at the final whistle - but only just, the home side having survived a huge scare in the dying seconds when Firmino hit a post with a header and Lallana failed to convert the rebound from five yards out.

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This is the REAL Liverpool way - and there's only one way it can change Trademark Liverpool, moaned supporters. And they weren't wrong. Mere days after taking part in a Premier League classic with a thrilling 4-3 home victory over title contenders, the Reds, chests puffed out and mood buoyant, travelled to struggling opponents. A routine win was expected. Instead, though, came a demoralising 1-0 reverse to prompt much angst, finger-pointing and recrimination among the fanbase. Except this isn't 2018 we're talking about. It's 22 years earlier, when Liverpool followed their memorable triumph over Newcastle United with dismal defeat at Coventry City. Such has been the case for the Reds far too often during the Premier League era. If ever there is a club guilty of becoming carried away with themselves, it's Liverpool. During the past 25 years, there have been numerous occasions when the Anfield outfit, whether unwittingly or not, have allowed themselves to become swept along by the tide of emotion that so often follows a landmark result. The most infamous, most costly example of this arguably came during the title challenge of 2014 and the visit of Chelsea. We all know what happened next. So desperate are Liverpool and their supporters for success – one trophy in almost 12 years, don't forget – that every major result is greeted with euphoria, every setback as the end of the world. No team, no matter how successful, is immune to results such as the one at the Liberty Stadium on Monday night. Nor do they completely avoid the sense of comedown that was inevitable after the manner in which Manchester City were beaten. Perspective is everything. Consider this. Imagine a season in which Liverpool lose twice to Manchester United, win at only one of the bottom seven clubs, are beaten at home by the team that finishes last, fail to score in two visits to Wembley and are knocked out of the FA Cup by a second-tier side. It would be enough to send the modern-day, social media-active Reds fanbase into meltdown. Such a season, as you may have guessed, has already happened. But many would be surprised to discover all of that happened in the 1983-84 season, Liverpool's most successful season ever when they clinched the treble of league championship, League Cup and European Cup. While the bar has since been raised, then, like now, the Reds were criticised for each setback. They had, though, earned the right to be cut a little slack. Klopp's Liverpool thus far haven't, although they are edging ever nearer. Liverpool, though, will always be a special case, forever carrying a weight of history that increases each year their title drought, now poised to enter a 28th year, extends. Tottenham Hotspur, the team most likely to threaten the Reds' top-four place, suffered a result not much better than Liverpool at the weekend, but there wasn't anywhere near the same level of teeth-gnashing after a disappointing 1-1 draw at Southampton. That was curious given Spurs are five points and three places worse off than this stage last season. Liverpool, beaten just five times in their last 46 games in all competitions, are one point better off. This, though, won't be of any consolation to fans picking apart Monday night's events, from the ongoing reticence to replace Philippe Coutinho in the transfer window, issues at right-back and just who should be captain. Commonsense and sheer logic indicates Liverpool, under Klopp, are improving each year. But overplaying the highs and the lows will remain part of Reds lore until they consistently return silverware. It is, to pilfer an adage, the Liverpool way.



Why the win over Liverpool was a statement to Arsenal as well as Swansea City's relegation rivals
 In all fairness, it wasn't a great game against Liverpool, but that doesn't matter one bit. Liverpool are a far better side technically, which we have to accept, but in terms of desire and commitment you can't fault the effort of our boys. So many people have gone on about possession and the fact that Swansea only had 28 per cent of the ball against Liverpool, but the bottom line is, Swansea put the ball in the back of the net and Liverpool didn't. Leicester won the Premier League with an average of around 30 per cent possession, so it just goes to show it doesn't matter how much of the ball you have if you don't stick it in the goal. I thought the whole team were brilliant, but I have to admit, we'd be goners without Lukasz Fabianski. He was as terrific as ever against Liverpool and without him we'd probably already be relegated. With the possible exception of Roger Freestone who was a terrific servant for the club and a fantastic man, I think Fabianski is the best goalkeeper Swansea have had since Noel Dwyer in the 60s. Without him we'd be sunk. But most importantly, I was very pleased for Carlos Carvalho and I've got a lot of time for him. I haven't met him but I've liked him ever since he arrived at the club. He sounds like he's enjoying himself at the moment, and of course results help that, but he is constantly a shining light and his positive demeanour is infectious. He must make things so much easier for the players and in my opinion that's totally different to the previous regime. Paul Clement was a defeatist, and the way Carvalho speaks and his conduct in press conferences, he's always encouraging and that must be great for the players. He's a little bit crazy with his analogies and they probably confuse a lot of people when he starts talking about Formula 1 cars, sardines and lobsters. But when you look back at what he's said and the message he's trying to get across, he's spot on every time. Obviously the Liverpool win has given everyone connected to the club a huge boost, but more importantly it sent out a message to everyone else in the bottom half of the table. It's probably unrealistic to say Swansea will get to 40 points this season, but it's looking increasingly likely that around 35 could be enough to keep you in the Premier League. And the confidence that win will bring the players is just incredible, but as I said, it's a statement to everyone else who thought Liverpool would just turn up and win. We've had such rotten luck at times with decisions, and you could see fans were waiting for it all to go wrong in the last five minutes against Liverpool, almost as if they were expecting a penalty or a red card or something that would change the game. But thankfully that never happened and the supporters played a huge part in what was a real team effort. The atmosphere was just incredible and sometimes you just need a 12th man to give you that lift. It all means Swansea have a free pass against Notts County in the FA Cup this weekend because if they win, the confidence rises even more but if they lose, then people won't be too worried because Swansea have bigger fish to fry. I just hope the players can go out and enjoy the occasion and deliver another good performance before Arsenal come to the Liberty. And I have to say, I'm a big admirer of Arsenal and the way they play, I always have been. But in the last few years I think they've gone backwards. I would say of the top five or six sides in the Premier League, Arsenal are the one I would most like to play right now, either home or away. We've got a great record against them and we've had some memorable wins in this fixture, and I don't think Arsenal will relish coming to South Wales after seeing how the Swans beat Liverpool. So the fans should look forward to the final two games of January and hopefully the good run under Carvalho will continue.

Date: 22 January 2018
 Opposition: Swansea City
 Competition: League

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Manager Carlos Carvalhal says Swansea put "Formula 1 car" Liverpool in traffic as the Premier League's bottom club claimed a famous victory at the Liberty Stadium.

Alfie Mawson's goal proved the difference as the Swans recorded a potentially priceless win in their fight against relegation.

Liverpool, unbeaten in their previous 18 games, had by far the better scoring chances but some poor finishing, fine home defending and an impressive display from goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski kept them at bay.

The closest they came was when Roberto Firmino struck a post with a late header. Swansea have been beaten just once in six matches since the appointment of Carvalhal, while Liverpool lost for the first time since Spurs beat them 4-1 on 22 October.

"I talked with my players and said this Liverpool is a really strong team," said Carvalhal, who has secured seven points in his first four league games.

"They are like a Formula 1 car. But at 4pm in London it will be difficult to speed, they would be a car like any other.

"We needed to make sure there was traffic, we could not let them have open roads to drive in."

Swansea were six points adrift of safety heading into the match, having lost eight games in a row against sides in the top six. But after Monday night's win, Carvalhal's side are within three points of 17th.

The Reds, meanwhile, failed to narrow the gap on Chelsea and Manchester United but remain fourth.

They came into this game on the back of a superb win over leaders Manchester City but lost for only the third time in the league this season after a lacklustre display.

"I am more frustrated about the performance than the result," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp. "We didn't play how we wanted to play.

"We gave them the opportunity to score and then we did exactly what Swansea wanted. Swansea knew that to win they needed our help, and unfortunately we gave it to them."

Goal-shy Swansea stay with pack

Heading into this match the hosts had scored only 22 goals all season across all competitions - two fewer than Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah alone.

The Swans had lost seven of their previous 11 home matches and a loss to Liverpool would have equalled their worst home record in the Premier League, so it was perhaps no surprise that they approached the contest more like an away match.

Having shipped five goals at Anfield just 27 days ago, that cautious approach made sense, especially considering Swansea had lost each of their past eight home fixtures against the top six, conceding 25 goals in the process.

While they might have lacked Liverpool's quality, their game management will have thrilled Carvalhal.

Their back three of Mawson, Federico Fernandez and Mike van der Hoorn were superb and, as the contest wore on, they had an outlet in the tireless Jordan Ayew, who might have added a second but saw his effort was well saved by Loris Karius.

Liverpool pushed until the end with substitute Danny Ings testing Fabianski.

Swansea were then forced to repel cross after cross but the result was secured when Salah blasted over and Firmino struck the post in time added on.

Personnel changes mean adjustment for Liverpool

January has been a month of adjustment for Liverpool and their first league contest with Virgil van Dijk at the heart of their defence provided a look at what they have gained and lost.

The world's most expensive defender looked assured and composed for long spells, even contributing to a host of attacks, but he was also central to the goal.

He failed to effectively cut out two successive crosses, heading both out for corners, and his timid header then struck Swansea skipper Fernandez and fell perfectly for Mawson, who finished like a striker into the bottom corner.

The goal, which sparked celebrations so wild Fernandez broke his nose, was harsh on a Liverpool side missing the invention and creative spark provided by the departed Philippe Coutinho.

That might not have been the case in the thrilling [4-3 win against Manchester City](#), when Pep Guardiola's side were happy to give as good as they got and leave space, but it was a different story against a side with 11 men behind the ball.

When they did break through, Van Dijk headed wide from an Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain corner and freed Salah beautifully with a ball over the top that the Egyptian fired over, before Fabianski denied Oxlade-Chamberlain.

The visitors should have levelled just before the break but Sadio Mane could only volley wide after Salah's centre, and a sense of desperation crept into Liverpool's play as the contest wore on.

Man of the match - Alfie Mawson (Swansea)

Turning the table upside down - the stats

Since the start of 2014-15, this is only the third time the team starting the day bottom of the table have beaten a team in the top four (W3 D4 L20). The other two occasions were Crystal Palace against Chelsea this season, and Swansea at Liverpool in 2016-17.

Swansea have earned seven points in their four Premier League games under Carlos Carvalhal (W2 D1 L1), two more than they'd picked up in their 12 before his arrival (W1 D2 L9).

This was Liverpool's first defeat in 15 Premier League games (W10 D4), and just their third in the competition this season.

Jurgen Klopp has lost three Premier League games against Swansea, more than he has against any other opponent in the competition.

Alfie Mawson is only the second Swansea player to score more than once in the Premier League at the Liberty Stadium this season, after Tammy Abraham (three).

Liverpool had 20 shots to Swansea's three in this match, but only managed two more attempts on target than the hosts (2).

What's next?

Both teams are in FA Cup fourth-round action on Saturday, when Swansea look to avoid a shock at League Two Notts County (15:00 GMT) and Liverpool host West Brom in the late game (19:45).

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Match ends, Swansea City 1, Liverpool 0.

90'+5' Second Half ends, Swansea City 1, Liverpool 0.

90'+5' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alfie Mawson.

90'+5' Attempt blocked. Adam Lallana (Liverpool left footed shot from very close range is blocked.

90'+5' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool hits the left post with a header from the right side of the six yard box. Assisted by Virgil van Dijk.

90'+3' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool right footed shot from a difficult angle on the right is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Adam Lallana.

90'+1' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a headed pass.

88' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alfie Mawson.

88' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Joel Matip.

85' Attempt saved. Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Mohamed Salah with a cross.

85' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Federico Fernández.

82' Attempt missed. Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Roberto Firmino with a cross.

81' Attempt missed. Joseph Gomez (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right.

79' Substitution, Swansea City. Wilfried Bony replaces Jordan Ayew.

78' Foul by Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool).

78' Jordan Ayew (Swansea City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

77' Attempt saved. Danny Ings (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the bottom right corner.

73' Substitution, Liverpool. Danny Ings replaces Georginio Wijnaldum.

73' Offside, Swansea City. Lukasz Fabianski tries a through ball, but Jordan Ayew is caught offside.

72' Attempt blocked. Joseph Gomez (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.

71' Attempt missed. Joel Matip (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Mohamed Salah.

70' Attempt saved. Jordan Ayew (Swansea City left footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Tom Carroll.

69' Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

68' Substitution, Liverpool. Adam Lallana replaces Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

65' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Federico Fernández.

65' Attempt blocked. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

64' Substitution, Swansea City. Tom Carroll replaces Nathan Dyer.

61' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Lukasz Fabianski.

60' Attempt saved. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top left corner.

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

59' Foul by Ki Sung-yueng (Swansea City).

58' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alfie Mawson.

58' Attempt blocked. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked.

58' Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Emre Can.

54' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Georginio Wijnaldum.

52' Foul by Joel Matip (Liverpool).

52' Jordan Ayew (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

48' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Federico Fernández.

48' Foul by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool).

48' Leroy Fer (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

Second Half begins Swansea City 1, Liverpool 0.

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

45'+2' Attempt missed. Sadio Mané (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Mohamed Salah following a fast break.

45' Joel Matip (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

45' Foul by Joel Matip (Liverpool).

45' Sam Clucas (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

44' Andrew Robertson (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.

43' Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).

43' Jordan Ayew (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

40' Goal! Swansea City 1, Liverpool 0. Alfie Mawson (Swansea City right footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Federico Fernández following a corner.

40' Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Virgil van Dijk.

39' Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Virgil van Dijk.

36' Attempt missed. Kyle Naughton (Swansea City left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left following a set piece situation.

35' Foul by Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool).

35' Nathan Dyer (Swansea City wins a free kick on the right wing.

33' Attempt saved. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner.

32' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).

32' Mike van der Hoorn (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

30' Attempt missed. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Virgil van Dijk with a through ball.

29' Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.

29' Foul by Leroy Fer (Swansea City).

23' Attempt missed. Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain with a cross following a corner.

23' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Kyle Naughton.

21' Mohamed Salah (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

21' Foul by Alfie Mawson (Swansea City).

21' Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

21' Foul by Leroy Fer (Swansea City).

17' Corner, Swansea City. Conceded by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

14' Hand ball by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).

12' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Mike van der Hoorn.

5' Foul by Jordan Ayew (Swansea City).

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

5' Ki Sung-yueng (Swansea City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

5' Foul by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool).

4' Offside, Liverpool. Joel Matip tries a through ball, but Sadio Mané is caught offside.

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.