

Date: 17 March 2018

Opposition: Watford

Competition: League

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

17 March 2018

THE TIMES

Klopp: I didn't know Salah was a striker

Liverpool 5 Salah 4, 43, 77, 85, Firmino 49 Watford 0

Referee A Taylor Attendance 53,287

There are various ways of measuring the jaw-dropping impact that Mohamed Salah is having at Liverpool, but one message in particular scribbled on his first souvenir match ball served to encapsulate his feats succinctly. "I just kept it simple for him," said the captain Jordan Henderson. "I just wrote, 'Well done superstar.'" And in those three words he summed up the phenomenon that Salah has become; a clinical goalscorer whose penalty-box prowess does not simply astound his opponents, as Watford's bamboozled back line could testify, but also his manager. Jürgen Klopp confessed afterwards that he was not expecting this. Not 36 goals by mid-March certainly and, in truth, probably not half that amount by this stage of the campaign. Apart from Salah not being Klopp's first choice last summer (his credentials were continually pushed by the sporting director Michael Edwards, the head of recruitment Dave Fallows and the chief scout Barry Hunter after Bayer Leverkusen's Julian Brandt opted to stay put), the Egyptian was expected to contribute from wide areas after his arrival from Roma but not emerge as a talisman. Seldom have surprises been as enduring as this. "He played more on the wing in Rome where he had a very dominant striker in [Edin] Dzeko," said the Liverpool manager. "Nobody could know [that he could play like this as a striker]. We learnt it step by step. We didn't know exactly that he's [capable] of playing in the centre."

Realisation dawned in pre-season. Salah arrived in the right position at the right moment to score a tap-in on his first appearance against Wigan Athletic in July, finishing the warm-up programme with four goals, with Klopp soon working on giving him the platform needed to succeed. The 25-year-old does not abdicate all defensive responsibilities, indeed, initially what caught the eye was what he did without the ball in tracking back and setting the tone, but he is fortunate that Roberto Firmino's desire to hunt down opponents here, there and everywhere means that the workload does not need to be spread evenly. Salah is often positioned centrally, and nearest the goal, and with Sadio Mané linking in between the midfield and attack, the space the triumvirate creates leaves rivals helpless even though they know what is coming. In the early stages of this campaign, Salah spurned countless chances, ironically beginning against Watford on the opening weekend, and the contrast with Saturday was therefore clear. Four shots, four goals and the assist for Firmino's impudent back-heeled flick. Yet it was the chutzpah he demonstrated in dumping Miguel Britos on his backside for the breakthrough and then tormenting the visiting trio of Adboulaye Doucouré, Adrian Mariappa and Sebastian Prödl for his hat-trick goal which delighted. Two tap-ins completed his haul.

"You have to bring him more often in the positions where he can score or be involved in games," Klopp said. "He doesn't love defending as he loves attacking, but he's still involved. Thank god to Roberto that he's doing all of these things without thinking. He's often in the space where Mo could be so it works really well. "With Sadio in shape like now, he's the perfect link between midfield because he's not constantly on the last line. That's how you try to use these three guys in the right positions." Every game brings up a new milestone — Salah has now scored more goals in all competitions in his debut season than any player in Liverpool's history, outstripping the 33 that Fernando Torres plundered in 2007-08 — and the demand for a new comparison.

Henderson recalled the confidence accrued from Luis Suárez's trailblazing form in 2013-14 and, while it is a different dressing room, sensed similarities with the fear factor that Salah brings. Javier Gracia, the Watford head coach, was asked about Lionel Messi, having coached Osasuna in Spain when the Argentinian scored a hat-trick against them in a 7-0 win for Barcelona. "Salah is not the same as Messi," he said. "At the same level in this moment, yes, but they are different types of forwards. [But] it is very difficult to play against them, because they can score in any moment. You can do everything right in defence, and in one moment you are lost." Increasingly, there is a clamour to put him up against Kevin De Bruyne, not just because of the looming Champions League matches with Manchester City, but with regard to who will be PFA Player of the Year. Pep Guardiola has given De Bruyne the responsibility to make City play in a very specific, non-negotiable way and Salah does not carry that burden. However, his numbers are becoming so extraordinary that they are impossible to ignore. There was time for one more comparison, with Klopp gleefully offering a reminder that he once scored four goals in 5-0 win for Mainz on August 13, 1991. "It was against Rot-Weiss Erfurt. They are a second division team, it was a league game," he chuckled. "They had only one ball. If I took the ball then they would be looking for one. There were a few nice goals, one very easy and there was one off the crossbar so it would have been five." With that he disappeared to tell the story to Salah. Klopp's career would go backwards soon after, as he switched from striker to centre back, but there is little prospect of Salah's doing likewise. "We will not treat him like, 'You don't have to train, Mo — just come on Saturday for the game and we'll see you there at Anfield.' He doesn't want that," Klopp said. "He's exactly in the moment of his career but he knows there is a lot for him to come. He wants to learn and he wants to improve."

RATINGS Liverpool (4-3-3): L Karius 6 — J Gomez 6, J Matip 6, V van Dijk 7, A Robertson 7 — E Can 6 (sub: J Milner 27min, 6), J Henderson 6, G Wijnaldum 6 (sub: A Oxlade-Chamberlain 71) — M Salah 9, R Firmino 8 (sub: D Ings 79), S Mané

7. Substitutes not used S Mignolet, R Klavan, A Moreno, T Alexander-Arnold. Booked Gomez. Watford (3-4-3): O Karnezis 7 — A Mariappa 5, S Prödl 5, M Britos 4 (sub: D Janmaat 81) — K Femenía 5, A Doucouré 5, É Capoué 5, J Holebas 5 — R Pereyra 6, T Deeney 5 (sub: S Okaka 70, 5), Richarlison 5 (sub: W Hughes 65, 5). Substitutes not used H Gomes, C Cathcart, A Carrillo, A Gray.

the guardian

Mohamed Salah hits awesome four as Liverpool romp past Watford

This is getting ridiculous. In a season containing nearly as many superlative descriptions as goals scored, Mohamed Salah continued to write his own [Liverpool](#) destiny with four superb finishes in a personal performance at Anfield that was as complete and as ruthless as anything this famous stadium has seen down the decades.

[Watford](#) will have returned home last night wondering how they were on the end of such a sobering scoreline. They were by no means a shambles. Yet, in sport, ability generally finds a way of shining through and Salah's class is so clearcut, so emphatic and so enjoyable that he is comfortably the Premier League's most attractive sight at present.

The really frightening thing was he barely broke sweat — his goals completely dismantled Watford yet he maintained a relaxed, smiley air throughout.

Two of his goals carried the same jinking manner and positional nous as that displayed by Lionel Messi, and Jürgen Klopp noted that Salah's form this season is making comparisons between the two increasingly valid.

"I think Mo is on the way [to being the best in the world]," Klopp said. "In a way that's good. I don't think Mo or anybody else wants to be compared with Lionel Messi. He is the one who is doing what he's doing for what feels like 20 years or so.

"The last player [before Messi] I know who had the same influence on a team performance was Diego Maradona, another Argentinian. Mo is in a fantastic way, that's for sure. As it always is in life if you have to have the skills, you have to show that constantly. Consistently he is very good and he helps us a lot.

"Conditions were difficult. It was obviously slippery and everybody suffered, but not Mo in that situation. It was really special."

The *joie de vivre* that Salah both played with and provoked was evident from as early as the third minute when he gave Liverpool a lead they never once looked like losing.

Salah's remarkable season began with a goal against Watford on the opening day of the campaign, and it continued with aplomb here as he latched onto a Sadio Mané ball, bamboozled Miguel Britos to such an extent that he eventually fell over, and then calmly threaded past Orestis Karnezis.

The goal meant Watford's parsimonious gameplan lay in tatters but, to their credit, they did manage to keep Liverpool relatively quiet for the remainder of the first half — although Roberto Firmino was denied what would have been a stunning second goal when his 20-yard shot was superbly stopped by Karnezis. Liverpool would not be denied for long, though. Just before the break they again swarmed forward and when the ebullient and rock-steady Andy Robertson delivered a pinpoint cross to Salah in the middle of the six-yard box, the Egyptian could not miss.

After the restart Liverpool's attacking prowess became ever more concentrated, never more so than when Firmino backheeled in a cross from close range to make it 3-0 after 49 minutes.

Who provided the cross? The scorer of the first two goals — indeed Salah was the answer to virtually every question as he continued to expunge all memories of his difficult afternoon at Old Trafford the previous Saturday.

The horrendous conditions then played their part in the second half flattening out, but even that will have pleased Klopp. There were few of the defensive wobbles here that have so often punctured his side's self-belief, and little complacency was to be found. Aided and abetted by Watford's reluctance to try anything remotely attacking, Liverpool consolidated and then smelt further blood in the water.

With 13 minutes remaining, Salah sealed his hat-trick as he somehow managed to thread the ball into the back of the net while simultaneously falling over. When he thrashed home his fourth, and his side's fifth, from 10 yards out with five minutes left, his afternoon was complete.

"We know we play against one of the best teams in Europe at this moment and they were much better than us," Javi Gracia said of his Watford team afterwards. It was just about the only thing the visitors got right all day.

Salah, now with 36 goals to his name for his club this season, can do no wrong.

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The Mail

Mohamed Salah nets FOUR in rout as his first Premier League hat-trick helps him move clear of Harry Kane in race for Golden Boot

They played Ken Dodd's signature tune 'Happiness' at half-time as a tribute to the legendary Liverpool comedian who died last week. As a great entertainer, and close friend of Bill Shankly, Doddy would have appreciated what the club have in Mo Salah. Salah hits new heights each time he plays. His first hat-trick for Liverpool on Saturday night ended up as a four-goal haul; two worldies and two poacher's finishes. The statistics are astonishing in his debut season on Merseyside. He has 36 goals in total, 28 in the Premier League where he's top scorer, and 15 in his last 13 games in all competitions. Ian Rush's club record of 47 is under threat. But it's his thrilling style that marks him out as special. His first goal left Watford defender Miguel Britos on his backside, literally. The third goal, when three defenders converged on Salah before they were twisted inside-out, wouldn't have looked out of place on a slalom course. The way the ball is often glued to his left boot is reminiscent of a famous Argentinian.

'I don't think Mo wants to be compared with Lionel Messi. He is the one who has been doing it for what feels like 20 years. The last player before him to have that influence on team performance was Diego Maradona,' said Liverpool's manager Jurgen Klopp, aware of the attention that comes with Salah's world-class performances. 'But I think Mo is on the way. He is in a fantastic way, that is for sure. In life, if you have the skills, you have to show it constantly. Mo's loves playing, his consistency is very good and he helps us a lot.

'Mo gave his answer with four goals. It is impressive. Dealing with difficult conditions out there, it was very slippery, and everybody suffered but not Mo in that situation.' The player himself seems genuinely modest about his exploits. 'I have to thank my team-mates, without them I couldn't reach this number,' he said afterwards. Already, Salah deserves to be included in an elite list of Thierry Henry, Cristiano Ronaldo and Luis Suarez as the Premier League's most captivating overseas stars. The £35million fee Liverpool paid Roma last summer looks a steal particularly compared to the £89m spent by Manchester United on Paul Pogba. Salah would cost double that if Real Madrid came knocking now.

Watford hadn't won at Anfield since 1999 and after only four minutes it was clear history wasn't going to change. The conditions Klopp was referring to included bitter cold, a swirling wind and occasional dramatic snow flurries. Salah grew up in warmer climes but right now he can play in any conditions.

Liverpool frontman Firmino has now scored 14 Premier League goals this season — a grand total of 23 in all competitions

He Salah was on the edge of the penalty area when Sadio Mane passed. From then on, the ball was under his spell, tempting Sebastian Prodl and Britos into challenges and then accelerating past them. Poor bamboozled Britos fell over in the chase and the only surprise was that Salah chose to finish past Orestis Karnezis with his right foot rather than his favoured left.

With Troy Deeney - Watford's self-style 'reducer' getting no change out of the excellent Virgil van Dijk - there was a sense of inevitability about more Liverpool goals, even though Emre Can limped off with a back problem after 26 minutes. Salah set up Roberto Firmino who was denied by a flying save by Karnezis but the second goal duly arrived after 43 minutes. It was an outstanding team move, Andy Robertson playing a one-two with Mane before firing a cross into the corridor of uncertainty between goalkeeper and defence. Salah too advantage of Watford hesitation to tap in from four yards, again with his right.

After 49 minutes, the Egyptian turned provider, crossing from the byline with Firmino jumping to allow the ball to run between in the legs before flicking it with his right instep for goal No 23. And there was still time for Salah to score again, gobbling up a rebound from a Danny Ings shot before hugging the striker Watford, who are eight points clear of the relegation zone and should be safe despite another heavy defeat, had one brief glimpse of Liverpool's goal when Robert Pererya hit the top of the crossbar. Their manager Javi Gracia wasn't too impressed with his players, complaining: 'Before the match I felt we had the passion but after conceding five goals, I am not sure. We need to improve.'

But better teams than Watford would have struggled to contain Salah who will be a major threat to Manchester City in their Champions League quarter-final if he plays like this. Liverpool look far better defensively than when they did drawing 3-3 at Vicarage Road on the opening day of the season and at the other end they hardly seem to be missing Philippe Coutinho at the moment.

Three Watford defenders - Abdoulaye Doucoure, Prodl and Adrian Mariappa tried to close down Salah as he collected a Mane pass just inside the area after 77 minutes. Salah went to their outside then cut infield as they attempted to challenge. As their legs dangled out for the block, he waited until the last moment before squeezing a low finish for his hat-trick.

And for an encore that Doddy would have appreciated, Salah scored his fourth goal of an incredible evening after 85 minutes, following to nab a rebound after substitute Danny Ings had seen his shot spilled by Karnezis.

Adam Lallana was not included in Liverpool's 18-man squad but Klopp confirmed afterwards it was just a precaution for the midfielder and he will be available to join up with Gareth Southgate's England squad who play Holland in a friendly on Friday.

MATCH FACTS, PLAYER RATINGS AND LEAGUE TABLE

Liverpool (4-3-3): Karius 6; Gomez 6, van Dijk 7.5, Matip 6, Robertson 7; Henderson 6.5. Can 6 (Milner 27 6). Wainaldum 7 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 71 6):

Salah 9.5, Firmino 7 (Ings 79 6.5), Mane 7 **Subs:** Mignolet (Gk), Klavan, Moreno, Alexander-Arnold **Goals:** Salah 4, 43, 77 & 85, Firmino 49 **Booked:** Gomez **Watford (3-4-3):** Karnezis 5.5; Mariappa 5.5, Holebas 6, Britos 4.5 (Janmaat 81); Femenia 6, Doucoure 6, Capoue 6, Prodl 5; Pererya 6.5, Deeney 5.5 (Okaka 70 6), Richarlison 6 (Hughes 65 6) **Subs:** Gomes (Gk), Cathcart, Carrillo, Gray **Referee:** A Taylor **Attendance:** 53,287

The Daily Telegraph

Prolific Salah puts Spanish giants on red alert

Liverpool 5 Salah 4, 43, 77, 85, Firmino 49 Watford 0 Att: 53,287

Imagine heading to a six-year-old's house on Christmas Day and expressing delight as gifts are eagerly accepted, only to feel compelled to introduce a sense of sobriety by announcing there is no Santa Claus.

There was a bit of this going on at the final whistle at Anfield on Saturday night. Was there any chance of Liverpool supporters or officials basking in the gleeful glow of Mohamed Salah's four goals against Watford?

Of pondering the possibilities in Europe this season, or the feats he might inspire for the rest of his Anfield career? Not without an unwelcome intrusion of logic, it seems. Amid the acclaim, the haste to authoritatively announce it a matter of time before Real Madrid or Barcelona make their bid was only marginally slower than one of Salah's sprints to goal. Whatever the motivation behind this outbreak of level-headedness - reason, fear, envy or (most likely) all three - it reflects Salah's elevation into global phenomenon. "Well done superstar," was the message captain Jordan Henderson scribbled on Salah's match ball. The fact he said this was 'keeping it simple' underlines how the Egyptian has casually assumed VIP status. Lionel Messi/Salah comparisons earned Ian Wright ridicule in December. Now the ex-Arsenal striker resembles a sage, even if there is lavishness in this well-intentioned applause. Salah's first goal here, when he put Miguel Britos on his backside before scoring, could have been a reconstruction of the Argentine's effort against Bayern Munich in the 2015 Champions League.

Among the more extraordinary facts after this four-goal haul is Salah averages a goal every 90 minutes played this season - Messi scores once every 105 minutes. But a more reasonable reference point is how Salah's performances put one in mind of Luis Suarez's Anfield career. And Salah's performances do elicit recollections of Suarez's time at Liverpool. The Egyptian is playing in a more balanced team, but has a similar ability to concoct as much as score goals. He struck his third here in the midst of stumbling, ensuring Watford's defenders will spend the international break trying to untie the reef knots in neck and back muscles. He now has 28 league goals, just three short of the record held jointly by Alan Shearer, Cristiano Ronaldo and Suarez since the Premier League was reduced to 20 teams. At this rate, it is one he will surely beat.

Henderson, the only first-team survivor from the Suarez era, says such players instil a belief goals are assured. "Luis is a fantastic player who I was privileged to play with. But Mo this season has been unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable. He is doing it every week, without fail," he said. "If we work as hard as we possibly can, then Mo - or even Sadio [Mane] and Bobby [Firmino] - are going to finish it in the final third. We had that with Luis. You know when you are walking out there are so many goals out there for you."

Every match day, Liverpool's highly respected club statistician, Ged Rea, takes his seat in the press box ready to offer factual nuggets.

With each Salah goal he is obliged to consult records untouched for 20, 50 or in some cases 100 years. Salah has started his Liverpool career more prolifically than Roger Hunt and Robbie Fowler - and could plausibly score more league goals in a single top-flight campaign than Ian Rush. For Jurgen Klopp, the Salah show is a thrill and an ever-so-slight (but welcome) irritation. Managers zealously avoid lauding individuals above the collective. Klopp's decision to linger when issuing thanks to the other scorer, Firmino, for example, seemed deliberate - an acknowledgement that the application of all is facilitating Salah's deeds.

The contrast between the Salah at Chelsea, Roma and Liverpool is also a tribute to Klopp's coaching. "Nobody could know [that he could play as a striker]. We learnt it step by step," admitted Klopp, who joked that he, too, once scored four in a game. "We didn't know exactly that he's [capable] of playing in the centre. It was early. Without consistency we couldn't know, but in the pre-season we knew.

"But we will not treat him like, 'You don't have to train, Mo - just come on Saturday for the game and we'll see you there at Anfield or whatever'. He doesn't want that." Of course the La Liga giants are watching.

The difference from the cases of Suarez and Philippe Coutinho is they admired from afar. With Liverpool equipped to annually make the final stages of the Champions League, performances such as this might ensure they get a closer look at Salah sooner than they think. Lionel Messi scored for the sixth consecutive game as Barcelona tightened their grip on the La Liga title race with a 2-0 victory over Athletic Bilbao. The Argentine took his club tally for the season to 35 with a fine finish from the edge of the penalty area. Paco Alcacer opened the scoring, with Messi at the heart of the move, as Barca extended their lead over second-placed Atletico Madrid. The Argentina forward, who scored twice against Chelsea in midweek, now has eight goals in 27 days. His record for scoring in successive appearances is 10 games, set in 2013. How Egyptian is measuring up to Messi - and is threatening to rewrite the record books 'Mo Salah, this season, has been unbelievable - he is doing it every week without fail'

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Mohamed Salah hits FOUR as Liverpool move back up to third by putting abject Watford to the sword
 Sometimes it feels like you are watching Lionel Messi. His record, this season at least, is better than Messi. Mohamed Salah has now scored more times in a debut campaign than any Liverpool player in the club's entire history. He reached number 36 here via a four-goal haul, surpassing Fernando Torres in the record books and surpassing Messi's total, albeit in two fewer games. What a signing he has been.
 Surely only Sergio Agüero can stop Salah now from topping the Premier League charts come May, when you take into account Harry Kane's injury. It is worth remembering too Salah did not arrive from Roma last summer as a forward. For his recruitment at a fee that now feels like loose change, you have to credit Michael Edwards, Liverpool's sporting director. For Salah's subtle repositioning, you have to credit Jürgen Klopp and commend his vision. For delivering, you can only credit the player, who is currently in the process of redefining expectations on wingers in this country.
 Liverpool have at the very least nine games left to play. If they reach the Champions League final it will be twelve. From here then at this rate and this state of almost permanent form – at the very least - it would be a surprise if Salah did not reach 40. In doing so, he would become the first Liverpool player since Ian Rush in 1987 to reach the landmark. Rush, of course, is Liverpool's all-time leading goalscorer, though Rush played in Liverpool's greatest team and this is not quite Liverpool's greatest team – though a very, very good team nevertheless.
 If there was a temptation to fall into a slump after last weekend's defeat to Manchester United and think, 'typical Liverpool,' it is worth remembering that typical Liverpool is now a team that responds to set-backs by finding the right result in the next game.
 Watford might have little to play for because their position in the league is comfortable. Yet if Liverpool consider their place in next season's Champions League secure already they are not showing it. There was an appetite about this performance and a confidence that reassures absolutely they are a side heading in the right direction.
 It helps when a lead is established as early in the fourth minute. Salah's brilliance has been well documented elsewhere in this report so let's focus on the opponent trying to stop him for a moment. Last week it was Ashley Young, a better player than many consider him to be. It was an off day for Liverpool but it was also an off day for Salah. He is not at Messi's level. Not yet.
 This time his opponent was Miguel Britos - not at Young's level - but at the standard of the majority of Premier League left sided defenders. Britos seemed terrified to get too close to the Egyptian after he received a pass from Sadio Mané that slid across the snow but by reacting in such a way, he afforded too much space. As Salah turned past him, Britos fell dramatically, as though he'd been speared through the throat. With a swish of the right foot, Liverpool were ahead. Watford were in an awkward position because if you chase Liverpool, gaps open and they are more than likely to punish you. Despite being behind their game plan did not alter. It felt like the sensible thing to do for a while because Liverpool did not take control totally until three minutes before half time when Andrew Robertson's cross – which could be made into a video, it was that good - was met by Salah at the far post.
 Liverpool started to have fun. If you have not seen their third goal yet, make an effort to. Again, it involved a cross and this one was hammered by Salah – though the speed was necessary in order to negate the influence of defenders. Roberto Firmino's finish was from the Matrix, taking the sting out of the delivery with his back heel and in finishing past Orestis Karnezis, he somersaulted in one movement in front of the Kop.
 From there it might have been tempting for Klopp to give Salah a rest. Yet with him chasing more records, he remained involved. Number three for the evening was another one to watch again and again and it is not too far a stretch to compare it to the moment Diego Maradona bamboozled Belgium's entire defence in 1986. This time it was Watford, admittedly, with three yellow shirts being fooled and falling all over the place in trying to stop him but they could not. Salah had his hat-trick but still he was not done, adding a fourth from a rebound following Danny Ings's shot.
 Only then, Salah was finished. It feels like only a side with the crudest intentions can stop him.



AIN'T MO STOPPING HIM NOW - 'You can have all the plans you want but players like Salah make their own rules'
 LIVERPOOL 5 Salah 4, 43, 77, 85, Firmino 49
 WATFORD 0
 JAVI GRACIA pondered: "No matter how hard you work on your plan, a player like that can change it in an instant."
 Gracia was talking about Mo Salah after his stunning one-man demolition of both his Watford side and the Anfield record books. But his words were also about Lionel Messi.
 Four years ago on the exact weekend, Gracia was in charge of Osasuna as they faced Barcelona at the Nou Camp. Despite his bestlaid plans, they lost 7-0 with Messi scoring a hat-trick and becoming Barca's all-time leading scorer in the process.
 For the Watford manager, this visit to Liverpool and Salah's stunning performance brought back painful memories of that Messi mauling.
 As a coach, Gracia has tactical dexterity and an eye for defensive detail - as he showed when taking Malaga to Barcelona in 2015 and winning 1-0. Yet sometimes, he explained, systems and strategies simply do not matter, because the very best players are unstoppable. And Salah is fast approaching Messi's level of inevitability.
 "I remember that game, you don't need to remind me! But I also remember I went there the next season and won," he said with a smile.
 "They are both incredible players, they were both unstoppable, yes. Honestly, both are fantastic and now Salah is in a very good moment, one of the best in Europe.
 "It is very difficult to play against them, because they can both score in any moment. That is the same with both, they have so many qualities, they can do it in a single moment. You can do everything right in your defence, and in one moment you are lost.
 "You can have plans to stop them, you have to try and we did it against Messi with Malaga, yes. But players are always the most important element in a game. Players like Messi and Salah, they make decisions and they decide games. That is what happened with Salah."
 Gracia did try. He arrived at Anfield with a back five and a plan to draw Liverpool into a defensive quagmire. Yet after Salah had lured Miguel Britos on to icy surface and devoured his slipping, thrashing carcass like a predator, those plans were shredded.
 The opening goal came after three minutes and 30 seconds and for the rest of the game, Watford simply attempted damage limitation. But with Salah, such a mode is sometimes impossible.
 He again eluded a frozen Britos to turn in Andy Robertson's cross for the second, then turned on a Messi-like masterclass to tee up a brilliant finish from Roberto Firmino and a Maradona-like defence-hypnotising wonder goal, before ending with a tap-in.
 There can be no real comparison with Messi of course, as Reds boss Jurgen Klopp pointed out. Not after one season, when the Barca legend has "been doing what he's been doing for what feels like 20 years or so".
 Yet he is the perfect fulcrum for this breath-taking Liverpool team. As Gracia said: "It is difficult stopping an individual like Salah like it is difficult stopping a team like Liverpool. Sometimes you just can't do anything.
 But not only Salah, the whole Liverpool team is one of the best teams in Europe right now. They have a high pressing level, higher level than Barcelona. But both teams are in this moment the best in Europe."
 STAT IS AMAZING
 LIVERPOOL
 Karius 6, Gomez 6, Matip 6, Van Dijk 7, Robertson 7, Can 6 (Milner 27, 7), Henderson 7, Wijnaldum 7(Oxlade-Chamberlain 71, 6), Salah 9.5, Firmino 7, Mane 7 WATFORD Karnezis 4, Holebas 5, Prodl 4, Mariappa 5, Britos 4, Femenia 5, Pereyra 6, Doucoure 6, Capoue 5, Richarlison 4 (Hughes 65, 5), Deeney 5
 MATCH STATS
 58% POSSESSION 42% 10 SHOTS ON TARGET 11 SHOTS OFF TARGET 2 578 TOTAL PASSES 421 82% PASSING SUCCESS 72% 6 CORNERS 1 6 OFFSIDE 3 5 FOULS 4 10 CARDS 0 0 REF: Anthony Taylor ATT: 53,287

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Mohamed Salah showcases outrageous talent as Reds make no mistake at Anfield

Mohamed Salah last week starred in an acclaimed advert featuring some of Liverpool's most historic sights. Anfield, though, remains the perfect stage on which to showcase his own outrageous talents.

The Egyptian continued to set new standards as Liverpool responded to Jurgen Klopp's call by overcoming both the weather and Watford to strengthen claims for a top-four finish. Given Premier League defences have struggled to contain Salah, it was perhaps no surprise the wintry elements proved no barrier.

A sensational four-goal haul – with an assist for Roberto Firmino thrown in for good measure – moved him on to 36 goals in 41 games during a remarkable first [Liverpool](#) campaign in which he shows no signs of relenting.

[Salah](#) now has the most amount of goals scored by a Liverpool player during a debut season, surpassing the previous best of 33 by Fernando Torres.

Indeed, Torres, John Aldridge and Luis Suarez never netted so many in a single term for the Reds. No player in Europe's top five leagues has scored more goals this season. In a season of so many highs, so many spectacular goals, this was something special from Salah, made all the more memorable by it being achieved amid constant snow flurries. The images from the evening will resonate for years to come. And, whisper it quietly, that Egyptian Messi tag does not look misplaced on this evidence. To think there were those who questioned Salah's contribution following a rare off-day in defeat at Manchester United last weekend.

With Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane sidelined by an ankle injury, the Reds winger – and let's not forget, he's not a striker – is now in prime position to kick on in the race to be the Premier League's leading scorer.

But while personal accolades and historic landmarks are admirable, Salah knows it's the team that comes first. And that's what made this performance as timely as it was impressive. With that Old Trafford loss gnawing away at the squad all week, and mindful of the fact top-four rivals Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea are all in FA Cup action this weekend, this was an opportunity that couldn't be spurned. The manner of this 5-0 win not only underlined Liverpool's progress since their 3-3 draw at Watford on the opening weekend, it sent a reminder they will not take their foot off the pedal between now and the end of the season, their self-belief and confidence maintained.

Certainly, there was no suggestion minds were drifting towards next month's mouth-watering Champions League quarter-final showdown against runaway leaders Manchester City. That was immediately clear when it took Salah less than four minutes and a goal drought that had lasted all of one-and-a-bit games.

Found by Sadio Mane in the inside right channel, the Egyptian raced into the area, turned Sebastian Prodl and left Miguel Britos on his backside with one swivel of his hips, then tucked the ball into the bottom corner beyond Watford goalkeeper Orestis Karnezis. Lionel Messi comparisons are becoming increasingly regular for the Liverpool man, and many were quick to note the strike was not dissimilar to when the Barcelona magician embarrassed Bayern Munich's Jerome Boateng. Salah's nimble footwork, almost dancing through the visiting defence on his tiptoes, was all the more impressive given the pre-match snowfall had left many players nervously gauging the slipperiness of the surface.

Salah revelled in the first half. Watford left wing-back Jose Holebas, terrorised throughout, was just starting to picture the refuge of the dressing room when the Liverpool man struck again two minutes before the interval.

This time the strike was a real team effort. Andy Robertson played a one-two with Mane before being released by the Senegalese down the left, and his brilliant, low first-time cross was tucked in at the far post Salah.

The Egyptian turned provider four minutes after the interval. Once again, the hapless Britos was left on the turf as Salah demonstrated pace and strength – so often an overlooked aspect of his game – to sprint to the byline and cross for Firmino to finish with an outrageous back flick.

Salah's treble was completed 13 minutes from time with another twisting run inside the penalty area that prompted more Messi comparisons and ended with the Egyptian on the deck along with two Watford players but still able to toe-poke the ball into the bottom corner.

His fourth, and Liverpool's fifth, was the easiest of the lot. Salah laid a chance on a plate for substitute Danny Ings, and after the shot was saved by the by now exhausted Karnezis, the Egyptian tapped home in front of a gleeful Kop.

His first hat-trick for Liverpool, his first four-goal haul of his professional career.

Watford boss Javi Gracia declared the Reds one of the best teams in Europe after the game. Salah must surely, on form, be one of the continent's best players.

What of the rest at Anfield?

Robertson's assist was deserved reward after another impressive outing, Joe Gomez was solid at right-back, Firmino could have had another goal, Ings was unlucky not to notch during his late cameo, the returning Jordan Henderson found it tough going on his 200 Premier League appearance for the Reds and Roberto Pereyra hit crossbar with Watford's only real chance.

But really this was all about one man.

Mohamed Salah. The Egyptian King.

Watford Observer

Mo Salah scores four as Watford thrashed at Liverpool

Mo Salah tore Watford apart, scoring four goals and setting up the other as the Hornets were hammered 5-0 on a freezing evening at Anfield.

The visitors – and in particular Miguel Britos and Jose Holebas who suffered a torrid game – found the Egyptian star almost unplayable from the outset as he made the early breakthrough, scored a second just before half-time and after setting up Roberto Firmino for the third shortly after the restart, he added two more to round off a record-breaking game. The Hornets were barely able to lay a glove on their opponents, although Roberto Pereyra did hit the woodwork with a second-half free-kick, but while their top-flight status is not guaranteed yet, they go into the international break with an eight-point cushion over the bottom three.

Javi Gracia made just the one change from the side that lost 3-0 at Arsenal last time out, as Britos returned in place of Daryl Janmaat, but significantly switched to a 5-4-1 formation to try and counter Liverpool's free-scoring threat.

There was also a welcome return for Craig Cathcart to the bench following his long injury lay-off. The Reds were looking to get back on track following their 2-1 defeat at Manchester United last time out and Jurgen Klopp made four changes to his starting XI. In came defenders Joe Gomez and Joel Matip while captain Jordan Henderson and Georginio Wijnaldum started in midfield. Trent Alexander-Arnold, James Milner and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain dropped to the bench but Dejan Lovren was not involved due to a minor ankle injury.

The teams arrived on the pitch in a blizzard but the snow relented as the game got underway. The very opening exchanges were low key but it didn't take long for the hosts' terrific attacking triumvirate to make a decisive mark.

Salah had already tested Britos with one run before the Egyptian magician latched on to a ball over the top on the right after Holebas had not tracked his run, turned the Hornets defender inside out leaving him flat on his backside before firing league goal number 25 past Orestis Karnezis to make it 1-0.

Having got the early breakthrough, Klopp's men were content to keep possession and knock the ball around patiently, waiting for further opportunities to present themselves. Watford were afforded some ball, but not in any areas where they could potentially hurt the opposition, as barring some Reds set pieces, little of attacking consequence then happened until midway through the first half.

Liverpool were forced into an unwanted change in the 27th minute as Milner replaced the injured Emre Can following a couple of minutes when the Hornets had at least been able to enjoy some play in the opposition half.

That was to continue, culminating in a delicious nutmeg from Roberto Pereyra on Sadio Mane close to the byline that allowed him to advance in the penalty area from the right but his low delivery was cleared.

The former Juventus man was enjoying a good spell and next he sent over a cross from the right which saw Richarlison out-jump Gomez, but the header was at a comfortable height for Loris Karius. But a significantly better save was to follow soon after at the other end, as Karnezis did superbly to push away a shot from Firmino after the Brazilian had latched on to a Salah pass and danced inside Sebastian Prodl. However, three minutes before the break, Liverpool were to get their second. The Hornets were caught on the sucker punch as Andrew Robertson got free on the left and sent over a superb cross into the channel between defence and goalkeeper and a grateful Salah tapped home for his second and 34th in all competitions this season, making him the highest scoring Liverpool player in history in their first season at the club.

The destiny of the points already seemed settled at the break, and that was even more the case within four minutes of the restart when the Reds netted a sumptuous third. Unsurprisingly Salah was involved again, receiving a Henderson pass on the right side of the penalty area before beating Britos with ease again to send in a low cross to Firmino, who got across the front of Karnezis and beat him with a superb back-heel inside the far corner. Watford tried to respond positively; Etienne Capoue fizzed a low shot not too far wide of Karius' right-hand post and after Gomez had been booked for pulling back Richarlison on the left edge of the 18-yard box, Pereyra hit a curling free-kick which dipped over the Reds stopper and went overt via the crossbar. Ominously though, the Reds were now enjoying themselves and Firmino was to have another opportunity on the hour when he glanced a Gomez cross from the right down and wide of the far post.

Gracia made his first change in the 65th minute as Richarlison made way for Will Hughes and a second followed five minutes later, Stefano Okaka coming on for Troy Deeney. At the same time, Wijnaldum made way for Oxlade-Chamberlain. The former Arsenal man was to warm Karnezis' gloves with a shot from the edge of the area in the 77th minute but two minutes later the Reds' Egyptian scoring king completed his hat-trick. The goal originated from a throw-in on the right which saw Prodl get too tight to Mane and turned too easily before advancing into the area and slipping the ball to Salah. Watford got enough bodies around the player as he twisted but even though he was tripped by Abdoulaye Doucoure, he still had the sharpness of thought and reaction to stick out a leg and prod the ball past the off-balance Karnezis. Firmino was then replaced by Danny Ings and Janmaat came on for Britos, before the final Liverpool substitute almost made it five, latching on to a Mane ball over the top and hitting a powerful right-footed shot which brought another fine save out of Karnezis.

But number five wasn't long in coming; Karnezis again thwarting Ings from close

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range but this time the ball broke loose for Salah to hammer in his fourth as a torrid evening for the visitors came to an end.
Liverpool: Karius; Gomez, Matip, Van Dijk, Robertson; Henderson, Can (Milner 27), Wijnaldum (Oxlade-Chamberlain 70); Salah, Firmino (Ings 79), Mane. Subs not used: Mignolet, Klavan, Moreno, Alexander-Arnold.
Watford: Karnezis; Femenia, Mariappa, Prodl, Britos (Janmaat 81), Holebas; Pereyra, Doucoure, Capoue, Richarlison (Hughes 65); Deeney (Okaka 70). Subs not used: Gomes, Cathcart, Gray, Carrillo.
Bookings: Gomez for a foul on Richarlison (51). **Referee:** Anthony Taylor.



The Sunday Telegraph

Salah's four-goal blitz of shell-shocked Watford shows progress by Liverpool

Liverpool 5
 Salah 4, 43, 77, 85 Firmino 49
 Watford 0
 Att: 53,287

Never mind drawing Manchester City in the quarter-final, driven by a masterclass in finishing from Mohamed Salah, Liverpool took a sizeable step towards ensuring they play in the Champions League next season, moving seven points clear of Chelsea in fifth place.

And in the process, scoring just the four goals, Salah took himself ahead of Harry Kane at the top of the Premier League goal charts.

It is hard to imagine, after this brutal dismantling, that the two sides had shared the spoils in a 3-3 draw at Vicarage Road back in August.

"I love how we have developed since then," wrote Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp in his programme notes. And no one has developed across the season like Salah. His progress in eight months under Klopp has been remarkable.

Within barely three minutes here he had added to his burgeoning account.

Georginio Wijnaldum sent him forward with an invitation of a through ball. Salah took it in his stride, dummied, left Miguel Britos on his backside, then pushed the ball beyond goalkeeper Orestis Karnezis.

A couple of minutes later, Jordan Henderson delivered a slide-rule pass that almost put Salah away again. By now, every time the ball found the Egyptian, a noise very like a purr would rise from the stands. And no wonder. Everything he did was freighted with threat. Midway through the first half he found Roberto Firmino with a crossfield pass. The Brazilian's beautiful dragback foxed poor old Britos for a second time. However, Karnezis palmed his shot over. Then, with halftime looming, Andy Robertson swept over the most delightful of crosses to the far post, where Salah, applying the afterburners, arrived ahead of everyone else to side-foot home.

The second half had barely started before Salah was at it again. Haring down the right wing, he once again embarrassed Britos, before sweeping over a left-foot cross which Firmino converted with the most flamboyant of back heels. Joe Gomez then found Firmino with another belter of a cross, but this one he could not convert.

The beleaguered Watford manager Javi Gracia attempted to stem the flow by bringing on Will Hughes to replace Richarlison and swapping Troy Deeney, whose cojones appeared to have dropped off in the freeze, with Stefano Okaka. But, apart from Roberto Pereyra, busy on the left wing throughout, hitting the bar with a fine freekick, his team nothing to offer.

Liverpool were by now rampant. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, given the chance to redeem himself after the defeat at Old Trafford when he came on to replace Wijnaldum midway through the second half, warmed Karnezis's gloves with a long-range shot. Even fellow sub Danny Ings had a crisp shot which the keeper beat away.

The game, however, belonged to Salah. And, after 77 minutes, he showed the rest how to finish. After picking up the ball from Oxlade-Chamberlain and dipping his shoulder, somehow he slipped a shot past five yellow-shirted defenders into the far corner of the net. It was the most delightful of hat-tricks.

Not that he was satisfied. He added a fourth in the dying moments for his 28th league goal of the season after smashing home the rebound after Karnezis parried Ings's shot. This was development writ large.

Liverpool (4-3-3) Karius 6; Gomez 6, Van Dijk 6, Matip 6, Robertson 7; Henderson 7, Can 5 (Milner 27), Wijnaldum 6 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 70); Salah 9, Firmino 8 (Ings 78), Mane 8. Subs Mignolet, Klavan, Moreno, Alexander-Arnold. Booked Gomez.

Watford (4-2-3-1) Karnezis 7; Holebas 5, Prodl 5, Mariappa 5, Britos 4; Capoue 6, Doucoure 5; Femenia 5, Richarlison 4 (Hughes 64), Pereyra 6; Deeney 5 (Okaka 70). Subs Gomes, Cathcart, Carrillo, Gray.

Referee Anthony Taylor (Manchester).

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Four more for super Salah

LIVERPOOL 5 Salah 4, 43, 77, 85 Firmino 49

WATFORD 0

Snow fell, temperatures plummeted, Siberian winds blew, but from Mohamed Salah, magnificent Mohamed Salah, there was only warmth. In snowglobe conditions, Liverpool strolled past Watford with insouciant glee, as Salah scored four goals — each of them sprinkled with sunshine — and created another for the outstanding performance of his outstanding season.

"The conditions were very difficult," noted Jurgen Klopp, the Liverpool manager.

"Everyone suffered, but not Mo. He was exceptional, he was special and he was outstanding. Performances like that are why we come into football. Obviously, I was pleased about the result, but also the performance. Look at Sadio Mane, look how cool he was on the ball, look how mature he was."

With Champions League qualification for next season likely but still far from certain, Klopp had neither the option nor the inclination to tempt fate ahead of next month's Manchester City double-header. Trent Alexander-Arnold's torrid afternoon at the other Manchester team last week meant the teenager was benched for the less taxing visit of Watford, along-side fellow Old Trafford starters Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and James Milner.

Untroubled by relegation fears, yet with no prospect of sneaking into the European places, Watford froze in the sub-zero temperatures. After just four minutes, they were behind. Georginio Wijnaldum threaded a crafty through ball into Salah's path. As Salah charged into the penalty area, Watford's defenders knew what was coming as surely as the expectant Kop, but what was foreseen could not be prevented. Salah danced with such twinkle-toed daintiness that the bamboozled Miguel Britos was left on his backside. The Egyptian drew Orestis Kanzezis and slotted home his 25th Liverpool league goal. By the end of the evening he was on 28. "This was not the best performance from us," understated Javier Gracia, the Watford manager. "Before the match I thought the passion was there. After conceding five goals, I'm not so sure. We are more comfortable at home than away: we must improve."

Ahead, Liverpool could strut. Their glistening front three, Salah, Mane and Roberto Firmino, were in mischief-making mood; caviar musketeers tormenting a bread'n'buter defence. Wijnaldum and Jordan Henderson brought the gap-plugging midfield solidity so lacking in Manchester and their defence was untroubled until Roberto Pereyra crossed low and dangerously.

Yet, for all Klopp's urgings from the technical area, the atmosphere was lowkey and that strutting sunk into coasting. Prompted by Pereyra, Watford began to make inroads and when the Argentine crossed to the back post in the 36th minute for Richarlison, Loris Karius was called into action at last. Aura of invincibility pricked, Liverpool roused themselves and the game was settled after 43 minutes when Mane spotted Robertson's overlap long before the Watford defence. The full-back crossed to the back post where Salah nipped in to tap home.

The snow was more insistent after the break and so too were Liverpool. Soon they were three ahead and this time Salah was maker rather than taker. Again, he got the better of Britos, whose half-tackle was neither firm enough nor smart enough. Salah ran to the goalline to cross low and the unmarked Firmino backheeled home. Alone in his refusal to be cowed, Pereyra rattled Karius's crossbar with a fine free kick in the 54th minute but as the snow turned blizzard-like, Mane found Salah, who twisted this way and that, dropped a shoulder and poked the ball round Karnezis for his first hat-trick in English football. And there was one more to come. This time Salah made it — passing to Danny Ings, whose shot was stopped by Karnezis — then scored it, tapping in the rebound. A day to remember for him; one to forget for Watford.

Star man: Mohamed Salah (Liverpool) Yellow card: Liverpool: Gomez Referee: A Taylor Attendance: 53,287 Liverpool: Karius 6, Gomez 6, Matip 6, Van Dijk 6, Robertson 6, Henderson 7, Can 5 (Milner 27min, 6), Wijnaldum 6 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 70min, 5), Salah 9, Firmino 8 (Ings 79min, 6), Mane 7 Substitutes: Mignolet, Klavan, Moreno, Alexander-Arnold Watford: Karnezis 6, Mariappa 5, Prodl 5, Britos 4 (Janmaat 81min, 4), Holebas 6, Doucoure 6, Capoue 6, Femenia 5, Pereyra 7, Richarlison 5 (Hughes 65min,6), Deeney 5 (Okaka 70min, 5) Substitutes: Gomes, Cathcart, Gray, Carrillo

TheObserver

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Mohamed Salah scored four goals as Liverpool moved up to third in the Premier League table by thrashing Watford at Anfield.

Salah danced through Watford's defence to score early in the game before poking home Andy Robertson's cross late in the first half.

He set up Roberto Firmino's clever flick for Liverpool's third, then added two late strikes to complete the rout.

Liverpool have now opened a seven-point gap over Chelsea in fifth.

Jurgen Klopp's side also remain unbeaten at home in the Premier League this season.

It was Watford's second successive defeat, and despite chances for Roberto Pereyra and Richarlison, they never looked like getting back into the game.

But the Hornets are still eight points above the relegation zone and sit comfortably in 11th position.

Salah masterclass lights up Anfield

Before kick-off, Klopp insisted his side wanted to be back "immediately on the winning side" following the disappointment of their 2-1 defeat at rivals Manchester United last Saturday.

And it was a more familiar-looking Liverpool side who turned up at Anfield as Klopp's men put in a performance befitting their manager's urgency.

They started the game with high intensity - pressing their opponents and winning the ball back in midfield to set Salah on his way.

It did not take long for the Egyptian to make a breakthrough. Within four minutes he had given Liverpool the lead and taken his season's tally to 25 in the league.

Salah continued to cause Watford's defence problems and it always looked likely he and Liverpool would get a second, overtaking Harry Kane as the league's top scorer in the process.

Robertson's inch-perfect cross from the left meant the second goal was a tap-in but Salah produced two moments of magic to dance his way to a hat-trick and fire in his fourth.

Time seemed to stop as he evaded multiple challenges in the area and picked out the corner with a stabbed finish for his third before firing a strike high into the net for his fourth after Danny Ings' shot was saved.

It was another masterclass from the Egyptian and his form mirrors Liverpool's as they head into the final stages of the season.

The Reds are back up to third place in the table - with rivals Tottenham facing fifth-placed Chelsea in their next match.

With seven games left to play, Liverpool look to have consolidated their place in the top four and can also look forward to a Champions League quarter-final with Manchester City.

A long way off the season opener

Miguel Britos scored a 93rd-minute equaliser for Watford as Liverpool were held to a thrilling 3-3 draw when these two teams met on the opening day of the season at Vicarage Road.

Liverpool's defensive frailties - which allowed Watford back into the game in August - were on show against Manchester United last Saturday but there was none of the same at Anfield.

The hosts never looked like throwing away the lead and, after scoring twice in the first half, controlled the game comfortably before Salah's late additions to the score.

Salah's inclusion on the scoresheet comes as no surprise now but when he netted on his debut at Vicarage Road few would have predicted what success he would go on to have this season.

Nor would many who saw that game have predicted a 5-0 rout for Watford in March but aside from two chances from Pereyra and Richarlison, they offered very little going forward at Anfield.

Pereyra's fizzing free-kick hit the crossbar in the second half and could just conceivably have given the Hornets a route back into the game but, in truth, they never looked like matching their hosts.

The determination the Hornets showed to come from behind in that opening fixture set the tone for a largely positive campaign which has seen them climb to 11th, eight points above the relegation zone but Saturday's thrashing will be a day to forget.

'It helps the goal difference' - what the bosses said

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, speaking to BBC Match of the Day: "It was very pleasing. It could have been really difficult tonight. We knew we had to be spot on from the first to the last second and our work rate had to be higher than 100%.

"The goals we scored were unbelievably good, and the boys didn't stop. That's how football should be, so I'm really happy with the performance.

"For Mo to be involved in five goals is fantastic but to score four is even more fantastic. His goals are so important for us. We have to hope they all come back well from the internationals.

"The clean sheet is very important. They lost a little concentration in the last few minutes but that's normal. It helps us in the goal difference."

Watford manager Javi Gracia, speaking to BBC Match of the Day: "We knew today was going to be a tough game.

"We conceded an early goal again like we did against Arsenal and after that it was difficult. We will try to do better next time. They were much better than us and congratulations to them.

"Mo Salah is one of the best players at the moment. We know we have played against one of the best teams in Europe.

"There are positives we can take, but we will try to do better next time."

No luck on the road for Hornets - the best of the stats

The Reds have averaged 2.2 goals per game since Klopp took over - their highest goals-per-game ratio at Anfield in the Premier League under any manager.

Watford have lost 10 of their 11 top-flight away games against Liverpool.

Roberto Firmino (three assists) and Mohamed Salah (four assists) have combined for seven goals in the Premier League this season - the joint-most by any duo, level with Sadio Mane (six assists) and Salah (one assist).

Sadio Mane has had a hand in five goals in three Premier League games against Watford for Liverpool (three goals, two assists).

Watford are winless in their past nine Premier League away games (D1 L8), scoring just twice in that run and failing to find the net in each of the past five.

Man of the match - Mohamed Salah (Liverpool)

What's next?

Liverpool travel to Crystal Palace on Saturday, 31 March (12:30 BST) hoping to consolidate their position in the top four.

Watford will look to return to winning ways when they host Bournemouth at 15:00 BST on the same day.

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Match ends, Liverpool 5, Watford 0.

90'+3' Second Half ends, Liverpool 5, Watford 0.

90'+2' Corner, Watford. Conceded by Joel Matip.

89' Offside, Liverpool. James Milner tries a through ball, but Danny Ings is caught offside.

88' Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

88' Foul by Stefano Okaka (Watford.

88' Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

88' Foul by Roberto Pereyra (Watford.

85' Goal! Liverpool 5, Watford 0. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the top right corner.

85' Attempt saved. Danny Ings (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Mohamed Salah.

84' Offside, Liverpool. James Milner tries a through ball, but Danny Ings is caught offside.

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

84' Attempt saved. Danny Ings (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Sadio Mané with a through ball.

81' Substitution, Watford. Daryl Janmaat replaces Miguel Britos.

80' Attempt blocked. Stefano Okaka (Watford right footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Abdoulaye Doucouré with a through ball.

79' Substitution, Liverpool. Danny Ings replaces Roberto Firmino.

79' Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool.

79' Will Hughes (Watford wins a free kick in the defensive half.

77' Goal! Liverpool 4, Watford 0. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

77' Attempt saved. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal.

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

75' Foul by Adrian Mariappa (Watford.

71' Substitution, Liverpool. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain replaces Georginio Wijnaldum.

70' Substitution, Watford. Stefano Okaka replaces Troy Deeney.

65' Substitution, Watford. Will Hughes replaces Richarlison.

61' Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool header from the centre of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Joseph Gomez with a cross.

59' Foul by Mohamed Salah (Liverpool.

59' José Holebas (Watford wins a free kick in the defensive half.

52' Roberto Pereyra (Watford hits the bar with a right footed shot from a difficult angle and long range on the left from a direct free kick.

52' Joseph Gomez (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

51' Foul by Joseph Gomez (Liverpool.

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

51' Attempt missed. José Holebas (Watford right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Miguel Britos.

51' Foul by James Milner (Liverpool.

51' Etienne Capoue (Watford wins a free kick in the defensive half.

49' Goal! Liverpool 3, Watford 0. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from very close range to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Mohamed Salah with a cross.

47' Offside, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson tries a through ball, but Mohamed Salah is caught offside.

46' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool header from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Jordan Henderson with a cross.

Second Half begins Liverpool 2, Watford 0.

45'+2' First Half ends, Liverpool 2, Watford 0.

45' Offside, Watford. Kiko Femenía tries a through ball, but Abdoulaye Doucouré is caught offside.

43' Goal! Liverpool 2, Watford 0. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool right footed shot from very close range to the centre of the goal. Assisted by Andrew Robertson with a cross.

40' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Miguel Britos.

39' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Orestis Karnezis.

39' Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the top left corner. Assisted by Mohamed Salah.

37' Attempt saved. Richarlison (Watford header from the centre of the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by Roberto Pereyra with a cross.

36' Offside, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson tries a through ball, but Sadio Mané is caught offside.

34' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Sebastian Prödl.

33' Offside, Liverpool. Joel Matip tries a through ball, but Roberto Firmino is caught offside.

31' Offside, Watford. José Holebas tries a through ball, but Sebastian Prödl is caught offside.

30' Foul by Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool.

30' Etienne Capoue (Watford wins a free kick in the attacking half.

27' Substitution, Liverpool. James Milner replaces Emre Can because of an injury.

23' Attempt blocked. Georginio Wijnaldum (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

22' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Adrian Mariappa.

20' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by José Holebas.

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

19' Foul by Adrian Mariappa (Watford.

16' Offside, Liverpool. Mohamed Salah tries a through ball, but Roberto Firmino is caught offside.

12' Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Miguel Britos.

4' Goal! Liverpool 1, Watford 0. Mohamed Salah (Liverpool right footed shot from the

right side of the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Sadio Mané.

2' Offside, Watford. José Holebas tries a through ball, but Richarlison is caught offside.

First Half begins.

Lineups are announced and players are warming up.