

Date: 1 January 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Hull Daily Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

1 January 2014

THE TIMES

Suarez defies the pain to carry on where he left off

Liverpool 2
Agger 36, Suarez 50
Hull City 0
Referee C Pawson Attendance 44,627

If Luis Suarez had not wanted 2013 to end, he began 2014 as if determined to ensure that he drags his remarkable run of goalscoring form with him from the previous year to the new one.

Having scored eight goals in his previous three games at Anfield, the forward had to settle for one against Hull City yesterday, but the value of his strike was significant as it allowed Liverpool to ease to victory and reclaim their place in the Barclays Premier League top four.

Suarez has 20 goals to his name this season and in reaching that landmark in only 15 matches, he did so quicker than any other player in Premier League history. As with most of Liverpool's home games, this one ended with superlatives being showered upon the Uruguay forward as another record fell at his feet, a knock to one of which had made him a doubt for this fixture.

On this occasion, Liverpool did not need Suarez's rare ability as much as they have on others. Hull were workmanlike and resolute, but after going behind to Daniel Agger's first goal since April, they never posed a significant threat to Simon Mignolet's goal and at times looked as if they had punched themselves out in their 6-0 win over Fulham four days earlier.

Suarez's free kick -- struck into the top corner of Allan McGregor's goal from 25 yards after 50 minutes -- merely confirmed Liverpool's superiority and put the visiting team out of their misery. Hull had not threatened a comeback after going behind, but a one-goal deficit meant that tantalising possibility remained, which is why Liverpool were relieved by Suarez's brilliance if not reliant upon it.

Having lost their previous two games, against Chelsea and Manchester City, the importance of the win was not lost on Brendan Rodgers. "I have told the players that I think that is our best win of the season," the Liverpool manager said. "In a lot of our games we have been vibrant, had great energy, scored goals and performed well. But on the back of the games we have had this period, to play a lot of the same players against a team who won their last league game 6-0, we knew we were going to have to tough it out and dig in. We might not have always been at our best, but we scored two great goals, created other opportunities and restricted Hull to no shots on target."

Steve Bruce felt that unflattering statistic had been caused by Hull lacking the kind of energy that had helped them to beat Liverpool 3-1 at home a month earlier. "Possibly it was a game too far," the Hull manager said. "There were a lot of tired bodies out there and three games in six games was a bit much for us. When we played them three or four weeks ago we had had a week's preparation and today we couldn't play with the same intensity."

Still Bruce was able to take solace from the "huge achievement" of Hull having 23 points at this stage of the season and that, in spite of their superiority, Liverpool had required two set-piece goals to ensure victory. If Suarez's was unstoppable, Agger's did not fall into that category as the defender's header from Philippe Coutinho's corner was the type of goal that managers hate to concede.

While Rodgers maintained the routine of eulogising Suarez --- "nine out of ten players would not have played" with the injury he had, according to the Liverpool manager -- his opposite number singled out Jordan Henderson for acclaim. "I gave Jordan his debut and when he first came here I never had any doubts that he'd be a top player," Bruce said. "He's looking every bit a [pounds sterling]19 million player at the minute and you have to ask if there are many better English midfield players than him right now." There will be other contenders for that accolade, but at present there is none who can compete with Suarez's status as the Premier League's most outstanding goalscorer.

RATINGS Liverpool (4-2-3-1): S Mignolet 6 -- G Johnson 6 (sub: K Toure, 55min 6), M Skrtel 6, D Agger 7, A Cissokho 6 -- Lucas Leiva 6, J Henderson 8 -- I Aspas 5 (sub: S Gerrard, 62 6), P Coutinho 7, R Sterling 6 (sub: V Moses, 76) -- L Suarez 7. Substitutes not used: B Jones, L Alberto, J Rossiter, M Kelly. Booked: Suarez. Hull City (3-5-1-1): A McGregor 7 -- J Chester 5, A Bruce 5, C Davies 5 -- A Elmohamady 5, Huddleston 6, J Livermore 5, D Meyler 5 (sub: G Boyd, 58 5), M Figueroa 6 -- R Koren 5 (sub: D Graham, 58 5) -- Y Sagbo 5 (sub: M Fryatt, 58 5). Substitutes not used: S Harper, L Rosenior, A Faye, S Quinn. Booked: Bruce, Davies.

the guardian

Suarez shrugs off injury to punish Hull and leave Rodgers in awe

The comforts of home will determine Liverpool's fate in 2014, according to Brendan Rodgers, and they made a convincing start against Hull City. The performance was not the finest served this term at Anfield but it mattered not as Luis Suarez invariably eased the pain of two successive defeats on the road. Suarez continued where he left off in 2013, a calendar year that brought a remarkable 33 goals in 33 appearances for Liverpool, with a stunning free-kick that sealed his team's return to the Champions League places. The striker now has 20 goals from only 15 appearances this season, a Premier League record, and has scored in his last seven outings at Anfield, although statistics do not illuminate his contribution against Steve Bruce's side. More impressive was that he excelled on one foot.

"Luis will get the plaudits because he is a world-class player but nine out of 10 players would not have played today," revealed the Liverpool manager. "He had a real bad knock on the top of his foot from the Chelsea game. I know from working with and managing players that most footballers wouldn't have played with that. He had a big strapping on it and put himself out there for the team and that is why he gets the goals he does because he is so determined."

Rodgers hailed the result as "our best win of the season". He was not talking in terms of a display that dropped below the levels given in defeat at Chelsea and Manchester City, and that saw Aly Cissokho and Iago Aspas struggle to seize their opportunities to impress. The manager's satisfaction lay in Liverpool's reaction to their Christmas toils and their energy levels that ensured Hull did not register one shot on target all afternoon. The added disappointment for Bruce was his team's weakness at set pieces.

Suarez converted Liverpool's first chance of the game but was adjudged fractionally offside as he headed home an inviting free-kick from the right by Philippe Coutinho. Hull's goalkeeper Allan McGregor then denied the lively Raheem Sterling after he was sent clear by Liverpool's leading marksman. That was the sum total of incident until Daniel Agger broke the deadlock. Hull had not been troubled when David Meyler conceded a corner with a block tackle on Suarez. Liverpool's fortunes had appeared increasingly reliant on a moment of magic from the Uruguay international - and that was to come - but Hull's aerial vulnerability was also decisive when Coutinho swung the corner over from the right. Agger, Liverpool's captain for the day until Steven Gerrard returned from injury in the second half, escaped his marker too easily and headed into the bottom corner despite the goalline presence of McGregor and Maynor Figueroa. Bruce gave his opinion on Hull's performance after the interval with a triple substitution but by then it was too late. Liverpool were already coasting towards three points courtesy of the latest sublime goal from their irrepressible No.7. "I don't have the luxury of making five or six changes," said the Hull manager. "Three games in six days was a bit much for us and we didn't have the energy to compete with them by the end."

Suarez was upended 25 yards from goal by James Chester while Hull were appealing for a foul by Sterling. Despite Suarez's obvious intent, his technique with a dead ball throughout the season and McGregor's best endeavour, the outcome was predictably brilliant. The Hull keeper could only grasp thin air as Suarez swept the free-kick into his top corner.

Liverpool 4-2-3-1
Mignolet; Johnson (Toure, 55), Skrtel, Agger, Cissokho; Lucas, Henderson; Aspas (Gerrard, 62), Coutinho, Sterling (Moses, 76); Suarez*.
Subs not used
Jones, Alberto, Kelly, Rossiter.
Referee C Pawson.
Hull City 4-4-1-1
McGregor; Chester, Bruce*, Davies*, Figueroa; Elmohamady, Livermore, Huddleston, Meyler (Boyd, 58); Koren (Graham, 58); Sagbo (Fryatt, 58).
Subs not used
Harper, Rosenior, Faye, Quinn.

Date: 1 January 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Hull Daily Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

1 January 2014

The Mail

Suarez on song with yet another strike

LUIS SUAREZ up to 20 Premier League goals for the season and Steven Gerrard back ahead of schedule. The graph kept rising for Liverpool throughout the old year, and there is little to suggest the new one will be different.

Visiting managers have employed a variety of methods to try to subdue Suarez at Anfield, but an effective one remains elusive. Hull's involved kicking him at every turn, but that just led to both Liverpool goals.

When James Chester launched himself at Suarez in the 37th minute, in a position of no danger, the resulting corner led to Daniel Agger heading Liverpool in front.

The lesson went unheeded and when Chester opened Liverpool's danger man once more in the 50th minute there was an air of inevitability about the outcome as Suarez picked himself up and curled an unstoppable free-kick into the top corner for his 20th goal in 15 League appearances. The statistics are as stunning as his finishing. He went into the game as the only player in Liverpool's history to have scored two or more goals in five successive home League games, and while he failed to extend that sequence, he was on the scoresheet again to make it 14 in six.

It was the ideal response to consecutive 2-1 defeats at title rivals Manchester City and Chelsea, and Brendan Rodgers was in no doubt about its significance.

'I've just told the players that was our best win of the season,' said the Liverpool manager.

'We have been vibrant and full of goals in so many games, but I knew, after the fixtures we've had over Christmas and still using the same players, it would be a case of toughing it out today.

'Not only did we do that, we scored two great goals and created other opportunities, and I was very pleased with the team as a whole. It was a great header from Daniel to set us on our way and Luis got his reward for putting up with an injury he picked up at Chelsea and insisting on playing.

'It was a bad knock on his foot, and most players wouldn't have played a few days later.

'There's a lot of strapping on it, but there was never any question in his mind. He wanted to be out there for the good of the team and it's that sort of attitude that enables him to score the goals he does.' A marginal offside decision cost Suarez a 19th-minute breakthrough, after he had sent a header flashing into the roof of the net from Philippe Coutinho's free-kick, but Hull paid for a moment of indiscipline 18 minutes later.

Suarez protested vigorously enough about Chester's reckless challenge to earn himself a booking, but there were no complaints from Agger as he rose to meet Coutinho's corner with a header that bounced between Allan McGregor's dive and Maynor Figueroa's attempt to guard a post.

Jordan Henderson and Coutinho squandered clear-cut chances just before half-time, but another injudicious challenge from Chester cost Hull soon after.

After chopping down Suarez 22 yards from goal, he could only look on as the Uruguayan arced the resulting free-kick over the wall and inside the top near corner of McGregor's net.

It could have been worse for Hull, as the livewire Coutinho weaved past three challenges deep into added time before being denied by McGregor, and manager Steve Bruce conceded it was a game too far for his toiling team.

'That's the third time we have played in six days and there were a lot of tired bodies towards the end,' he said.

'We were game enough to keep going, but unfortunately I haven't got the luxury of making five or six changes and it eventually took its toll. You've got to run a million miles to get anything here and that was always going to be a big ask for these players.

'It is impossible to keep playing with the same intensity when games are coming thick and fast, and when that happens and tiredness creeps in, your concentration levels slip and your passing starts to go.

'It was just too much for us and sometimes you have to hold your hands up and accept you have been beaten by the better side.'

The Daily Telegraph

Suarez adds a touch of beauty

Liverpool 2

Agger 36, Suarez 50

HullCity 0

Att: 44,627

Silverware will return to Anfield in 2014. The wait for the league title may go on, and the FA Cup will depend on the lottery of the draw, but you can set the date for the player-of-the-year awards because -- future crimes and misdemeanours permitting - there can be only one winner. The players' and writers' associations might as well save time and printing costs by submitting only Luis Suarez's name on the voting slips.

When Liverpool play at home, Suarez scores beautiful goals. This truth has become self-evident, the Uruguayan finding the net in his seventh consecutive Anfield fixture as Liverpool regained a position in the top four. Yet again, it was a pearl of a strike - a 25-yard free-kick at the Kop end to double his side's advantage.

It was Suarez's 20th league goal in 15 fixtures, a Premier League record to accompany a growing collection. It spoke volumes for the standards he has set that, when he lined up the setpiece on 50 minutes, no other outcome was anticipated.

There was even a moment of dry humour 20 minutes later when he tried to repeat the trick from 35 yards, blazing a mile or two over Hull goalkeeper Allan McGregor's bar.

"What was that?" sang the home fans. Suarez laughed. At this point in his career, there seems to be nothing of which he is not capable. Even more impressive, Suarez was playing with a foot injury.

"Nine out of 10 players would not have played with the injury he had. He had a bad knock on his foot against Chelsea," Brendan Rodgers, the Liverpool manager, said.

Not for the first time, the South American elevated what could have been an awkward afternoon.

Liverpool were not at their fluent best and seemed tired during the early stages, when a couple of personnel changes seemed to be draining confidence. Iago Aspas, making a rare start, was especially uncomfortable.

Fortunately for Rodgers, in Suarez, Jordan Henderson and Philippe Coutinho Liverpool possessed the drive, creativity and poise to ease to three of the more important points of the season, given the context.

By recent Liverpool standards, this was winning ugly, but there are not too many warts apparent nowadays when Suarez is around.

With Steven Gerrard returning from a hamstring strain -- he played the final 28 minutes -- it was an afternoon to restore confidence and morale. No wonder Rodgers was purring.

"That was our best win of the season," he said. "In a lot of games we have been vibrant, but on the back of the games we've had, against a team that had just won 6-0, we had to dig in. Luis will get the plaudits, but it was very much a team effort."

Festive-period defeats at Manchester City and Chelsea were debilitating, especially as Liverpool found themselves out of the top four at the start of the day, scant reward for their work thus far.

They have fortified Anfield this season, however - this was their ninth home victory in 10 fixtures. But, until Daniel Agger's header on 37 minutes, Steve Bruce harboured hopes of maintaining an impressive run against the Merseyside club. It was only last month that Hull beat Liverpool comfortably, although containment was the instruction here and the Hull manager attributed defeat to fatigue. "It was possibly one game too many, having so many games in six days," he said.

Bruce's praise was reserved not only for Suarez but his former charge Henderson, who has been one of the most consistent Liverpool performers. "I gave Jordan his debut and when he first came here I never had any doubts that he would be a top player," he said.

"He's got a huge desire to do well and I'm delighted that he is. He's looking every bit a [pounds sterling]19million player at the minute and you have to ask if there are many better English mid-field players right now."

Henderson could have doubled Liverpool's lead before half-time, but he missed the target after a wellconstructed move, while Coutinho did everything but score on several occasions.

The Brazilian misses too many chances and if he eradicates that flaw he will score as regularly as Suarez, given the opportunities he crafts, often for himself.

His corner created the first for Agger on 37 minutes, a header that hit the turf before bouncing over McGregor. After a series of long-range efforts tested the Hull keeper, Coutinho danced through the Hull defence in injury time with a run beginning in his own half. Had his shot not been straight at McGregor it would have been a goal to eclipse any in the Suarez catalogue.

Liverpool were content with two, a return to the Champions League positions and further compelling evidence that they are in possession of the division's premier player.

Date: 1 January 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Hull Daily Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

1 January 2014

THE INDEPENDENT

Suarez delivers another divine finish to continue rebuilding of Anfield's aura

The last Liverpool player to score 20 goals in successive seasons was known as "God". After he emulated Robbie Fowler's achievement with his latest jaw-dropping free-kick, you wondered what level of divinity Luis Suarez will come to occupy at Anfield.

Fowler and Suarez share an upbringing as street footballers with the blend of brilliance and cheek that Merseyside adores. They also share a wonderful technique. The free-kick that settled this game was struck so well that, no matter how Hull goalkeeper Allan McGregor had positioned his wall or where he had stood, the ball would have struck the net with a geometric certainty.

In the year that has just ended, Suarez scored 33 times in as many games and the Kop now so expects goals from free-kicks that when the Uruguayan sent one from 40 yards over the bar, they jeered "What the f*****g hell was that?" The god grinned back.

"Nine out of 10 players would not have played," his manager, Brendan Rodgers, said. "He had a bad knock on the top of his foot during the Chelsea game and he had heavy strapping on it. From what I know about footballers, most wouldn't have played but that's why Luis gets the goals he does - he is so determined."

One of Rodgers' principal achievements is to give Anfield its aura back. In 2012, it was a fortress that had been taken down brick by brick. Liverpool had won just half a dozen league games there in the calendar year. In 2013, Rodgers more than doubled that figure and remarked that he wanted opponents to come here fearing "the longest 90 minutes of their lives".

Rodgers called it the "best win of our season". It seemed a strange analysis but Liverpool had endured a draining Christmas that had seen them lose at Manchester City and Chelsea. They were facing a Hull side that had beaten them on Humber side a month ago and had won their last game 6-0. Here, they did not manage a single shot on target.

Hull manager Steve Bruce had celebrated his 53rd birthday on New Year's Eve but it was the need to play three games in six days that had really drained him. He managed to raise a smile by putting his hood over his mop of curly grey hair when the Kop launched into its usual chant of "Steve Bruce has got a big, fat head" but that was the last of the laughs.

Naturally as a one-time centre-half, conceding a goal from a corner stung. It was delivered by Philippe Coutinho and met by the head of Daniel Agger. Jordan Henderson swung a boot at it and so did Maynor Figueroa on the line. Both missed and Liverpool found themselves a goal up. Since Suarez's header in similar circumstances had been disallowed for offside, Hull had been warned.

The only surprise was that Liverpool, Coutinho in particular, did not score more. His run from the halfway line, the way he beat three defenders, was Brazilian to the core. Only brave keeping from McGregor prevented a Maracana-style finish.



NEW YEAR SAME OLD LUIS; Amazing Suarez starts 2014 like he played in 2013. 33 goals in 33 games, now it's one game, one awesome goal LIVERPOOL 2 Agger 36, Suarez 50

HULL CITY 0

NO New Year's resolutions for Luis Suarez - he has clearly decided change is overrated.

In fact, it was business as usual for the Liverpool striker as he added to the 33 goals he scored in 2013 with another stunning strike.

True, the visits to Manchester City and then Chelsea had been frustrating for the Uruguayan - the first time this season he had gone two games without scoring. But he was never going to allow any such problems back at Anfield. Suarez's goals have been of such quality this season that efforts such as his 50th-minute free-kick from 25 yards into the top corner are almost in danger of becoming commonplace.

If he can keep delivering in this manner, Liverpool will surely remain in the title race - especially when coming to Anfield is such a hellishly difficult proposition for any side, never mind one as nervous as Hull.

And make no mistake, with a talent as brilliant as Suarez, they will not lose many games here.

Remember, Manchester United won the title thanks largely to the goalscoring exploits of Robin van Persie last season, so a striker really CAN make that much of a difference.

Suarez scored 29 Premier League goals in 26 matches in 2013, and if he continues at the same rate, then it is hard to see how Liverpool can fail to finish outside the Champions League placings.

As City boss Steve Bruce said afterwards, even when he is quiet, he still unnerves teams, unsettling them sufficiently to force mistakes.

This game was a perfect case in point. Hull's defence has looked solid, but against Suarez, they were edgy and skittish, almost gifting him a goal that was ultimately ruled out for the narrowest of offside margins as early as the 18th minute.

The respite was brief for the visitors. Without even playing well, Liverpool created

a series of first-half chances - the best a sitter which Jordan Henderson spurned after being put in when Iago Aspas and Philippe Coutinho combined superbly. Raheem Sterling also shot at the keeper when he should have scored and Coutinho missed another. But you could see Hull's central defence focusing more and more on the main threat... and, inevitably, it was from elsewhere the home side opened the scoring.

Coutinho's delivery from set pieces was excellent all afternoon, and when he swung in a 37th-minute free kick, Daniel Agger (far left) rose almost unchallenged to thump home a header.

After the break it was more of the same, with boss Brendan Rodgers rightly proud that his side restricted the Tigers - who scored six at the weekend - to no shots on target.

Suarez (above) sealed the win with his free-kick, and twice more Coutinho could have added a flourish when he produced brilliant skill but not a finish to match.

The Reds could have had five or six, even without going into overdrive. If the Brazilian finds his shooting boots, they will be even more devastating.

Perhaps even better than that, was the fact skipper Steven Gerrard returned as a second-half substitute after a month-long lay off with a hamstring problem.

And with striker Daniel Sturridge also close to a return, Liverpool, on the devastating home form they continue to show, must now be considered at least an outside bet for the title.

LIVERPOOL OUR RATING

Mignolet 6 Little to do, but maintained concentration impressively
Johnson 6 Picked up knock early on, struggled to shake it off
Skrtel 7 Powerful at back and enjoyed surging runs forward
Agger 7 Had Sagbo in his pocket and enjoyed physical challenge
Cissokho 6 Looks far more composed than early season disasters
Henderson 7 Another confident display, but missed fine chance
Lucas 6 Neat and tidy as always, without edging into the limelight
Aspas 6 One sublime touch, otherwise struggled to impose self
Coutinho 7 Class act on the ball, showed a weakness in his finishing
Sterling 6 Looked a little jaded, but has a right to be after intense run
Suarez 7 Booked. Brilliant free-kick showed class once more

SUBS

Toure (Johnson 55) 6
Gerrard (Aspas 62) 6
Moses (Sterling 75) 6
59% Possession 41%
6 Shots on target 0
9 Shots off target 4
3 Corners 4
1 Offside 2
15 Fouls 15
Referee: C Pawson
Att: 44,627

Hull have never won a Premier League game in January in eight attempts
HULL OUR RATING

McGregor 7 Couple of good stops at crucial moments kept the score down
Chester 6 Coped well at full back, and kept Sterling quiet in the main
Bruce Booked. 6 Struggled to contain Suarez but kept to his task
Davies Booked. 6 Confident at heart of defence but conceded too many chances
Figueroa 6 Never had the chance to show his threat going forward
Elmohamady 6 Forced into so much defensive work he struggled
Livermore 6 Kept plugging away in the congestion of midfield
Huddleston 6 Needs to do more at this level to justify recent rave reviews
Meyler 6 Worked hard down the flank and more evident in defence
Koren 6 Did little to justify attacking formation, withdrawn early
Sagbo 5 Won nothing all afternoon and no surprise subbed early



Home rule continues for Reds

New year, same old Liverpool on home turf.

The frustration of back-to-back away defeats to Manchester City and Chelsea was banished with a routine victory over Hull City. There were no fireworks to kick-off 2014 but Brendan Rodgers' side got the job done with a minimum of fuss as they climbed back into the top four at Everton's expense. This was a seventh successive league victory in L4 - fuelling Rodgers' belief that the Anfield factor could hold the key in the battle for Champions League qualification. The manager wasn't suffering from a bout of amnesia when he described a largely forgettable contest as his side's best win of the campaign. Of course Liverpool have played significantly better and secured more prized scalps this term you knew where he was coming from. This had all the hallmarks of a potential slip-up. A Reds squad depleted further by injuries to Joe Allen and Mamadou Sakho going into a fourth game in the space of 11 energy-sapping days.

Date: 1 January 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Hull Daily Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

1 January 2014

Mid-table Hull were riding the crest of a wave following the 6-0 hiding they dished out to Fulham and with the memory of last month's first ever victory over Liverpool at the KC Stadium still fresh in their minds. Throw in 44,000 hangers and a subdued atmosphere and this was always going to be a tricky assignment. The Reds never threatened to produce the kind of fluent attacking masterclass which has lit up Anfield in recent months but crucially they dug in and ground it out. After a painfully slow start they improved and got their reward when Daniel Agger headed home Philippe Coutinho's corner before the break.

Luis Suarez then ended what by his sky-high standards was a goal drought when he added another special strike to his blossoming collection.

The Uruguayan's stunning free-kick which was curled into the top corner saw him reach another historic milestone. Suarez became the quickest in Premier League history to reach 20 league goals for a season – achieving that figure is just 15 appearances. He is also the first Liverpool player since Robbie Fowler in 1995/96 to reach the 20 league goals landmark in back to back campaigns.

Remarkably, Suarez has scored in all seven of his home games this term – netting 15 times in the process. His tireless work rate and commitment to the cause remain as eye-catching as his breathtaking natural talent.

There were concerns that a badly bruised foot suffered at Stamford Bridge might keep Suarez out of the clash with the Tigers but the frontman insisted on having it strapped up and battling on. Once again he was relentless and once again opponents resorted to trying to kick lumps out of him. Referee Craig Pawson, promoted to Premier League duty after being in charge of Bournemouth v Yeovil on Boxing Day, infuriated the home fans with the leniency he showed to Hull's combative approach. Jose Mourinho's attack on Suarez last weekend when he accused him of diving was ludicrous. But the fear for Liverpool is that the Chelsea boss has placed that seed of doubt in officials' minds about the striker's conduct. Suarez could scarcely believe his eyes when Pawson brandished a yellow card in his direction after enduring so much rough treatment himself which went unpunished. At least on this occasion the referee's shortcomings had no impact on the outcome with Hull a pale shadow of the team which had beaten the Reds a month earlier. After costly errors against both Man City and Chelsea, Simon Mignolet enjoyed a relaxing start to the new year as Steve Bruce's side failed to muster a single shot on target. For 20 minutes it was painfully sloppy with the Kop entertaining themselves by drawing attention to the size of the visiting manager's head. A smiling Bruce responded by pulling up his hood.

Suarez thought he had broken the deadlock when he rose to nod home Coutinho's free-kick but the celebrations were cut short by the offside flag. It was marginal but replays showed the decision was correct. Sakho's hamstring injury has handed Agger the opportunity to re-establish himself at the heart of Liverpool's back four and if he performs at this level he will take some shifting.

The Dane dealt with the threat of Yannick Sagbo and always used the ball intelligently. It was his lofted pass which Suarez nodded into the path of Raheem Sterling. The young winger's pace took him clear but Allan McGregor made the block. There were weak links with Aly Cissokho and Iago Aspas, who came in for Allen and Sakho, both failing to impress. This was Aspas' first start since September and the £8million Spaniard spent most of the opening hour firmly on the periphery. His progress hasn't been helped by injury setbacks but he looks ill equipped for the physical demands of English football. Nine minutes before the break the Reds were in front when Agger's downward header left McGregor beaten. It was his first goal for the Reds since last April. Somehow Alex Bruce, already booked for scything down Suarez, then escaped a second yellow for another cynical foul on the frontman. Pawson played the advantage with Coutinho and Aspas combining to find Jordan Henderson, who had time to pick his spot but drilled wide. Coutinho was similarly wasteful after expertly controlling Henderson's inviting pass. Five minutes into the second half the points were secure. After being upended by James Chester, Suarez picked himself up to find the top corner from 25 yards out. Glen Johnson limped off after twisting his ankle with Kolo Toure replacing him, while there was a huge ovation for Steven Gerrard who came off the bench to make his comeback from injury in place of Aspas. The skipper's return ahead of schedule is a timely boost and Gerrard helped ensure the Reds cruised to victory.

Coutinho threatened to add to the home side's tally but the Brazilian couldn't produce the end product to match his silky skills.

One mazy run from halfway in stoppage time saw him slalom past three challenges but with only McGregor left to beat he fired straight at the keeper. Having fallen agonisingly short against the best, Liverpool have got back to beating the rest.

A new year brings new hope and Rodgers' men are up and running.

***Re-read: Liverpool FC 2 Hull 0 as it happened from Anfield**

LIVERPOOL (4-2-3-1): Mignolet, Johnson (Toure 55), Skrtel, Agger, Cissokho, Lucas, Henderson, Aspas (Gerrard 62), Coutinho, Sterling (Moses 76), Suarez.

Not used: Jones, Alberto, Kelly, Rossiter. Goals; Agger 36, Suarez 50. Booking: Suarez.

HULL CITY (3-5-2): McGregor, Chester, Bruce, Davies, Elmohamady, Livermore, Huddleston, Meyler (Boyd 58), Figueroa, Koren (Graham 58), Sagbo (Fryatt 58).

Not used: Harper, Rosenior, Faye, Quinn. Bookings: Bruce, Davies.

REFEREE: Craig Pawson. ATT: 44,627.

NEXT MATCH: Liverpool v Oldham Athletic, FA Cup third round, Sunday KO 3pm.

HULL DAILY MAIL

Revenge of Suarez as tired Tigers huffed and puffed to no avail LIGHTNING would not strike twice for Hull City. A month to the day since becoming one of only five Premier League clubs to nullify Luis Suarez's threat successfully in a 3-1 win at the KC Stadium, it was Liverpool's gifted Uruguayan who yesterday exacted revenge on his fertile Anfield soil.

Unlike the Tigers' historic victory 31 days earlier, Steve Bruce's men had no answer to the attacking verve of a title-chasing Liverpool side led by Suarez. Once Daniel Agger had nodded in a downward header late in the first half, all hope of an illustrious double slipped through tired fingers.

The margin of the defeat could have been greater but in Suarez, Liverpool had the telling advantage this time around. Scoring his 15th goal in seven home games this season with a magnificent free-kick four minutes after the break, the prolific marksmen again proved the ace in the Reds' pack.

City huffed and puffed in pursuit of a happy New Year's Day. Four days after hammering six past Fulham, however, they failed to even muster one shot on target. For a City squad low on numbers, Anfield represented a stop too far down the line. Ten of a fatigued XI had started at least six of the games in December and the demands had clearly taken a heavy toll.

Liverpool, without question, always appeared the superior side but the Tigers were low on the energy that has so often dug the foundations for their better performances this term. This was a side running on empty.

"A football player can play a match every day, but you can't play with the same intensity," said Bruce in the wake of a losing start to 2014.

"We looked tired and when tiredness creeps in, concentration goes, your passing goes and basically you haven't got the energy to compete. "Sometimes you just have to say you were beaten by a better team and we were, it was as simple as that." Although 2013 had ended with a scintillating flourish, Bruce still found room for change from the side that had beaten Fulham 6-0 four days earlier.

A switch back to 3-5-2 – the same system that had tripped Liverpool up a month before – paved the way for Alex Bruce and David Meyler to return, with Liam Rosenior and George Boyd the unfortunate absentees.

The stated aim was to stifle a Liverpool attack that had plundered 23 goals on the way to six consecutive wins at Anfield and, namely, Suarez, the tormentor-in-chief responsible for 14 of them. The early signs were promising in a subdued opening. City's compact shape offered few spaces to exploit and it was the visitors who were first to threaten. Yannick Sagbo shot into the Kop when working space on the edge of the box, while Robert Koren's attempt on goal, fed by Jake Livermore, was diffused by a covering challenge and collected safely by Simon Mignolet.

Suarez was beginning to get irritable at the close attention he was afforded, but his threat was mercurial and constant. The Uruguayan had the ball in the back of the net after 19 minutes when nodding in Philippe Coutinho's free-kick but wheeling away in celebration he discovered a raised flag. Replays showed it was only Suarez's shoulder beyond the last defender. Suarez persisted and carved open City six minutes later. A wonderful flick from Daniel Agger's long ball sent in Raheem Sterling and only Allan McGregor's save when one-on-one kept the Tigers level. Although City recovered to enjoy a tidy defensive spell, their good work was undone eight minutes from the interval.

A right-wing corner from Coutinho was headed downwards by Agger and though his effort appeared innocuous enough, Henderson made a nuisance of himself to unsight McGregor. The dam had sprung a leak and City were fortunate their plight was not worsened before the break. First Henderson, latching on to a lovely lay-off from Aspas, and then Coutinho, dropping a shoulder inside the box, dragged wide with McGregor's goal gaping. Two fortunate escapes were City's.

For the visitors to find a way back in there needed to be a notable upturn in their use of the ball. Bruce preached the message at half-time but his words floated away across Stanley Park when Suarez effectively killed the game as a contest four minutes into the second half. Awarded a free-kick when brought down by Chester to the left of centre 20 yards out, the irrepressible striker curled an unstoppable right-foot effort past the diving McGregor and into the top corner. It was a moment where all you could do was applaud. Bruce responded by using his full allocation of substitutes a minute before the hour mark. Danny Graham, Matty Fryatt and Boyd all entered the fray in a bold switch but Liverpool's grip on the contest never relinquished. For all City could be commended for their endeavour, the home side were always the likelier to find the game's third goal inside a relaxed conclusion. Brazilian playmaker Coutinho alone had four attempts on goal but only twice managed to work McGregor.

On both occasions the Scot was the equal to what came his way from the right foot of Coutinho. The Tigers plugged away, with Boyd and Fryatt pressing their claims for a start against Middlesbrough in the FA Cup, but Anfield was an unrelenting end to a hectic festive schedule. Though minds and hearts were willing, there would be no reward for Bruce's men.

That came later with news of those below them in the table failing to make up the ground. City fall to within six points of the bottom three but remain 10th. For that, there was ample reason to believe in 2014.

Date: 1 January 2014
Opposition: Hull City
Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Hull Daily Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

1 January 2014



Liverpool moved back into the top four following successive Christmas defeats with a comfortable victory over Hull.

Daniel Agger nodded in a Philippe Coutinho corner to set the hosts up for a seventh straight home win.

It was all Liverpool as Jordan Henderson and Coutinho went close before Luis Suarez doubled the advantage with an exquisite free-kick early in the second half. Hull created little, but did well to prevent the hosts from scoring a third.

The victory goes some way to repairing the damage caused by the losses to Manchester City and Chelsea over Christmas, and prevented Hull from completing the double over Brendan Rodgers's men.

Not only was this payback for the 3-1 defeat Hull inflicted at the KC Stadium last month, but the three points also keep Liverpool in touch with league leaders Arsenal.

The Reds, top on Christmas Day but fifth at the start of play, leapfrog Everton into fourth after their Merseyside rivals drew at Stoke.

A further boost to Anfield boss Rodgers was Steven Gerrard's second-half introduction after the captain's four-match absence with a hamstring injury. However, the sight of Glenn Johnson hobbling off early in the second half will be a worry to Rodgers who already has a lengthy injury list to contend with.

Suarez continues The manager has described the second half of the season as "massive" for the club as they seek a first top-four finish since 2008-09.

Not every opponent in 2014 will be dealt with as easily as Hull were, although it did take the hosts a while to break down Steve Bruce's well-organised side.

When they eventually hit their stride midway through the first half, it was Suarez's imagination and energy that was at the heart of it.

The Uruguayan thought he had scored his 20th goal of the season early on, only for his header from a Coutinho free-kick to be correctly disallowed for offside.

Undeterred, he went on to create an opening for Raheem Sterling but Allan McGregor advanced quickly off his line to get down and smother the teenager's effort.

The opener came from an unlikely source as Agger scored his first league goal since April, his downward header evading not just the goalkeeper but two Hull defenders on the line.

The hosts should have extended their advantage before the break but the influential Henderson missed with the goal at his mercy, while Coutinho squandered an equally glorious chance.

Those misses were forgotten in the 50th minute, however, when Suarez stepped up to produce a moment of brilliance, curling an unstoppable free-kick into the top corner.

And there were more cheers from the home fans when Gerrard replaced Iago Aspas shortly afterwards.

The veteran midfielder enjoyed an easy reintroduction as Liverpool continued to dominate, Coutinho twice more going close in the latter stages, though Hull held their discipline to prevent further scoring.

Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers: "It was arguably our best win of the season, on the back of what was a tough schedule for us with a light squad.

"The energy, as you'd expect, was not what it has been but we showed great resilience. Luis Suarez's quality is unquestionable. It's probably unfair that our team doesn't get the credit.

"Everyone talks about Luis, and we all know he's a world class player, but even when he was out of the team we only lost one game. Today was a great team performance and what we're building here is based around that."

Hull boss Steve Bruce: "It's a disappointing result. It was a difficult afternoon for us. It isn't the easiest of places to come and, towards the end, we had a lot of tired bodies out there.

"We stuck at it and conceded from two set pieces. Our season is never defined in places like this. It was very comfortable for Liverpool because we didn't have the energy. They were better than us on the day."

Date: 1 January 2014

Opposition: Hull City

Competition: League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
Guardian	Mirror	Hull Daily Mail
Independent	Mail	BBC

1 January 2014



Full time Match ends, Liverpool 2, Hull City 0.

90:00+2:24 Full time Second Half ends, Liverpool 2, Hull City 0.

90:00+1:45 Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the top right corner. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

90:00+0:52 Attempt blocked. George Boyd (Hull City left footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Matty Fryatt.

89:38 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool).

89:38 Danny Graham (Hull City wins a free kick on the right wing.

86:09 Attempt missed. Luis Suárez (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high from a direct free kick.

85:22 Booking Curtis Davies (Hull City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

85:19 Luis Suárez (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

85:19 Foul by Curtis Davies (Hull City).

84:01 Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool).

84:01 Jake Livermore (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

82:27 Attempt missed. Maynor Figueroa (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by George Boyd.

82:07 Foul by Victor Moses (Liverpool).

82:07 Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City wins a free kick on the right wing.

81:36 Corner, Hull City. Conceded by Aly Cissokho.

79:58 Attempt missed. Luis Suárez (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho with a headed pass.

79:25 Martin Skrtel (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

79:25 Foul by Curtis Davies (Hull City).

79:03 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool).

79:03 Matty Fryatt (Hull City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

78:23 Attempt missed. Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City right footed shot from the right side of the box is high and wide to the left.

78:19 Attempt blocked. Matty Fryatt (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Jake Livermore.

77:43 Attempt blocked. Tom Huddlestone (Hull City right footed shot from more than 35 yards is blocked. Assisted by Jake Livermore.

76:38 Victor Moses (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

76:38 Foul by Matty Fryatt (Hull City).

76:15 Corner, Hull City. Conceded by Jordan Henderson.

76:11 Attempt blocked. Jake Livermore (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

75:56 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Victor Moses replaces Raheem Sterling.

75:26 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool).

75:26 Curtis Davies (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

74:40 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left.

72:07 Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Lucas Leiva.

70:00 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Steven Gerrard.

68:20 Dangerous play by Steven Gerrard (Liverpool).

68:20 James Chester (Hull City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

67:47 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool).

67:47 Maynor Figueroa (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

65:54 Attempt missed. Curtis Davies (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Matty Fryatt following a corner.

65:23 Corner, Hull City. Conceded by Lucas Leiva.

64:44 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Raheem Sterling with a cross.

61:25 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Steven Gerrard replaces Iago Aspas.

59:01 Aly Cissokho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

59:01 Foul by Curtis Davies (Hull City).

58:13 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Hull City. George Boyd replaces David Meyler.

58:03 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Hull City. Danny Graham replaces Robert Koren.

57:56 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Hull City. Matty Fryatt replaces Yannick Sagbo.

57:12 Corner, Hull City. Conceded by Daniel Agger.

57:09 Attempt blocked. Robert Koren (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by David Meyler.

54:37 Substitution Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Kolo Touré replaces Glen Johnson because of an injury.

53:03 Foul by Glen Johnson (Liverpool).

53:03 David Meyler (Hull City wins a free kick on the left wing.

51:59 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by James Chester.

51:56 Attempt blocked. Aly Cissokho (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

49:07 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Liverpool 2, Hull City 0. Luis Suárez (Liverpool from a free kick with a right footed shot to the top left corner.

47:55 Luis Suárez (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

47:55 Foul by James Chester (Hull City).

46:21 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool).

46:21 Jake Livermore (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

45:00 Second Half begins Liverpool 1, Hull City 0.

45:00+1:21 Half time First Half ends, Liverpool 1, Hull City 0.

45:00+0:49 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from the

centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

45:00+0:02 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

45:00+0:02 Foul by Yannick Sagbo (Hull City).

43:51 Offside, Hull City. Allan McGregor tries a through ball, but Yannick Sagbo is caught offside.

42:21 Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

42:21 Foul by Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City).

41:33 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Iago Aspas.

39:59 Aly Cissokho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

39:59 Foul by Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City).

39:23 Daniel Agger (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

39:23 Foul by Yannick Sagbo (Hull City).

38:26 Booking Luis Suárez (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

38:13 Foul by Luis Suárez (Liverpool).

38:13 Curtis Davies (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

35:58 Goal scored Goal! Goal! Liverpool 1, Hull City 0. Daniel Agger (Liverpool header

from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho with a cross following a corner.

35:04 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by David Meyler.

28:44 Foul by Daniel Agger (Liverpool).

28:44 Tom Huddlestone (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

28:14 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Alex Bruce.

25:28 Foul by Iago Aspas (Liverpool).

25:28 David Meyler (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

24:30 Attempt saved. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Luis Suárez with a headed pass.

23:33 Daniel Agger (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

23:33 Foul by Yannick Sagbo (Hull City).

22:57 Attempt missed. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high.

21:38 Attempt saved. Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner.

20:54 Booking Alex Bruce (Hull City is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

20:49 Luis Suárez (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

20:49 Foul by Alex Bruce (Hull City).

19:13 Glen Johnson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

19:13 Foul by David Meyler (Hull City).

18:14 Offside, Liverpool. Philippe Coutinho tries a through ball, but Luis Suárez is caught offside.

17:44 Hand ball by Robert Koren (Hull City).

16:29 Offside, Hull City. Allan McGregor tries a through ball, but Yannick Sagbo is caught offside.

15:34 Attempt missed. Luis Suárez (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Glen Johnson.

14:20 Attempt blocked. Robert Koren (Hull City right footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Jake Livermore.

11:56 Attempt missed. Yannick Sagbo (Hull City right footed shot from outside the box is just a bit too high. Assisted by Robert Koren.

10:36 Iago Aspas (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

10:36 Foul by David Meyler (Hull City).

4:36 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool).

4:36 Robert Koren (Hull City wins a free kick in the attacking half.

3:53 Attempt blocked. Glen Johnson (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

3:00 Aly Cissokho (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

3:00 Foul by Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City).

1:38 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool).

1:38 James Chester (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

0:25 Foul by Iago Aspas (Liverpool).

0:25 Maynor Figueroa (Hull City wins a free kick in the defensive half.

0:00 First Half begins.

0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.