Title: Man Utd v Liverpool: Van Gaal hints at Falcao return

Louis van Gaal will rely on his assistant Ryan Giggs to motivate his Manchester United team for Sunday's Barclays Premier League match with Liverpool.

The Dutchman will get his first taste of this fixture at Old Trafford but revealed his assistant has left him and the other United newcomers in no doubt about the significance of this game. In more than 20 years as a United player, Giggs played an integral part in helping Sir Alex Ferguson to replace this weekend's opponents at the top of English football.

"I have an assistant manager in Ryan Giggs and he presented an analysis of Liverpool and he did it in a marvellous way, so I'm very pleased," Van Gaal said.

United are seven points and six places above Liverpool and will be seeking a sixth straight victory this season but United defender Jonny Evans has dismissed suggestions his team are firm favourites to prevail. Liverpool have failed to reach the heights of last season, including an emphatic 3-0 triumph at Old Trafford in March, but Evans still expects a stiff test.

"We are in a bit of form in terms of results and Liverpool are not but all form goes out of the window in these games and anything can happen," Evans, who is fit again to play, told MUTV. "I haven't seen many of their games this season, but I watched a bit of the one in the Champions League the other night against Basel.

"Obviously, they were under a wee bit of pressure to get a big result that they didn't get in the end. Luis Suarez has gone and maybe they aren't as strong, but they've still got some fantastic players who can still create magic on the pitch and that is something we will have to be careful of."

Evans returned from a foot injury to feature in Monday night's 2-1 success at Southampton and will hope to be a touch sharper this weekend following that first outing since September.

"I didn't start the game but I came on after 15 minutes, so it was good to get a run-out and it was a tough game as well," he said. "It was very fast-paced and I felt that in the first 10 minutes. It has been a frustrating time for me with injuries so it was nice to get back involved."

United will be without Angel Di Maria, Luke Shaw, Chris Smalling and Daley Blind through injury, but Phil Jones and Rafael are available again and Van Gaal hinted that Radamel Falcao could return to action after being an unused substitute at St Mary's Stadium.

Liverpool must bounce back from last weekend's 0-0 stalemate at home to Sunderland and Tuesday's UEFA Champions League exit following a 1-1 draw with Basel. Brendan Rodgers accepts facing United is always one of the most relished games of the season for Liverpool’s supporters.

"It's a very important game - it always is," the Liverpool manager declared. "It's a massive game in the fixture list for this country.

"We got an outstanding performance and result last season and if we can replicate that we'll be very happy."

Liverpool remain without injured striker Daniel Sturridge but Rodgers reported that Adam Lallana is in good shape after a rib problem and Mario Balotelli could return from a groin strain.

"He's been out for a while but in the last couple of days he's looked good in training, so we'll give him every chance to come into the squad," Rodgers said of Balotelli.

Manchester United (from): Amos, De Gea, Johnstone, Lindegaard, Blackett, Evans, Jones, McNair, Rafael, Rojo, Vermijl, Anderson, Carrick, Fellaini, Fletcher, Herrera, James, Januzaj, Lingard, Mata, Valencia, Young, Falcao, W Keane, Rooney, Van Persie, Wilson.

Liverpool (from): Jones, Mignolet, Johnson, Jose Enrique, Lovren, Manquillo, Moreno, Sakho, Skrtel, Toure, Allen, Can, Coutinho, Gerrard, Henderson, Lallana, Lucas, Markovic, Balotelli, Borini, Lambert, Sterling.