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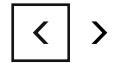

## Liverpool

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UEFA Champions League



Frankfurt



Liverpool

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1



Brentford

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Liverpool

League Cup

SAT  
20:00  
25 OCT



17:08 BST

### A Salah-less XI?



We have had a Liverpool team selector running all day on Thursday for you to pick your best XI if everybody was fit for Arne Slot.

It is a small sample size, but here are the results.

The most popular formation has been the usual 4-3-3, taking more than 50% of the vote.

The back four is pretty set - Conor Bradley, Ibrahima Konate, Virgil van Dijk and Andy Robertson.

In midfield, Dominik Szoboszlai and Ryan Gravenberch are the most popular picks, with a tight battle between Florian Wirtz and Alexis Mac Allister for the other spot.

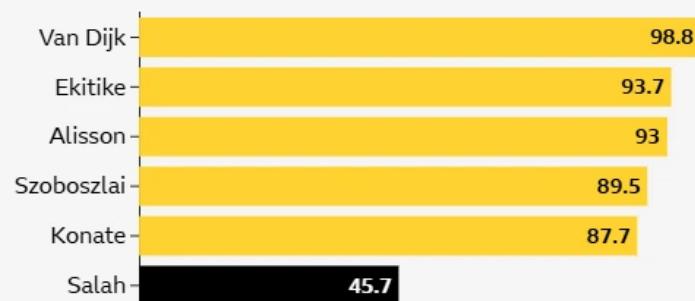
Finally, for the forward positions, Mohamed Salah's poor recent form has actually nudged him out of the first choice XI, albeit only just replaced by Wirtz as most popular pick on the right-hand side.

Hugo Ekitike has been chosen for almost all teams, in either the central striking role or on the left, with Alexander Isak down the middle.

In fact as of 17:00 BST on Thursday, Salah had been selected in just 45.5% of teams, 12th among all players.

## Mohamed Salah was chosen in under half of Liverpool XIs

% of teams picked in



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16:31 BST

### Ekitike 'deserves to start games of football'

#### FAN'S VOICE



Our Liverpool fan contributor Chloe Bloxam reflects on the side's impressive 5-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the Champions League on Tuesday and discusses why Hugo Ekitike should be the first name on Arne Slot's teamsheet.



Find more from Chloe Bloxam at [The Redmen TV](#)

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15:12 BST

## 'Not a shock if Salah does not start against Brentford'



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Former Scotland winger Pat Nevin says it was a "big call" to leave Mohamed Salah on the bench for Wednesday's win over Eintracht Frankfurt.

Salah has not scored in his past six appearances and has now started only one of Liverpool's three Champions League matches so far this season.

On Thursday, the Egyptian has replaced his header image and profile picture on X, formerly known as Twitter, removing his Liverpool-themed branding and switching his profile image for one featuring his two children.

In his absence, Arne Slot's side scored five times in a dominant display before the Egypt international was introduced with about 15 minutes to play and the score at 5-1.

"It was a grown-up, very mature performance," Nevin told BBC Radio 5 Live's Football Daily podcast.

"It didn't seem to be panicked - even when they went 1-0 down it didn't look that way.

"There was an energy as well about the team, which helped quite a bit. But, they were playing against a side that gave away chance after chance.

"Frankfurt had clear limitations with their defending and Liverpool made good use of it.

"It was a big call to leave Salah on the bench. It is big to say dropped - but it kind of is that because he hadn't done well enough recently.

"A Premier League starting XI without Salah would be very unusual. I'm someone who is all for honesty. If you are the best player for that moment you play - it doesn't matter what your name is.

"For a little while, that hasn't been Salah in this team. We all know how fabulous he is, how much we love him, his capabilities of suddenly scoring a phenomenal amount of goals.

"But, if you're the players behind him you're thinking: 'Give me a chance, we need to do something else.'

"If you've lost those four games in a row previously and then won against Frankfurt, is it so much of a shock if he doesn't start the next game? I'm afraid not."

[Listen to the full episode on BBC Sounds](#)

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## Pick your Liverpool XI



Arne Slot has some decisions to make for his best Liverpool XI. If everybody is fit, who makes your starting line-up for the Reds?

Does it look like the above, with Mohamed Salah left out? Do the Reds go 4-4-2 like we've produced below?

[Pick your team here and please assume all players are fit](#)



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14:16 BST

### 'I wanted to say some things' - Van Dijk on players meeting



Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk has insisted a players meeting this week was not a "crisis meeting", despite recent struggles.

The Reds snapped a four-match losing streak with an emphatic 5-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the Champions League on Wednesday night.

After a difficult weekend that saw them lose at home to rivals Manchester United for the first time in nine years, Arne Slot's side looked like they could be set to equal a 72-year record for losses when they fell a goal behind to the German side.

But, Monday's meeting appeared to help, with the team soon turning it around to get themselves back to winning ways.

"On Monday everyone was sad because we lost to United at home," said Van Dijk.

"It was tough under the circumstances so on Monday we came together but it wasn't a crisis meeting.

"Nobody wants to lose four games in a row but it was the situation we faced.

"Obviously we also had a proper debrief with the manager but we also had a separate one as players.

"I wanted to say some things. It's not something I do after every game.

"After my meeting everyone was happy!"

The recent run of form brought unwanted attention to a number of players, including Van Dijk and his fellow defenders, as well as £100m summer signing Florian Wirtz.

But, both centre-backs scored in Frankfurt while Wirtz also contributed two assists.

"We had to stay calm and block out all the noise from the outside because that's something you can't control," added Van Dijk.

"The only way to get out of a situation like that is to stay together, keep your mind on the task ahead, try to improve, keep the confidence, embrace the moment.

"They are all things that are easier to say than actually do but if you want to get out of it, you have to do it.

"We live in a world now where there is always noise - always something to be said, always someone who knows better.

"We have to stay focused on ourselves. We all know how things can change. We're only in October."

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13:02 BST

**Choose who you would pick in Liverpool's best XI**

Liverpool

13:01 BST

**'Best performance of the season' - fans on Frankfurt victory**

**YOUR OPINIONS**





We asked for your views on Liverpool's 5-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Here are some of your comments:

**Fraser:** That's more like it. Obviously still some problems in defence that need sorting out but that was, overall, a much better performance. A very good performance from Florian Wirtz as well - finally got two assists and was unlucky not to get a goal. We look so much better in attack with him on the pitch, and further proof why he needs to start. He's going to be good for us. Nice to have Hugo Ekitike back in the starting line-up and another goal too. He also showed why he deserves to start.

**Adam:** Despite a poor start, Liverpool managed to find the ignition after half an hour. Some defensive concerns still linger, but huge positives in the offensive department. Notable performances from Curtis Jones, Federico Chiesa and Dominik Szoboszlai who kept the intensity high.

**Dax:** The jitters were there at the start. Liverpool were able to show what the team can do without Mohamed Salah. We've always had goalscorers in the team and we showed that life without Salah won't be so bad if we use our strength as a team rather than rely on one player. That's not to say Salah is finished. It's just that Arne Slot is putting a team together that will replace Salah's goals. We saw a glimpse of that on Wednesday. Five different goalscorers.

**Ian:** A bit of a dodgy start but they soon got their act together and controlled the game with some nice football and we'll taken goals. Surely Slot must now realise Chiesa needs to start because he was amazing.

**Daniel:** Quite possibly our best performance this season. First time I've been satisfied with our performance since the day we won the league last season. We looked more comfortable and confident than ever before and this win is a big confidence boost for Saturday night! Proud of the lads - every single player deserves their plaudits.

**Babak:** A good result. Gives the team some confidence going forward. Disappointed in Salah not squaring it to Wirtz at the end. We go again on Saturday.

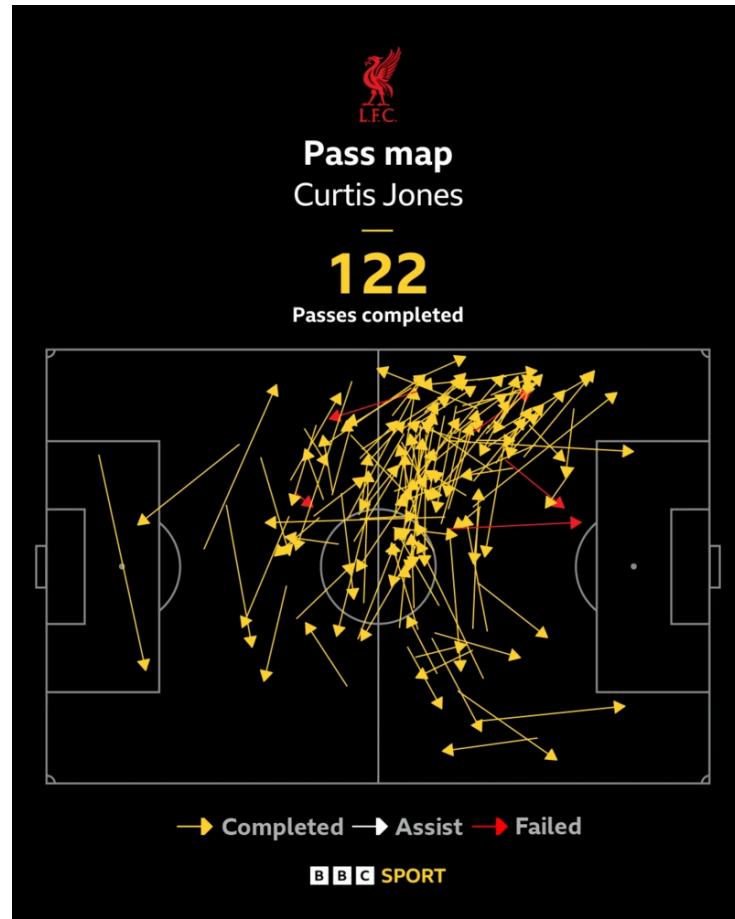
**Tony:** If this team is starting to click, watch out Premier League.

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13:01 BST

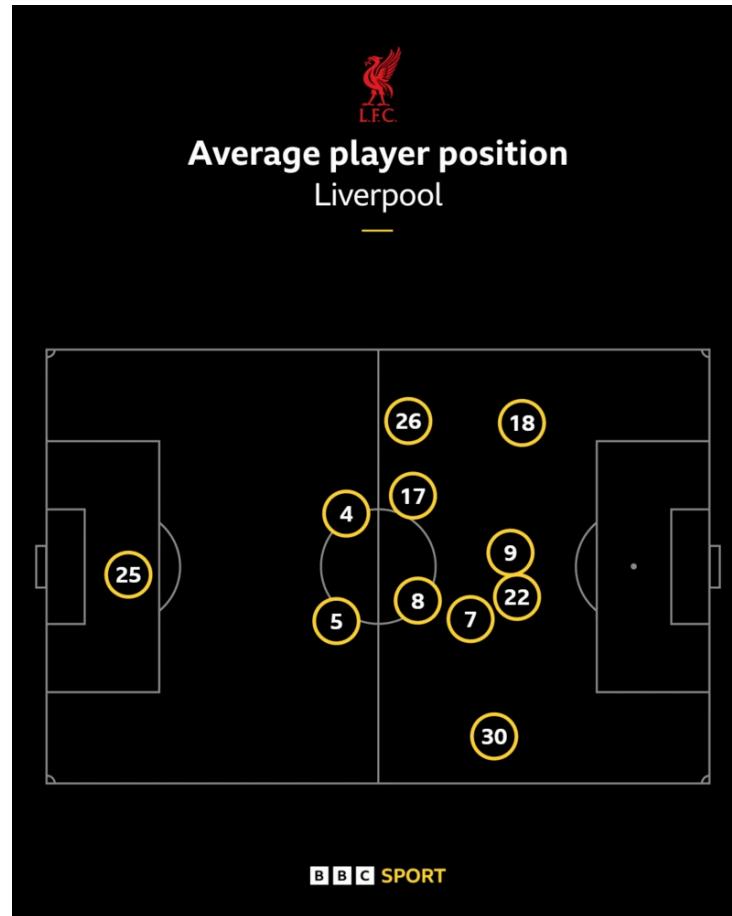
## Jones keeps Reds ticking

In the win over Eintracht Frankfurt, Curtis Jones completed 122 passes, the most ever by a Liverpool player in a Champions League match Opta has on record (since 2003-04).



It was a night of change for Liverpool, with two players featuring in a central area in Alexander Isak and Hugo Ekitike. Florian Wirtz and Cody Gakpo were in wide areas.

As these average positions show, Andy Robertson didn't play too high up the pitch at left-back, offering a little more solidity, while Jones and Dominik Szoboszlai provided a base in midfield.


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09:02 BST

## A system for the future?

**Gary Rose**  
BBC Sport journalist



The main intrigue after the teams had been announced before Wednesday's game was just how Liverpool would gel with both Hugo Ekitike and Alexander Isak in the starting line-up.

Up until now, Arne Slot has preferred to rotate the two but this was the first time Liverpool fans got to see how they played alongside each other from the outset.

So just how did the Reds line up?

BBC Sport's football tactics correspondent Umir Irfan said: "Slot altered his approach against Frankfurt and, in the end, it paid off."

"Liverpool played in a 4-4-2 shape out of possession throughout the game - which isn't uncommon for his teams - with Florian Wirtz defending as a right midfielder.

"In possession, they played with a slightly fluid 3-2-5 shape. Cody Gakpo and first Jeremie Frimpong, then Conor Bradley held width on the left and right flank respectively.

"Isak played inside, slightly towards the left, Wirtz playing inside towards the right side and Ekitike down the middle. However, these three rotated between themselves.

"Defensively, Liverpool still looked open at times and the more attacking midfield trio, paired with Slot's rotation-heavy approach, left gaps down the middle.

"In possession, however, this was a display full of bright performances and budding relationships that may inform how Slot looks to get this Liverpool side in good form, perhaps at the expense of some of their more established names."

"This might be a long-term system for Slot, but time will tell on that," former Liverpool full-back Stephen Warnock told BBC Sport.

He added: "There is always going to be little flaws in a new system - it's not going to be flawless straight away.

"Away from home as well, it is difficult to adapt at the start of a game, but they soon took control and were comfortable in the way they played."

While the Isak-Ekitike partnership lasted just 45 minutes, some of those watching are enthused by the prospect of them playing more games together.

"I like it," former **Manchester United** striker Andy Cole told BBC Sport. "They are both of a good age, bought for the future.

"I can see them playing as a two, because if they do they it will ultimately cause chaos. They both have the pace, ability and are prepared to take players on."

[Read the full breakdown of Liverpool's return to winning ways](#)

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08:13 BST

## 'Hugo Boss' - Thursday's back pages



Thursday's back pages heavily feature Liverpool as they avoided their longest losing run for 72 years and returned to winning ways with a commanding 5-1 Champions League victory at Eintracht Frankfurt.

The Telegraph carries the headline "Slot stops the rot", while The Express focuses on Slot dropping Mohamed Salah to the bench from the start: "No

Mo, no problem."



The Mirror calls the Reds "five star" as they ended a "dismal run", while The Star labels Ekitike "Hugo Boss" after the forward's well-taken goal on his return to Frankfurt.

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08:10 BST

## Liverpool 'near perfect' despite Isak injury

**Gary Rose**  
BBC Sport journalist



It was a night of bold calls for Liverpool boss Arne Slot in the Champions League on Wednesday, particularly on the back of four successive losses.

With the Reds out of form and desperate for a win, Slot opted to bench the talismanic Mohamed Salah against Eintracht Frankfurt and also experiment with a change in formation.

The most interesting aspect of that change was the decision to start British record signing Alexander Isak alongside the in-form Hugo Ekitike for the first time.

All the risks paid off as Liverpool emphatically beat their German opponents 5-1, with Ekitike scoring against the club he left in the summer to make the move to Merseyside.

However it did come at a cost, with Isak not emerging for the second half after suffering a groin injury.

"He had to go off at half-time because he felt his groin a little bit," Slot told TNT Sports afterwards.

"That is a pity but it is such a difficult balance to find with a player who missed out three months."

"You bring them slowly and sometimes people argue saying 'you cannot play him more or longer' and now we've played him for the second time in

"Let's hope for the best."

In an additional injury blow, right-back Jeremie Frimpong went off in the first half with a hamstring injury and will be out for a "few weeks", according to Slot.

[Read the full breakdown of Liverpool's return to winning ways](#)

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23:21 BST 22 October

## Eintracht Frankfurt 1-5 Liverpool: What Slot said



**Liverpool boss Arne Slot, speaking to TNT Sports about Hugo Ekitike and Alexander Isak starting together:** "Hugo had a big chance and scored. Alex got a few, unfortunately he didn't score yet, but he had to go off at half time because he felt his groin a little bit."

"That's a pity. I've said many times, it's such a difficult balance to find with a player that missed three months. You bring him slowly, people sometimes argue with you, why you cannot play him longer or more often."

"Now we've played him for the second time in three days and he has had to go off. It's not an easy balance to find if a player has been out for so long."

### **Did you know?**

- *This was Liverpool's second-biggest European Cup/Champions League win in a game in which they fell 1-0 behind, after a 7-1 victory at Rangers in October 2022.*

[Hear more from Slot on BBC Sounds](#)

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22:39 BST 22 October

## Analysis: Ruthless Reds throw struggles aside

**Gary Rose**  
 BBC Sport journalist



This was a much-needed win for Liverpool, with the pressure having ramped up on them following Sunday's loss to one of their biggest rivals at Anfield.

In an effort to instigate a turnaround Arne Slot decided to start forwards Hugo Ekitike and Alexander Isak for the first time, with the pair appearing to line up as a front two in Frankfurt.

Initially the formation tweak appeared to unsettle the visitors, with the hosts - supported by a very vocal crowd - dominating the opening stages.

Their opener once again exposed Liverpool's defensive frailties as the Reds lost the ball in midfield and Eintracht Frankfurt countered beautifully, tearing through the visitors before Rasmus Kristensen sent a neat finish in off the far post.

That was the 18th goal Liverpool had conceded in 13 games this season - a stark contrast to the seven they had let in at the same stage last term.

But Ekitike's goal against his former club sparked a turnaround as the visitors - who had not scored a first-half goal in any of their past four games - added two more in five minutes before the break.

That visibly deflated the hosts and they were a distant second best in a second half Liverpool dominated.

Slot took a risk by not starting Mohamed Salah - who has scored 52 goals in the Champions League - but it was a risk that paid off with this emphatic victory that Liverpool fans will hope inspire their side to return to their best.

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22:32 BST 22 October

## Eintracht Frankfurt 1-5 Liverpool: What Ekitike and Van Dijk said



**Liverpool's Hugo Ekitike, speaking to TNT Sports:** "It was a great feeling [to come back to Frankfurt]. It was something special to come back home."

"To win and score my first Champions League goal here was important. I just keep it calm and cool. I knew he would come and open his legs so I put it between the legs and that worked."

**On his first start with Alexander Isak:** "I think it was good. We can improve together and he is a very good player, we need to work together and find a good association."

**On why he has settled in so quickly:** "I have very good team-mates, staff and I love my life here. I hope I can keep going because it's about consistency in football. I feel really good and they have helped me a lot, that is why I am calm and doing my thing."

**On not celebrating his goal:** "I have so much respect for Frankfurt. They made me the player I am and I wouldn't be here if I didn't go to Frankfurt. I am respectful and grateful for what they did to me."

**Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk, also speaking to TNT Sports:** "I don't know if it's a statement, but it is a win and something to build on.

"I've been in the football business for a while, so not relief. Obviously we are disappointed with losing games, so it's something we have to deal with, stick together and keep working."

"Today we won and have to be ready for **Brentford** on Saturday. We don't get dragged into the negative things that are going around. The only way you can play your game is to focus on the task ahead."

"Keep going, don't get dragged into all that stuff."

#### Did you know?

- Liverpool's Hugo Ekitike is the first player to score both for and against Eintracht Frankfurt in major European competition.
- All five of Reds captain Virgil van Dijk's Uefa Champions League goals have been headers from corners – this is the second-most goals by any player in the competition's history with 100% being headed, behind only Diego Simeone (six).

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21:55 BST 22 October

## Eintracht Frankfurt 1-5 Liverpool - send us your thoughts



Whether you were at the game or following from elsewhere, we want to know what you learned.

#### What did you make of Liverpool's display?

Come back to this page on Thursday to find a selection of your replies

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21:54 BST 22 October

## Ekitike scores as Liverpool end losing run in style

Football · 953

## Eintracht Frankfurt v Liverpool: Team news



Striker Hugo Ekitike starts for Liverpool against his former club as Mohamed Salah drops to the bench.

In total there are five changes by Arne Slot, with Jeremie Frimpong, Andy Robertson, Curtis Jones and Florian Wirtz also starting.

**Eintracht Frankfurt XI:** Zetterer, Theate, Koch, Amenda, Kristensen, Larsson, Gotze, Brown, Doan, Knauff, Bahoya.

Subs: Batshuayi, Burkardt, Buta, Chandler, Chaibi, Collins, Dahoud, Wahi, Grahl, Santos, Skhiri, Uzun

**Liverpool XI:** Mamardashvili, Van Dijk, Konate, Wirtz, Szoboszlai, Isak, Jones, Gakpo, Ekitike, Robertson, Frimpong.

Subs: Woodman, Misciuri, Gomez, Endo, Kerkez, Mac Allister, Salah, Bradley, Chiesa, Ngumoha.



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18:37 BST 22 October

## Follow Wednesday's Champions League games live



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There are nine games in the Champions League, three of them involving Premier League teams, on Wednesday and BBC Sport will bring you every moment.

- Athletic Club v Qarabag (17:45)
- Galatasaray v Bodo/Glimt (17:45)
- Atalanta v Slavia Prague
- Bayern Munich v Club Brugge
- Chelsea v Ajax - [listen on BBC Radio 5 Live](#)
- Eintracht Frankfurt v Liverpool
- Monaco v Tottenham
- Real Madrid v Juventus
- Sporting v Marseille

*Kick-off times 20:00 BST unless stated*

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*There will also be a Champions League Match of the Day on BBC One on Wednesday, from 22:40 to 00:00.*

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17:31 BST 22 October

## Liverpool hoping to avoid unwanted history

**Paul Birch**  
BBC Sport journalist

If Liverpool lose at Eintracht Frankfurt on Wednesday it will be the first time for 72 years that they have lost five games on the spin.

Early in the 1953-54 First Division season they were beaten by Bolton Wanderers, **Newcastle United**, **Preston North End**, **Wolverhampton Wanderers** and **Tottenham Hotspur** and went on to finish bottom of the league.

It was the last time they were relegated from the top-flight.

### Last time Liverpool lost five in a row

All matches in First Division

Date	Opposition	Result
29 August 1953	Bolton (a)	Lost 0-2
2 September 1953	Newcastle (a)	Lost 0-4
5 September 1953	Preston (h)	Lost 1-5
7 September 1953	Wolves (a)	Lost 1-2
12 September 1953	Tottenham (a)	Lost 1-2

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15:18 BST 22 October

## What advice do you have for Slot?



After our fan writer Josh Sexton [listed five ways](#) for Arne Slot's to reverse Liverpool's fortunes, we asked for your suggestions.

Here are some of your comments:

**Jim:** Slot must give Mohamed Salah a rest and start Federico Chiesa, Florian Wirtz and Hugo Ekitike. They made massive differences against United but they were not given enough time.

**Rob:** Slot was the best thing since slice bread after winning the Premier League in his debut season despite only spending £10 million on one player who hardly started a match. Won the Premier League the old-school way. This season, Slot has brought in players that will need time to settle in despite the high fees spent. Wait till the Christmas/New Year period and see what happens.

**Nick:** Commit to the moves. Start Wirtz - it will be his team/he'll be the driving influence anyway. Start Dominik Szoboszlai alongside Ryan Gravenberch - Alexis Mac Alister has been awful, and the former cannot be a utility man. Pick a right-back and stick with them. Play faster because it is so slow in attack. Give Chiesa some starts ahead of Salah - his mind is elsewhere, and he is in shocking form. Fix the press, which has all but vanished. Not much, is it?

**G:** I agree with Josh and think Slot needs to play Rio Ngumoha more as well. I would definitely rotate Mo - he's been terrible and we are badly missing Luis Diaz and Trent Alexander-Arnold. But why buy players if you're hardly going to use them (Jeremie Frimpong)? It just doesn't make sense - I have no faith in us winning games anymore. I'm grateful to Slot for winning us the league again but I so wish Jurgen was still our manager. I absolutely cannot see us retaining the title.

**Stuart:** Agree, apart from on Kerkez. He is doing nothing wrong. Slot needs to let him play as an attacking left-back not as a centre-back. Cody Gakpo needs to come out of the team as he is one-dimensional and never passes the ball to Kerkez for the runs we bought him for. Salah should have been rotated over the past two years. There's a reason he doesn't perform in finals and at the back end of seasons - successive managers overplay him!

**Andrew:** While agreeing with Slot about fine margins, our defensive cohesion and intensity to win the ball back has almost disappeared, which means we are so open defensively down both flanks as a result. Rest Salah and play Szoboszlai on the right to support Conor Bradley and allow Wirtz to come into attacking midfield. Rest Milos Kerkez and bring in Andy Robertson as we have lost the left-sided link-up. Build Alexander Isak up from the bench as Ekitike and start with Curtis Jones who has done well when coming on.

**Neil:** Arne Slot needs to ignore any advice on social media including this message.

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15:18 BST 22 October

## Speed demon Bahoya has exited Ekitike's shadow

Live

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Eintracht Frankfurt forward Jean-Matteo Bahoya is the fastest player in the Bundesliga and looking to break out of Hugo Ekitike's shadow.

The 20-year-old winger clocked a remarkable 37.16 km/h (23.09 mph) in a match against Bochum last season. His speed, which meant he was the first player to break the 37 km/h (23 mph) mark, according to the Bundesliga's figures, will be a significant threat when Liverpool visit Deutsche Bank Park later on Wednesday.

Comparably, Olympic great Usain Bolt had an average speed of about 37.58 km/h (23.35 mph) during his 9.58-second 100m world record at the 2009 World Championships.

Bahoya has three goals and one assist having started five of Frankfurt's seven league games this season.

However, he made only nine starts and 14 substitute appearances last season, with Ekitike as the talisman.

Ekitike, a close friend of Bahoya, joined Liverpool this summer after scoring 22 goals and providing 12 assists last season. Omar Marmoush also left in January to join **[Manchester City](#)**.

Now linking with star playmaker Can Uzon, Bahoya won player of the match after scoring twice in a 4-1 win over Werder Bremen on the opening Bundesliga weekend.

Frankfurt reportedly rejected a £61m bid for the forward from an unnamed Saudi club over the summer.

Ekitike will enjoy a quick reunion with his former club but may want to warn manager Arne Slot about the pace they will face down the left wing as Liverpool seek to avoid a fifth successive defeat.

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13:22 BST 22 October

### Hakimi & Salah on African Player of Year shortlist

Africa Sport · 76

12:45 BST 22 October

### 'He has such a particular quality in our squad' - Slot rues Gravenberch absence



Liverpool will be without midfielder Ryan Gravenberch against Eintracht Frankfurt because of an ankle injury sustained against **[Manchester United](#)** - but head coach Arne Slot has not ruled him out of Saturday's match at **[Brentford](#)**.

The Netherlands international has been one of the Reds' best performers so far this season and Slot highlighted his importance to his team.

"We have to wait and see, give him a bit of time and see where he is when we come back from Frankfurt," Slot told Liverpool's official website.

"It already means I definitely have to change one player. With him not being there, that might mean something for others as well, because he has such a particular quality in our squad.

"We've seen that when we played **Bournemouth**, for example, and when we played the Community Shield. We missed a little bit of a player that was always protecting our back four.

"Hopefully he will be available at the weekend."

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