

West Bromwich Albion v Liverpool preview

Written by Darren Phillips

Tuesday, 25 September 2012 22:04 -

Brendan Rodgers will juggle his resources for the visit to West Bromwich Albion, which presents the opening hurdle in Liverpool's defence of the Capital One Cup.

Changes were always expected to be made from the side which faced Manchester United on Sunday but injury will ensure Martin Kelly, Daniel Agger and Fabio Borini are unavailable.

Jamie Carragher will be drafted into the defence. Potentially alongside Sebastian Coates.

The team is likely to bear some resemblance to that which beat Young Boys Thursday last.

Left-back may prove an intriguing selection decision. Jose Enrique has not been the first choice, with Glen Johnson switched from the opposite flank. But with the latter set to revert to the right hand side of defence as a result of Kelly's long term injury Enrique could be regarded the first choice replacement.

Stewart Downing will also be considered having been fielded in that reserved role in the Europa League.

Lucas Leiva is out with Joe Cole still struggling to regain full fitness.

Jonjo Shelvey is suspended following the red card received against Manchester United.

Pepe Reina is expected to gain a midweek rest giving Brad Jones a turn between the sticks. Others from the starting line-up against the Red Devils will also be given the evening off, or held on the bench.

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That policy could give the Liverpool XI a youthful look.

Jones accepts that he may only get the handful of chances cup games offer this term, and while the Australian may hope to be considered a dependable alternative choice as well as an able deputy; he rejects claims that Reina has lost the air of invincibility which has seen him categorised as one of the best Premier League stoppers.

"Pepe's consistency is massive and a lot about being a goalkeeper at Liverpool is concentration because you aren't getting peppered every week," he said.

"You have got to look at it in context. Goalkeeping can turn on one decision at any given time. Sometimes you make the wrong decision but get away with it. Other times someone moves. It doesn't matter who you are, you are going to be criticised over the odd mistake over the course of a season.

"You look at the top teams and every goalkeeper has made a mistake. For people to jump on the bandwagon and start criticising someone who has been at the top of his game, been in the top tier of football, for so long, is wrong. Pepe's still only 30. You can't start dismissing people and say: 'That's it.' He's a brilliant keeper and I don't think there is any reason to start questioning him now."

Steve Clarke will not expect the Baggies to remain in the Champions League qualification spot his team's early season form - which includes an opening day home win against Liverpool - has brought them.

Though with Premiership survival a priority the former Anfield coach will also be contemplating changes.

Shane Long could be in for a return.

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James Morrison is a doubt having picked up a hamstring problem against Reading. Steven Reid and Goran Popov may also face late calls on their participation.

Peter Odemwingie will watch from the side lines for disciplinary reasons. Jerome Thomas is certain to miss out

As many as nine players could be absent for the Baggies meaning Markus Rosenberg and Yassine El Ghanassy could get a run out alongside some promising young players.

Romelu Lukaku, on-loan from Chelsea, can feature.

West Bromwich Albion from: Foster, Myhill, Jones, Jara-Reyes, Dawson, Tamas, Hurst, Olsson, McAuley, Ridgewell, Thorne, El Ghanassy, Allan, Dorrans, Yacob, Mulumbu, Morrison, Brunt, Gera, Fortune, Long, Rosenberg, Lukaku, Berahino

Liverpool from: Jones, Wisdom, Carragher, Coates, Wilson, Enrique, Shelvey, Sahin, Henderson, Downing, Yesil, Morgan, Gulacsi, Robinson, Coady, Suso, Sterling, Pacheco, Assaidi, Johnson, Skrtel, Allen, Gerrard, Suarez, Sterling

Referee: Michael Oliver

Kick-off is at 8pm

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Shanklygates.co.uk's betting partner paddypower.com offer odds of 6/4 for Liverpool to progress

The hosts rate at 17/10

A range of other markets are available with some value in correct result, method of a win for either side and goalscorer bets

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