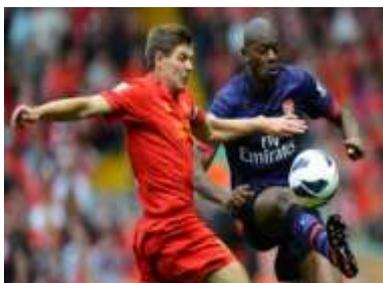


By Gary Fulcher, Daniel Rhodes and Mihail Vladimirov.

After what feels like a missed opportunity to put some distance between us and our rivals for 4th place following the 1-1 draw with West Bromwich Albion at the Hawthorns on Sunday, the Reds play host to Arsenal on Saturday – **12.45pm kick off UK time** – and with the Gunners having won eight of their 12 previous away games in the Premier League, the current league leaders should prove to be our toughest challenge at Anfield to date.

Despite the disappointment of that draw with the Baggies, it's worth remembering that only once in the past 21 seasons have we had more than our current total of 47 points from 24 matches. That was of course 2008/09 when we had 51pts from 24 matches and ended up finishing 2nd. That's no guarantee that we'll even finish in the top four but it does clearly show the progress we've made since last season.

Liverpool are ranked 3rd based on our home record (consisting of ten wins, one draw and one defeat giving us an 83% win ratio) this season while the Gunners are ranked 1st away from home having won eight, drawn two and lost two (67% win ratio). Only Manchester City (42) have scored more goals at home than our tally of 33 and only Arsenal (six) have conceded fewer goals at home than our total of eight. Only Man City have scored more goals away from home than Arsenal's 25 (the same amount that we've scored away from Anfield this season), so this fixture is unlikely to end in a 0-0 stalemate (you have to go back to Jan 9 1999 to find the last time a league meeting between these two sides ended in that scoreline).



The corresponding fixture last season saw Arsenal leave Anfield with a 2-0 victory courtesy of goals from Podolski and Cazorla, while the Reds slumped to a 0-2 defeat at the Emirates back in November with goals from Cazorla and Ramsey sealing all three points for the Gunners. Eight points currently separate the Reds in 4th from the current table toppers and the Reds' recent record against Arsene Wenger's side doesn't make pleasant reading.

Since the Peter Crouch inspired 4-1 victory back in March 2007, we've won just one of the last 13 league games – home and away – against the Gunners, a record that reads:

- **P: 13 W:1 D: 7 L: 5 F: 15 A: 20 Pts: 10 (from a possible 39)**

Our home record during that period reads:

- **P: 6 W:0 D: 3 L: 3 F: 8 A: 12 Pts: 3 (from a possible 18)**

That solitary victory came during the 2011/12 campaign when an own goal from Aaron Ramsey on 78' and a 90' Luis Suarez strike sealed a 2-0 victory at the Emirates. The Gunners may be our current 'bogey team' but we're badly due a win and Saturday's meeting would be the perfect time to do just that.

Our biggest league victory against the Gunners at Anfield is 5-0 from the 1963/64 campaign, while Arsenal's biggest win is 5-1 from the 1952/53 season.

The rest of this article is for subscribers only.

Liverpool's overall league record against **Arsenal**:

- Total – P: 179 W: 69 D: 47 L: 63 F: 251 A: 230 GD: +21
- Home – P: 89 W: 48 D: 17 L: 24 F: 169 A: 97 GD: +72
- Away – P: 90 W: 21 D: 30 L: 39 F: 82 A: 133 GD: -51

Liverpool's record against teams managed by Arsene Wenger (all competitions):

- Total – P: 43 W: 13 D: 13 L: 17 F: 62 A: 64 GD: -2
- Home – P: 20 W: 8 D: 5 L: 7 F: 41 A: 33 GD: +8
- Away – P: 21 W: 4 D: 8 L: 9 F: 19 A: 29 GD: -10
- Neutral – P: 2 W: 1 D: 0 L: 1 F: 2 A: 2 GD: 2

The match-day officials for this fixture are:

- **Referee:** Michael Oliver
- **Assistants:** S Burt, G Beswick
- **Fourth Official:** R Madley

TEAM NEWS

Jose Enrique (knee), Lucas (knee), Glen Johnson (ankle), Mamadou Sakho (hamstring) and Daniel Agger (calf) are absent for the Reds.

Arsenal are missing Kim Kallstrom (back), Theo Walcott (ACL), Aaron Ramsey (thigh), Yaya Sanogo (back) and Abou Diaby (ACL). Jack Wilshere (foot) may be available but Mathieu Flamini is suspended.



Liverpool:

Goalkeepers: Mignolet, Jones, Ward

Defenders: Flanagan, Kelly, Skrtel, Toure, Cissokho, Smith

Midfielders: Gerrard (c), Coutinho, Henderson, Allen, Sterling, Luis Alberto, Ibe

Forwards: Suarez, Sturridge, Aspas, Moses

Arsenal:

Goalkeepers: Szczesny, Viviano, Fabianski

Defenders: Sagna, Mertesacker, Vermaelen (c), Koscielny, Monreal, Jenkinson, Gibbs

Midfielders: Rosicky, Arteta, Wilshere (?), Ozil, Cazorla, Zelalem, Gnabry

Forwards: Podolski, Giroud, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Bendtner

Preview by Daniel Rhodes including:

Arsenal's strengths and weaknesses (selected)

Match predictions

GIFs from Arsenal's goals

Shot comparison from Arsenal's last three games

Screenshot analysis from previous game

Individual Player Analysis #1 (selected)

Szczesny

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Style of Play</u>
Long passing Shot stopping Close range shots Penalty saving	<i>Catching crosses</i>	Comes off his line often

Koscielny

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Style of Play</u>
Interceptions Passing Tackling	Aerial duels	

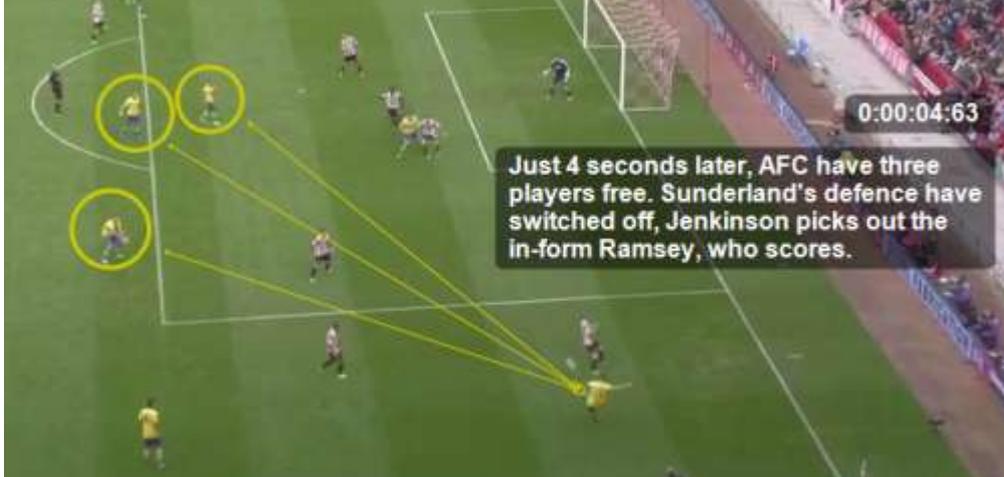
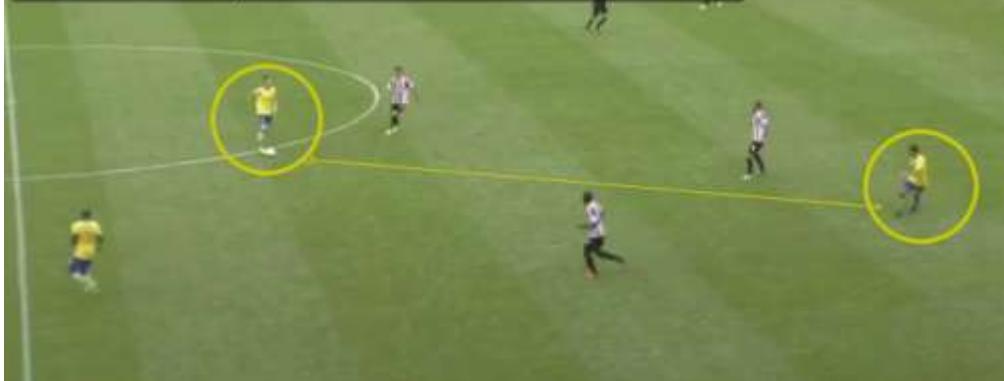
Individual Player Analysis #2 (selected)

Mertesacker

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Style of Play</u>
Passing Concentration	Tackling	Likes to play short passes Indirect set-piece threat Does not dive into tackles



Koscielny picks up the ball inside Sunderland's half, and looks for Flamini. Arsenal persistently targeted the Black Cats' left hand side. Ozil, Jenkinson and Walcott cause havoc.



0:00:04:63

Just 4 seconds later, AFC have three players free. Sunderland's defence have switched off, Jenkinson picks out the in-form Ramsey, who scores.

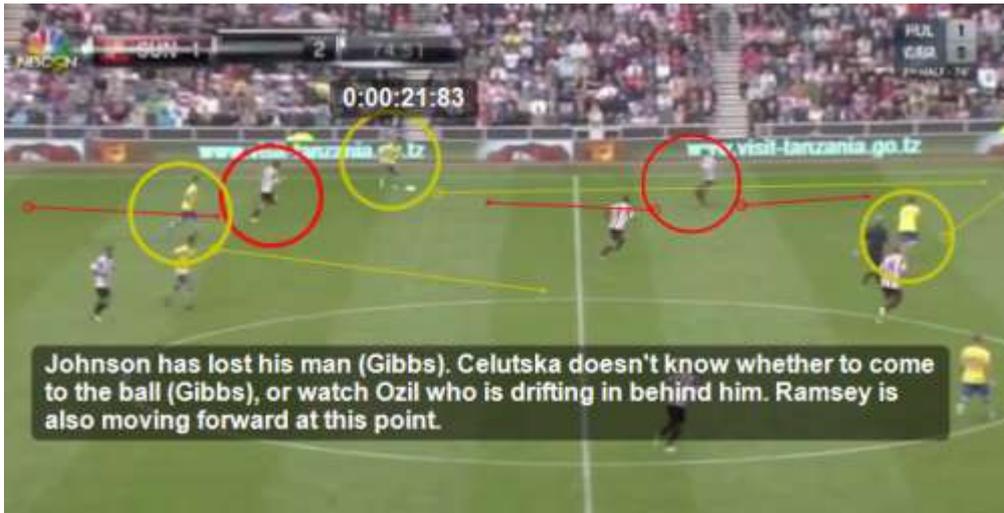


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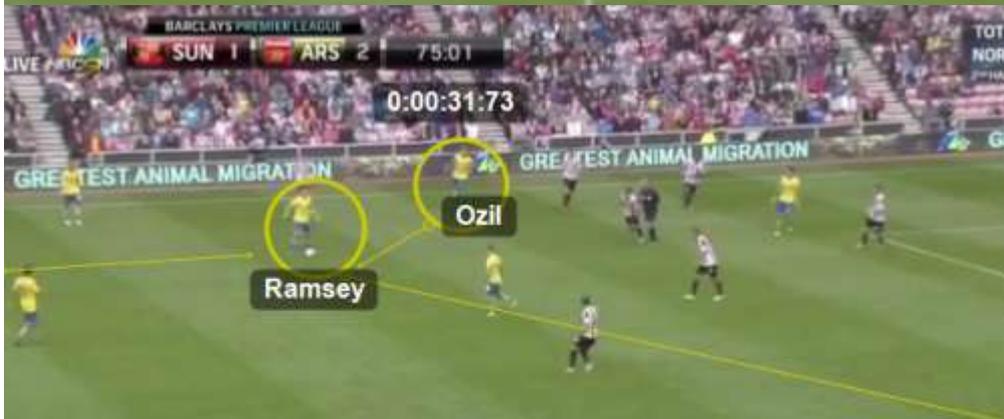


Sagna (AFC's RCB for the day) wins a long punt forward from Westwood. And Arsenal start their build-up...





Johnson has lost his man (Gibbs). Celutska doesn't know whether to come to the ball (Gibbs), or watch Ozil who is drifting in behind him. Ramsey is also moving forward at this point.



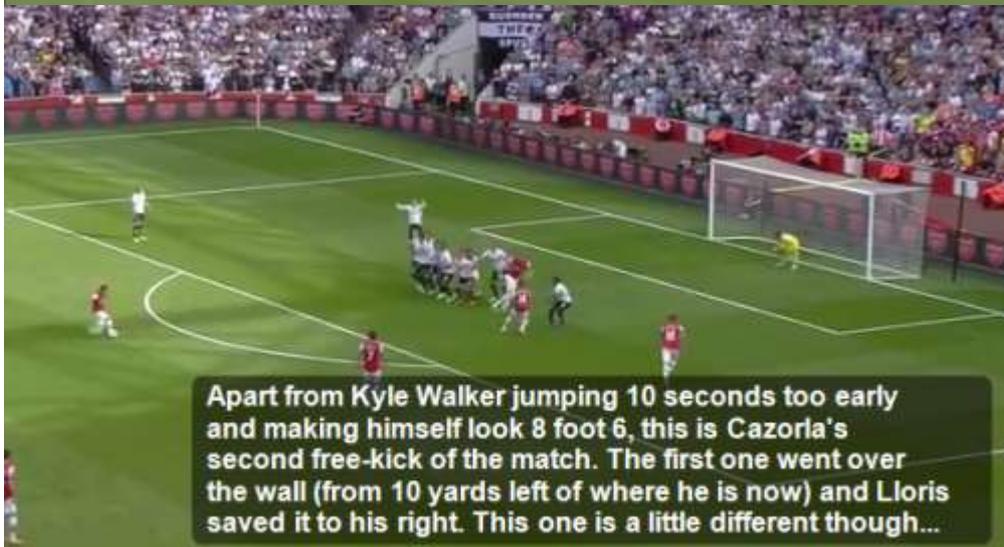
Ozil dribbles down the left wing, before cutting back and picking out Ramsey (who wasn't tracked by Johnson, the last man to attempt to tackle him). Ramsey plays a crossfield ball to Walcott on the right-edge of the penalty area.



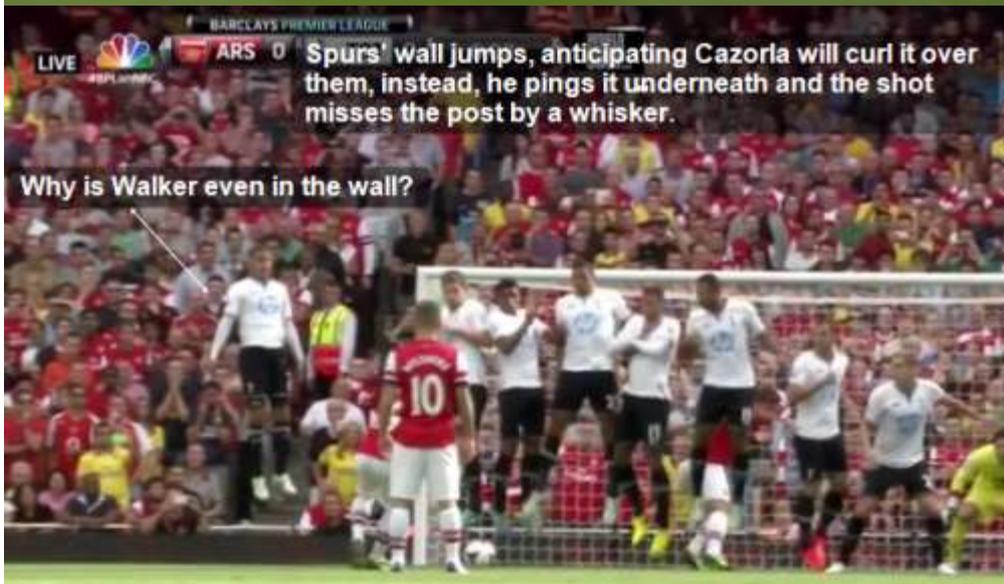
Walcott brings it down, turns back, gives it to Wilshere. Again, at this point, AFC's defence seems in a good position. But at the top of the screen, as AFC switch play again, Celutska and Gardner come out too quickly. (39 seconds)



Ramsey (16) picks the ball up from Wilshere, and lays it off to Ozil before running (the '+'s) in behind the RB Celutska who comes out to challenge Ozil.



Apart from Kyle Walker jumping 10 seconds too early and making himself look 8 foot 6, this is Cazorla's second free-kick of the match. The first one went over the wall (from 10 yards left of where he is now) and Lloris saved it to his right. This one is a little different though...



Spurs' wall jumps, anticipating Cazorla will curl it over them, instead, he pings it underneath and the shot misses the post by a whisker.

Why is Walker even in the wall?





0:00:17:88

Three Spurs defenders are now out of position and stranded. Giroud is behind Dawson now, and as Walcott gets control of possession, the Frenchman now cuts back across Spurs' captain.



0:00:19:26

Giroud gets fractionally ahead of Dawson and beats Lloris at his near post. All this, just 20 secs after Mertesacker's tackle on Chadli.



Agbonlahor picks it up just inside AFC's half. No Arteta or Flamini in this game vs. Villa. As you can see, as a consequence, Wilshere and Ramsey both played as the double pivot. Without any positional discipline.

