

Liverpool 1-1 Chelsea: Gravenberch Goal Not Enough As Fernandez Free-Kick Dents Redsâ?? Top-Four Push

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The **Liverpool Chelsea Premier League draw** at Anfield on 9 May 2026 was a tale of squandered leads, VAR controversies, and mounting Anfield frustration. Ryan Gravenberchâ??s stunning early curler was cancelled out by an Enzo Fernandez free-kick just before half-time, and despite a dominant second-half spell from the Reds, neither side could find a winner. The 1-1 result leaves Liverpool in fourth place, clinging to a one-point advantage over Aston Villa in the race for Champions League qualification.

Liverpool Chelsea Premier League Draw: Gravenberch Opens, Fernandez Equalises

Liverpool needed just six minutes to take the lead. Dominik Szoboszlaiâ??s free-kick struck the wall and broke to Rio Ngumoha, whose quick footwork created space for Gravenberch on the edge of the box. The Dutch midfielder took one touch to set himself, then bent a beautiful curling effort into the far corner past Filip Jorgensen. It was exactly the kind of composed, incisive start the home supporters had demanded, and Anfield responded with a thunderous roar.

Chelsea, under caretaker manager Sandro Tonali, had arrived in desperate need of a result to end a wretched run of six consecutive Premier League defeats. And while they struggled to establish any rhythm in the opening quarter of an hour, they gradually grew into the contest as Liverpool retreated deeper and invited pressure.



Source: Liverpool FC official website (liverpoolfc.com)

The equaliser arrived in the 35th minute, and it carried a strong dose of fortune. Cody Gakpo needlessly fouled Cole Palmer 35 yards from goal, presenting Fernandez with a set-piece opportunity. The Argentine midfielder struck it low and to the right, and while Wesley Fofana appeared to get a touch, the ball was adjudged to have crept in untouched. Giorgi Mamardashvili, restored to the starting line-up after injury, was beaten at his near post. Liverpool went into the break with their lead erased and Anfieldâ??s mood darkening.

Second Half Controversy and Missed Chances

The second half burst to life almost immediately when Cole Palmer prodded home from close range â?? only for a VAR review to rule out the effort, with Cucurella adjudged to have been in an offside position during the build-up. Liverpool then had their own goal disallowed when Curtis Jones nodded home, but Cody Gakpo was flagged for straying beyond the last defender in the build-up.

As the second half progressed, Liverpool dominated possession and territory. Szoboszlai crashed a venomous strike against the post, and Virgil van Dijk headed against the crossbar from a corner. Ibrahima Konate limped off with what his manager later described as cramp, adding to the growing injury list that has blighted the Redsâ?? campaign.



Source: Liverpool FC official website (liverpoolfc.com)

Anfield Frustration and Champions League Implications

Boos rang around Anfield at the final whistle â?? a sound that has become familiar at Liverpoolâ??s home ground this season. Arne Slot acknowledged the reaction with understanding but not apology, pointing to the structural problems that have undermined Liverpoolâ??s campaign throughout 2025/26.

â??I think it makes complete sense that the fans are frustrated,â?• Slot admitted. â??We are not scoring enough goals, and that is the problem this season. But I want to be clear â?? dropping deep after scoring was never the plan. We just were not able to control the game the way we needed to.â?•

Slot also confirmed that Mohamed Salah and Alisson Becker are both close to returning from injury, and that Florian Wirtz â?? the clubâ??s high-profile January signing â?? should be available for the crucial trip to Aston Villa next Friday. Those returns cannot come soon enough. The Reds face Villa in a match that could effectively decide whether they finish inside the top four, with both sides level on points before the Anfield contest.

For Chelsea, the draw ended a miserable league run and offered a foundation to build on heading into the final fixtures of a deeply disappointing season. The Blues sit ninth in the table, with the gap between their January ambitions and their current reality painfully apparent.

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Sunderlandâ??s goalless draw with Manchester United on the same afternoon means the top-four picture remains tight. Liverpool know that a win at Villa Park would likely seal Champions League football for next season â?? if they can summon the quality that eluded them at Anfield on Saturday.

Keep up with the full title race picture in our EPL Matchweek 36 preview and relive the earlier season drama in our Man Utd vs Liverpool report. All the action continues in the LBRD Sports section.

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