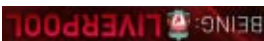




It's true that this is a Liverpool FC jersey commentary, but I've first got to get something Liverpool FC related off my chest. I'm a big Liverpool fan – no question of my loyalty there. Have been for a while (although it's a bummer they let, or asked, Dirk Kuyt to leave). But I have a real (royal) problem with **Being: Liverpool**, the behind the scenes TV series about the club.

I watched the first episode and was fearful that the saccharine would do me in. I read a review here that compared it to a similar series about the NY Jets (American) football team. While I didn't watch any of that series, I heard that the coach, Rex Ryan, was consistently profane and vulgar throughout. Well, **Being: Liverpool** could use a bit more coach (or player) crassness. If I hear one more fatherly "They're good lads..., etc." from Brendan Rodgers or see another heartfelt family gathering (Suarez, Gerrard, Lucas...I like them all), I'm going to puke. And lastly, the effort to airbrush some real soccer chops onto owners John Henry and the other guy is so lame. Suffice it to say that this is not "must see TV" for me. "You'll never walk alone"? Well, if you are heading out to watch this show, I certainly won't be accompanying you.

This is a rare case where American football tops world Futbol for me - a rare occurrence indeed. Ok, lets get on with the business we came here for.



I've got two jerseys to discuss. The 2011-12 black Adidas Liverpool away and the red 2012-13 Warrior Liverpool home. Both are size large. I am not familiar with the Warrior brand, but after a bit of snooping found that it is an American company founded by a former lacrosse player but now part of New Balance, the athletic shoe company. The brand only recently branched into soccer with its Liverpool sponsorship, reportedly a record. I'll also talk about two different English Premier League personalization types; the felt like material and plastic. As I understand it, both are officially licensed by the EPL, but only one is the EPL officially licensed on field kit personalization.

mmsports.com



## 2011 black Adidas away / 2012 red Warrior home

For a number of years I've felt that Adidas shirts are generally the most distinctive and best styled (the high water jersey mark for me is still the Spain 2010 World Cup shirts). The three Adidas stripes on each arm are often well integrated into and enhance the shirt design/color scheme. The shirts also usually have distinctive, varied detailing such as piping, fabric variation and a well styled collar. So that's my starting point.

The 2011 Adidas Liverpool away delivers on these distinctive design elements and is a great shirt. The shirt is black, though, which limits its distinctiveness. That may or may not be an issue, depending on one's personal preferences. The collar, sleeves and sides have red accent piping. The underarm fabric is a different texture than the rest of the shirt (presumably for ventilation). The shirt front has silver pin stripes (seemingly woven into the fabric, not printed, as they are visible on exterior and interior) that tie into the silver Standard Chartered logo, the silver Liverpool Football Club badge/crest, silver Adidas logo and silver sleeve stripes. The collar back has printed black on black "LFC". The fit is true to that expected for Adidas football jerseys. The badge is not edge stitched, usually a problem for me, but it feels substantial and well adhered – so not a deal breaker. As expected, the jersey is extremely well made.



The whole *black jersey thing* that started with American sports teams more than a decade ago, got a bit passé as everyone was doing it but not particularly well (except the Oakland Raiders NFL team that have had black [and silver] uniforms since the team was founded in the 1960's). The last several years have dialed the use of black back a bit with teams now using black as a third shirt or complimented by historic team colors instead of a straight black home or away shirt (a welcome development). BUT there are still too many. While the Liverpool 2011 away jersey fits well and looks great, the black is a bit too generic and interchangeable with other teams black shirts (think 2010 Bayern Munich among others).



The new Brooklyn NBA team, the Nets, have a black and white color scheme with a plain, condensed sans serif font that contrasts with most other sports teams. Time will tell if in 5 or 10 years this stripped down "urban" reference will feel as genuine as the Oakland Raider black and silver. I guess as

Brooklyn becomes ever more trendy and stratospherically expensive, the stripped down reference to the rough and tumble Brooklyn of decades past may start to ring hollow. Or may be an embraced reference to the grit in Brooklyn's DNA without folks having to actually experience it.

A few interesting links commenting on the Nets uniforms and identity:

<http://theclassical.org/theclog/another-look-at-the-brooklyn-nets-new-look>

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/09/27/style/brooklyn-nets-logo.html>





Speaking of stripped down and simplified, the 2012 Warrior Liverpool home jersey is just that. Warrior has gone to a plain red jersey with no embellishments. Even the Liverpool badge is simplified to just the bird (Liver bird?), is fully embroidered to the shirt and

"L.F.C." was relocated to the back collar (although this has pissed off some fans as an unacceptable location for the tribute to the Hillsborough tragedy; Barcelona fans had a similar beef when Unicef was relegated to the ass end of the shirt). The jersey is quite nice though and the simplicity has a lot to do with that. The Warrior and sponsor logos are both rendered in the same yellow as the LFC bird and that's it. The dress shirt type collar is well styled and detailed and the shirt has similar fabric variations that are an attribute to the Adidas 2011 away shirt, including the pin stripes on the front (this time woven into the fabric red on red). The jersey is also extremely well made.

Even though simple, this jersey has real stopping power (as in people stopping to say how much they like it) and many friends that dislike the Liverpool club say they will gladly wear this shirt. I agree whole heartedly and hope Warrior expands further into top tier soccer.



## Sizing

I typically wear a size large and the large size of both the Warrior and Adidas are appropriate. Having said that, the Warrior jersey is slightly, but noticeably, shorter in length and arms than the Adidas - more shirt like, if you will, than the Adidas frock. The Adidas might also be just slightly more roomy than the Warrior jersey. I have always liked the Adidas fit, but I might come to like the very slightly more tailored Warrior fit better. For comparison with some other manufacturers, I find the Nike size large longer and looser than either of these. The 2011 Li Ning size large, however, is significantly shorter and slimmer than both the Adidas and Warrior. And forget size comparison to Kappa which have been so "fitted" they must be up sized at least one if not two sizes.

## EPL Personalization: Lextra v. plastic

When I bought my first EPL team jersey several years back, the felt like name and number was strange. I thought that the shirt was a knock off but I determined that this was the official EPL authorized, on field stuff.

The Adidas shirt is personalized #7 Suarez with the official, on field EPL felt type material Lextra (or Sencilla...or whoever has the licence these days) and the Warrior shirt is personalized #8 Gerrard with the EPL officially licensed, but not authentic on field, plastic/vinyl material. As far as I know, the EPL is the only league that uses this felt like material for jersey personalization. All other leagues, it seems, use some type of plastic or vinyl although I've heard that the 2012 Sevilla jerseys use something similar to, but lighter weight than, Lextra.

The #7 Suarez Lextra is funky, though. It looks and feels like what it basically is: felt. Which somehow seems out of place on a jersey (or at least the name/number). While in this case the Lextra is applied in a quality, flat and even manner, I have a few old Arsenal shirts where there is noticeable bunching around the name and number (maybe that is a result of an imperfect application). The noticeably heavier weight material (than vinyl) looks and hangs stiffly (on the hanger or the person). Lastly, the felt material attracts fibers and can take on a slightly dulled or dirty look. If it was lighter weight, maybe some of my complaints would go away.

The #8 Gerrard vinyl name/number are lightweight, well adhered and flat, feel integral to the jersey fabric and they seem of similar quality as that used by La Liga teams among others. I have no objection to the vinyl and even prefer it to the Lextra but I also prefer a shirt with the personalization type that is used on the field. So until the EPL changes it, Lextra name/number it is.

Interestingly, the Warrior #8 Gerrard vinyl name/number jersey has Lextra EPL patches on each sleeve. In fact, if the sleeve patches were vinyl, the jersey would have a cheap feel. Sleeve patches are usually heavy weight and edge stitched on. While these are not stitched they somehow seem appropriate.

So my humble jersey recommendation to the Barclays Premier League (both on field and fan wear) is use vinyl name/number sets and Lextra patches. And if they don't, maybe I'll reconsider and go that way myself.



## Sponsor/Logo

*"Standard Chartered, the British bank accused of illegally funneling money for Iranian banks and corporations, signed a settlement on Friday with New York State's top banking regulator.*

*Bank executives agreed last month to pay \$340 million to settle claims that Standard Chartered moved hundreds of billions of dollars in tainted money and lied to regulators."*

*September 21, 2012; NYTimes*

The sponsor for these shirts is the British bank, Standard Chartered. While maintaining the prominent visual presence required by a £20m/year deal (I suppose any sponsor requires this, regardless of the sponsorship amount), the simple font and helix logo compliment the shirt design well, helped smartly by the logo color matching the shirt accent color. (Credit goes to SC for approving this deviation as most sponsors just overlay the marketing logo color scheme on the team jersey without care.) Furthermore, the DNA helix fortuitous position on the right logo margin acts, unintentionally, as an underscore to the Liverpool FC badge. A well conceived, unified and executed shirt front.



### **Post Script**

*In the time between finishing this review and this final proof read, the Atlantic coast and northeast United States was visited by a treacherous hurricane. The entire region got slammed and is now beginning the difficult task of recovery. My own town, New York City, was hit by a record breaking storm surge that flooded the subways, washed away or flooded homes and damaged the electric grid leaving about 250,000 New Yorkers without power.*

*For a region not accustomed to this type of weather, this is the second hurricane to hit in 14 months. A very unsettling occurrence but I fear we'd better get used to it.*

*p.locascio; October 30, 2012*

