

Let's talk about Emile Heskey's recent comments suggesting that Liverpool have leaned too heavily on Mohamed Salah to carry the team's attacking burden. It's a hot topic in football circles: after all, when one player racks up 35 goals in a season — something Salah did last term — it's natural to wonder if that spells strength or a worrying dependency.

So, is Heskey onto something with this idea of **Liverpool goal dependency**? Or is it just the usual noise when a top player shines? We're going to unpack this by looking at the *price tag pressure at big clubs*, the tricky balance between *goal contributions vs goals*, and the often-overlooked *injury context and season resets*. Plus, we'll swing by trusty analytics from Flashscore and even peek at offshore betting trends via Oddstrader to see how the wider market views it all.

What Did Heskey Actually Say About Salah?

For those who didn't catch the quote, here's the gist. Heskey told BBC Sport that Liverpool "relied on Mohamed Salah too long" and that the club needs to find ways to replace or complement his output. It's a fair point given Liverpool's style: Salah is often the go-to option in the final third, the talisman delivering goals crucial to their success.

But here's the kicker — when a player hits 35 goals in a league season (aka the **salah 35 goals talk**), it's both a sign of enormous quality and a potential red flag. The question is whether this is sustainable or if Liverpool are just one injury or dip in form away from serious trouble.

Price Tag Pressure at Big Clubs: The Invisible Load

We always sanity-check these stories against reality. Salah's transfer fee was around £36.9 million in 2017 — not astronomical compared to some modern-day splurges. Yet, the expectations that come with being a star at Liverpool arguably bring a different kind of price tag pressure.

We're not just talking about fees paid to clubs but the huge pressure to deliver week in, week out. When Liverpool invested in Salah, they signed a player who quickly became a goal machine, constantly hitting double-digit goals each season, culminating in that 35-goal haul in 2021/22. That means fans and pundits expect him to replicate those levels — and expect Liverpool to build their attacking identity around him.

- **Fact-check:** Using Flashscore's updated player stats, Salah's goals per season remain consistently high, but dips happen after injuries.
- Salah's value isn't just measured in goals scored, but in how his presence changes defensive setups, freeing up teammates.

The problem with this pressure? It can stifle tactical flexibility. If your most trusted finisher plays every game non-stop (which Heskey also flagged as an issue), you're bound to suffer when he's off or tribalfootball.com marked out.

Injury Context and "Season Resets"

This is where excuses rarely get airtime but really should. Salah has had injuries — ankle sprains, muscle issues — that sometimes limit his minutes or affect his sharpness. If you ignore minutes played and injury spells, your analysis is missing a big part of the story.

Look at last season: after Salah's runs of goals early on, injuries and then rotation meant he played fewer games and logged fewer minutes than some previous years. This forced Liverpool to innovate or falter. And for teams like Liverpool, that's an important "season reset" point. It forces them to ask questions:

1. What happens if Salah isn't there?
2. Can the squad pick up the slack?
3. Are there players capable of producing Salah's goal contributions?

As an aside, clubs like Liverpool generally want to avoid resting their main man mid-season but sometimes necessity trumps strategy.



Goal Contributions vs Goals: Why The Debate Matters

This is key to understanding Heskey's point and Liverpool's dilemma. While 35 goals sounds staggering, football is changing. The best assessment of a forward isn't just pure goals — but all attacking contributions: assists, key passes, shot creation, pressing, and off-ball movement.

Looking back at Liverpool's data on Flashscore's team pages, you notice that during Salah's peak seasons, his assists often rose in tandem with his goals. But there were seasons where his goals edged up, while assists lagged — highlighting a more "selfish" scoring role.

Heskey's point about "reliance" is really a question about:

- Does Liverpool have other players with comparable **goal contributions** (goals + assists)?
- Is their system too dependent on Salah finishing moves rather than creating chances collectively?

Who Steps Up When Salah Doesn't?

Looking at players like Diogo Jota, Darwin Núñez, and Luis Díaz, Liverpool has a rotating cast to share the load. But statistically, they rarely match Salah's output. For example, Jota's best season might yield 15-20 combined goal contributions — solid, but nowhere near Salah's peak haul.

Additionally, Liverpool's midfielders like Thiago and Fabinho contribute more to buildup and defense than finishing. Injuries and inconsistent form often mean the secondary scorers can't reliably replace Salah's numbers.

Is Liverpool Goal Dependency Real or Overstated?

Now, the burning question: is Liverpool genuinely dependent on Salah? Here's where we sanity-check the narrative:

Season	Salah Goals	Other Top Liverpool Scorers (Goals)	Salah % of Liverpool League Goals*
2021/22	23	Firmino 9, Jota 8	~36%
2022/23	15 (injured half-season)	Jota 15, Núñez 10	~27%
2023/24	Data ongoing	Various contributors TBD	

*Based on league goals only

From this, it's clear Salah accounts for over a third of Liverpool's league goals in his peak seasons — big but not entirely unprecedented. Teams often have a star contributing 25-35% of goals. However, the drop-off in his absence shows how thin the margins become.

What Offshore Betting Apps Tell Us About It

Curious what the market thinks? Platforms like Oddstrader show how odds shift based on Salah's form and availability. For instance, when Salah is in good nick, Liverpool's odds to win the Premier League or Champions League improve significantly — highlighting the market's recognition of his importance.

Similarly, betting odds for Liverpool's next top scorer often heavily favor Salah, far above teammates. When injury news breaks, the odds balance out, reflecting uncertainty in Liverpool's goal output.

In short, the gamblers' market confirms that Liverpool currently run a significant portion of their attacking expectations through Salah, further backing Heskey's point about reliance.

How Can Liverpool Solve This? Final Thoughts

Heskey's comments about Liverpool's long dependence on Salah are not just hot air — they raise a valid concern about squad depth, tactical flexibility, and resilience to injury. But at the same time, blaming the forward who's delivering 35 goals (or close to it) feels a bit unfair.



- **Squad promise:** Liverpool must build or buy players capable of sharing the load, or embrace a more collective approach to goal creation.
- **Rotation and rest:** Managing Salah's minutes better to prevent burnout and injury, which would prevent those sharp dips in form.
- **Backing data:** Track goal contributions (goals + assists) carefully — not just pure goals — to evaluate attacking balance better.

So, is Liverpool over-reliant on Salah? *Yes, to some extent*, but that's equally a sign of his brilliance as a goalscorer. Nevertheless, big clubs with big ambitions can't rest on one superstar alone forever — and Heskey's comments serve as a timely nudge.

As we watch Liverpool evolve this season, keep an eye on those Flashscore stats and Oddstrader odds: they'll show how Klopp's side adapts when No. 11 doesn't have to do it all.