

Date: 5 January 2016
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Times	Telegraph	Echo
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5 January 2016

THE TIMES

Klopp's call is answered as Liverpool seize control

Stoke City 0 Liverpool 1 Ibe 37

Liverpool delivered one of the gutsiest displays of the Jurgen Klopp era, playing with real intensity, negating Stoke City's creative threat and winning the first leg of the Capital One Cup semi-final despite hamstring injuries to Philippe Coutinho and Dejan Lovren, who both went off, and Kolo Toure, who struggled on.

Joe Allen, Emre Can, Lucas Leiva, Roberto Firmino and Adam Lallana all excelled, while Jordon Ibe scored the first-half goal that makes Liverpool favourites to reach the final after the second leg at Anfield in three weeks. Liverpool fans were certainly singing about Wembley, as well as singing the praises of their players. Klopp had called for "more intensity" from his players and started with the front three of Lallana, Firmino and Coutinho that so impressed in games away to Manchester City and Chelsea. For 18 minutes, this Anglo-Brazilian attack troubled Stoke until Coutinho's hamstring injury led to a brief lull before his replacement, Ibe, struck with eight minutes of the first half remaining. Liverpool were unrecognisable from the languid collection who lost to West Ham United at the weekend. Their attack looked more mobile, more industrious without Christian Benteke, who had been replaced by Lallana.

They started at full throttle. Firmino had an early sighter saved by Jack Butland, who then threw himself athletically to his left to push away a 25-yard strike from Lallana. Liverpool's pressing was of a percussive intensity more in keeping with their manager's demands. Lallana hounded Bojan. Murmurs of frustration emanated from Stoke supporters as Lovren, then Lucas were quicker than Mark Hughes's players to the ball.

Allen seized his opportunity, working hard to win the ball back and playing some clever, driven passes. Can and Lucas joined Allen in controlling midfield. Firmino nicked the ball off Glen Johnson. Klopp's players were responding fully to his commands.

The visiting team then added to their unfortunate collection of hamstring injuries this season. Firmino sent Coutinho down the inside-left channel and the No 10 crossed left-footed, immediately slowing down and rubbing his left hamstring. He walked away, shaking his head, moving to the bench and having ice applied to his leg. Ibe rushed on and tried to maintain the momentum built by Coutinho.

For a while, Liverpool were struggling to find a way past Ryan Shawcross, continuing his season's good form, but the visiting team were comfortably the better. Stoke threatened only from corners in the first half. One delivery from Xherdan Shaqiri was particularly clever, ignoring the mass around the six-yard box and picking out the unmarked Bojan, who was lurking ten yards farther back. The ball was perfect but Bojan, usually so elegant, got his legs in a tangle.

Stoke were enjoying plenty of possession, but lacked real focus up front until Jonathan Walters stormed on for the second half, and they hardly had any time or space to create because of Liverpool's constant closing down. Liverpool lost another player to their hamstring hoodoo, this time Lovren, who departed rubbing his right leg.

Lucas stepped into central defence alongside Toure, with James Milner arriving in midfield and soon making his presence felt. With eight minutes of the half remaining, Milner swept a pass down the right to release Lallana. He ran on before cutting the ball back to Allen, who dextrously squared to Ibe.

The 20-year-old controlled the ball and then drilled a firm finish past Butland. It was Ibe's third of the season, after goals against Rubin Kazan and Southampton. Stoke fought hard for an equaliser, and Simon Mignolet did brilliantly to parry a Johnson effort after a corner. Hughes stood in the pouring rain, his suit taking a soaking. He made changes for the second half, not least a coat, a sub and a new mood.

Walters flew into the game, bringing a greater intensity to Stoke's work. When Glenn Whelan then ran on to a loose ball, he was impeded by Alberto Moreno and the Bothen End bayed for a penalty with a real clamour and justification. Anthony Taylor, the referee, waved play on.

Stoke supporters continued to urge their team on. Bojan threatened one of those pitter-patter runs until the outstanding Lucas slid in.

Klopp's side were defending deeper and deeper, digging deeper into their reserves of resilience. Lucas makes an unlikely centre back, and was exposed when forced into the role at Watford last month, but he stuck to his task, even charging upfield with Milner intelligently slotting back in alongside Toure.

Liverpool appealed for a penalty when Allen touched the ball past Glenn Whelan, who knocked the Welshman over. It looked a far more legitimate claim than when Clyne called for a penalty, Marko Arnautovic having simply proved too robust for him. The action was relentless, if not always of the highest quality. Ibe hit the side-netting, Shawcross headed over and Mignolet was booked for time wasting. Down at the other end of the pitch, Butland hammered an unfortunate clearance straight at Firmino, and the ball cannoned back, forcing the Stoke goalkeeper into an emergency save.

There was still time for Liverpool to suffer another hamstring, injury -- this time for Toure -- meaning Can was now partnering Lucas at centre-back, and just before the final whistle, Walters ran though but dragged a shot across goal.

Klopp marched on to the pitch at the end, congratulating his players, and surely wondering who he will play at centre-half against Exeter City in the FA Cup on Friday.

You wear the coat when it is raining, Mark

the guardian

Jordon Ibe gives Liverpool advantage against Stoke in Capital One Cup

Perhaps the greatest compliment that can be paid to the way Liverpool set about this tie is that in the closing stages Stoke City had abandoned all the deft soft-touch football for which they would like to be renowned and gone back to aiming long, hopeful balls up to Peter Crouch. There was no way through and Jürgen Klopp's team deserve their lead after subduing a side that has already beaten Manchester United, Chelsea and Manchester City on this ground this season. Stoke certainly chose a bad night to forget the qualities that have made them such dangerous opponents recently and, having been reminded so many times that this was their first semi-final in this competition since 1972, it has to be questioned whether they allowed a little uncertainty to creep in. Bojan Krkic and Xherdan Shaqiri were substituted after strangely listless performances and there was a collective gasp from the crowd when the public announcer named Marko Arnautovic as the man of the match.

Krkic connected only with thin air with his one chance to score. Shaqiri's night was summed up when he hit a corner straight out of play and Arnautovic rarely threatened a Liverpool side who outpaced the home team for long spells, particularly in the first half when the substitute Jordon Ibe scored the game's decisive goal. Klopp's men are now in a considerable position of strength before the second leg at Anfield on 26 January and the only downside is the sudden epidemic of hamstring injuries that has left them with a patched-up back four, Philippe Coutinho back on the treatment table and the makings of a defensive crisis.

Their victory certainly came at a cost given that Coutinho lasted only 17 minutes and was limping so heavily when Ibe replaced him that the Brazilian cannot be expected back for Liverpool's next two Premier League fixtures, at home to Arsenal and Manchester United. Dejan Lovren was next after a challenge on Shaqiri, meaning Liverpool had to experiment with Lucas Leiva, a central midfielder, in the heart of their defence and Kolo Touré will also need to undergo a scan after feeling a sharp pain in the back of his leg in the last 10 minutes. Touré chose to play on, telling Liverpool's medical staff it was merely cramp, but Klopp talked afterwards about having "zero centre-halves left", indicating he feared it might be something more serious. If so, Liverpool have now had 25 different injuries since Klopp joined the club and are missing 11 players. In the circumstances, they showed commendable resolve not to allow all the changes and disruption to break their supremacy. "We could have waved a white flag," Klopp said, "but that's not possible."

His team began the game with great self-belief, knocking the ball around confidently and repeatedly opening up their opponents. There were only fleeting moments when the Leiva-Touré partnership was seriously threatened and it was strange to see Stoke operating with so little fluency of their own. Mark Hughes looked agitated in his technical area from the opening few minutes and the moment Glen Johnson subjected Coutinho to a perfectly-executed nutmeg was incongruous given how the first half panned out. Stoke looked sluggish in a way that could never have been expected and, for a team that pride themselves on their structure and organisation, it was unusual to see how often they lost the ball inside their own half.

Two minutes after Ibe's goal, Roberto Firmino ran clear after dispossessing Glenn Whelan only to be let down by a piece of poor control. Liverpool, eight-time winners of this competition, could also reflect on several other chances and their inability to take them was really the only form of encouragement for Stoke. "People seem to want to criticise our performance in the first half, but sometimes you have to give credit to the opponents," Hughes said.

"The important thing for us is that we are still in the tie and we will look to impose our tactics on them in the second leg as they have with us."

The goal arrived in the 37th minute when James Milner, replacing Lovren after his own injury layoff, picked out Adam Lallana on the right. Lallana turned a low centre into the penalty area and, though Joe Allen's shot was miscued, the ball spun conveniently for Ibe. His first touch managed to get the ball under control and the second picked out the corner with a left-foot shot.

Hughes brought on Jonathan Walters at half-time to add some extra height to Stoke's attack, taking off the midfielder Geoff Cameron and moving Krkic into a more withdrawn role. The idea was to capitalise on Lucas's lack of inches and it was the same later on when Crouch was introduced and Stoke effectively returned to their tactics of old.

For the first time, there were moments to indicate Liverpool might be vulnerable. Even then, however, there was the sight of Krkic aiming a simple pass out of play. Hughes was exaggerating to say that Stoke had dominated the second half and his complaints about Liverpool's time-wasting did not entirely stack up either. Simon Mignolet was booked for taking too long with one goal-kick but Liverpool's win had its origins in the way they moved the ball during the opening 45 minutes. They outdid Stoke at their own game and, from here, it will need something special for Hughes's team to advance.

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The Mail

STOKE CAUGHT IN KLOPP TRAP; Liverpool show fight demanded by boss as Ibe seals victory

SO THIS is what happens when they make him angry. Three days working with a team who looked like duds and suddenly Jurgen Klopp is 90 minutes from Wembley.

If Upton Park provided the lowest moment of Klopp's brief Liverpool reign, the transformation he managed to mastermind at Stoke in the first leg of this Capital One Cup semi-final was deeply impressive.

No matter that fitness issues had robbed him of key players or that confidence was low, Klopp moulded Liverpool into a solid and confident team which never gave Stoke a moment's hope.

A goal from Jordan Ibe settled the first leg but that did not really do justice to the performance Liverpool produced at a ground that has given them nightmares in the past.

This was not as eye-catching as their 4-1 slaying of Manchester City, but it was just as noteworthy. Nobody could have expected Liverpool to play like this.

Nobody, perhaps, except their manager. Sloppy starts have been one of the many issues that have exasperated Klopp Liverpool's habit of conceding early goals often setting the tone for performances that have been limp and error-strewn.

Here, though, there was no messing. Roberto Firmino was first out of the traps, scurrying after the ball from Stoke's kick-off. With only 34 seconds on the clock, the Brazilian forced a flying save from Jack Butland after Erik Pieters had squandered possession under pressure. The tone was set but there was more to it than mere hard running. Liverpool's tackles had bite, the passing was sharp and, for once, they looked ready to fight Joe Allen's shoulder charge, which dumped a startled Ibrahim Afellay, an example of their aggression.

Standing with arms folded tightly together, nodding in approval, Klopp looked content as Liverpool's scuttled forward, pressing and pushing the hosts back in search of chances. Adam Lallana became the next to try his luck with a 25-yard drive that Butland gathered. This wasn't how the home fans expected things to be. Normally such a raucous, intimidating crowd, they were eerily silent in the opening 20 minutes as Liverpool took full control. But then came two sizeable disruptions, with Philippe Coutinho and Dejan Lovren both pulling up lame, then grabbing at a hamstring. Klopp has described that as the 's****test' word he has learned since being appointed and it is becoming one of his most used.

Liverpool's problems with injury are reaching crisis point. How stretched they now are could be gauged when James Milner only just back from a calf strain was introduced and Lucas Leiva, the holding midfielder, dropped into central defence.

Still, they looked the most likely to open the scoring and so it proved in the 37th minute. Milner's first significant contribution was to set Lallana scurrying down the right. With time to pick out a pass, he squared for Allen, whose mis-hit shot presented Ibe Coutinho's replacement with a chance he could not squander. As the ball ripped past Butland, Klopp, who had now pulled up the hood of his overcoat to protect himself from the constant rainfall, spun on his heels and pumped his fists at the rest of his coaching staff. For a team with such brittle confidence, this was a significant moment. Stoke responded with a header from Marko Arnautovic that skidded across Liverpool's six-yard box but it was nothing to unduly worry the visiting fans. Their team remained in control until the interval, the one moment of alarm being a snapshot from Glen Johnson which Mignolet beat away.

Bounding back to the sanctuary of the dressing room at the break, Klopp must surely have come to the conclusion that he had seen one of the best 45-minute performances his side had produced for him. The big question, however, was whether Liverpool could carry it through.

Given this was their first appearance in the semi-finals since 1972, there was no chance Stoke who have captured the imagination over the last six weeks with their verve and dash could be so passive again. To give their attack some teeth, Mark Hughes introduced Jonathon Walters.

Suddenly things seemed sharper from those in the red and white stripes and the spin-off was that the stadium became louder and more hostile. This is how a wet, cold night in the Potteries should be, a test of mind and body.

Yet Liverpool were not for being bullied and nothing illustrated that point more than when Lucas thundered into a challenge with Bojan with such speed and intent that the match ball suffered a puncture and needed replacing.

Moments like that are what Klopp wants to see from his players maximum commitment and a determination to give their all.

Such was the way Liverpool were operating here that there was no frantic gesticulating from Klopp last night.

Where Hughes stood a few yards from him, barking and brooding, Klopp was content to let the action unfold.

He stayed that way until the final whistle. It was the sign of a job well done, even if Kolo Toure joined the ranks of those struggling with a hamstring problem late on.

The Daily Telegraph

Injury-hit Liverpool in driving seat after Ibe strike silences Stoke

Stoke City 0 Liverpool 1 Ibe 37 Att: 27,369

The dream of Wembley is alive for Jurgen Klopp, although this first step towards a place in the Capital One Cup final came at a price for his patched-up, injury-racked Liverpool squad from which he lost three more players in the course of victory over Stoke City. By the time the second leg comes around on Jan 26, Klopp will hope that some of his injured players are available again, with the number of those unavailable currently approaching double figures. Substitute Jordan Ibe scored the tie's only goal but not before he came on for the injured Philippe Coutinho who was soon followed off before halftime by the centre-back Dejan Lovren with concerns at the end of the game over Kolo Toure.

It is a long list of players who will not feature in the FA Cup third round on Friday when Klopp's team play League Two Exeter City. Jordan Henderson, Daniel Sturridge, Danny Ings, Joe Gomez, Divock Origi, Martin Skrtel and Mamadou Sakho were already injured before the game at the Britannia and there are two more now, but they came through well against Stoke with a victory that might have been by a greater margin. After the weekend league defeat by West Ham it was a different, more resolute kind of Liverpool. There was an impromptu turn at centre-back for Lucas Leiva and a fine performance from Joe Allen in midfield.

This was not the kind of Liverpool team that Klopp expected to be selecting for a semi-final but it was the kind of performance that he would have hoped for.

It took Liverpool one long period of domination and two unfortunate injuries but they were damned if they were going to let so much effort go to waste without a first-half goal. Klopp's team deserved their lead from a relentlessly attacking first half that gave Stoke nowhere to go but defend.

The Liverpool manager had made the brave decision to start without the recently underwhelming Christian Benteke, consigned to the bench in favour of an attack with no specialist centre-forward. Stoke are different these days but it is still a courageous manager who turns up with an attacking four comprising three fireflies - Adam Lallana, Coutinho and Roberto Firmino - plus Emre Can as a No 10. It was not as if he was alone in his improvising because at the other end, Mark Hughes deployed Bojan Krkic as his centre-forward with the three behind him that gilded array of Xherdan Shaqiri, Ibrahim Afellay and Marko Arnautovic. Between them they had a dreadful first half with one Bojan miscue exactly the kind of technique failure Stoke thought they had long left behind.

At the other end, Liverpool pushed on undeterred by two bad injuries in the first half, the first of which meant they lost Coutinho. He seemed to pull a muscle and was off quickly, to be replaced by Ibe with just 18 minutes played.

On 34 minutes, Lovren seemed to strain something reaching for the ball and broke down chasing another minutes later. Klopp had already lost Mamadou Sakho to injury before the game, another one to add to a very long list of Liverpool injury absentees, and he had brought Toure into the side. As a consequence, Klopp did not have another central defender on the bench and called on James Milner to replace Lovren while moving Lucas back into defence.

The goal came three minutes later, starting with a tackle won by Milner on the right who played in Lallana down the wing. He cut the ball back for Allen, starting just his ninth game of the season. The Welsh midfielder looked like he was trying to shoot but succeeded in moving the ball on perfectly for Ibe at the back post who took one touch and picked his spot past Jack Butland.

If anything there should have been more goals for Liverpool. Minutes later, Firmino pinched the ball from Glenn Whelan in midfield and only a heavy touch allowed Ryan Shawcross to intervene. The Stoke captain was his team's best player in the first half with another crucial intervention on Coutinho earlier.

On the touchline, steadfastly refusing any Stoke official bench coats to protect his suit from a soaking from the January rain, Mark Hughes looked ever more incensed with his team's performance. For all that they had a good chance in injury time at the end of the half when a clearance from a corner fell to Glen Johnson and he forced a good save out of Simon Mignolet. Hughes changed his attack as well as his attitude towards the winter rain at half-time. He emerged with a coat on and a more orthodox centre-forward, Jonathan Walters, who replaced Geoff Cameron, one of the two holding midfielders. In the early minutes of the second half, Stoke at last turned the heat up on their visitors but it never reached sizzling. In the heart of the Liverpool defence, Lucas was reinventing himself with an excellent clearing header as the big men in the stripes converged on the ball. Later he tackled Bojan with such pace that it appeared that Liverpool's Brazilian had managed to burst the match ball, which was immediately retired from action. Stoke's problem was that their new 4-3-3 formation was not creating a significant number of chances. Arnautovic was quiet although he picked out Shaqiri with one excellent straight through ball that the little winger could not control. Otherwise, Liverpool looked comfortable with Toure finding himself well-suited to the challenge Stoke posed. When Allen departed with 11 minutes remaining he was given well-deserved applause by the away following and was replaced by Benteke. A switch in formation had seen Can back in a more orthodox central midfield role and Firmino just ahead of him and behind Benteke. Hughes had already brought on Joselu in place of Bojan by then. By the end, Hughes had sent on Peter Crouch as Stoke sought out a goal to take to Anfield. Away goals will only count in the second leg if the scores are level after extra-time but nevertheless, this was just the sort of night that Klopp would have wanted.

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THE INDEPENDENT

Allen's bit of magic lets Ibe hand the edge to Liverpool

So we now know that Jurgen Klopp can do it on a wet and windy Tuesday night at Stoke. After the weekend capitulation at West Ham, Liverpool responded to their German manager's demand for a response as Jordon Ibe's goal put the eight-time League Cup winners one step closer to Wembley. Stoke failed to live up to their hype in front of their expectant supporters, but much of that was down to Liverpool and Klopp's tactical blueprint. The Merseysiders nullified Stoke's attacking talents and outran their midfielders to claim a deserved first-leg lead in this Capital One Cup semi-final. Having overcome Stoke on the way to winning this competition in 1995, 2001 and 2012, Liverpool will hope the omens are on their side again as they attempt to win silverware for the first time since Kenny Dalglish guided them to success in this competition four years ago. Much water has passed under the bridge since Liverpool were humiliated 6-1 at this stadium last May. Brendan Rodgers has been replaced by Klopp and Mark Hughes has added Xherdan Shaqiri and a fit-again Bojan Krkic, following the Spaniard's cruciate ligament injury, to the team which trounced the five-time European champions at the Britannia. Having won 1-0 here on the opening day of this season, Liverpool had quickly exorcised their Stoke demons, but Hughes' team have since bounced back to claim impressive home victories against Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United to justify Klopp's pre-match claim that Liverpool were tasked with overcoming a dangerous obstacle in their efforts to reach Wembley. But that challenge became even more difficult when Philippe Coutinho and Dejan Lovren both limped out of the game in the first half with hamstring injuries. Coutinho, Liverpool's creative force, lasted just 17 minutes before sustaining his injury while crossing the ball and Lovren, who has been impressive at centre-half, gave up the ghost 16 minutes later, having pulled his right hamstring while attempting to block a cross. The changes left Liverpool facing an hour with Lucas Leiva alongside Kolo Tour[c] at centre-half against Stoke's in-form attacking players. Liverpool had dominated the opening period, with Klopp's decision to drop centre-forward Christian Benteke in favour of the more mobile Roberto Firmino looking justified. Stoke could not cope with Liverpool's pressing high up the pitch and their first mistake came on 35 seconds, when Erik Pieters was dispossessed by Firmino 35 yards from goal. The Brazilian had a clear run on target, but by shooting straight at goalkeeper Jack Butland, he displayed the confidence of a [pounds sterling]29m forward with just one goal to his name this season. It was a warning shot to Stoke, however, that Liverpool were determined to play on the front foot after proving so disappointing when losing 2-0 at West Ham at the weekend. This was the Liverpool who rattled in six goals at Southampton in the previous round - Adam Lallana forced Butland into another save and Coutinho was denied a clear shot on goal by Ryan Shawcross's brilliantly timed challenge inside the area. Stoke were struggling to lay a glove on the visitors and they did not go close until the 26th minute, when a clever corner by Shaqiri picked out the unmarked Bojan in the penalty area. The former Barcelona forward had time and space and appeared destined to open the scoring, but he missed the ball completely, much to the delight of the 3,500 Liverpool supporters behind the goal. It would prove to be a costly miss, with Liverpool substitute Ibe putting Klopp's team ahead on 37 minutes, following a break down the right by Lallana. The former Southampton forward had been released by Nathaniel Clyne and his pull-back to Joe Allen from the byline was neatly laid on by the Welshman, leaving Ibe to take a touch before guiding his shot past Butland. Allen, resembling Andrea Pirlo with his beard and long hair, delivered the crucial touch with his disguised pass, however. It was the kind of ball of which his Italian lookalike would have been proud. But for a reflex save by Simon Mignolet deep into first-half stoppage time, when the Belgian dived full stretch to his left to deny former Anfield team-mate Glen Johnson, Stoke would have hauled themselves level before the break. With that chance going astray, however, Hughes chose to bolster his team's attacking options by replacing midfielder Geoff Cameron with Jonathan Walters at the interval. And although Firmino should have done better after being set free inside the Stoke penalty area on 47 minutes, Hughes' change helped tilt the balance of play back in his team's favour. Bojan was able to find more space, with Walters occupying the Liverpool centre-halves, and Stoke began to find gaps. The home side were harshly denied a penalty by referee Anthony Taylor on 53 minutes when, after Tour[c] had cleared Marko Arnautovic's free-kick to the edge of the penalty area, Glenn Whelan appeared to be fouled by Alberto Moreno as he challenged for the ball. Taylor shook his head and dismissed Stoke's appeals, angering Hughes on the touchline. Liverpool then had a penalty claim of their own, albeit less convincing, when Clyne was knocked to the ground by Arnautovic with what appeared no more than a well-timed shoulder charge. Despite having a second-leg to come at Anfield, neither team was prepared to settle for the narrow margin of 1-0 and Ibe shot into the side-netting after being released by Firmino on 68 minutes. Hughes threw on Joselu, who forced Mignolet to backpedal hastily to tip over a deflected 77th-minute strike. Liverpool held firm, even when Peter Crouch was given a late chance to rescue Stoke from the bench, but the sight of Tour[c] limping heavily at the end was worrying for Klopp. It leaves Liverpool with no fit centre-halves for Friday's FA Cup trip to Exeter City.

DAILY MIRROR

KLOPP IS HOT OFF THE PRESS; Jurgen blueprint pays off for Kop

IT was full throttle, high energy and, at times, mesmerising to watch. A fascinating glimpse of Liverpool's potential under Jurgen Klopp as they overwhelmed Stoke at the Britannia Stadium. It is hard to believe they can keep this tempo going over the next three weeks which will probably decide their season. Certainly not after losing Philippe Coutinho and Dejan Lovren to hamstringing injuries to further test an already depleted squad. They all looked dead on their feet at the final whistle. But over the course of the next few games they face Exeter in the FA Cup on Friday night, Arsenal, Manchester United and then Stoke in the return leg which could take them to Wembley. But Liverpool fans can dare to dream as on nights like these you can see the Klopp masterplan beginning to take shape. They were terrific, taking gegenpressing - Klopp's blueprint also known as chasing, tackling and closing down the opposition - to a new level. It left Stoke wondering what hit them as Liverpool flew out of the blocks and only stopped for breath when Coutinho and Lovren hobbled off. But even those injuries could not knock the Reds out of their stride as Stoke were outfoxed and bullied in their own backyard. Mark Hughes looked furious on the touchline, hardly believing what he was seeing. By the second half, he had almost given up screaming and shouting to slump back into the dug-out in desperation as another pass went astray. Stoke's wonderful front four - Bojan, Xherdan Shaqiri, Ibrahim Afellay and Marko Arnautovic - did not break sweat until the second half. It was an incredibly un-Stoke like performance and it looks like Hughes will have to carry on waiting for his first major trophy as a manager. Even when Jon Walters came on at half-time to restore some of Stoke's traditional values, they still could not summon up enough momentum to find a way back. Liverpool had too much grit and determination, Lucas Leiva's crunching second-half tackle on Bojan even bursting the ball to highlight their grit. From the off, Roberto Firmino, Coutinho and Adam Lallana worked hard to produce angles, openings and chances. Christian Benteke, dropped to the bench, must have looked on wondering if there was any way back. Stoke keeper Jack Butland had to be at his best to deny Lallana's fizzing 25-yard shot as Liverpool dominated. Their rhythm was interrupted when Coutinho pulled his left hamstring after 16 minutes. That was soon followed by Lovren limping off with Lucas switching to central defence to allow James Milner to come on after Jordon Ibe had replaced Coutinho. Ibe was quickly in the thick of things and Liverpool scored to expose Stoke's normally reliable defence. Lallana raced down the right as Stoke left-back Erik Pieters looked on in horror. The England midfielder pulled the ball back, Joe Allen miscued and it ran to Ibe who fired a shot on the half volley into the corner. It was no more than Liverpool deserved and they could have had more but for some wasteful finishing. Firmino, in particular needs shooting practice, horrible control allowing Ryan Shawcross to stop him getting a second. Stoke came closest in first-half injury time as Glen Johnson hit a fierce shot and Simon Mignolet (left) made a good block. The truth is that Stoke were a world away from the team which beat Chelsea, Manchester United and Manchester City at home this season. Mignolet was rarely tested in the second half either as Kolo Toure was magnificent in the heart of Liverpool's defence. Klopp's men could have had a second when Butland's clearance rebounded off Firmino and the Stoke keeper had to recover quickly. Liverpool have managed just one trophy in the last 10 years. And this tie is not over yet. But victory has at least allowed Liverpool fans to really start believing in Klopp's revolution.

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Reds triumph in adversity as gutsiest of wins stirs Klopp's pride
 Talk about triumphing in the face of adversity.

Liverpool moved to within sight of a Wembley final on a stirring night at the Britannia Stadium. If anger was Jurgen Klopp's overwhelming emotion after the Reds' spineless defeat at Upton Park on Saturday, this time it was pride as his heavily depleted side secured the gutsiest of victories over Stoke City.

The job must still be completed in the second leg of the Capital One Cup semi-final on January 26 but showcase these same qualities again and a reunion with Anfield South awaits. Klopp had demanded a response from his under-achieving players and he got it as they secured a prized advantage courtesy of Jordan Ibe's first-half strike. The outcome was all the more remarkable considering the cards dealt them during a night when Liverpool's injury problems reached crisis point.

First, Philippe Coutinho and then Dejan Lovren limped off as the curse of the hamstring strain struck twice in quick succession.

With Mamadou Sakho sidelined by a knee problem and Martin Skrtel still out, Kolo Toure is Liverpool's only fit centre-back and even he finished the evening clutching his right hamstring due to cramp. The current list of absentees also includes Jordan Henderson, Daniel Sturridge, Divock Origi, Jon Flanagan, Jordan Rossiter, Danny Ings and Joe Gomez. With crunch Premier League games with Arsenal and Manchester United on the horizon it's a major headache for Klopp but this was a night when those still standing dug deep and unlikely heroes emerged.

Joe Allen delivered on his return to the side

Toure rolled back the years with a near faultless display as he repeatedly put his body on the line. Lucas Leiva rose to the challenge after being pressed into duty as a makeshift centre-back as the Reds kept the gifted triumvirate of Xherdan Shaqiri, Marko Arnautovic and Bojan quiet. Joe Allen delivered on his return to the side, while it was also the night when Roberto Firmino broke off the shackles as Klopp's gamble in dropping Christian Benteke and playing the Brazilian up front paid off handsomely. The thunderous applause from the away end as Klopp and his walking wounded headed for the tunnel was a ringing endorsement of what the 2,800-strong travelling Kop had witnessed. There had been fight and spirit in abundance. Can this much criticised squad do it on a cold, wet Tuesday night in Stoke? Here the answer was emphatic.

Klopp accused his under-achieving side of being too "passive" at Upton Park but there was nothing meek about this performance.

Aggressive, purposeful and on the front foot, this was a world away from what was served up against West Ham. No-one had seen this Liverpool since the thrashing of Southampton in the previous round last month.

Firmino responds to Klopp's Benteke gamble

The Reds flew out of the traps and the tone was set inside 40 seconds when Firmino pounced on a loose pass and forced a low save from Jack Butland. Pockets were picked as Klopp's side hunted in packs and repeatedly forced Stoke into coughing up possession cheaply. Klopp took a risk by leaving out Benteke – the only Liverpool player who had found the net in more than six hours of football dating back to the 2-2 draw with West Brom in mid-December.

But Firmino stepped up to the plate. The former Hoffenheim attacker did what Benteke has failed to do of late – linking play intelligently and bursting in behind defenders. Adam Lallana's 20-yarder was palmed away by Butland after slick interplay between Coutinho and Firmino.

Liverpool were winning battles all over the pitch. Allen's prospects under Klopp have looked bleak with him making just one league start during his tenure. But the Welsh midfielder looked like a man on a mission after getting his chance – steaming into tackles and probing with his range of passing.

With Firmino and Coutinho continuing to pull the strings, Stoke were on the ropes but the Reds' momentum was dented. Coutinho pulled up clutching his hamstring with Ibe replacing him.

Resolute defence with menacing counters

The Potters began to come into the contest and a lapse in concentration almost gifted them the opener just before the half hour mark. Xherdan Shaqiri's corner picked out the unmarked Bojan but to the Reds' relief the little Spaniard miskicked. It was a massive let-off and to their credit Klopp's men wrestled back control. With Ibe and Lallana dropping deep when Stoke had the ball, it was effectively 4-5-1. Liverpool defended resolutely and then countered with menace. Butland denied Ibe before Klopp was forced into another reshuffle when Lovren limped off. With Skrtel and Sakho already sidelined, Leiva dropped into the back four with James Milner introduced in midfield. Eight minutes before the break Liverpool were in front. Milner sent Lallana scampering away down the right. His low cross was touched on by Allen and Ibe took a touch to steady himself before lashing a left footer into the bottom corner. It was the youngster's third goal of the campaign. Marko Arnautovic wasted the chance to level when he nodded wide and it took a fine stop from Simon Mignolet to thwart former Reds full-back Glen Johnson. Liverpool were good value for their lead with Ibe and Firmino threatening to add to their account.

A soaked Mark Hughes, who had talked bullishly pre-match about what a great time it was to face the Reds, responded by bringing on Jonathan Walters for Geoff

Cameron. Inevitably, Stoke's aerial threat grew. They went route one but Liverpool stood up to the bombardment and soaked up the pressure. The centre-back combination of Toure and Lucas were helped by a commanding display from Mignolet, who raced out to save smartly at the feet of Shaqiri. Penalty appeals were waved away at both ends as first Glenn Whelan and then Allen went down. With the pace of Ibe leading the charge, Liverpool broke away and should have increased their lead in the tie but Firmino couldn't provide the finish. During a late onslaught Mignolet was alert to tip over Joselu's deflected strike before Walters fired wide in stoppage time.

Battered and bruised, Liverpool deservedly survived.

STOKE CITY (4-2-3-1): Butland; Johnson, Shawcross, Wollscheid, Pieters; Cameron (Walters 46), Whelan; Shaqiri (Crouch 83), Afellay, Arnautovic; Bojan (Joselu 69).

Subs: Haugaard, Wilson, van Ginkel, Adam.

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Mignolet; Clyne, Toure, Lovren (Milner 34), Moreno; Can, Lucas, Allen (Benteke 79); Lallana, Firmino, Coutinho (Ibe 18). Subs: Bogdan, Brannagan, Smith, Randall. **BOOKING:** Mignolet. **GOAL:** Ibe 37.

REFEREE: Anthony Taylor. **ATT:** 27,369.

Man of the match: Kolo Toure. Heroic display from the veteran who epitomised the Reds' fighting spirit.



City must now roll back the pages of history

DOWN, and feeling very down, but not out, not quite just yet.

Stoke will now have to roll back the pages of history, however, if they are to emerge with a place in the Capital One Cup Final.

For they must win the second leg at Anfield in three weeks and they've gone the little matter of 56 years and 36 visits since they last accomplished a victory there. They were never at their best in this first leg as maybe the occasion, but certainly their opposition's high intensity, truly got to them.

Stoke's spirits had lifted with the early exit of the injured Philippe Coutinho, but it was his replacement, England under-21 international Jordan Ibe, who was destined to bag the night's only goal and so achieve Liverpool's second 1-0 win at the Britannia this season.

Some revenge for that 6-1 mauling back in May.

And there could be no complaints with the final outcome, despite a more spirited second-half offering, and Stoke certainly require far better in three weeks.

Stoke, unchanged for the sixth time in seven games, were the more nervous of the two starters amid a barrage of noise as an ill-directed pass from Erik Pieters teed up Roberto Firmino for a shot at Jack Butland after barely 30 seconds. Stoke's mettle remained under the spotlight early on as Liverpool were clearly intent on demonstrating their pedigree in a competition they have won a record eight times.

City simply couldn't get a whiff of the ball and another early Liverpool attack left Adam Lallana letting fly from distance to force Butland to parry with an outstretched left hand.

And when they did have the ball, mis-placed passes were contaminating Stoke's game under intense pressure from Liverpool's high-octane start.

Patience and courage was required from the home side – along with a Bobby Moore-like challenge from Ryan Shawcross to cleanly stifle Coutinho's voracious advance into City's area.

Jurgen Klopp furiously beckoned his Liverpool players goalwards once more, sensing blood in the first quarter of the contest, but his side's early enthusiasm was tested by Coutinho's early exit with hamstring trouble after 18 minutes.

The visitors remained impressively dominant, however, and their hosts somewhat pedestrian and unsure of themselves by comparison.

Events were summed up perfectly when Stoke's first corner was pulled back towards the edge of the area by Xherdan Shaqiri, but Bojan's attempt to match a goal in similar circumstances once-upon-a-time at West Ham went horribly askew as he mis-kicked in a manner worthy of a much lesser player.

Liverpool remained much the more penetrative and Ibe, with something of a dress rehearsal for the goal that followed a little later, should have examined more than just Butland's positioning with a snapshot shortly before the half-hour. Stoke's chief source of hope in the first half was the sight of another hamstring victim, this time centre half Dejan Lovren, which left James Milner being summoned from the bench and Lucas becoming an unlikely central defender. But just as circumstances appeared to be swinging in their favour, Stoke found themselves a goal down after switching off momentarily and allowing Lallana to escape maliciously down the Liverpool right.

His pass inside was mis-hit by Joe Allen, but that was no reprieve as the ball merely fell for Ibe to control and smash home with Stoke at sixes and sevens. Stoke responded with Glen Johnson's right-wing cross glancing off Marko Arnautovic's forehead and across the face of goal, while Glenn Whelan's miserable control allowed Firmino to scurry goalwards at the other end before another fine Shawcross challenge prevented him unloading on Butland's goal. The half ended with Stoke coming their closest yet to a goal as a poorly-defended corner left the ball falling to Johnson for a firm drive that Simon Mignolet was happy to simply block.

The half-time appearance of Jon Walters for Geoff Cameron – to generous acclaim from home fans requiring some encouragement – was a statement of intent from Mark Hughes at the start of a second half that now saw some physical

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presence in his attack.

Walters was soon making his presence felt as Liverpool struggled to clear a free-kick that left Whelan falling under Alberto Moreno's challenge inside the box and a Shawcross stab from close range being blocked by Milner.

Suddenly, perhaps, Stoke were rediscovering their mojo and Bojan, possibly their biggest disappointment thus far, cut menacingly in-field before Lucas slid across superbly to choke a potentially goalbound shot.

And arguably the pass of the night – Arnautovic's slide-rule delivery through the heart of Liverpool's defence – was only inches too strong for Shaqiri.

With an hour gone Stoke had hoped where previously there had been precious little as Liverpool's earlier endeavours threatened to catch up with them.

Liverpool's half-hearted penalty claim was rejected for Whelan's collision with Allen – and for Arnautovic's with Nathaniel Clyne – while sandwiched in between Arnautovic was beaten to a through ball by Mignolet as the tie continued to promise a second goal.

The home crowd remained in good spirits – not least when Mignolet was booked for time-wasting in the 72nd minute – but Stoke's earlier second-half momentum had visibly waned and an equaliser looking a distant possibility once more.

Joselu, who had replaced a tiring Bojan, announced himself with a deflected shot that had Mignolet back-tracking to tip over and prevent that sorely-needed equaliser.

Shaqiri's rare burst of pace into space was thwarted by Kolo Toure's sliding presence at the near post, while Shaqiri's subsequent corner into the side-netting summed up much of Stoke's evening and was also his final contribution before being replaced by Peter Crouch.

Hughes now had three genuine strikers on the pitch, but not even the manager himself in his pomp was going to break Stoke's duck on a night like this.

Late salvation presented itself in the dying seconds, but Walters dragged his shot past the far post from a tightening angle to leave Stoke firmly in the doldrums.

TEAMS

Stoke: Butland, Johnson, Pieters, Shawcross, Wolscheid, Whelan, Cameron (Walters,46) Shaqiri (Crouch,83), Afellay, Arnautovic, Bojan (Joselu,69). Subs: Haugaard, Wilson, van Ginkel, Adam.

Liverpool: Mignolet, Clyne, Morenom Toure, Lovren (Milner,34) Lucas, Allen (Benteke,79), Lallana, Can, Coutinho (Ibe,18), Firmino. Subs: Bogdan, Brannagan, Smith, Randall.

Referee: A Taylor (Manchester).

Att: 27,369.

Cards (yellow): Stoke – none. Liverpool – Mignolet (time-wasting,73).

Cards (red): Stoke – none. Liverpool – none.



Liverpool hold a precious advantage going into the Capital One Cup semi-final second leg after Jordon Ibe's goal gave them victory at Stoke City.

Jürgen Klopp's side take the lead to Anfield for the return on 26 January despite losing influential midfielder man Philippe Coutinho and defender Dejan Lovren to hamstring injuries before half-time. Ibe, on for Coutinho, struck at the far post in the 37th minute after clever build-up work by Adam Lallana and Joe Allen.

Stoke failed to reproduce the form that has brought them home wins against Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United in recent times and, when they did force an opening, Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet saved well from Glen Johnson and Joselu. Substitute Jon Walters wasted their best chance deep into stoppage time and Liverpool are now favourites to meet either Everton or Manchester City at Wembley.

Liverpool's split personality

Klopp left the media to guess at the "three words" he delivered to his players after a dismal performance in defeat at West Ham United on Saturday.

He had no need to rein in his message here as Liverpool bristled with an intensity from the first whistle that shocked Stoke City in such a manner they struggled to recover any rhythm or composure. It was another example of the two-faced nature of Liverpool's performances under Klopp since he arrived to succeed the sacked Brendan Rodgers in early October. This display, full of steely resolve and the incessant pressing Klopp demands, was more akin to the outstanding away victories at Chelsea (3-1), Manchester City (4-1) and the 6-1 win at Southampton in the quarter-final. And yet Klopp has still had to suffer the frustration of Liverpool barely turning up in losses at Newcastle United, Watford and West Ham. This was more like the model of what he will expect on a consistent basis when he has really settled into his work at Liverpool - and it has given him a big opportunity of marking his first season with a Wembley appearance.

Stoke City fluff their lines

This was a huge night at the Britannia Stadium as Stoke's players attempt to write their names alongside those who famously won the League Cup for the Potters against Chelsea at Wembley in 1972. And anticipation had been elevated by the impressive form shown by Mark Hughes' side, a potent blend of silk and steel that arguably had them as favourites before the game. It was to be a disappointing 90 minutes for the hosts as Liverpool appeared to stun them from kick-off by pressurising them into mistakes, and they simply never recovered enough to build up a head of steam. Mignolet made a couple of important stops and Stoke felt they had penalty claims when Alberto Moreno tangled with Glenn Whelan, but Liverpool closed down their big players such as Bojan, Xherdan Shaqiri and Marko Arnautovic to deserve their victory. No-one should dismiss Stoke's chances as they have shown so much quality already this season - but they have left themselves a huge task in the return.

Klopp's injury curse

After young Belgian striker Divock Origi went lame in the Boxing Day victory against Leicester City at Anfield, Klopp pointed out in colourful terms that "hamstring" was his least favourite word of 2015. It is not shaping up any better in 2016 as Coutinho and Lovren both limped off clutching their hamstrings before half-time - adding to Liverpool's already lengthy injury list. They may be joined by Kolo Toure, who ended the game clutching the back of his right leg.

Klopp's "gegenpressing" style, intense and physical as opponents are put under pressure, is demanding and requires high levels of fitness - and maybe it is taking some getting used to for his new charges.

And there is no doubt Liverpool are also suffering a run of bad luck that is filling up the treatment room at their Melwood training headquarters.

Martin Skrtel, as well as Origi, is nursing a hamstring problem while James Milner has only just returned from a similar injury.

Joe Gomez and Danny Ings suffered long-term knee ligament problems before Klopp's arrival while Jordan Henderson's heel problem is a recurrence of a problem he had earlier in the season.

Jordan Rossiter was sidelined by a hamstring problem after initially suffering the injury with England's youngsters while Daniel Sturridge's many problems have already occupied much of Klopp's early time at Anfield.

The German is waiting for the day when he will have all his Liverpool players fit - but that day looks as far away as ever.

Man of the match: Joe Allen

What they said

Stoke City manager Mark Hughes said: "People might want to criticise what we did in the first half but sometimes you have to credit the opposition.

"They restricted what we wanted to do in terms of getting people around the ball and restricting space and they did that to good effect and we had to improve in the second half.

"The key from our point of view is that we didn't concede again and the danger was that if we over committed and conceded another one that would have been a huge task to go to Anfield and claw it back."

Liverpool boss Jürgen Klopp told BBC Radio 5 live: "The only thing we can criticise is our finishing again. We had a good structure, played football good, everything was good but we don't make enough goals.

"The biggest problem for us is we have two and maybe three injured players again."

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Full time Match ends, Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1.
 90:00+3:38 Full time Second Half ends, Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1.
 90:00+3:11 Attempt missed. Jonathan Walters (Stoke City left footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Peter Crouch with a headed pass.
 90:00+1:48 Attempt missed. Jonathan Walters (Stoke City header from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Joselu with a cross.
 87:08 Offside, Stoke City. Glen Johnson tries a through ball, but Marko Arnautovic is caught offside.
 87:07 Attempt missed. Glen Johnson (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box misses to the right following a corner.
 86:31 Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Simon Mignolet.
 85:14 Foul by Philipp Wollscheid (Stoke City.
 85:14 Christian Benteke (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.
 82:49 Substitution Substitution, Stoke City. Peter Crouch replaces Xherdan Shaqiri.
 81:49 Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Kolo Touré.
 80:30 Erik Pieters (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 80:30 Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool.
 79:04 Foul by Erik Pieters (Stoke City.
 79:04 Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 78:12 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Christian Benteke replaces Joe Allen.
 77:43 Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.
 76:59 Foul by Ryan Shawcross (Stoke City.
 76:59 Roberto Firmino (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 76:25 Attempt missed. Joselu (Stoke City left footed shot from the left side of the six yard box misses to the left. Assisted by Xherdan Shaqiri with a cross following a corner.
 75:59 Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Simon Mignolet.
 75:56 Attempt saved. Joselu (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top right corner. Assisted by Glenn Whelan.
 72:22 Booking Simon Mignolet (Liverpool is shown the yellow card.
 71:34 Erik Pieters (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 71:34 Foul by Adam Lallana (Liverpool.
 71:15 Philipp Wollscheid (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 71:15 Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool.
 68:58 Substitution Substitution, Stoke City. Joselu replaces Bojan.
 68:19 Attempt missed. Ryan Shawcross (Stoke City header from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Jonathan Walters with a cross.
 67:17 Attempt missed. Jordan Ibe (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
 64:35 Attempt missed. James Milner (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right following a set piece situation.
 63:50 Foul by Glen Johnson (Stoke City.
 63:50 Jordan Ibe (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing.
 62:44 Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Emre Can.
 59:32 Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Kolo Touré.
 59:21 Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 59:21 Foul by James Milner (Liverpool.
 58:16 Attempt missed. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
 52:01 Attempt missed. Glen Johnson (Stoke City right footed shot from the right side of the box is too high following a set piece situation.
 51:59 Attempt blocked. Ryan Shawcross (Stoke City right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Glenn Whelan.
 51:32 Jonathan Walters (Stoke City wins a free kick on the left wing.
 51:32 Foul by Kolo Touré (Liverpool.
 48:17 Offside, Liverpool. Joe Allen tries a through ball, but Adam Lallana is caught offside.
 45:58 Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
 45:00 Second Half begins Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1.
 45:00 Substitution Substitution, Stoke City. Jonathan Walters replaces Geoff Cameron.
 45:00+3:18 Half time First Half ends, Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1.
 45:00+3:07 Attempt saved. Glen Johnson (Stoke City right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal.
 45:00+2:38 Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Alberto Moreno.
 45:00+2:36 Attempt blocked. Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Bojan.
 45:00+1:53 Glen Johnson (Stoke City wins a free kick in the defensive half.
 45:00+1:53 Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool.
 45:00+0:41 Attempt missed. Xherdan Shaqiri (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Ibrahim Afellay.
 43:08 Attempt blocked. Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.
 40:33 Attempt missed. Jordan Ibe (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Adam Lallana with a cross.
 38:40 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ryan Shawcross.
 37:56 Attempt missed. Marko Arnautovic (Stoke City header from the centre of the box misses to the left. Assisted by Glen Johnson with a cross.
 36:27 Goal scored Goal! Stoke City 0, Liverpool 1. Jordan Ibe (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Joe Allen.
 36:26 Attempt missed. Joe Allen (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box

misses to the left. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
 33:47 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. James Milner replaces Dejan Lovren because of an injury.
 33:23 Delay over. They are ready to continue.
 31:43 Delay in match Dejan Lovren (Liverpool because of an injury.
 27:37 Attempt saved. Jordan Ibe (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Adam Lallana with a headed pass.
 25:24 Attempt missed. Glen Johnson (Stoke City left footed shot from outside the box is too high following a corner.
 24:47 Corner, Stoke City. Conceded by Kolo Touré.
 23:52 Attempt missed. Jordan Ibe (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Alberto Moreno.
 23:28 Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Adam Lallana.
 19:58 Offside, Stoke City. Ibrahim Afellay tries a through ball, but Marko Arnautovic is caught offside.
 17:57 Delay over. They are ready to continue.
 17:57 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Jordan Ibe replaces Philippe Coutinho because of an injury.
 16:55 Delay in match Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool because of an injury.
 15:43 Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Dejan Lovren with a headed pass.
 15:07 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Ryan Shawcross.
 15:06 Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box is blocked.
 14:44 Attempt blocked. Ibrahim Afellay (Stoke City right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Erik Pieters.
 9:02 Offside, Liverpool. Lucas Leiva tries a through ball, but Adam Lallana is caught offside.
 7:16 Attempt saved. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Roberto Firmino.
 3:50 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Philipp Wollscheid.
 1:50 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Glen Johnson.
 1:14 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Glenn Whelan.
 0:34 Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom right corner.
 0:00 First Half begins.
 0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.