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THE TIMES

Frei renders touch of class from Gerrard meaningless

Liverpool 1 Gerrard 81 Basle 1 Frei 25

It ended with drama, as it usually does at Anfield, after Steven Gerrard briefly raised hopes of another spectacular European comeback, but that late onslaught should not blind Liverpool to the obvious. In fact, those final ten minutes or so were just about the first time this season that they had looked like a team who believed they belonged in the Champions League once more.

It was, of course, too little and too late. Gerrard's lovely free kick changed the atmosphere and the game with nine minutes remaining, but, against an intelligent, spirited Basle, it was not enough to revive a Champions League campaign in which Liverpool took five points from six matches. With Manchester United looming on Sunday, Brendan Rodgers must hope that the spirit they mustered in the closing stages will somehow serve as a catalyst for a team who seem to have lost the qualities that brought them back to Europe's premier competition in the first place. By then, Liverpool were a goal down, their horribly erratic first-half performance punished by Fabian Frei's 25th-minute goal, and a man down after Lazar Markovic, a substitute, was sent off for flinging his right hand -- or, more precisely, a finger -- in or towards the face of Behrang Safari.

Indeed, it was only after the red card that Liverpool seemed to discover a cause and even a semblance of the belief that might have taken them through. Cohesion and structure have been so absent from Liverpool's play this season that Rodgers has opted for a safety-first approach in recent weeks, eschewing flair in favour of pragmatism. Last night, as against Ludogorets in Sofia last month, he selected Gerrard and Jordan Henderson as two of three players operating in support of Rickie Lambert in a 4-2-3-1 formation. The demand, clearly, was for solidity and reliability first and foremost. What ensued was a first half in which Liverpool were devoid of either quality. In fact, they were much worse than that. They were dreadful, flattered to be only 1-0 down at the interval, given that just about all the attacking threat to that point had come from Basle. For once, before a big European match at Anfield, the talk was less about what effect the home crowd might have on the visiting team than on whether Liverpool could raise their game to anything like the required level. On the evidence of the first quarter of an hour or so, they were facing a struggle. They were so startlingly poor, inhibited on one hand and careless on the other, playing into the hands of Paulo Sousa's well-drilled team. It started in the first minute, when Dejan Lovren unwisely played the ball across the penalty area and Glen Johnson responded by sending the ball skywards, inviting pressure. A couple of minutes later Joe Allen and Lucas Leiva contrived to concede possession in midfield. There was a high ball for which none of Lovren, Jose Enrique, Henderson and Allen, all in close proximity, challenged. Enrique's pass to Skrtel ran loose, enabling Luca Zuffi to create a chance that Shkelzen Gashi struck wide. This was all in the first 13 minutes. To say Liverpool were living dangerously would be a huge understatement. Sousa's players could smell blood. On 22 minutes Marco Streller threatened from Gashi's cross, but the ball was scrambled away. Three minutes later Frei pressed forward, picking out Zuffi, and continuing his run. From Zuffi's lay-off, Frei struck a low left-foot shot inside the far post. Basle, deservedly, were in front. The Swiss could have scored again before half-time. Derlis Gonzalez was thwarted by a saving tackle from the otherwise wretched Enrique. Streller volleyed wide when he should have got the ball on target. At the other end, Liverpool's first-half efforts amounted to a forgettable, speculative attempts by Henderson and poor deliveries from Johnson and Raheem Sterling when crossing opportunities arose. Lambert both offered and was offered nothing. At half-time he made way for Markovic, while Alberto Moreno replaced Enrique at left back. Sterling was pushed up as the falsest of false nines. Markovic brought a hint of an improvement, showing a pace and willingness as he ran with the ball, but those flashes of quality were invariably a long way from goal.

A case in point was the bizarre incident that led to Markovic's expulsion. He was dribbling parallel to the halfway line, going nowhere, when he looked over his right shoulder and flung his outstretched hand towards Safari. The Basle player's reaction was preposterous, but so was Markovic's action. Whether or not the red card was deserved, sympathy should be in short supply.

Little had been seen of Gerrard, who, with his team unable to control the game, might have wished he could drop deeper in search of the ball. On 71 minutes, finally, he was released by Sterling's pass, but was beaten to the ball by Tomas Vaclik's sprawling challenge. If it is tempting to say that a twentysomething Gerrard would have got there, it must also be acknowledged that the goalkeeper's reactions and timing were perfect.

Then, with time ticking away, Gerrard delivered. Sterling was fouled by Fabian Schar near the corner of the penalty area and, with the Kop singing his name, the Liverpool captain stepped forward and curled a perfect free kick off the inside of the near post and into the net. For the first time all night, Liverpool had something to cling to. Now we had a game on our hands.

Gashi and Zuffi tested Mignolet from distance. From Moreno's cross, Henderson's header deflected off Gashi and almost beat Vaclik. The ball dropped for Gerrard on the edge of the box, but this time he could not keep it down. Sterling crossed for Skrtel, by now an emergency striker, to slide in and shoot a foot wide. Henderson forced Vaclik into a fine save, but it was not enough and so instead they will drop into the Europa League. On this evidence, that is their natural level, which, after the way they played last season, feels rather inadequate.

the guardian

Gerrard fails to rouse languid Liverpool in sad sleepwalk to exit

At least in that frenzied late assault, after Steven Gerrard had equalised and the team in red gave absolutely everything to add another occasion to their all-time list of great comebacks, we saw a few glimpses of the old Liverpool spirit. Yet the damage had already been done and for the majority of this match it had been mystifying to see them play with so little drive and momentum when anything but a win meant dropping into the clunky Thursday-night-Sunday-afternoon cycle of Europa League football.

It was a pulsating finale and Liverpool's late attempt at escapology was certainly commendable given they had to contend with Lazar Markovic, a halftime substitute, being sent off barely a quarter of an hour after coming on. Their 10 men threatened the most improbable ending but the awkward truth is it had been another night to expose the scale of Liverpool deterioration before Gerrard's 81st-minute free-kick arced into the top corner.

Liverpool might have nicked it in those impassioned final moments but a match is judged over 90 minutes, not 10, and at times it felt as though Brendan Rodgers's players had temporarily forgotten what is expected of them on the big European nights, under the floodlights, in front of their own crowd. Instead, they had been politely ushering themselves to the door. Of all the disappointments, that was probably the most perplexing.

It is just a shame for Liverpool that they left it so late before finding any real belief and found it beyond them when it was even numbers.

They had set out knowing only a win would suffice and yet the sense of urgency that might have been anticipated during the opening exchanges never materialised. The crowd were strangely subdued and as Basle sized up their opponents, then elegantly took control, it was strange to be at Anfield for one of these important fixtures and find a team doing so little to turn up the volume.

Basel had a boisterous following but they also had the knowledge they had beaten English opposition, including Chelsea twice last season, on their previous four encounters. They quickly showed their tactic would not be conservatism and fully deserved the half-time lead courtesy of Fabian Frei's firecracker of a shot after 25 minutes.

Liverpool in those moments had looked what they now are: a Europa League side. More than anything, they seemed stripped of confidence. In one revealing moment out by the touchline, Jordan Henderson, Joe Allen and Lucas Leiva all left a dropping ball to one another and the nearest opponent, Taulant Xhaka, was completely unchallenged with his header.

When Raheem Sterling had Liverpool's first opportunity his diminished assurance was plain in the way he declined the chance and tried a pass that was never on. Liverpool were teetering, ragged, dispirited and barely recognisable from the side that had bewitched Anfield last season.

What happened in the second half was unorthodox in many ways. Markovic had replaced the peripheral Rickie Lambert during the interval and in his brief time on the pitch he did at least inject a touch more drive into Liverpool's attack. Then, as the game ticked past the hour, he and Behrang Safari went for the same ball. Markovic was slightly ahead of his opponent and the Liverpool player did swing back his right hand. Yet it was the merest of touches, barely a flick of fingertips against Safari's nose, and almost certainly meant as a hand-off rather than something more violent. Safari was probably the game's outstanding performer but his reaction was exaggerated in the extreme and undoubtedly helped to convince the Dutch referee, Bjorn Kuipers, it merited a red card. Liverpool were entitled to be aggrieved and Rodgers's anger went as far as saying it should have been Safari who was sent off.

Jose Enrique had also been replaced at half-time and the double substitution was a measure of how alarmed Rodgers must have been about Basle's superiority. "We just weren't good enough," he said. "We weren't anywhere near where we wanted to be, not even close."

Yet the paradox was that Liverpool, a man down, improved considerably when everything seemed lost. Sterling, now operating in the centre-forward role, started to flicker with menace. Gerrard reminded everyone of his qualities, lifting the crowd with a thunderous challenge on the impressive Xhaka, then running clear and was denied only by a fine save from Tomas Vaclik, diving at his feet. Gerrard's equaliser came shortly afterwards and it was a dramatic ending as the ball ricocheted around the Basel penalty area and the crowd roared for someone to apply a decisive touch. Overall, though, Basle used the ball with greater expertise and, as Rodgers acknowledged, looked the more rounded team.

The move for Frei's goal was a case in point, featuring a crisp exchange of passes, a clever one-two with Luca Zuffi just outside the penalty area and then a 20-yard shot, left-footed and with the minimum of back lift, to pick out the spot just inside Simon Mignolet's left-hand post.

The Swiss league leaders had several other chances in the first half, whereas Vaclik barely had a scrap of mud on his kit during the same period. Liverpool, with five points out of six games, left it too late and will be jealous onlookers when the Champions League resumes in February.

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The Mail

REDS OUT WITH A WHIMPER
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THERE were 72 minutes gone and Steven Gerrard was through, one on one. Could this be it? The night of folklore and legend that Brendan Rodgers had forecast? Sadly, Liverpool's story has lost that magical element this season. Out came Basle goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik and threw himself at Gerrard's feet. His outstretched hand connected with the ball first, then Gerrard's leg. The captain appealed furiously, so did the crowd. Referee Bjorn Kuipers shook his head. The writers of myths and epic tales had gone home for the day. This narrative was Liverpool, knocked out of the Champions League. Gerrard might have had other ideas, he might have fought like a hero to the bitter end. But he cannot do it alone. Not anymore. The mood was set in the first minute of the match. A loose ball fell to the experienced Martin Skrtel at the heart of Liverpool's defence and he cleared in panic, like a novice. Up it went into the night air, barely an inch further forward, requiring much hurried regrouping beneath. Variations on this theme were prevalent throughout the Liverpool team. Simple passes went astray or were miscontrolled, touches were poor, in good positions, chances were wasted. Not scoring chances. There were few of those. But the chance to find a player in a scoring position. Liverpool were not even waiting to fall at the hurdle; they were having enough trouble with the approach. Anfield, so often Liverpool's greatest friend on nights like this, sensed the desperation. The noise was muted, a worried murmur, drowned out by the buoyant visitors from Switzerland. Rodgers had talked about his team becoming part of Liverpool folklore, but the history of this club is great and proud and this group seemed overwhelmed by maintaining it. They were as nervous as kittens at times; players who had looked like world beaters last season shying away from the responsibility of reaching the last 16. When Behrang Safari, on the left of Basle's back three, made a mistake to let Raheem Sterling in after 20 minutes, the England international gave up the chance to shoot and instead played a lame pass inside that went nowhere. When a Sterling run was intercepted and the ball fell to Gerrard, his shot from outside the area was tame. When Gerrard played a good pass to Glen Johnson for a counterattack on the right, he sloppily let the ball run out of play, provoking a furious reaction from the former England captain. When Sterling finally got into range after 28 minutes, his shot lacked power and was easily snaffled by Basle goalkeeper Vaclik. Rickie Lambert, deployed as a lone striker, did not even have the sniff of a chance. He was replaced at half time by Lazar Markovic, a sobering moment not only for the player but also for the committee that guides Rodgers' hand in the transfer market. Liverpool could have bought close to 20 Lamberts with what they got for Luis Suarez, but it is class that is required to win occasions like this; not numbers. It was no better for Liverpool at the other end. Still struggling to shake off that horrid first touch, Skrtel made another mistake after 13 minutes, letting in Shkelzen Gashi who shot wide. YET Basle were growing in confidence all the time - no doubt bolstered by Liverpool's fragility -- and it was only a matter of time before they made this positivity count. After 25 minutes it happened. Basle are not a great side, but they are competent and technically tight and the goal was just that. Fabian Frei played the ball in to tormentor-in-chief Luca Zuffi, who held it up, returned it and Frei's shot did the rest. It was in the net without so much as a dive from Simon Mignolet. The defending was slack but he shouldn't have been so startled, surely? Basle could have gone further ahead after 33 minutes when poor marking left striker Marco Streller alone to receive a cross from Taulant Khaka. He tried to take it on the volley, but missed. Had that gone in, it would have surely been game over. So, too, the chance that fell to Fabian Schar six minutes later which was blocked on its way to goal. Rodgers rolled the dice with two substitutions at half time, but Basle appeared unperturbed, Liverpool's revival ever more elusive. That this ended in a grandstand finish is to Gerrard's immense credit. Down to 10 men and ordinary in the extreme for much of the game, Liverpool were allowed to take Basle to the wire by the brilliance of their captain. Having won a free-kick on the edge of the area with nine minutes remaining, Gerrard stood over the ball. Could he? Would he? He did. He curled the ball inside Vaclik at the near post and Anfield went bananas. It was in vain, of course, but they didn't have much else to shout about. Not this time. The task was straightforward enough. Beat Basle, reach the last 16. Yet only in those frenzied final exchanges did Liverpool come close. A goal down after 25 minutes, they hooked their main striker Lambert at half time so ordinary was his first-half display, but fared little better thereafter. Markovic came on in his place, offering a spark of life, but then calamity struck. Just 16 minutes after arriving he was gone, victim of that fatal combination -- his own stupidity and the spiteful cunning of an opponent. Markovic was speeding away from Safari when, for reasons best known to himself, he decided to flick out an arm to keep his opponent back. If he touched the Basle man it was minor but he fell as if struck by sniper fire. Kuipers bought it and Markovic was shown a straight red card. If Mario Balotelli had done it, he would have been castigated for impetuous foolishness. From there, Liverpool looked done. That they ended up even within touching distance is due to Gerrard's refusal to quit. But he must quit. One day he will have to quit. And what will they do then?

The Daily Telegraph

Liverpool crash out despite Gerrard genius
Liverpool 1 Gerrard 1 Basel Frei 25 Att: 43,000
If only Liverpool had started this game with the defiance and attacking zest that they ended it then Steven Gerrard and company would not now be in the Europa League. When Basel took the lead through Fabian Frei and then Lazar Markovic was controversially sent off on the hour for wafting a fingertip at Behrang Safari's nose, Liverpool looked doomed. Anfield was subdued. Brendan Rodgers looked bereft of ideas. Gerrard gave them brief hope, curling in a brilliant free-kick, but Basel held on and go through into the Champions League knockout draw with Group B winners, Real Madrid. Basel deserved their point. They had played with such style in the first half. They had seemed in total control when Markovic departed, a decision that guaranteed Safari plenty of boos and the referee, Bjorn Kuipers, plenty of catcalls at the final whistle. Despite Gerrard's riposte, Basel deservedly progressed. Liverpool made too many mistakes. Fluttering in one corner of the Kop had been a banner urging the players to "never, never, never give up" yet Liverpool's hopes were damaged in a first half riddled with mistakes by Rodgers' side and spiced with swift, confident attacking from Paulo Sousa's visitors. Basel were terrific in that opening 45 minutes, as good as Liverpool were poor. Rodgers had hoped Liverpool would summon up the spirit and deeds of a decade ago when Gerrard struck to defeat Olympiakos in front of the Kop and secure qualification for the knockout stage. A replica of the European Cup won that season was paraded outside Anfield, the Kop was full, You'll Never Walk Alone was sung powerfully but there were clear concerns over Basel's threat even before Frei's fine strike after 25 minutes. Their captain, Marco Streller, had immediately begun imposing his huge frame on Liverpool's centrehalves, Martin Skrtel and Dejan Lovren. Streller provided an outlet as well as a target, also linking adept. Derlis Gonzalez was speeding forward on the right, joined by the spritely wing-back, Taulant Khaka, who was soon clattered by Lucas. Over on the left, Shkelzen Gashi gave Basel further width and dynamism. Liverpool were over-stretched and over-run. Jose Enrique was really struggling, needing coaxing and encouraging from Rodgers as white shirts poured past him. Alberto Moreno sat on the bench for 45 minutes, looking on, and could have been forgiven for wondering why he had been overlooked until Rodgers acted at the break. Enrique is certainly no Joey Jones. Enrique was not alone in his discomfort. Lovren was deputising for Kolo Toure, who injured his groin at the weekend, and the Croatian international was rarely convincing. Liverpool were edgy, frequently wasteful in possession, seemingly overwhelmed by the occasion and the fluid movement of the Swiss for 45 minutes. Enrique and Skrtel made mistakes, inviting Basel on. Gashi ran down the inside-left channel but shot into the Kop. Rodgers' tactics had seemed far too cautious for a team chasing all three points. Two of his more creative players, Philippe Coutinho and Adam Lallana, began on the bench and when the changes came at the break, it was Markovic scampering on for that cameo that ended in such controversy. Rickie Lambert was isolated up front, lacking service, let alone company. Raheem Sterling tried to open up Basel's defence but they were too organised. With Lucas holding, Jordan Henderson embarked on one promising run down the left while Gerrard was quiet before the break. Glen Johnson did pick out Sterling but Frei cut out the danger. Still the nerves persisted. When Johnson lost the ball to Gashi, Lucas cleaned up. Johnson then did well to block Streller's shot as Liverpool's defence was cut open again. The Kop began chanting "attack, attack, attack", pleading with the players to seize that lead. Instead it was Sousa's men who struck right in front of the Kop. All that space was so inviting for Basel, who took a deserved lead midway through the half. Frei advanced towards the edge of the area, exchanged passes with Luca Zuffi, and then drove the ball from left to right past Simon Mignolet. Liverpool now needed to score twice. In a game that Liverpool needed to win, one of their busiest figures was their keeper. Liverpool's problems were highlighted by the half-time figures that revealed Mignolet making five more touches than Lambert (22-17). Rodgers was certainly decisive at the break, removing Lambert, putting Markovic down the right and switching Sterling into the centre. Liverpool now had more pace and Markovic tore into Basel, having a couple of early shots until dismissed within 15 minutes, leaving his side in even more trouble. Just after the excellent Khaka had shot wide, Markovic departed in contentious circumstances. Running across midfield, Markovic was being tracked by Safari, and the Serbian twice looked back to check on the Tehran-born Swede. Markovic then wafted his right arm back, as much for balance, and his finger-tips appeared to clip Safari's nose. The Basel No19 milked the minimal contact and Markovic walked. Safari ruined the big game. Markovic looked bemused at Kuipers' decision. He briefly smiled before eventually walking away. Rodgers briefly held his head in his hands and then ignored Markovic as he went past. Markovic had some choice words for the fourth official, Angelo Boonman. Liverpool went to a back three, Skrtel, Lovren and the left-sided Johnson with Moreno pushing into midfield. Gerrard was even further forward, even rolling back the years, running through the middle, charging into the box. Basel's Czech keeper, Tomas Vaclik, had anticipated the attack, timing his run, diving at the feet of Gerrard and getting the ball first. Gerrard went over, appealing for a penalty but it was the correct decision by Kuipers to wave play on. The Kop was incensed but Vaclik had saved well.

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Frustration bit into Liverpool. Moreno took out Gonzalez and was rightly booked. With 15 minutes remaining, Rodgers made his last change, taking off the booked and tiring Lucas and sending on Coutinho. And then came Gerrard, lifting the roof at Anfield, giving hope to the home fans. A foul on Sterling gave Gerrard the free-kick opportunity. It was in territory that he loves, slightly to the left of centre, ideal for his right foot. Gerrard stepped up, curling the ball over the wall and into the net with Vaclik having no chance to intercept. Gerrard had hit the ball too quickly, imparted the requisite spin and the placement was perfection. Gerrard ran to the fans to celebrate, before gathering the players back in their half for the resumption. Liverpool had eight minutes to rescue their Champions League season. Just one goal was required. They were a man down but their tails were up. Basel awoke and tried to restore their lead. Mignolet, so often maligned, made a good save to deny Zuffi.



Red card and red faces as Anfield fails to deliver

In years to come Steven Gerrard may reflect that, to the very end, he always took his team down fighting. Liverpool were slipping out of the Champions League with a whimper - and with a performance deeply unfitting for the club who had never known when they were beaten - when he stepped up to unravel another of those arced free-kicks which will be remembered for decades after he has gone. The equaliser restored Anfield to the place we have always known on occasions like this - energetic, passionate, believing - and to the dying seconds you felt that a second goal might come. But though there will be a sense of injustice as the dismissal of Lazar Markovic is replayed, the side have dropped into the Europa League for a reason. A 10-minute finale doesn't tell the story. Five points and a solitary group win speak of a side that longed to be back on this stage but when they reached it were not much more than pitiful. They did not deserve to win, or to progress. For most of the evening it was not one of those famous atmospheres; a shadow of the cauldron Olympiakos encountered a decade ago this week when they were boiled alive, leaving Rafael Benitez to reflect that he had experienced nothing like it. There was something subdued about the place from the moment the players stepped down from the team bus to polite applause. This was a team whose arrival set the surrounding side streets on fire eight months ago. It was because Anfield knew. It knew that the team needing a win to reach the knockout stage had managed only five goals in 12 competitive games here this season. And it knew that Liverpool lack a scintilla of the defensive leadership - as personified by Jamie Carragher - which that very modestly equipped side of 2004 possessed when they strode all the way to Istanbul under Benitez. It was that defence which caused the tension to ratchet up soon after Kop flags bearing legends like "Liverpool FC - European Royalty" and "Support and Believe" were put away. Basel, to provide some perspective, are a third-tier European side but Liverpool were teetering - back on their heels - from the start. It comes to something when a late injury to Kolo Tour[c] - a player who had been surplus to requirements at Manchester City a full two years ago - is a cause for concern. It pitched an unconvincing Martin Skrtel and Dejan Lovren together in central defence and, with Lucas Leiva unable to apply pressure to the neat, tidy, incisive Swiss side playing in front of them, a setback was destined to happen. Taulant Xhaka had the better of Jose Enrique. Marco Streller's aerial presence was too much for Lovren. Glen Johnson, frankly, looked unfit. A Skrtel error in possession allowed Shkelzen Gashi a run on Simon Mignolet in the Liverpool goal before the game was 15 minutes old. It was an air of resignation, not rancour, that greeted the inevitable opener after Lucas failed to close down Fabian Frei after 25 minutes, allowing him to advance 10 yards, give and go with Luca Zuffi, and unfurl a precise 20-yard finish well beyond Mignolet. It was not a lack of will which stopped Liverpool from shifting the momentum of the game; just a lack of wit. Only Raheem Sterling could supply any attacking thrust but he was faced down each time by three white shirts. The anxiety was palpable as passes went astray and possession broke down. Gerrard and Rickie Lambert, the 33 and 36-year-olds being asked to provide the attacking threat, were equally invisible, which will have pained the captain profoundly. A raking Gerrard pass for Johnson sailed out of touch 20 yards in front of the defender. A short Sterling pass for Gerrard from the edge of the area was nowhere near the captain, provoking howls of anguish from a stadium which had grown accustomed last spring to him taking the ball on and dispatching it. This Basel side were never destined to be comfortable opposition. They beat Chelsea twice last season, and Manchester United before that. But the sight of a lofted ball sailing over Liverpool's defence for Streller, who should have buried it on the volley for 2-0, was not much less than humiliation. Lambert, who had been desperately ineffectual, was removed at half-time, Markovic took over on the right wing and Sterling moved into the striker's role. Enrique's torture at the hands of Xhaka was brought to a premature finish, too, Alberto Moreno replacing him. The substitutions by Brendan Rodgers were a sign of a manager struggling desperately for answers and dismayed by what he had seen, and for 15 minutes they seemed to have an effect. Markovic impressed, delivering at last some attacking intent to the home side. And then the hope was snatched away by the dismissal. The theatrical reaction of Behrang Safari was preposterous as he ran in pursuit of Markovic and felt the Serb's fingertips brush his nose when the Liverpool man thrust a hand back at him. The contact was minimal but it could still be classified as deliberate.

Markovic was a fool to give his opponent the opportunity. Liverpool's sense of injustice was compounded when Gerrard was sent through on goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik and found himself down on the turf, though Vaclik made clean contact with the ball. Gerrard had no complaint. Then his last intervention; a 41st European goal for Gerrard, the triumphal run and jump we have come to know so well, and the chorus of his name once again. The old spirit was restored. Jordan Henderson's deflected header threatened but was grasped by Vaclik on his goal-line five minutes from time. Gerrard tried a final volley from 30 yards. But the game was up. As he trudged from the field last night the captain was left to reflect whether he has graced the Champions League for the last time. This, like the diminution of Liverpool, was not supposed to happen quite so soon.



LATE SURGE CAN'T SAVE A LOST CAUSE; Stevie G's stunning strike sparks 13-minute frenzy but Liverpool get what they deserve

FOR 13 extraordinary minutes, it seemed as though Anfield had been overtaken by the Spirit of Istanbul.

Once Steven Gerrard had curled home an 81st-minute free-kick to equalise for Liverpool, the old place was experiencing a power surge - and a familiar belief that impossible is nothing.

Never mind that Liverpool had been outplayed for long stretches by the Swiss champions.

Never mind that they had been reduced to 10 men by Lazar Markovic's controversial sending-off.

Never mind that this Champions League campaign had been so underwhelming. Lu Suddenly, everybody inside Anfield was believing. Believing because they had seen another ordinary-looking Liverpool team win the European Cup from this position a decade earlier.

But even with a 'weatherbomb' on the way, lightning refused to strike twice. History, tradition and atmosphere al are not quite enough when the other lot are better than you. And so the hedonism of the Anfield Spring was all in vain.

The way Liverpool had swaggered back into the Champions League after a five-year absence, the way they had staged such a glorious, cavalier charge for the title, all for this glorious failure.

Thursday nights in the Europa League are now on the fixture list for the team rechristened 'the Dog and Duck' by Gary Neville, the assistant manager of England, on Monday.

Because, post-Luis Suarez, Liverpool do not have a team who belong in Europe's top 16. All in all, this campaign has been a humbling experience for Brendan Rodgers - just one win in six, and that from a late penalty at home to Ludogorets. A spanking here from Real Madrid, a white-flag of a teamsheet in the Bernabeu and twice outplayed for long stretches by Basel.

Those final 15 minutes might just have lifted chins from the floor, in time for a trip to Old Trafford on Sunday. Not quite the pub match Neville had claimed it to be but a match reduced to a local squabble.

Gerrard had been restored to the starting line-up, his workload managed with this night in mind. But there was certainly no inferiority complex for Basel, who have defeated Chelsea, Tottenham and Manchester United in recent seasons. For an hour, the Swiss were vastly superior in their technique, passing and movement.

Shkelzen Gashi drilled wide when he was sent clean through and a Basel goal had looked inevitable long before it arrived in the 25th minute.

A rat-a-tat-tat passing move was finished off when Fabian Frei found the bottom corner with power and precision from 20 yards.

It could have been worse before half-time as Basel attacked in waves.

Alberto Moreno was sent on along with Markovic at half-time. Rickie Lambert was sacrificed, no fairytale for the bloke who dreamed of nights like these while grafting as a beetroot-packer.

Raheem Sterling was thrust into the centre-forward's role, the cupboard bare. Markovic lasted only 15 minutes before he was then sent off for taking a swipe at Behrang Safari.

The Basel player acted disgracefully, the victim of apparent sniper fire when Markovic's hand had only brushed against his face.

But there looked to be clear intent from the Serb. It was brainless stuff.

Markovic's dismissal provoked justifiable anger around Anfield but the Liverpool man was not blameless.

Yet with 10 men, they went death-or-glory and it almost paid off.

A Martin Skrtel longranger whistled narrowly wide and then Sterling releasing Gerrard, who was denied by a diving Tomas Vaclik pushed the ball away from his foot. The captain tumbled, Anfield begged for a penalty but referee Bjorn Kuipers made the correct call in turning them down.

Sterling won a freekick 20 yards out and Gerrard thumped it home, with a touch of bend.

Suddenly it appeared as though Basel were a man down - Jordan Henderson almost fooled Vaclik with a deflected header and then forced the keeper into a tumbling save three minutes into injury time.

But the ball would not quite fall for Gerrard, who would surely have held his nerve.

Gerrard, who may never play in the Champions League again.

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LIVERPOOL

ECHO

They came with hopes of another Olympiakos, another Roma, another Saint-Etienne. Instead, the Anfield faithful was subjected to another Basel. Like in 2002, Liverpool's hopes of progress to the Champions League was thwarted by failure to beat the Swiss side. Not even the trademark heroics of Steven Gerrard could prevent the 10-man Reds from slipping out of the competition. The skipper drew Brendan Rodgers' side level on the night with a magnificent 25-yard free-kick nine minutes from time. But, as 12 years ago, the winning goal would not come. And, in truth, it would not have been deserved as the home side were undone by a lack of composure and a lack of quality during the first half. Rather than sit back and play for the draw they required to progress, Basel instead sought to expose Liverpool's porous defence. It worked, Fabian Frei given the time and space to fire an unstoppable shot into the bottom corner in the 25 minute. Yes, there was controversy at the manner in which half-time substitute Lazar Markovic lasted only 16 minutes before being dismissed after brushing his fingers against the face of Behrang Safari. With a full complement, Liverpool – who deserve credit for the manner in which they fought in the closing stages – would surely have had a greater chance of completing an unlikely recovery. Questions will be asked why the Reds played the second half without a recognised striker, Rickie Lambert substituted at half-time with Fabio Borini not even on the bench. Now Rodgers must galvanise a deflated dressing room to ensure their absence from the Champions League is not a lengthy one. So continues Liverpool's curious record of only ever failing to progress to the knockout stages of the Champions League whenever they have automatically qualified for the group stages. Rodgers rang the changes after Saturday's frustratingly disappointing goalless draw at home to Sunderland as Dejan Lovren, Jose Enrique, Joe Allen and Gerrard returned to the starting line-up. While boisterous before kick-off, the hushed tones of the Kop during much of the first half underlined what was at stake, their nerves transmitted to the players who were anything but composed during a tense opening. Basel settled the quicker, a misjudgement by Martin Skrtel giving Shkelzen Gashi an opportunity to sprint forward but his shot from range was woefully off target. Liverpool flickered briefly into life in the 20 minute. Raheem Sterling found himself in a great position on the right of the penalty area but, rather than take a shot at goal, instead attempted a weak cut-back to Gerrard that was easily intercepted and the opportunity was lost. Otherwise, it was increasingly one-sided half as Basel pressed forward almost at will. Midway through the half, a total failure of the Liverpool back line to clear meant Taulant Xhaka's cross fell for Marco Streller but Glen Johnson was alert to block. But resistance couldn't last and the inevitable goal arrived on 25 minutes. Allen allowed Frei to progress to the edge of the area and the midfielder, after playing a one-two with the unmarked Luca Zuffi, thrashed a first-time shot into the bottom corner from 20 yards. Sterling's shot was easily fielded by Vaclik as Liverpool sought a response, but they were fortunate Basel weren't out of sight by half-time. Only a fine covering challenge by Jose Enrique prevented Derlis Gonzalez from scoring on the half-hour, and the home side keeping everybody back for corners couldn't prevent Xhaka again crossing for Streller, who volleyed over at the far post. Johnson made another good block after Streller caused confusion with a simple cross, before becoming involved at the other end when racing on to a Jordan Henderson pass in behind only for his chipped ball to be neither cross nor shot. Something needed to change. But when Markovic and Moreno were introduced at the interval for Enrique and Lambert, it left Liverpool without a recognised striker for a 45 minutes in which they needed to score twice. One impressive Markovic sprint down the right brought the crowd to their feet, the Reds immediately injected with more energy and purpose. However, Xhaka was only inches away from sealing Liverpool's fate on 59 minutes when shooting wide from the edge of the area. And the Reds' task become more difficult two minutes later Markovic was ridiculously dismissed for flinging an arm out as he raced passed Behrang Safari and brushing his fingers against the face of the Basel player, who fell to the ground as if shot rather than being tickled on the nose. Liverpool, to their credit, kept at it with 10 men. Skrtel shot narrowly wide from range while Gerrard raced on to a Sterling pass but Vaclik just about got his hand to the ball first as Anfield screamed for a penalty. And they were given a lifeline on 81 minutes when, after Sterling was brought down by Fabian Schar on the edge of the area, Gerrard curled a brilliant free-kick into the top corner. Mignolet made a sprawling save to deny Luca Zuffi before Henderson's header was deflected into the arms of the grateful Vaclik. With Skrtel playing up front, Liverpool threw everything forward, the Slovakian sliding Sterling's low cross into the side-netting while Vaclik made a flying save to deny Henderson. But while Basel eye up Barcelona, Bayern Munich et al, Liverpool head for the Europa League. A poor season just took another turn for the worse.

Basler Zeitung

Äusserst souverän meistert der FC Basel zum dritten Mal nach 2002/03 und 2011/12 die Gruppenphase der Champions League. Die Basler erreichten beim FC Liverpool dank einem Tor von Fabian Frei ein 1:1.

In zweimal 90 Minuten liess der FC Basel gegen den traditionsreichen FC Liverpool nur gerade ein Tor zu. Das ist ein bereedtes Zeugnis für die Stärke und die internationale Tauglichkeit des Schweizer Meisters.

Mit dem Prädikat souverän lässt sich auch die Manier beschreiben, mit der die Basler die heikle Aufgabe an der Anfield Road bewältigten. Statt sich auf das fürs Weiterkommen nötige Unentschieden zu konzentrieren, nahmen sie von Beginn an alle Gelegenheiten war, um das Spiel in die Hand zu nehmen und Chancen zu kreieren.

Unnötige Tötlichkeit von Markovic

Liverpool dagegen wirkte im ganzen Spiel hilflos. Nach 60 Minuten - zwei Minuten nachdem Taulant Xhaka eine grosse Chance zum 2:0 vergeben hatte - liess sich Liverpools eingewechselter Serbe Lazar Markovic zu einer überflüssigen Tötlichkeit verleiten. Nach dieser Roten Karte waren die zuvor schon schwachen Engländer zusätzlich geschwächt. Der Ausgleich nach 81 Minuten fiel bezeichnenderweise nicht aus dem Spiel heraus, sondern durch einen Freistoss aus 18 Metern, den Routinier Steven Gerrard in den linken oberen Winkel zirkelte.

Obwohl von dort weg noch fast eine Viertelstunde zu spielen war, geriet Basels Weiterkommen nur noch zweimal in Gefahr: Shkelzen Gashi lenkte einen Kopfball ab und hätte damit seinen Goalie Tomas Vaclik beinahe auf dem falschen Fuss erwischt. Und Sekunden vor Schluss machte Vaclik einen Weitschuss unschädlich. Liverpool drückte in der Schlussphase zwar, war aber nicht gefährlich. Vielmehr hatten die Basler weitere Chancen, um wieder in Führung zu gehen. Aus dem Spiel heraus kam Liverpool im ganzen Match nur zu den erwähnten zwei Chancen.

FCB mit besseren Chancen

Die erste Halbzeit hatte ganz dem FC Basel gehört. Während die auch in der Meisterschaft (9. Platz) enttäuschenden Liverpooler nur zu einer Chance, einer halben, kurz vor der Pause kamen, hätten die Schweizer deutlicher in Führung gehen können als nur 1:0. Zum 2:0 fehlten nur Zentimeter: Goalgetter Shkelzen Gashi erzielte dieses Tor mit einem satten Linksschuss nach 43 Minuten, er war jedoch nach Luca Zuffis hervorragendem Steilpass aus leichter, aber richtigerweise geahндeter Offsideposition.

Die Führung war schön herausgespielt. Fabian Frei lief mit dem Ball unbehindert in der Mitte Richtung Strafraum, brauchte den mit dem Rücken zum Tor stehenden Luca Zuffi als Relaisstation und traf mit einem trockenen Flachschiuss in die rechte Torecke. In weiteren Szenen – so von Gashi und zweimal Marco Streller – fehlte nur wenig zu weiteren Basler Toren.

Der Verlauf dieses Champions-League-Herbstes gemahnte verblüffend an jenen von 2002. Auch damals verwies der FCB - nach zwei Unentschieden in den Direktbegegnungen - Liverpool auf den 3. Gruppenplatz. Anzumerken gilt es indessen, dass die Reds damals stärker waren und überzeugender auftraten als in diesen Wochen.

Date: 9 December 2014 Opposition: FC Basel Competition: Champions League	Times	Telegraph	Echo		9 December 2014
	Guardian	Mirror	Baseler Zeitung		
	Independent	Mail	BBC		

BBC

Liverpool's wretched Champions League campaign came to a disappointing conclusion as they failed to beat Basel at Anfield and saw their hopes of reaching the knockout phase evaporate.

Steven Gerrard - who dragged Liverpool through to victory in a similar situation against Olympiakos at Anfield a decade ago - threatened to do so again when his brilliant late free-kick equalised Fabian Frei's first-half goal for the Swiss.

Up until Gerrard's equaliser, this was not an occasion in the famous Anfield tradition of European nights, The Kop silenced for long periods except when voicing frustration at a side that has lost its way since coming so close to winning the Premier League last season.

Liverpool may claim injustice after substitute Lazar Markovic was sent off after coming on and delivering a promising cameo.

But once he senselessly raised his arm in the direction of the pursuing Behrang Safari, he was running the risk of a red card.

It is another setback in a disappointing season for manager Brendan Rodgers, who must now galvanise players who looked devastated at the final whistle for a Europa League campaign.

GROUP B

Liverpool have lost the goals of talisman Luis Suarez to Barcelona as well as Daniel Sturridge and Mario Balotelli to injury, but that does not fully explain how they have become so pedestrian and lacking in spark.

The Champions League was meant to be a return to their rightful status for Liverpool.

But one win in six group games, and that only a fortunate victory earned by Gerrard's late penalty against Ludogorets, tells the tale of a team that has simply not been up to the demands of Europe's elite tournament.

Liverpool now have a pivotal week where they face Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday and then visit Bournemouth in the Capital One Cup quarter-final.

Basel's fans were in noisy and buoyant mood despite a Merseyside downpour before kick-off - and that optimism was reflected in their team during an opening half that reduced Anfield to frustrated silence at its conclusion.

Instead of coming out with pace, energy, movement and the sort of threat befitting the task in front of them, Liverpool were nervous and slower than Basel, who took a deserved lead after 25 minutes.

Frei's low shot from the edge of the area beat the motionless Simon Mignolet after a slick exchange with Luca Zuffi proved too much for Liverpool's hesitant defence.

Instead of sparking Liverpool into action, the goal only added to Basel's confidence and they looked more likely to add a second than the home team did to finding an equaliser before Rodgers was forced into a double substitution at the start of the second half.

Jose Enrique and Rickie Lambert were replaced by Alberto Moreno and Markovic, the latter finally injecting some drive and tempo into Liverpool's game before his sending off just after the hour mark.

Liverpool were struggling to create chances and referee Bjorn Kuipers from the Netherlands infuriated The Kop even further when he ignored loud appeals for a penalty as Gerrard went down as he and visiting keeper Tomas Vaclik challenged for a loose ball in the area.

Just as hope seemed to be slipping away, it was Gerrard who delivered once more, showing superb technique to send his free-kick from 20 yards just inside the post and into the top corner beyond the flying figure of Vaclik.

As the pressure and the noise levels finally grew, Vaclik had to show great athleticism to clutch Jordan Henderson's deflected header as it looked set to bounce over the line in front of an expectant Kop.

In a predictably frenzied finale, defender Martin Skrtel was sent up front as a last throw of the dice and was just off target with a near-post flick while Vaclik again saved well from Henderson.

But it was tough to compile a strong case for Liverpool deserving to get out of this group.

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Opposition: FC Basel

Competition: Champions League

Times	Telegraph	Echo
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Full time Match ends, Liverpool 1, FC Basel 1.

90:00+4:10Full time Second Half ends, Liverpool 1, FC Basel 1.

90:00+4:03 Attempt saved. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool left footed shot from the left side of the box is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Philippe Coutinho.

90:00+2:41 Attempt saved. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner.

90:00+1:45 Attempt missed. Martin Skrtel (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Raheem Sterling.

90:00+0:18 Attempt saved. Breel Embolo (FC Basel right footed shot from a difficult angle on the left is saved in the bottom left corner. Assisted by Marcelo Díaz.

89:33 Attempt missed. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right following a corner.

89:10 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Marek Suchy.

89:01 Delay over. They are ready to continue.

88:16 Delay in match Tomás Vaclik (FC Basel because of an injury.

87:36 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Marek Suchy.

87:35 Attempt missed. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from the left side of the box misses to the left.

87:11Substitution SubstitutionSubstitution, FC Basel. Walter Samuel replaces Luca Zuffi.

85:52 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool header from the centre of the box misses to the right. Assisted by Alberto Moreno with a cross.

85:17 Attempt missed. Taulant Khaka (FC Basel right footed shot from the right side of the box is too high. Assisted by Derlis González.

84:31 Attempt saved. Luca Zuffi (FC Basel right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner.

83:36 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Marek Suchy.

83:10 Martin Skrtel (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

83:10 Foul by Breel Embolo (FC Basel.

82:59Substitution SubstitutionSubstitution, FC Basel. Marcelo Díaz replaces Mohamed Elneny.

82:24 Attempt saved. Luca Zuffi (FC Basel left footed shot from outside the box is saved in the bottom left corner.

81:42 Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool.

81:42 Luca Zuffi (FC Basel wins a free kick in the attacking half.

80:34Goal scored Goal!Goal! Liverpool 1, FC Basel 1. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool from a free kick with a right footed shot to the top left corner.

79:46Booking Fabian Schär (FC Basel is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

79:35 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

79:35 Foul by Fabian Schär (FC Basel.

76:07Booking Alberto Moreno (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

76:04 Foul by Alberto Moreno (Liverpool.

76:04 Derlis González (FC Basel wins a free kick on the right wing.

75:49 Attempt missed. Taulant Khaka (FC Basel right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left.

75:15 Corner, FC Basel. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.

73:30Substitution SubstitutionSubstitution, FC Basel. Breel Embolo replaces Marco Streller.

73:15Substitution SubstitutionSubstitution, Liverpool. Philippe Coutinho replaces Lucas Leiva.

72:43 Attempt missed. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Raheem Sterling.

70:26 Attempt blocked. Marco Streller (FC Basel left footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Shkelzen Gashi.

69:33 Offside, FC Basel. Fabian Frei tries a through ball, but Taulant Khaka is caught offside.

69:01 Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool.

69:01 Marco Streller (FC Basel wins a free kick on the left wing.

67:40 Attempt missed. Martin Skrtel (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the left. Assisted by Lucas Leiva.

66:41 Delay over. They are ready to continue.

66:08 Delay in match Taulant Khaka (FC Basel because of an injury.

65:42Booking Dejan Lovren (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

65:39 Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool.

65:39 Taulant Khaka (FC Basel wins a free kick in the defensive half.

65:04 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

65:04 Foul by Fabian Frei (FC Basel.

64:36 Glen Johnson (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

64:36 Foul by Shkelzen Gashi (FC Basel.

60:03Dismissal DismissalLazar Markovic (Liverpool is shown the red card for fighting.

59:56 Foul by Lazar Markovic (Liverpool.

59:56 Behrang Safari (FC Basel wins a free kick in the defensive half.

58:27 Attempt missed. Taulant Khaka (FC Basel left footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Marek Suchy.

56:55 Attempt missed. Lazar Markovic (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left.

56:54 Attempt blocked. Joe Allen (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Lazar Markovic.

55:53 Foul by Martin Skrtel (Liverpool.

55:53 Marco Streller (FC Basel wins a free kick in the defensive half.

54:31 Offside, Liverpool. Jordan Henderson tries a through ball, but Raheem Sterling is caught offside.

54:02 Attempt blocked. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Jordan Henderson.

52:21 Attempt blocked. Derlis González (FC Basel right footed shot from long range on the right is blocked. Assisted by Taulant Khaka.

51:11 Glen Johnson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

51:11 Foul by Shkelzen Gashi (FC Basel.

49:54 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

49:54 Foul by Fabian Schär (FC Basel.

48:54 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

48:54 Foul by Taulant Khaka (FC Basel.

47:40 Lazar Markovic (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

47:40 Foul by Shkelzen Gashi (FC Basel.

47:07 Attempt missed. Fabian Schär (FC Basel right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left following a set piece situation.

47:05 Attempt blocked. Fabian Schär (FC Basel right footed shot from outside the box is blocked.

46:19Booking Lucas Leiva (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul.

46:15 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool.

46:15 Mohamed Elneny (FC Basel wins a free kick in the attacking half.

45:32 Attempt missed. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right.

45:00 Second Half begins Liverpool 0, FC Basel 1.

45:00Substitution SubstitutionSubstitution, Liverpool. Lazar Markovic replaces Rickie Lambert.

45:00Substitution SubstitutionSubstitution, Liverpool. Alberto Moreno replaces José Enrique.

45:00+0:07Half time First Half ends, Liverpool 0, FC Basel 1.

42:53 Offside, FC Basel. Luca Zuffi tries a through ball, but Shkelzen Gashi is caught offside.

40:04 Martin Skrtel (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

40:04 Foul by Marco Streller (FC Basel.

38:02 Attempt blocked. Fabian Schär (FC Basel right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked.

33:27 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

33:27 Foul by Behrang Safari (FC Basel.

32:19 Attempt missed. Marco Streller (FC Basel left footed shot from the centre of the box is close, but misses to the right. Assisted by Taulant Khaka with a cross following a corner.

31:40 Corner, FC Basel. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.

31:39 Attempt blocked. Derlis González (FC Basel right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Marco Streller.

30:06 Attempt missed. Behrang Safari (FC Basel left footed shot from outside the box is just a bit too high.

29:36 Corner, FC Basel. Conceded by José Enrique.

29:00 Foul by Raheem Sterling (Liverpool.

29:00 Behrang Safari (FC Basel wins a free kick in the defensive half.

28:19 Foul by Jordan Henderson (Liverpool.

28:19 Derlis González (FC Basel wins a free kick in the defensive half.

27:32 Attempt saved. Raheem Sterling (Liverpool left footed shot from the right side of the box is saved in the centre of the goal. Assisted by Glen Johnson.

26:07 Rickie Lambert (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half.

26:07 Foul by Marek Suchy (FC Basel.

24:11Goal scored Goal!Goal! Liverpool 0, FC Basel 1. Fabian Frei (FC Basel left footed shot from outside the box to the bottom right corner. Assisted by Luca Zuffi.

22:55 Foul by José Enrique (Liverpool.

22:55 Derlis González (FC Basel wins a free kick on the right wing.

21:43 Attempt blocked. Marco Streller (FC Basel right footed shot from the centre of the box is blocked. Assisted by Mohamed Elneny with a cross.

20:53 Corner, FC Basel. Conceded by Lucas Leiva.

16:41 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

16:41 Foul by Behrang Safari (FC Basel.

15:03 José Enrique (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half.

15:03 Dangerous play by Taulant Khaka (FC Basel.

14:18 Foul by Lucas Leiva (Liverpool.

14:18 Fabian Schär (FC Basel wins a free kick in the defensive half.

13:44 Raheem Sterling (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing.

13:44 Foul by Luca Zuffi (FC Basel.

12:26 Attempt missed. Shkelzen Gashi (FC Basel left footed shot from outside the box is close, but misses the top left corner. Assisted by Luca Zuffi.

9:31 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Behrang Safari.

7:26 Foul by Martin Skrtel (Liverpool.

7:26 Marco Streller (FC Basel wins a free kick in the attacking half.

6:11 Offside, Liverpool. Simon Mignolet tries a through ball, but Rickie Lambert is caught offside.

5:36 Hand ball by Marco Streller (FC Basel.

4:31 Hand ball by Behrang Safari (FC Basel.

2:57 Attempt missed. Jordan Henderson (Liverpool left footed shot from the centre of the box is too high. Assisted by Rickie Lambert.

1:47 Attempt saved. Steven Gerrard (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the centre of the goal.

0:00 First Half begins.

0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.