

Date: 10 December 2015  
 Opposition: Sion  
 Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Mail	Berner Zeitung
Independent	Telegraph	BBC

10 December  
2105

## THE TIMES

Klopp takes cold comfort from progress after toothless display  
 Sion 0  
 Liverpool 0

When one team who did not need to win played another who only needed to avoid defeat, the inevitable outcome was produced. The goalless draw that allowed Liverpool to qualify for the knockout stages as group winners and Sion to join them as runners-up was almost as predictable as it was uneventful last night. Both got what they set out to achieve, but getting there made for painful viewing. The post-match statistics revealed that Liverpool had two shots on target, while Sion had none. It is hard to imagine a more incident-free encounter. Yet Liverpool's hopes of reaching the last 32 of the competition hung in the balance when Jurgen Klopp took over as manager two months ago. As it was, they went into their final group game able to coast and did so, albeit aided and abetted by opponents who showed no adventure whatsoever.

"A few weeks ago it was far away from us that we would achieve this, so it is good to have qualified as group winners," Klopp said. Other positives for the Liverpool manager to focus on included a mature and energetic display from Brad Smith, a left back on his full debut, Jordan Henderson and Philippe Coutinho getting playing time after injury and the return of defensive stability in the wake of Sunday's 2-0 defeat by Newcastle United.

The main area of concern for Klopp, once again, was Liverpool's inability to break down opponents who did not allow them to counterattack. Sion sat deep and challenged Liverpool to find a way past them. For all the possession Liverpool enjoyed, Divock Origi failed to fashion a goal from the halfchances that fell to him. Rather than dwell on such ineffectiveness, Klopp highlighted the state of a partially frozen pitch as the primary cause for the game being such a non-event.

"In a tournament of this level, you shouldn't be worrying about the ground," Klopp said. "Usually in a tournament of this level there should be heating for the ground. And that's not good, but now we've played it we have got through it, and if we have to come back in April I hope it will be warmer."

"It was difficult. The first thing we had to do tonight was to show our character. That's what my team did and so I am very satisfied. It was not our best football, we all know, but frozen ground is for other sports usually."

Liverpool cannot be pitted against any of the other 11 group winners in Monday's draw for the last 32 and will not face any of the English participants. The tantalising prospect remains, though, that they could be paired with Borussia Dortmund, Klopp's former club. "There are a lot of very good teams we can still get," he said. "It is like a small Champions League now, but we will look forward to it and wait and see what happens."

Sion (4-2-3-1): A Vanins -- E Zverotic, L Lacroiz, R Ziegler, P Jagne -- V Salatic, X Kouassi -- V Rufli (sub: J Adao, 90min), E Fernandes, Carlitos -- E Assifuah (sub: G Bia, 73). Substitutes not used: K Fickentscher, C Akolo, V Sierro, V Vanczak, D Follonier. Booked: Assifuah, Kouassi. Liverpool (4-3-2-1): S Mignolet 5 -- N Clyne 5, K Toure 5, D Lovren 5, B Smith 8 -- J Milner 5 (sub: P Coutinho, 61), J Henderson 5 (sub: J Rossiter, 77), E Can 6 -- R Firmino 5 (sub: C Brannagan, 90), A Lallana 5 -- D Origi 5. Substitutes not used: A Bogdan, C Benteke, M Skrtel, C Randall. Booked: Clyne.

Referee: M Koukoulaki (Greece)

## the guardian

Klopp relieved as Jordan Henderson returns in Liverpool draw with FC Sion

Jordan Henderson made his first start for Jürgen Klopp on a night where the Liverpool manager was relieved to leave Sion unscathed after watching his side claim top spot in their Europa League group.

Henderson completed 77 minutes during a dismal goalless draw, secured on a semi-frozen pitch, to hand Klopp some welcome injury news following the England midfielder's extended absence because of a heel problem.

The captain's return was one bright spot in an ordinary game which Liverpool went into safe in the knowledge qualification had already been secured. The stalemate made it four draws and two wins in Europe this season and, with the 21-year-old left-back Brad Smith enjoying an impressive full debut, Klopp had an excuse to accentuate the positives.

However, he was concerned about the playing conditions in Switzerland, which could have added to his injury list.

"It was difficult; the ground was very difficult to play and for both teams the first thing to do was show you were prepared for a game like this and that is what my team did," he said.

"It was not our best football and although it is an outdoor sport, frozen ground is for other sports.

"Of course in each tournament at this level there should be heating for the ground – that is not good [there was none] – but now we have played here and if we come here again it will maybe be April and I hope it will not be that cold.

"We saw the pitch and we knew what can happen on a pitch like this but as a professional footballer and especially as a manager you cannot talk about the pitch.

"You have to ignore it, try to take it and use it and the only thing that helps in a situation like this is concentration: if you are really ready and prepared and concentrated then usually nothing happens.

"I am really satisfied, no one is injured and they were very focused and concentrated on the game."

When Klopp took over in mid-October the club had two points from their opening two matches in Europe and looked in real danger of failing to get out of Group B but they managed it with a match to spare and will await their fate in Monday's draw, which will now include Manchester United.

"We wanted to be first after this game and that is what we did," the German said.

"A few weeks ago it was far away from us that we could reach this place but we did it and it is really good.

"We will see how important it [first place] is – there are a lot of good teams in second place and also teams from the Champions League.

"Everyone will have to change their mind about this tournament now as everyone will see it is something like a small Champions League."

The Sion coach Didier Tholot was happy to have also progressed to the knockout stage and made no excuses for a match that offered very little by way of entertainment value.

"We deserve this result," he said. "We know Liverpool are very offensive and had a couple of dangerous situations but we did not have to rely on our goalkeeper."

"What we did was a real victory and we are very proud."

Date: 10 December 2015  
 Opposition: Sion  
 Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Mail	Berner Zeitung
Independent	Telegraph	BBC

10 December  
2105

## The Mail

Klopp goes on attack over frozen pitch  
 SION 0

LIVERPOOL 0

JURGEN KLOPP was relieved his players avoided injury in Sion as the Liverpool boss criticised a pitch he claimed was more suitable 'for other sports'. Liverpool ground out a 0-0 draw in Switzerland, a result which secured their progress to the Europa League's last 32 as winners of Group B, and the main positive for Klopp was that he could return to Merseyside without any fresh fitness concerns.

Before the game Klopp, his coaching staff and several members of his squad were seen examining a frozen, crusty area of the Stade Tourbillon surface and the German was adamant the pitch contributed to a sterile contest.

'It was not our best football, but frozen ground is for other sports usually,' said Klopp. 'We saw the pitch and we knew what could happen but you cannot talk about the pitch beforehand. You have to ignore it and try to use it. The only thing that helps in a game like this is concentration, and if you are prepared then usually nothing happens.'

'You shouldn't be worrying about the ground. Usually in a tournament of this level there should be (under-soil) heating.' Klopp (right), who could be pitted against his old club Borussia Dortmund when the draw is made on Monday, is taking the Europa League seriously and that was borne out in his selection, starting 11 full internationals. It turned out to be a war of attrition, though, and Liverpool did not manage a single shot to trouble Sion keeper Andris Vanins. The best chance fell to Divock Origi, whose shot in the first half dipped just wide of the post. The highlight of the night was the performance of Brad Smith, the 21-year-old Australian left back making his first start. He defended well and created Liverpool's best chance after halftime but Origi could not get a foot to his cross. 'We came here to get first in the group and it's very good we did,' added Klopp. 'There are a lot of very good teams we can still get. It is like a small Champions League now, but we will look forward to it.'

SION (4-1-4-1): Vanins 6; Zverotic 6, Lacroix 7, Ziegler 7, Jagne 6; Salatic 6; Assifuah 5.5 (Mujangi Bia 73min, 5), Kouassi 6.5, Fernandes 5, Carlitos 5; Rufli 5 (Adao 90). Subs not used: Akolo, Fickentscher, Sierro, Vanczak, Follonier. Booked: Kouassi, Assifuah.

LIVERPOOL (4-3-3): Mignolet 6; Clyne 6, Toure 6.5, Lovren 7, Smith 8; Can 6, Henderson 6.5 (Rossiter 77), Milner 6 (Coutinho 61, 5.5); Lallana 6.5, Origi 6, Firmino 5 (Brannagan 90). Subs not used: Benteke, Bogdan, Skrtel, Randall. Booked: Clyne.

Man of the match: Brad Smith. Referee: M Koukoulakis (Greece) 7.

## The Daily Telegraph

Klopp relief as Liverpool survive freeze

Jurgen Klopp was relieved his players escaped serious injury on a frostbitten field as Liverpool secured progress as group winners. The Swiss hosted the most stale of stalemates on a perilous pitch fit for reindeer racing rather than football, Klopp delighting in the lack of wounds as much as the point that preserved his club's seeding.

"Frozen ground is for other sports, usually," said Klopp. "Usually in a tournament of this level there should be heating for the ground. If we have to come back I hope it will be warmer."

"We saw the pitch and we knew what can happen on a pitch like this, but as a professional football manager you cannot talk about the pitch beforehand. The only thing that helps in a game like this is concentration, and if you are really concentrated and prepared then usually nothing happens."

Despite the conditions Liverpool consolidated top spot, securing the draw that mean they avoid the Champions League rejects at the Thursday night party. Sion knew a point would guarantee their progression, too. A blockade faced the Liverpool midfield each time they attempted to attack, but Roberto Firmino kept dropping deep and losing the ball and Divock Origi was outnumbered. Philippe Coutinho's introduction after an hour - he'd missed the last four games with hamstring trouble - at least offered the hope of excitement as the game meandered towards a convenient draw. The Brazilian's return - allied to Jordan Henderson first start since the second game of the season - ensured Klopp could return to Merseyside with fewer stricken players rather than losing more on a Swiss ice rink. Sion (4-3-3): Vanins; Pa Modou, Ziegler, Lacroix, Zverotic; Fernandes, Salatic, Kouassi; Carlitos, Rueli (Adao 94), Assifuah (Bia). Subs Akolo, Fickentscher, Sierro, Vanczak, Mujangi Bia, Follonier Booked Kouassi, Assifuah Liverpool (4-3-3) Mignolet; Clyne (Brannigan 89), Toure, Lovren, Smith; Henderson (Rossiter 76), Milner (Coutinho 61), Can, Lallana; Firmino, Origi. Subs Benteke, Bogdan, Skrtel, Randall Booked Clyne.

Referee: M Koukoulakis (Greece).

Date: 10 December 2015  
 Opposition: Sion  
 Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Mail	Berner Zeitung
Independent	Telegraph	BBC

10 December  
2105



**Klopp relieved to avoid injuries on icy pitch**

Liverpool manager Jrgen Klopp was grateful to leave Sion unscathed after a difficult night on a tricky pitch in Switzerland.

A dismal goalless draw on a semi-frozen pitch secured top spot in a Europa League group from which they had already qualified and made it four draws and two wins in Europe this season.

"It was difficult, the ground was very difficult to play and for both teams the first thing to do was show you were prepared for a game like this and that is what my team did," Klopp said.

"It was not our best football and although it is an outdoor sport, frozen ground is for other sports.

"Of course in each tournament at this level there should be heating for the ground - that is not good [there was none] - but now we have played here and if we come here again it will maybe be April and I hope it will not be that cold.

"I am really satisfied, no one is injured and they were very focused and concentrated on the game."

The German made six changes from Sunday's defeat at Newcastle but even with the inclusion of 21-year-old left-back Brad Smith, making his first start, he still fielded a side of 11 full internationals, even though they lacked cohesion and fluency.

Smith's energy and enthusiasm to get forward meant his flank was Liverpool's most profitable in the first half but what could just about be described as their only chance saw Divock Origi fire a left-to-right shot wide of the far post.

The arrival of Philippe Coutinho on the hour for his first appearance in four matches following a hamstring injury offered some hope of an increased goal threat, but Sion's goalkeeper Andris Vanins thwarted Origi.

The home side gave it more of a go in the final 10 minutes but they were more than happy with the draw to take them through.



**FINISH TOP ...BUT NOT MUCH KOP;** Ice and easy does it.. Reds and Sion in synchronised skate-off to last 32

EUROPA LEAGUE GROUP B

FC SION 0

LIVERPOOL 0

JURGEN KLOPP was a relieved man as Liverpool came through unscathed on an ice rink in the Swiss Alps last night.

The Reds boss insisted his side should not have been subjected to a European game at this level on a pitch almost completely frozen down one side and told UEFA they must make under-soil heating compulsory.

"It's an outdoor sport but frozen ground is for other sports usually," the German said.

"In a tournament of this level there should be heating for the ground."

Liverpool skated and skidded their way through into the knock-out stages of the Europa League with a 0-0 draw that was even worse than the scoreline suggests. But their German manager was happy his side topped their group to get an easier draw in the last 32, though they could still face his former club Dortmund.

"We were worried about the surface but as a football manager you cannot talk about the pitch beforehand. You have to ignore it," he said.

"We came through without injury so we should be happy."

Klopp was also given the added bonus of Philippe Coutinho returning unscathed from injury and skipper Jordan Henderson making his first start in almost four months.

It was somewhat appropriate they belted out Status Quo at the end here because this game was as arthritic as the ageing rockers.

Even Klopp's boyish enthusiasm couldn't disguise just how bad his side were.

Then again they've been like that for most of their Europa League campaign - creaking all over the world, or at least Europe.

The Reds failed to create a single clear-cut chance yet still looked more dangerous than their hosts, who with this point have also qualified.

Klopp maintained Liverpool's unbeaten record in Europe under him and can now concentrate on domestic football for two months.

"We came here to get first in the group and it's very, very good we did. A few weeks ago it didn't look likely but we have done it," he said.

"In football you cannot always play your best but you must always accept the circumstances.

"In England we have sometimes wind and rain, but you cannot stay inside, you have to accept and adapt."

Liverpool can get Dortmund in Monday's draw - a game to warm even the most frozen of nights.

LIVERPOOL: Mignolet 6, Clyne 6, Toure 5, Lovren 6, Smith 6, Henderson 6 (Rossiter 77), Can 6, Milner 6 (Coutinho 60, 6), Lallana 6, Origi 5, Firmino 5. REF: M Koukoulakis (Gre) ATT: 10,000

Date: 10 December 2015  
 Opposition: Sion  
 Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Mail	Berner Zeitung
Independent	Telegraph	BBC

10 December  
2105



Klopp had done the hard yards but Reds fail to hit right notes in setting of musical masterpieces

It was a performance in keeping with Liverpool's surroundings. Having awoken to the peace and tranquility of life overlooking Lake Geneva, Jurgen Klopp's men spent the 90 minutes that really mattered sending onlookers to sleep. It was all far too quiet and serene on a bitterly cold night at the foot of the Alps – a world away from the heavy metal football Klopp has sought to install over the past two months. Liverpool got the job done as they secured the point they needed to guarantee top spot in Europa League Group B but it wasn't achieved with any semblance of style. The idyllic setting of Montreux – the Reds' base for their two-night stay in Switzerland – inspired musical masterpieces from the likes of Deep Purple and Queen. But few of the Liverpool squad will look back with any fondness on what they produced at the Stade Tourbillon. Few hit the right notes. Their punishment was a painful dose of Status Quo being blasted out over the PA system after the final whistle as Sion's players and supporters celebrated joining the Reds in the knockout stages. A frozen pitch, which was dangerous in places, certainly didn't help matters as Liverpool struggled to retain possession throughout an error-strewn display.

Reds fire blanks for second successive game

There was character in abundance on a difficult night and they defended impressively, but considering the strength of the side that was fielded the lack of any spark or guile going forward has to be a genuine concern. For the second successive game the Reds fired blanks. When teams have tried to come out and play against them, Klopp's Liverpool have proved adept as picking them off with ruthless aplomb. However, when opponents have been content with simply shutting up shop and frustrating them, it's been a very different story.

This contest had much in common with the recent clashes against Swansea and Newcastle. You can guarantee that Sunday's visitors West Brom will adopt the same kind of backs-to-the-wall approach. At least Liverpool now have their most gifted creative force back to help in the mission to unlock defences.

There was the welcome sight of Philippe Coutinho getting half an hour under his belt after missing the four previous matches with a hamstring injury.

The Brazilian will be crucial to the Reds' hopes of using the festive period to launch a sustained push towards the Champions League spots.

Captain Jordan Henderson will feel the benefits of his first start since August as he builds up his fitness following three-and-a-half months out.

Smith's transformation has been remarkable

However, the real positive for Klopp was the sight of young Brad Smith grasping the opportunity he was given on his full debut. It's been some transformation for the 21-year-old Australia international who was in the Anfield wilderness just a month ago. Out of contract last summer and having rejected the Reds' offer of a new deal in the belief he would be better off elsewhere, Smith found himself in limbo. Liverpool retained his registration and informed him that any club he signed for would have to go to a tribunal for the compensation fee to be determined. Nobody was willing to take that risk and finally in November common sense prevailed when he signed the contract that had always been on the table. After being handed a cameo role by Klopp in the thrashing of Southampton last week, Smith took his Euro bow against Sion and he didn't disappoint. Alberto Moreno finally has some genuine competition.

There was no sign of any nerves as Smith thundered into tackles and got forward at every opportunity. During the opening 45 minutes he was the Reds' best attacking outlet. One inviting cross found Divock Origi at the far post but the striker couldn't control his volley. Roberto Firmino's long range strike was then easy for keeper Andris Vanins.

For the most part it was desperately scrappy. There was no control, no real tempo to any of the Reds' build up as Sion sat back and soaked up what little pressure there was. Origi cut inside off the left with menace but his dipping 25-yarder dropped wide. When Adam Lallana released Origi, the Belgian striker was crowded out before he could pull the trigger.

Firmino disappoints again

As the temperature continued to plummet so did Liverpool's standards.

If Roberto Firmino's eye-catching display in the rout of Manchester City represented the first return on Liverpool's hefty £29million investment, they've been left feeling short-changed by the Brazilian since.

Rather than push on, the former Hoffenheim attacker has retreated into his shell. Firmino was anonymous once again. There were more half-hearted challenges and his movement was sluggish. Each time Klopp made a change he looked sheepishly across to the bench. He was finally hooked in the closing stages.

Coutinho, Jordan Rossiter and Cameron Brannagan were all introduced but there was little change. With Sion knowing a point was enough to take them into the last 32, there was no urgency. It had the feel of a testimonial.

Defensively, Liverpool did what they had to do with Dejan Lovren rock-solid once again as Simon Mignolet remained untested. There will have been a few raised eyebrows at the sight of his name on the shortlist for the Premier League player of the month for November. But the £20million Croatian has stepped up to the mark in the absence of the injured Mamadou Sakho. There are still improvements

to be made but he's enjoying the best spell of his Liverpool career.

The last time the Reds drew with Sion they were booed off the pitch after what proved to be the final home game of Brendan Rodgers' reign.

This time the reaction to being held by the Swiss minnows was very different at the final whistle as Klopp accepted the thunderous applause of the 800-strong travelling Kop. This dismal stalemate will be quickly forgiven and forgotten.

Klopp had already done the hard yards in Europe – transforming a campaign that was going nowhere with wins over Rubin Kazan and Bordeaux.

**Now to truly kick on the Reds must find a way to start beating opponents intent simply on survival.**

**MATCH FACTS**

**FC Sion** : Vanins, Ziegler, Lacroix, Ruefli (Adao 90), Zverotic, Kouassi, Salatic, Pa Modou, Fernandes, Carlitos, Assifuah (Mujangi Bia 73).

**Not used** : Fickentscher, Akolo, Sierró, Vanczak, Follonier.

**Liverpool** : Mignolet, Clyne, Toure, Lovren, Smith, Henderson (Rossiter 77), Milner (Coutinho 61), Can, Lallana, Firmino (Brannagan 90), Origi.

**Not used** : Bogdan, Randall, Skrtel, Benteke.

**Referee** : Michael Koukoulakis (Greece) **Goals** : none **Bookings** : Assifuah, Kouassi, Clyne

**Man of the match** : Brad Smith. A composed and solid display from the youngster on his full debut.

## BZ BERNER ZEITUNG

Das lange Warten hat ein Ende

Obwohl Sion gegen Liverpool nicht einmal aufs Tor schoss, brach nach Schlusspiff grenzenloser Jubel aus.

Den dritten und letzten Matchball nutzte Sion, um erstmals seit 1986/87 (damals im Cupsieger-Cup) wieder im Europacup zu überwinteren. Weil im Parallel-Spiel Bordeaux den Russen von Rubin Kasan beim 2:2 Punkte abnahm, hätte dem zweiten Schweizer Europa-League-Vertreter selbst eine Niederlage zum Weiterkommen gereicht.

Für Sion war das erste von zwei Spielen in der «wichtigsten Woche der Saison» eines, das mit dem für die Moral sehr wichtigen Resultat endete. Mit dem Verbleib im internationalen Geschäft ist das erste Ziel erreicht, das zweite ist Halbfinal-Kualifikation im nationalen Cup. Mit einem Sieg gegen Basel würde der Titelverteidiger eine für seine Verhältnisse aussergewöhnlich ruhige Vorrunde mit einem weiteren Erfolgserlebnis abschliessen. Den Beweis, dass das Selbstvertrauen stimmt, lieferte Sion mit dem sprichwörtlich erkämpften Punkt gegen Liverpool. Der Fakt, in einer Gruppe mit Bordeaux, Rubin Kasan und Liverpool nur eine Partie verloren zu haben, ist überaus bemerkenswert. Defensive zuerst

Drei Tage nach dem 1:1 im Hinspiel am 1. Oktober hatte Liverpool Brendan Rodgers entlassen. Mit dem formschwachen und strukturalosen Liverpool dieser Zeit hatte jene Mannschaft, die im Tourbillon unter Jürgen Klopp bei weitem nicht in Bestbesetzung antrat, wenig zu tun. Sion blieb gegen das offensiv ausgerichteten Gegner aus der Premier League wenig anderes übrig, als sich primär mit Defensivarbeit zu beschäftigen.

Diese Arbeit löste Sion aber ausgezeichnet. Klopps stets gestenreiche Aufforderung, schneller zu spielen, war auch als Kompliment ans Heimteam zu verstehen. Mit der Hereinnahme von Vincent Rüfli verstärkte Sions Coach Didier Tholot das kämpferische Element im Sittener Mittelfeld, die Massnahme zahlte sich aus. Offensiv schien es, als hätte Sion Kenntnis vom Zwischenstand der Partie Bordeaux - Rubin Kasan. Ab dem Führungstor der Russen (31.) war Sions Devise klar: ja nicht verlieren. Im Rückblick wenig überraschend waren die besten der raren Offensivaktionen der Walliser vor der Pause zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits vorbei. Einmal schoss Carlitos drüber (16.), einmal war Edimilson Fernandes' Abschluss (23.) überhastet.

An Liverpools besten Szenen war ohne Ausnahme Divock Origi beteiligt. Der Belgier vergab allein in der ersten Halbzeit drei sehr gute Chancen respektive wurde einmal im letzten Moment von Elsad Zverotic gestoppt. Ansonsten waren die "Reds" weit davon entfernt, ihre unter Klopp zelebrierten Offensiv-Vorstösse auch nur annähernd aufziehen zu können. Auch dafür galt Sion an diesem kalten Abend ein Kompliment.

Sion - Liverpool 0:0

10'000 Zuschauer (ausverkauft). - SR Koukoulakis (Grie).

Sion: Vanins; Zverotic, Lacroix, Ziegler, Pa Modou; Kouassi, Salatic; Carlitos, Fernandes, Rüfli (94. Adão); Assifuah (73. Bia).

Liverpool: Mignolet; Clyne, Touré, Lovren, Smith; Can, Henderson (77. Rossiter); Lallana, Firmino (89. Brannagan), Milner (60. Coutinho); Origi.

Bemerkungen: Sion ohne Ndoye (gesperrt), Konaté, Mboyo und Zeman, Liverpool ohne Sturridge, Sakho, Ings, Flanagan, Gomez (alle verletzt), Ibe (krank), Lucas Leiva, Allen, Moreno (nicht im Aufgebot/geschont). Verwarnungen: 33. Assifuah. 52. Kouassi (im nächsten Spiel gesperrt). 82. Clyne (alle wegen Fouls).

Date: 10 December 2015  
 Opposition: Sion  
 Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Mail	Berner Zeitung
Independent	Telegraph	BBC

10 December  
2105



Liverpool finished top of their Europa League group by drawing with FC Sion in an uneventful game in Switzerland.

The Reds' best openings fell to Divock Origi, but he miscued a volley in the first half and was later denied by a fine last-ditch tackle.

He then almost rounded the keeper after the break but was thwarted.

Simon Mignolet made one routine save to deny Ebenezer Assifuah as Liverpool maintained their unbeaten record in this season's competition.

A night of hidden positives

A goalless draw with a side sixth in the Swiss Super League will hardly list among Liverpool's finer European nights, but the sight of club captain Jordan Henderson making his first start since August is an undoubted positive for manager Jurgen Klopp.

Philippe Coutinho appeared after 60 minutes after four games out with a hamstring complaint but not even his creativity could forge a meaningful opening as both sides struggled on a pitch which was partially frozen.

Origi - whose significance to Liverpool increased with news of another injury setback to Daniel Sturridge on Tuesday - was willing throughout but should have been more clinical.

As the 20-year-old broke through the home defence in the second period, his attempt to round Andris Vanins in the home goal lacked intent, and despite stretching he could not connect with an inviting cross late on.

The peripheral nature of summer signing Roberto Firmino was out of character giving recent impressive form, but Liverpool - who qualify with Sion - will welcome another solid display under Klopp, who now has tasted defeat just twice in 13 matches in charge.

Man of the match - Liverpool's new Aussie...

An impressive full debut for left-back Bradley Smith was also a plus-point.

He showcased pace and an attacking instinct throughout, crossing for Origi to misfire a volley early on and regularly reaching the byeline.

Australian-born, Smith is now a full international for the Socceroos despite playing for England at under-17 and under-20 level.

His opportunity under Klopp marks a turnaround as, having spent seven years in the club's academy, he almost left when his contract expired in the summer, before signing a new deal last month.

Who can they face next?

The first leg of the last-32 ties is scheduled for 18 February, with the return seven days later. The Reds will face Everton and Manchester City within a week of the second leg, so an easier draw will likely keep Klopp happy.

Monday's draw could see them paired with any of the runners up in the Europa League's 11 other groups, sides including Villarreal, Marseille or Klopp's former employers Borussia Dortmund.

As group winners, they could potentially meet four of the sides who drop out of the Champions League with the worst record, including Sevilla and Gary Neville's Valencia.

Up next?

Liverpool - eighth in the Premier League - travel to West Bromwich Albion on Sunday, a side they are unbeaten against in their last four meetings.

The stats you need to know...

Liverpool kept their first clean sheet against Swiss opposition since April 1977

The draw was Liverpool's first in 10 matches

Liverpool are one of only six teams unbeaten in the Europa League group stages this season - the others being Napoli, Lazio, Besiktas and the Group K pair of Schalke and Sparta Prague.

Date: 10 December 2015  
 Opposition: Sion  
 Competition: Europa League

Times	Mirror	Echo
Guardian	Mail	Berner Zeitung
Independent	Telegraph	BBC

10 December  
2105



Full time Match ends, FC Sion 0, Liverpool 0.  
 90:00+5:01 Full time Second Half ends, FC Sion 0, Liverpool 0.  
 90:00+3:44 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
 90:00+3:25 Substitution Substitution, FC Sion. Joaquim Adao replaces Vincent Rüfli.  
 90:00+2:38 Delay in match Carlitos (FC Sion because of an injury).  
 90:00+1:51 Foul by Cameron Brannagan (Liverpool).  
 90:00+1:51 Carlitos (FC Sion wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 89:11 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Cameron Brannagan replaces Roberto Firmino.  
 87:30 Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).  
 87:30 Carlitos (FC Sion wins a free kick on the left wing).  
 85:54 Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 85:54 Foul by Geoffrey Mujangi Bia (FC Sion).  
 83:19 Attempt saved. Divock Origi (Liverpool right footed shot from the centre of the box is saved in the bottom right corner. Assisted by Brad Smith with a cross).  
 82:50 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
 82:17 Delay in match Carlitos (FC Sion because of an injury).  
 81:39 Booking Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool is shown the yellow card for a bad foul).  
 81:30 Foul by Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool).  
 81:30 Carlitos (FC Sion wins a free kick on the left wing).  
 79:46 Corner, FC Sion. Conceded by Nathaniel Clyne.  
 78:47 Attempt missed. Geoffrey Mujangi Bia (FC Sion right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Vero Salatic).  
 76:15 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Jordan Rossiter replaces Jordan Henderson.  
 75:35 Foul by Roberto Firmino (Liverpool).  
 75:35 Jagne Pa Modou (FC Sion wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 72:42 Substitution Substitution, FC Sion. Geoffrey Mujangi Bia replaces Ebenezer Assifuah.  
 71:07 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 71:07 Foul by Edimilson Fernandes (FC Sion).  
 62:39 Corner, FC Sion. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.  
 62:36 Attempt blocked. Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion right footed shot from the right side of the box is blocked. Assisted by Elsad Zverotic).  
 60:20 Substitution Substitution, Liverpool. Philippe Coutinho replaces James Milner.  
 57:38 Attempt missed. Leo Lacroix (FC Sion header from the centre of the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by Carlitos with a cross following a corner).  
 57:16 Corner, FC Sion. Conceded by Brad Smith.  
 55:20 Hand ball by Brad Smith (Liverpool).  
 54:17 Foul by Kolo Touré (Liverpool).  
 54:17 Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion wins a free kick on the left wing).  
 53:29 Foul by Divock Origi (Liverpool).  
 53:29 Vero Salatic (FC Sion wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 51:20 Booking Xavier Kouassi (FC Sion is shown the yellow card for a bad foul).  
 51:13 Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the attacking half).  
 51:13 Foul by Xavier Kouassi (FC Sion).  
 45:15 Hand ball by Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion).  
 45:00 Second Half begins FC Sion 0, Liverpool 0.  
 45:00+1:12 Half time First Half ends, FC Sion 0, Liverpool 0.  
 43:36 Foul by Brad Smith (Liverpool).  
 43:36 Carlitos (FC Sion wins a free kick on the right wing).  
 42:02 Foul by Brad Smith (Liverpool).  
 42:02 Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion wins a free kick on the right wing).  
 38:52 Foul by Brad Smith (Liverpool).  
 38:52 Carlitos (FC Sion wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 38:18 James Milner (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing).  
 38:18 Foul by Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion).  
 36:08 Foul by Emre Can (Liverpool).  
 36:08 Edimilson Fernandes (FC Sion wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 35:16 Offside, FC Sion. Jagne Pa Modou tries a through ball, but Ebenezer Assifuah is caught offside.  
 34:32 Offside, Liverpool. Nathaniel Clyne tries a through ball, but Adam Lallana is caught offside.  
 34:10 Delay over. They are ready to continue.  
 33:50 Delay in match Emre Can (Liverpool because of an injury).  
 33:06 Booking Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion is shown the yellow card for a bad foul).  
 32:43 Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 32:43 Foul by Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion).  
 31:14 Emre Can (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 31:14 Foul by Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion).  
 30:41 Attempt missed. Adam Lallana (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the right. Assisted by James Milner).  
 30:03 Hand ball by Carlitos (FC Sion).  
 28:48 Offside, FC Sion. Xavier Kouassi tries a through ball, but Ebenezer Assifuah is caught offside.  
 27:52 Corner, FC Sion. Conceded by Brad Smith.  
 26:05 Jordan Henderson (Liverpool wins a free kick on the right wing).  
 26:05 Foul by Edimilson Fernandes (FC Sion).  
 24:53 Attempt missed. Reto Ziegler (FC Sion left footed shot from outside the box is high and wide to the left following a corner).  
 24:23 Corner, FC Sion. Conceded by Dejan Lovren.  
 22:06 Attempt missed. Edimilson Fernandes (FC Sion right footed shot from outside the box misses to the left. Assisted by Reto Ziegler).

21:30 Foul by James Milner (Liverpool).  
 21:30 Vero Salatic (FC Sion wins a free kick on the right wing).  
 18:11 Attempt missed. Divock Origi (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box misses to the right. Assisted by Roberto Firmino).  
 16:19 Attempt blocked. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is blocked. Assisted by Divock Origi).  
 15:38 Attempt missed. Carlitos (FC Sion right footed shot from outside the box is too high. Assisted by Jagne Pa Modou).  
 14:09 Corner, FC Sion. Conceded by Kolo Touré.  
 12:09 Corner, Liverpool. Conceded by Leo Lacroix.  
 9:47 Brad Smith (Liverpool wins a free kick on the left wing).  
 9:47 Foul by Carlitos (FC Sion).  
 9:08 Divock Origi (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 9:08 Foul by Reto Ziegler (FC Sion).  
 7:41 Attempt saved. Roberto Firmino (Liverpool right footed shot from outside the box is saved in the top centre of the goal. Assisted by James Milner).  
 5:35 Foul by Dejan Lovren (Liverpool).  
 5:35 Ebenezer Assifuah (FC Sion wins a free kick in the attacking half).  
 4:44 Adam Lallana (Liverpool wins a free kick in the defensive half).  
 4:44 Dangerous play by Vero Salatic (FC Sion).  
 4:09 Attempt missed. Emre Can (Liverpool left footed shot from outside the box is too high).  
 2:59 Offside, FC Sion. Andris Vanins tries a through ball, but Ebenezer Assifuah is caught offside.  
 2:14 Hand ball by Emre Can (Liverpool).  
 0:00 First Half begins.  
 0:00 Lineups are announced and players are warming up.